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**Raja Narendralal Khan Women's College (Autonomous)**

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# **Anudhyan An International Journal of Social Sciences**

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**Raja Narendralal Khan Women's College (Autonomous)**

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# **Anudhyan An International Journal of Social Sciences**

**(AIJSS)**

**Volume 9 ■ Issue 1**

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## From the Desk of the Editor

The 2024 issue of *Anudhyan: An International Journal of Social Science* is strikingly remarkable in many ways. It is a matter of great pleasure that this journal has maintained its regularity of publication, unlike many academic journals of Indian institutions. *Anudhyan* has now been the target place for bringing out research articles by young researchers, PhD scholars, and academics from various colleges and universities. As per the UGC regulations, *Anudhyan* is always an Academic, Peer-reviewed, and Non-commercial research journal. The present volume of this journal has addressed various social, historical and literary issues in the research papers published in it.

Dr. Biswajit Adhikary has written his paper on “Archiving the Local History, Heritage and Culture: Role of the Public Libraries in West Bengal” where he tries to establish how the small press, little magazines, public rural libraries play an important role in the preservation of local history, folklore folk arts etc. Dr. Sabbir Hossain has discussed the popular culture of worshipping ‘shakti-cult’ in undivided Midnapore in connection with Ghanaram’s *Dharmamangal*. Richik Bhattacharyya’s essay is designed to explore the connection between literature and history through a case study of Munshi Premchand’s writings which illustrate the history of the struggle of man against the men in power. In this issue, we have received some exciting papers on women’s questions and gender studies. Dr. Rajesh Biswas in his paper has reevaluated Swami Vivekananda’s views on women’s questions and gender relations. Swami Vivekananda was against the stereotypical notion about women. He emphasized women’s consciousness and women’s empowerment through proper education. In another paper, Soumyadeep Mitra, a resident scholar of Jñāna-Pravāha of Varanasi, has traced back the position of women in ancient times in his paper “Question to Womanhood: A Critical Analysis of ‘Her’ Sexual Impurity through lenses of the Pāli Buddhist Jātakas”. Our present volume has also thrown light on caste and Adivasi studies which are now the burning subjects in present-day national politics. Mridul Banik has written on the cultural and socio-political aspects of “Baruni Snan” (Sacred Bathing) which is

the biggest ritual of the Matua Nama Sudra (lower caste) community of Bengal. Rupa Ghosh, a research scholar in History, has focused her research area on a very interesting subject: “Outlook of Tribal Jewellery and Its Making Technology”. This issue also bears three well-written essays on the decline of the Mughal Empire, ‘Climate History’ and Pandita Ramabai respectively.

All other papers on various areas of humanities and social science are equally rich in research and innovative ways of representation.

The editorial team of *Anudhyan* heartily acknowledges the support received from all corners, especially the reviewers, the copy-editors, the printer, and above all, Dr. Jayasree Laha, Principal, Raja Narendralal Khan Women’s College (Autonomous) for bringing out the present issue of the journal.

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# **Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati, Pioneer of Education and Emancipation of Women**

Rina Pal

**Abstract:** Social reformer Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati (1858-1922) was a pioneer in education and women's emancipation, she defied every rule and custom that put obstacles in the life of upper-caste Hindu women in India in the 19th century. Through her bravery, intelligence, and perseverance throughout her life, she rose to become a living legend. She rose to prominence as a supporter of social change and women's educational rights. She was of the opinion that women's liberation and empowerment can only be achieved through education. Ramabai fought against patriarchy in her educational and social pursuits, breaking the glass ceiling in a world dominated by men. She championed women's right to liberation. An effort has been made in this article to focus on Pandita Ramabai's life and work for the emancipation of Indian women. Indian social reformer Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati was a pioneer in the education and emancipation of women in India. After passing an examination by the faculty of the University of Calcutta, she became the first woman to be given the titles of Sarasvati and Pandita as a scholar of Sanskrit. She was one of the ten women who were elected by the Indian National Congress in 1889. She established Mukti Mission in the late 1890s in the village of Kedgaon, forty miles east of Pune.

**Keywords:** Ramabai, social reforms, women's education, empowerment, emancipation

## **Introduction**

Indian social reformer Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati was a pioneer in the education and emancipation of women in India. After passing an examination by the faculty of the University of Calcutta, she became the first woman to be given the titles of Sarasvati and Pandita as a scholar of Sanskrit. She was one of the ten women who were elected by the Indian National Congress in 1889. In Mumbai, India, Pandita Ramabai established the school known as Sharada Sadan (Home of Wisdom). The school was intended to be non-sectarian, but all Brahmin caste rules were strictly adhered to. She established Mukti Mission in the late 1890s in the village of Kedgaon, forty miles east to Pune. Ramabai's health began to deteriorate in 1920. On April 5, 1922, almost a fortnight before her 64th birthday, she took her last breath.

