

## **Historical Genesis of Bind Community in West Bengal**

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To compose the history of a country, we need to write the history of its races. If the history of the Bengalis is not told, the history of Bengal is not properly spoken. Moreover, to understand the History of the Bengali properly, It is necessary to trace the historical account of other races with whom the Bengali people live together, share equal feelings, maintain cultural relation, and religious rituals since the early period. The communities those are barbaric and inferior to us now, might dominate us in past, and they were more civilized as past history of Bengal is concerned. The historical account of Bengal proved that the Bengalis adapted social customs, food, and religious rituals of other races since time immemorial. The proper history of the Bengali nation is not be revealed if the history of all communities and races with whom we came to contact since early age are properly written.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt about that the mixed-caste groups gradually formed the Bengali nation. The history of some communities is still obscured or unknown to us. The Bind community is one of such communities whose history is almost unknown to us. Some of the groups have their different language, ritual, customs, and food habits. They maintain their distinct identity in spite of adapting other manners. According to Risley, the early settlement of Bind community was on the foothill of mountain Bindhya of central India.<sup>2</sup>

According to oral tradition, the Bind community originated from the foothill of mountain Bindya. Once upon a time, a man moved around the foothill; he suddenly heard a curious sound from the water. Then the man cut a piece of bamboo and threw towards it like an arrow. Suddenly, he noticed the appearance of a piece of flesh from which the first man of Bind community came to the earth. According to the myth, in this way, the first man of Bind community came to the earth; Risley also mentioned this oral tradition.<sup>3</sup>

There is a popular belief among the people of Bind community that in the ancient past a Ksatriya king called Kirtabirya Arjun or Sahasrabahu Arjun of Haihay dynasty misruled the earth. The subject became helpless of his anarchy. He was a powerful king and great warrior. One day, the king went out for hunting with his army. In spite of spending three days in the forest, he hardly got any animal to hunt. The tired, hungry, and thirsty king took shelter to a sage's Ashrama when he was returning to his capital. The sage pleased the king with his hospitality within very short time. When the curious king asked the sage how he managed everything so early, the sage told the story of the mysterious cow named Suravi. The king then tried to forcefully take the mysterious cow. A clash broke out between the king and the sage. The king destroyed all the trees of the

ashrama and dishonoured the sage. Then Parashuram, the son of the sage, Jamadeagni and Renuka became angry and killed the king. Later, the sons of the king found the sage along at his ashrama and killed him. Parashuram was shocked and angry, and he committed to free the earth from Kshatriyas. He eliminated Ksatriyas for 21 times.<sup>4</sup> According to the traditional myth, some coward Ksatriyas took shelter of a den in the Bindya hill to avoid their elimination. In course of time, these people came out and began to settle in Deccan, Chotanagpur plate, and Bengal. The term Bind came from mountain Vindhya.

Another folk tradition reveals that once lord Vishnu was sweating when he was working hard. Gradually, drops of his sweat fell down from his forehead to nose. As a result, lord Vishnu cleaned his sweat, and the drops of sweat fell into the land and formed the Bind community. According to this myth, the other mixed caste groups were created by lord Brahma while the bind community was created by lord Bishnu. According to the myth, the term 'Bind' came from 'Bindu', which meant drop of sweat.<sup>5</sup> The word 'Bind' means waving or making. They used to make goods, like fishing net, baskets, etc. Perhaps, thus the term 'Bind' came into the terminology.

The early settlement of Bind community was Bindhya Mountain from where the word Bind came.<sup>6</sup> The field work suggests that the most of the people of this community believe that they belong to warrior Ksatriya caste. They often concealed their caste identity since ancient past. They concealed their caste identity in order to save the elimination from lord Parasuram. In course of time, they settled in the different areas of the country for food and shelter.