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When reformers took up the cause of women, many reform movements were

*Associate Professor, Department of History, Raja N.L. Khan Women's College, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal.*



started in India during the nineteenth century. Pandita Ramabai (1858.1922) was one of the most prominent social reformers of her time because she pioneered early feminism in India and fought for the emancipation of Indian women throughout her life at a time when the majority of women's reform movements were led by men. With her particularly scholarly foundation, she turned into a mainstay of women. One of the few early female voices in colonial India is Pandita Ramabai. Her guiding principle was to promote women's liberation. She tried to raise awareness of reforming social order to empower women. She had always addressed issues related to women's education and self-reliance in her English and Marathi writings. Pandita Ramabai was well-known for her efforts to provide education, freedom, and emancipation for women.

### **Early Life and education**

Pandita Ramabai was born in Gangamul, Karnataka, on April 23, 1858, to a High caste Hindu Brahmin family. The family made a pilgrimage to all of the country's important holy sites when Ramabai was a child. Here, they performed as puranikas, public narrators of the Sanskrit Puranas, which combine mythology and philosophy. This tradition continued until Ramabai's father, Anant Shastri, mother, and older sister died in the 1870s. Till they arrived in Calcutta in 1878, Ramabai and her older brother Shrinivas led the same life of poverty, hardship, and ritual observance. Ramabai gained skills in comprehending Indian society and Hinduism through the pilgrimage. She had the chance to talk to reformers like Keshab Chandra Sen, Kalicharan Bannerji, J.C. Bose, Sucharu Devi, and a number of other scholars in Calcutta. These scholars praised Ramabai's knowledge of the Sanskrit language and the texts that it contains. She received the highest titles of "Pandita" and "Sarasvati," which mean "a wise person" and "goddess of learning/wisdom," respectively, as soon as she was recognized as a learned woman. Ramabai asked to speak to women about women's education during her time as Bengal Presidency. Her primary sources were Hindu mythology and texts. She was also introduced to the Brahmo Samaj, a group that was concerned about the education of women. Ramabai accepted Shrinivas' friend's marriage proposal in 1880 after her brother Shrinivas's sudden death, and the couple got married on June 13, 1880. Her Bengali lawyer husband, Babu Bipin Bihari Das Medhavi, came from a different caste. Manorama, Ramabai's daughter, was born in the following year. Within two years of marriage. On February 4, 1882, her husband Bipin passed away from cholera

after less than two years of marriage. In April 1882, Ramabai reached Pune following the death of her husband. Ramabai began her reformist activities and her active participation in the social field of her time upon her arrival in Pune, particularly in regard to her efforts to improve the situation of women.

### **Her Journey Of Social Activism**

Ramabai moved to Pune in 1882 following Medhavi's death, where she established the Arya Mahila Samaj (Arya Women's Society). The society's mission was to support women's education and their escape from the oppression of child marriage. Ramabai testified before an Indian government commission established in 1882 to investigate education. "In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the educated men of this country are opposed to female education and the proper position of women," she declared with fervour in an address to Lord Ripon's Education Commission. They tried to ruin woman's character by magnifying the smallest flaw into a mountain whenever they notice it. She suggested that female school inspectors should be appointed and teachers should receive training. In addition, she stated that Indian women should be admitted to medical schools because women's conditions were such that they could only be treated medically. Ramabai's evidence went viral and was seen by Queen Victoria. Later, Lord Dufferin started the Women's Medical Movement as a result.

In 1883, Ramabai started her medical education by traveling to Britain. She converted to Christianity during her stay. In 1886, she traveled to the United States from Britain to attend the event of graduation of Anandibai Joshi, the first Indian woman doctor. She stayed there for two years. She also translated textbooks and gave lectures all over the United States and Canada during this time. Additionally, she had published *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, one of her most significant works. She also wrote this book for the first time in English. This book was devoted by Ramabai to Dr. Joshi. The work depicted the worst aspects of Hindu women's lives as child brides and child widows. Her goal was to show how women were oppressed in Hindu-dominated British India. Ramabai toured the villages of Maharashtra in 1896 during a severe famine with a caravan of bullock carts and rescued thousands of orphans, orphan-widows, and other destitute women and brought them to Mukti and Sharada Sadan's shelter. She translated the Bible into her mother tongue, Marathi, from the original Greek and Hebrew, and was an educated woman who could speak seven languages.

### **Family Life of Pandita Ramabai**

Pandita Ramabai had little time for family because she worked in social service. She had a difficult childhood because her parents died young and her husband died within two years of their marriage. She also had to educate Manorama Bai, her only daughter. Manorama earned her bachelor's degree from Bombay University; went to the US to study further; returned to India and assumed the position of Principal at Sharada Sadan in Mumbai. In 1912, Pandita Ramabai helped to establish a Christian high school in a backward district of south India called Gulbarga (now in Karnataka), where her daughter served as principal. In 1920, Ramabai's health began to deteriorate, and she appointed her daughter to lead the Mukti Mission ministry. Manorama passed away soon in 1921. Ramabai was shocked with this great loss. Ramabai, who had been afflicted with septic bronchitis for nine months, passed away on April 5, 1922, just a few weeks before her 64th birthday.

Rama Dongre became a member of the reform group Brahmo Samaj, which was against the deeply ingrained caste system. In June 1880, her brother passed away. She tied the knot with Bengali lawyer Bipin Behari Medhavi in the same year. She did not let her own high caste get in the way of her decision to marry Medhavi, a member of the socially marginalized lower caste. Manorama, the couple's lone child, was born in 1881. Under a year after the fact, her better-half passed away from cholera. She gradually rose to prominence as a Sanskrit lecturer. She was invited to speak by the Pandits or religious scholars when she went to Calcutta. In recognition of her proficiency in Sanskrit literature, the Calcutta University bestowed upon her the titles of Pandita and Sarasvati in 1878.

### **Philosophy Of Pandita Ramabai**

Ramabai created a one-of-a-kind educational program to meet the needs of the inmates at her home and urged them to become Christians. She combined ideas she had learned from the sisters at Wantage, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Indian Christian friends into her own version of Christianity, which was comprised of various doctrines. Ramabai perceived caste as the dominant social system in Hinduism. It resulted in a false appraisal of intellect and condemnation of manual labor. Caste associations hindered the growth of a democratic spirit and promoted narrow self-interest.

Ramabai's educational efforts were admirable and had greatly impressed her peers at the time. However, the impact of her contribution to women's education

was muted by her Christian faith. Because she was a well-known Christian, her work enraged a lot of prominent men in western India. Ramabai believed that many of her students belonged to higher castes contributed to the extent of their rage. She argued that if her work had only focused on low-caste women, these men would not have been bothered. She received the Kaiser-I-Hind award from the king of England in 1919, which was one of the highest honours that an Indian could boast of during the idoneal regime. In India, Ramabai is hailed as a national symbol of the women's development movement. Ramabai's first effort in India to educate widows and the students she left behind to carry on her work was her greatest legacy.

### **Ramabai Circles and Issues**

Ramabai is mentioned by Swami Vivekananda in his letters. He remarked- "I am shocked to learn of the scandals that the Ramabai community is engaging in regarding me. Mrs. Bull, do you not see that no matter how a man acts, there will always be those who fabricate the most vile lies about him? I faced such obstacles every day in Chicago. Additionally, these women are typically the most evangelical of Christians!" Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati was born Rama Dongre on April 23, 1858, into a Brahmin family that spoke Marathi. She was taught Sanskrit at home by her scholar father, Anant Shastri Dongre. Dongre and her brother Srinivas traveled across India to recite Sanskrit scriptures after becoming orphans at the age of 16 during the Great Famine of 1876.<sup>78</sup> As a lecturer, Ramabai gained notoriety, and the pandits in Calcutta invited her to speak. In recognition of her knowledge of various Sanskrit texts, she was given the titles of Pandita and Sarasvati in 1878 by Calcutta University. She was encouraged to read the Vedas, the most sacred of all Hindu writings, by the theistic reformer Keshab Chandra Sen, who gave her a copy. Ramabai wed Bengali lawyer Bipin Behari Medhavi in a civil ceremony after Srinivas's death in 1880. Because the groom was a Bengali Kayastha, the marriage was considered inappropriate for the couple's age because it was inter-caste and inter-regional. On November 13, 1880, they were married in a civil ceremony. Manorama was the name given to the daughter of the couple. Ramabai, who was only 23 when Medhvi passed away in 1882, moved to Pune and established an organization to support women's education. The "Kaiser-e-Hind" gold medal was awarded to Pandita Ramabai in December 1919 for her significant contributions to social reform and education. Due to her poor health, Ramabai was

unable to attend the ceremony in Mumbai; Manorama, her daughter, accepted the award on her behalf.

### **Mukti Mission**

Ramabai took a bullock cart caravan through the villages of Maharashtra in 1896 during a severe famine to rescue thousands of children, widows, orphans, and homeless women and bring them to Mukti and Sharada Sadan's shelter. The Mukti mission had 1,500 people living there and over a hundred cattle by 1900. The Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission continues to help widows, orphans, and people with sight impairments by providing housing, education, and vocational training. Ramabai Medhvi independently educated her daughter Manorama following the death of her husband, Bipin Behari Medhvi. Manorama earned a bachelor's degree from the Bombay University, continued his education in the United States, and then returned to India to become principal of Sharada Sadan in Mumbai. In 1912, Pandita Ramabai helped establish a school in Gulbarga, which is now in Karnataka. Her daughter served as the school's principal.

She stated, "In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the educated men of this country are opposed to female education and the proper position of women," in an address to Lord Ripon's Education Commission. They tried to ruin women's character by magnifying the smallest flaw into a mountain whenever they notice it. Lord Dufferin started the Women's Medical Movement as a result of this. Ramabai brought attention to social problems like child marriage, the plight of child widows, and the oppression of women in British India in her 1887 book *The High Caste Hindu Woman*.