The people of another community live in West Bengal share similar social tradition, religious activities another cultural value like the bind community. The community called Nuniya believes that they originated from the same God like the Bind. According to historian Santash Rana, Kumar Rana, and Susmita Som, the Bind and Nuniya belong to same community.<sup>7,8</sup> Another story suggests that the Bind and Nuniya originated from identical mythological God.<sup>9</sup> Presently, the Nuniya group came from same community. Once a man dug a grave for a Muslim king. This man was expelled and isolated from the bind community. His successors gradually form a new community called Nuniya. On the other hand, some of them believed that Bind was a sub community of larger Nuniya community. It is difficult to determine which community was created earlier. It is assumed that Bind is one of the backward sub-castes of West Bengal. Their forefather might come from any of the tribal groups.<sup>10</sup>

Bind usually lived in the districts of Sahanabad, mujaffarpur, bhakalpur of Behar and Maladha in West Bengal. Two sub-groups of bind community are found in Behar. They are Ghariyad Bind and Ganabind.<sup>11</sup> In Bengal, the Bind community mostly adapted Chowdhury title. They came from Gangetic plain of northern India. They were mostly traders in profession. They used to come in Bengal to sell different goods like Dal and wheat. They settled in central and eastern Bengal on the banks of big rivers like Padma.

They build small huts to live. In Dacca, the Bind community are divided in to 3 sub groups. They were Ketak Bind, Nun Bind and Bind. They usually work as palanquin carriers, salt maker and mud diggers.<sup>12</sup> Some of those of the same community used to take pork and wine were called adrishi. The above mentioned community made matrimonial relation with the bind and settled on the bank of river Padma learnt agriculture caged and killed picks.<sup>13</sup>

Anthropologically, the Bind community belongs to non-aryan community.<sup>14</sup> They belong to marginalised Hindu group. They live in different areas of India. According to Bukanan the Bind community primarily lived in Ayothya. They are now settled in North Western province, Gangetic plain and Oudh.<sup>15</sup>

The following tables show the census of bind community from 1872 to 2001 in West Bengal.

Castes/Year	1872	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Total SC	10679168	11157448	10973975	12323909	12759100	12354763
Total Bind	8234	9898	11816	14199	18911	10437

Castes/Year	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Total SC	12354763	13411957	15675021	19462706	5161512
Total Bind	10437	16591	12895	18881	22924

Castes/Year	1971	1981	1991	2001
Total SC	8816028	12000768	16080611	18452555
Total Bind	20779	34029	45067	51828

Source: 1872 and 1881 Census, Risley, H. H. (1891); *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Vol. I), reprint ed. (Calcutta, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. 1981). P- 134; *Census of India 1891-1951; 1961-1981 Census*; Amolkumar Das and Rmendrath Saha, *West Bengal Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes : Facts and Information*, Special Series No. 32, *Bulletin of the Cultural Research Institute*, Govt. of West Bengal; 1991, 2001 Census, Census of India Compact Disc, SC, ST Individual Community wise.

People who pursue fishing or related occupations can be grouped into different social categories. Hindu fishermen are formed into separate and distinct castes. One researcher classified the Hindu fishermen in different parts of Eastern Bengal and Assam into 23 separate castes. These are the *Kaibartas, Kewat, Krita, Tiwar or Rajbangshi, Das shikari, Malo or Jhalo, Namasudras or Chandals, Berua, Jiani, Karal, Pod, Bind or Bindu, Bagdi, Patni, Nadial, Mali, Hari, Gonrhi, Banpar, Gangot, Surari, Surahiya, and Loait*.<sup>16</sup>

In a recently published book, Rupkumar Barman categorizes the fishing communities in colonial Bengal post colonial West Bengal.<sup>17</sup>

Caste	Caste-based Occupation(s)
Bagdi	agricultural works, fishing, palanquin bearing, making fishing implements and other menial jobs.
Bind	fishing, earthen works
Doai	fishing and making mats
Gangrar	fishing
Ghashi	fishing, agricultural works
Gonrhi	fishing, selling fish and agricultural works
Jelia kaibartya	fishing, selling fish and making fishing implements
Jhalo Malo, Malo	fishing, selling fish and making fishing implements
Keot	fishing, selling fish and boating
Tiyor	fishing, selling fish and boating
Other Castes Rajbanshi, Mal, Malla, Namasudra, Patni, Poundra etc	fishing was their subsidiary occupation
Others Communities (Muslim) Mahaldar, Nikari and Bazari.	fishing and fish selling