Pandita Ramabai was an active participant in India's social and political life. In December 1889, she and a group of four other women attended the fifth annual session of the Indian National Congress in Mumbai. Additionally, she attended the Third National Social Conference. Ramabai spoke about two resolutions, one about marriage and another about the widow's tonsillitis, which she criticized. By depriving the widow of property in the event that she marries again, she brought to light the unfair treatment she received. The request that conference members pledged themselves not to allow marriage until the girl had completed her 14 years was also supported by a large majority of members. Both were approved by the majority. This was a remarkable accomplishment for Ramabai. In 1897, she opened another school called "Mukti Sadan" in Kedagaon, close to Poona. More than 2000 students,

including males, females, and children, attended the school and received vocational training. In 1896, a terrible famine that spread throughout Gujarat and Central India claimed the lives of the majority of them. Ramabai was compelled to relocate the Sharda Sadan from Pune to Kedgaon and incorporated it with the Mukti Sadan in 1902 when the plague struck Pune. Manorama, Pandita Ramabai's daughter, is credited with founding India's first blind school. Pandita Ramabai and Manorama provided blind women with some degree of vision by teaching them to read and write Braille. The blind women learned to weave baskets, make cane chairs, and knit sweaters. The blind women were made financially independent as a result. Ramabai began translating the Bible into Marathi as soon as she arrived in Kedgaon in 1905. She carried on with this mission until her final day.

### **Mukti School**

Mukti, Ramabai's second school, was established in Kedgaon, thirty miles outside of Pune, following the 1897 famine. She started bringing hungry women and children into Sharada Sadan, where she fed, clothed, and enrolled them in her school. The government tried to control the plague by making it harder for people to move around. In Pune, the city magistrate limited the number of people who could be held in Sharada Sadan. Ramabai moved her famine victims to Kedgaon, where she had purchased 100 acres of land, because she was unable to keep them there.

By 1900, this idea had drawn attention of major institutions that housed 2000 women and children who were involved in industrial training and production as well as attending school. An American committee provided Mukti with funding and willingly approved all of her plans. A remedial curriculum was created by Ramabai. Literature chosen for its emphasis on moral examples would foster a caring spirit. To teach students about their own bodies and the physical world in which they lived, physiology and botany classes were included. Printing, carpentry, tailoring, masonry, wood-cutting, weaving, and needlework were all part of the industrial training, as were farming and gardening. In an effort to break down caste barriers and cultivate new interests-based loyalties, all students were required to join unions or societies like the Christian Endeavor Society or the Temperance Union. The children were encouraged to take charge of their own affairs and were taught basic parliamentary rules as members of these societies.

## **Social Life and Work**

Pandita's actual reform career began with the establishment of the first organization for women in Maharashtra, Arya Mahila Samaj (Arya Women's Society), on June 1, 1882, in Poona. The organization's mission was to promote women's emancipation by addressing and modifying practices like child marriage and the cruel treatment of widows, among others. Street Dharm Neeti (Morals for Women), her first book in Marathi, was published by the end of June 1882. It is believed that she wrote and published the book in order to make some money, as it sold very well. The money probably went toward covering the cost of her trip to England the following year.

Unlike many of the social reformers of her time, she wanted to pay more attention to the issues affecting women. Ramabai considered advocating for widows and helpless upper caste women because she was a widow and had witnessed their predicament. By this point, Ramabai understood the significance of contemporary education and the ways in which it could help her develop. She was not prepared to pass up any opportunity to assist women.

In 1882, the Indian government appointed the Hunter Education Commission to investigate education in India. Ramabai testified before the commission, arguing that teachers should be trained for their jobs and that more schools should hire women. She made a strong case that women should receive both general and medical education. She argued that females would find it extremely challenging to explain their issues to male teachers or doctors, and she demanded that female doctors and teachers be appointed to educate and treat girls. Sir Hunter, the Chairman of the Commission, was impressed by her views and communication skills. He translated them from Marathi to English and made public her suggestions for women's medical education and the need for women doctors, which had a significant impact on Queen Victoria's thinking. Dr. Kosambi says that the spread of Ramabai's testimony and Dr. Hunter's own work on the subject may have sparked the creation of the Dufferin Fund to help Indian women get medical care. Pandita Ramabai realized, through her life experiences, how important modern English education is. Ramabai saw it as the brand-new platform for women's liberation. She discussed her plan to travel to England during her meeting with Sister Eleanor and Sister Geraldine of the Anglican Community in Poona. In exchange for teaching Indian languages to the Community's missionary nuns, they supported the young widow as she traveled to England to study medicine.

After that, in 1883, Pandita Ramabai set sail for England with her daughter Manorama to study medicine. She wanted to become a doctor so she could return to India as a doctor and help women in need. She gained a better understanding of the educational system in England and the activities of Christian missionaries during her time at Cheltenham College. She was both an understudy as well as an instructor there. Cheltenham College hosted Sanskrit classes taught by her. At Wantage, she taught the sisters who would be sent to India Marathi. She became a Christian while living in England. In Maharashtra, the conversion was met with strong and negative reactions. Jotirao Phule was the only critic of her people who was kind. In his essay "Mahatma Phule Samagra Vangmaya," he praised Ramabai for her conversion and cited her as an example of freedom from Hinduism's oppressive practices and norms against women.

Ramabai's depression during her time in England stemmed from the shocking suicide of her Indian friend Anandibai Bhagat, her inability to attend medical school due to her severe and incurable deafness, the difficult living conditions and hardships of her early years. She traveled from the UK to the United States in 1886 to attend Anandibai Joshi's graduation, India's first female doctor. Ramabai was impressed by the libertarian atmosphere and women's freedom in the United States. The opportunities available to girls in education captivated her. She states, "I am deeply impressed by and interested in the works of western women, who appear to have one common goal, which is the good of their fellow beings." It is my dream to one day tell this wonderful story to my country women in their native tongue, hoping that the recital will inspire them to do the same.

She gave talks all over the United States while she was there. She researched on the American educational system and went to various women's institutions. She enlightened the American society about the situation of Indian women, particularly child-widows, through her lectures. As a result of this awareness, the "Ramabai Association" was established to assist Pandita Ramabai in her social work. The foundation gave a confirmation of monetary help for her work among ladies in India.

The Ramabai Association's primary objective was to operate a school in India for high-caste child widows and young widows. The Association's constitution stated that secular education was one of its goals. The Ramabai Association's advisory committee included prominent social reformers like Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar,



Mahadeo Govind Ranade, and Gopal Hari Deshmukh.

She was aware of the significance of providing girls with adequate exposure in the form of a quality education from an early age. Her concept of education for girls in India symbolized "training of the hand with that of the head." She appears to have received basic education and kindergarten education training in the United States for this reason. She translated several books for kindergarten into Marathi. Ramabai published a book in 1887 titled "High Caste Hindu Woman" to raise funds and public awareness for her cause. Pandita Ramabai returned to India in 1889 and established an institution in Mumbai on March 11, 1889, which she dubbed "Sharda Sadan." In this book, she examined the various philosophical justifications and explanations offered by Hinduism in order to maintain the low social status of Indian women. In Mumbai's and Pune's respective local newspapers, it received a lot of attention and recognition. Because it was opened for widows, unmarried girls, and day scholars, this institution was the first of its kind in India. In addition to providing them with a regular school education, it also provided them with vocational training in areas like teacher education and nursing. She based her project on the idea she had previously presented in her book "Stree Dharma Neeti," which was about empowering women to build self-esteem, developing their personal skills and abilities, and giving them the opportunity to plan their future lives from new perspectives. Eighty women had been trained by the Sharda Sadan by 1900 to work as teachers or nurses on their own.

The social reformers admired and valued Ramabai's dedication to Indian society reform. It is to Ramabai's credit that she has not given up her national pride along with her religion. The first two students of the Sadan were the child widow Godubai Natu and the unmarried girl Sharada Gadre, as Ramabai had received permission to accept non-widow students as well, until a full number of widows could be enrolled. Among the various reviews that were written at the time about the opening of her residential school, the one that was published in the extremely conservative Marathi Godubai accepted the marriage proposal from seasoned social worker D.K. Karve. They got married in Pune four years after the Sadan opened, and she changed her name to Anandibai Karve.

## Conclusion

Pandita Ramabai was a great social activist, a brilliant Sanskrit scholar, and the first feminist to advocate for women's education and rights. She was one of India's notable historical figures. Ramabai occupies a singular position among the social reformers who worked toward the social awakening of Maharashtra's society toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The first organization for women's emancipation was Her Arya Mahila Samaj, and the first organization for widows was Sharda Sadan. The first feminist manifesto written in India was "The High Caste Hindu Women" by her. According to Uma Chakravarti, "she reconceptualized widowhood and womanhood in such a way that no male reformer could even think of." As a result, her concept put her well ahead of her time and had a significant impact on the political thinking that followed in India. She was a pioneer in numerous fields and a reformer of strong will and modern vision.

Her vision continues to have an impact not only on the lives of many women and young girls but also on the feminist movement and scholarship today. She continues to be one of India's most prominent female leaders. Ramabai was a poet and scholar as well as an educated woman who spoke seven languages fluently. She translated the Bible into her native Marathi language from its original Greek and Hebrew versions. Ramabai's health began to deteriorate in 1920. She delegated to her daughter Manorama the responsibility of leading Mukti Mission's ministry. Manorama passed away in 1921, a tragic turn of events. Ramabai was gratefully shocked when she died. Ramabai, who had septic bronchitis already at the age of nine months; She died on April 5, 1922, almost two weeks before her 64th birthday.