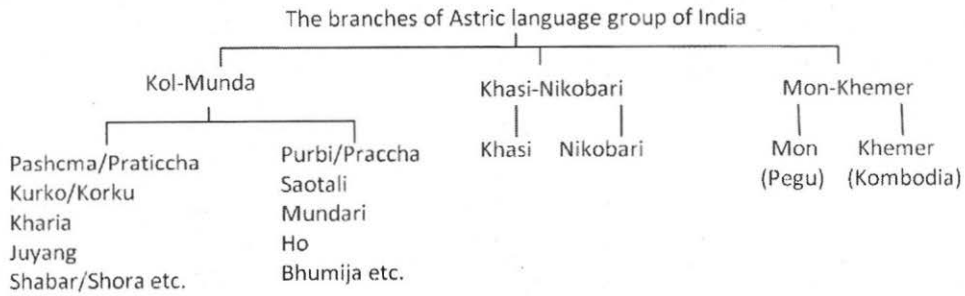
The finding evidences show: Barman, Rup Kumar, *Fisheries and Fishermen: A Socio-economic History of Fisheries and Fishermen of colonial Bengal and Post-Colonial West Bengal*, Abhijeet Publications, Delhi-110094, 2008, Page-14, 15.

The gazetteers of Malda district noted “The Binds are another caste who are found in the west of the district.....They are a non-Aryan caste, origination from Bihar”<sup>18</sup> The early settlement of Bind community was in Behar. Not only Bind community, Nagar and Chai communities of the district of Maldah also came from Chotanagpur and settled for here for long time.<sup>19</sup>

The Bind community mostly lived in Beneras. They migrated to eastern Bengal in 1770, because of starvation and began to live in the districts of Nadia, Pabna and Dacca.<sup>20</sup> Large number of people of Bind community entered the district of Maldah from Rajshahi, pabbna, Faridpur, Maymanshing, barishal and various places of behar.<sup>21</sup>

The Bind community of West Bengal are divided in to four sub-groups such as Jeth Bind, khar Bind, Sirwal Bind and Nun Bind.<sup>22,23</sup> The Bind community of the district Maldah has seven sub-groups. They are Jetdit Bind, Bhatia Bind, Nun Bind, Ahuir Bind, Goyal bind, Malti (Molla) Bind, Kayat Bind.<sup>24</sup>

According to Dr. Suniti Kumar Chaterjee, the Astric Dialect and Kol Dialect are oldest dilects found in India. The Kol dialect was prevalent before the advent of Dravira, Aryans, Mangolians, Chinese and Tibetans. This ancient dialect influenced not only new Aryan language, but also influenced modern Bangla. Many words of this ancient dialect directly enter in modern Bengali. The branches of Astric language group in India as follow.<sup>25</sup>



It is already mentioned that the Bind and other communities like Nagar, Dhanuk and Chai migrated from chotanagpur hundred years ago. They migrated here then capital of Bengal was established in Gaur. They were bilingual. They could speak in Bengali and their own dialect called Khota the Khota consists of Bangla, Hindi, Maithili, Maghahi and other languages and sub-languages.<sup>26</sup>

The mother tongue of Bind community is Pashima language which belongs Indo-European language group.<sup>27</sup> It is found that the people of this community speak both Pashima and Khotta dialects. It is also important to mention that Khotta dialect was inharitated from Aryan and non Aryan dialects specially kol dialect. Above evidences show that the community may has tribal origin in perspective of their spoken language.

The above findings clearly indicate that the Bind community may inharitate from Astric language groups in terms of their language though they adapted Paschima language and other Indo-European languages. Like Sanskrit and Bangla in course of time. The evidences also suggest their origin may be found in Proto-Australian group in terms of anthropological perspective. It is clearly showed the Bind community follow the mixed culture of tribal and non-tribal Aryan people. So they gradually adapted main modern Hindu culture without leaving their tribal culture and language which they follow for centuries.

## Notes & References

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