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# Question to Womanhood: A Critical Analysis of ‘Her’ Sexual Impurity through Lenses of the Pāli Buddhist Jātakas

Soumyadeep Mitra

**Abstract:** The Social Position of Women has always been an important question in early Indian history, researchers have tried or are trying to analyse it from every possible angle. But even then, one thing comes up, is the statement of the whole of the early Indian texts about women and their sexuality the same? Did this aspect change after the rise of Buddhism, Jainism, and Ajīvikism in 600 BCE? What is the statement of those who hurt the roots of the Brahmanical religion? In this article, through the lenses of Jātaka stories, we have tried to present the concept of femininity in Buddhism and highlight the social concepts that have developed around the sexuality of ‘Her’, and her womanhood.

**Key Words:** Jātaka, Buddhism, Sexuality, Patriarchy, Impurity, Adultery

The basic structure of the social system in Indian Civilization rests on the Patriarchy. Even in the twenty-first century, women have to be sacrificed in the crushing machine of patriarchy, and the roots of the patriarchal system lie above ‘Gender’ discrimination or bias, which means, men and women are not equal according to biological, psychological, and cultural points of view. So, that’s why it is necessary to know exactly what ‘Gender’ means. According to Gerda Lerner, Gender is ‘...set of cultural roles. It is a costume, a mask, a straitjacket in which men and women dance their unequal dance.’<sup>1</sup> In reality, Gender is a psychological concept created by society through which society divides men and women based on certain concepts and imposes certain conditions on them. Based on that, the division of labour developed, where from the earliest stages of society men were given the right to do outside work, including hunting-gathering, and women to do work inside the home, including producing and caring for children.

Scholars think that with the rise of ‘Renunciatory Religions’, there was a wave of change in the daily life of royal or ordinary households especially for women. I. B Horner mentioned that ‘Under Buddhism, Women had command of their life, more than ever before. The popular convictions that women were only child bearers and motherhood was their only natural and sole

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*function gradually disappeared. With the growth of Buddhism, women as spinsters, wives, widows, with rights and duties not limited to childbearing, became an integral part of society.*<sup>12</sup> Now the question is, did the empowerment of women in the hands of Buddhism happen in early Indian society? To examine this matter in the light of the primary sources, our main discussion now is to present a reasonable version of how women and their sexuality were presented in Buddhist Pāli Jātaka stories.

But before analysing Jātakas, it is necessary to know what exactly is meant by ‘Patriarchy’! According to Learner, *‘it means a system which represents the absolute legal and economic power of the head male of the family over his dependent females and other males.*<sup>13</sup> In Indian society, this psychological concept gradually became ‘ideology’ and was expressed in ancient literature. Some of the Jātakas were directly or indirectly associated with this ‘Patriarchal Ideology’ and highlighted it. The woman’s body and sexuality are impure and even attempts to control her are seen in the Jātakas also.

Jātaka stories deal with kings (especially, Brahmadatta of Varanasi) and their royal households. In our current discussion, we will try to understand the position of women in early Indian society from these stories, especially from these households. Is it desirable for a parent to have a daughter? Did the Jātakas show interest in having a daughter in any way? Probably not, no prayer for a daughter was heard anywhere in the Jātakas. On the other hand, if we see the Kusa-Jātaka<sup>4</sup> and Culla-Palobhana-Jātaka<sup>5</sup>, the King of Malla and Varanasi were childless and both of them prayed to God in the same way that they would be blessed with a son, not a girl. In this case, the son is considered to be the backbone of their respective families, mainly a ‘producer’, who will be the master of producing sons year after year; on the other angle, the role of women is only an instrument of production. Our second question is, what is the role of a woman in the family without her title of ‘*machine of son production*’? How much was early Indian society aware of her education? We do not know anything about her education from these stories; the Jātakas are surprisingly silent on this matter. On the other hand, from the Ayakūma-Jātaka<sup>6</sup>, Sandhibheda-Jātaka<sup>7</sup>, Dhonasākhā-Jātaka<sup>8</sup>, and Culladhanuggaha-Jātaka<sup>9</sup> we learn about the education of princes of the royal families- when they turn sixteen, they go to Takcaśilā for higher education but any of the stories did not mention about higher studies of royal princesses. We assume

that probably at that time (c. 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE to 5<sup>th</sup> century CE) women's outside higher education was stopped by the elites. Confinement of women within the four walls of her 'master' house was the main goal because men did not want to hand over the right to her consumptive body to another man. In that case, education can make women aware of their rights, and they can refuse to use their bodies or their sexuality for safeguarding; so, perhaps the basic right of education for women was taken away by society and this is reflected in the Jātakas. If we try to look at her rights, we see that women had no other rights at that time than childbearing. Even if the king was sonless, society did not recognize any right of his daughter to his throne, however, her father also did not accept her rights. In the Kammhahāri-Jātaka<sup>10</sup>, Brahmadatta was roaming in the jungle for fruits when suddenly he meets a beautiful girl. The king lusted for this girl and after being intimate with her, gave the signet ring and talked about her pregnancy *'If it be a girl, spend this ring on her nurture; but if it be a boy, bring ring and child to me.'* In this case, society does not accept any claim of the daughter to the throne of the father and if the daughter is illegitimate then she will not even get the title of the princess on her forehead but the rules of the so-called society are different in the case of sons born through illicit relationships; he has the right to be a king. So, it has been said that such patriarchal policies and politics were ridiculous and tragic at the same time.

Family plays an important role in society since early times. At the roots of the process of state formation in ancient India, terms like 'Kula', 'Kulapa', 'G[pati or Gahapati]', and 'Visha' were made the main foundation, on which the whole concept of state developed from the small tribal clan to modern urban society. At this stage, women and marriage took one of the main roles in forming the family (basic unit of society), which gradually turned women and their sexuality into a commodity. Notably, the role of women in this family was never recognized as equal to men. According to Gail Omvedt, the family contains the '*seeds of exploitation*' for women.<sup>11</sup> Now the question is, why do we bring up family or marriage again and again in the discussion of women? Because '*Marriage and family are basic institutions in all societies whether primitive or modern and the position of woman in a particular society is influenced by and expresses in the status she holds within these institutions.*'<sup>12</sup> In this context, Jātaka stories show, very quietly yet poignantly, how a married woman ruins the entire family

through her characteristics and her illicit relationships. In the Kaccāni-Jātaka, a wife is portrayed as a tyrannic and despicable plotter. In this plot, her husband throws his old mother out of the house (*'Mother, you are always raising strife in the house: henceforth go and live in some other place, where you choose.'*). Even in this story, the mother-in-law was cursed by the woman (*'I never had a son while your mother stayed in this house, but now I have: so, you can see what a witch she was.'*)<sup>13</sup> The Durājāna-Jātaka presented a young sinful and wicked woman. The story tells that she was *'as meek as a slave on days when she had done wrong, but on days when she had not done wrong, played...passionate and tyrannical...her husband was so worried and harassed by her...'* But when Bodhisattva knows this matter, he advised that *'...this manner are women sinful and wicked, and their nature is hard to know. No heed should be paid either to their likes or their dislikes.'*<sup>14</sup> The basic structure of Buddhist ideology is built on the patriarchal concept, where a woman's character is judged as a whole and where a woman's will or reluctance is of no value to society. Now the question is, then who is the ideal wife? The answer is found in the Sujāta-Jātaka, where the Buddha in the present story mentions seven types of wives- destructive, dishonest, high and mighty, sisterly, motherly, friendly, and slavish.<sup>15</sup> According to Buddha, the first three types of wives were reborn in hell and the last four types were reborn in the fifth heaven. But the interesting thing is when Buddha asks Sujātā to know, which of these seven types is she? Sujātā replied she is a slavish wife and the Buddha was pleased to hear that. From these it is proved that Buddhism never went beyond the sphere of the Brahmanical religion and did not create a happy place for women, that is to say, did not want to, because to do so, society would reject this new religion, and naturally, the Buddha could not accept it.

Adultery is not new to the Indian social system and is mentioned in almost all ancient Indian texts; in that case, Jātaka texts are no exception. However, the description of adultery in Jātaka is largely attributed to the unsatisfied lust of the women, whereas early Buddhist society is silent on the matter of men's illicit relationships. According to Neelima Pandey, *'a number of Jataka stories have been woven around the unsatisfied sexual desire of the queens who have been presented as adulterous women perennially hungry of extra-marital liaison.'*<sup>16</sup> Now the question is why? Vijay Laxmi Singh perfectly answered this

question, *'because the Buddhist Indian texts gradually believe that a woman's sexual drive is stronger than man's.'*<sup>17</sup> In the Culla-Paduma-Jātaka<sup>18</sup>, we find two horrific characteristics of a deceitful wife- first, blood-sucker and second, adulterous. This story depicts that if an outer man is capable and strong enough then any wife can fall in love with him and in that case, she will not hesitate to kill her husband. Moreover, the story tries to portray the darkest side of female sexuality through the thirsty wife, who drinks the blood of her husband like a vampire; on the other hand, it also tries to glorify the selfless love of the husband to the wife. Perhaps in the Bandhanamokkha-Jātaka, where adultery crosses, it's all limits. The story narrates a depraved queen who had physical relations with sixty-four messengers who brought the king news from the battlefield. Why did she do this sinful act? According to Bodhisattva (or Buddha), *'...for the passions of women are insatiate, and she does but acts according to her inborn nature...'*<sup>19</sup> So, it is clear that the early society believed that women's bodies were impure from birth and adultery was an inherent quality of women's character.

The greatest pride in the life of the woman is her motherhood but ancient society wanted to judge even motherhood by physical desires, which is reflected in the Astamanta-Jātaka<sup>20</sup>, where the Bodhisattva chose his old mother to explain to disciples what a wicked woman is like. He ordered his disciple to serve his mother and within a few days, the old woman fell in love with the young disciple. According to the story, the old woman first asked her young lover to kill her son but he refused and then told her that if he truly loved her, she would kill her son.

In present-day society, the chastity of a marriageable woman is considered very important in rural areas (a few urban areas also) of India, whereas the early society was naturally very strict about it. A reflection of such events can be seen in the PaGGika-Jātaka<sup>21</sup>, where a father himself becomes eager to test his daughter's chastity, even attempting to have intercourse with her, but when she refuses, he believes that her chastity is intact. But the most unfortunate thing is, that the girl witnessed this horrible incident only because of the suspicion of her father that she only laughed a little too much.

Early Indian society tried to consider women and their sexuality from every possible angle through Jātakas. Although within that consideration the attempt to chain the sexuality of women must be noticed. But the question is, who is afraid of women and their sexuality? Buddha himself or the general public? Because the



Jātaka stories have been developed over a long period with the folklore and in this case, the voices of the lower strata of the early society must be heard through the Jātaka text. Perhaps, the Buddha himself was afraid because it must be borne in mind that he was brought up in the early phase of his life in Brahmanical practices, and its influences naturally fell on him. One thing to note in this regard is that in the Jātakas, Buddha was born in various forms but never a woman. From that, we certainly get a glimpse of the attitude of Buddhism (upper-class Buddhist monks) towards women but the responsibility of common people who have accepted this injustice towards women for a long time cannot be denied. The question arises again, what was the reason for fearing women and their sexuality? The answer to this question is probably impossible even for the present society. Personally, it seems that the intense desire of common men, even the monks to enjoy the women's bodies, and her desire for revenge is like Mahābhārata, her indomitable love for men that Buddhism was aware of. Perhaps to keep the monks away from that desire or to protect the honour of the 'therīs' or nuns from the monks or common disciples, Jātakas forcefully portrayed women as traitors, possessors of insatiable desires, and even her beauty was presented as breaking the penance of the ascetics so that they developed a hatred or some fear towards the women and their sexuality. But another strong factor was equally responsible, certain stereotypes and ideologies of the patriarchal society, where women were always considered sinful, traitors, and wicked. Society gives men the right to enjoy women's bodies but on the other hand, marks that particular body as impure. Her power is identified by man as the machine of production but without that power or so-called '*machine*', men or society will never progress or produce, this universal truth is never been acknowledged by our society. In keeping with some illegitimate ideas, society places women in the second seat and accepts that they have inborn weaknesses and are thus unworthy of equal or equal rights to men. The whole concept of division of labour from early Indian society stands on the foundation of lies, which is trying to be stronger on the shreds of evidence of early literature like the Jātaka text. Finally, in conclusion, we must admit that the Jātaka stories mostly treated women and their sexuality as harmful to society, but in some of the cases, we heard the indomitable voices of the women of early India, which proves that Jātakas occupy a middle ground between the good and the evil.

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# Calcutta and Its Tramways: Reflections on the Colonial Past

Abhijit Saha

**Abstract:** This preset article intends to shed light on the growth and development of tramways in Calcutta which eventually emerged as a major surface transit system by the turn of the twentieth century. This article would introduce the theme contextualising it within the mega narrative of the urban milieu of colonial Calcutta. Moreover, the significant changes that the tramways had undergone to suit the local ambit would also be a matter of contemplation. This article also tries to unravel exactly how a quintessentially colonial appellation like tramways had gradually Indianized in course of time.

**Keywords:** Tramways, Calcutta, traffic, urbanization, electricity, bullock cart, passenger safety, suburbs, accidents.

As being the nerve centre of British power in India in nineteenth century, Calcutta became an obvious destination for financial investment and capital expansion<sup>1</sup>. Calcutta grew so rapidly in nineteenth century with enormous potentiality in administrative apparatus, trading activities and so on<sup>2</sup>. It saw an intense growth of urbanization in the nineteenth century<sup>3</sup>. To cope with this larger possibility, there was a need for a well-developed and modern transportation system<sup>4</sup>. The absence of a proper conveyance<sup>5</sup> was definitely a concern for the city planners. It is to be noted here that the chaotic situation unleashed by the rebellion of 1857 prompted the British to establish a more systematic communication<sup>6</sup> across the Indian subcontinent. Hence initiatives to upgrade and strengthen the communication system in the cities as well as the marginal areas like villages were slated to be the major areas of concern for the Britishers and the problems were also addressed. The metropolis of Calcutta was no exception to this. In this backdrop the introduction of tramways in Calcutta paved the way for a faster mobility and pace of urbanization in the cityscape<sup>7</sup>.

## 1. Experimentation with Tramways: the early phase

The first tram car rolled out on the streets of Calcutta on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1873.<sup>8</sup> The initiative was first taken by the Justices of Calcutta Corporation by the Act IX of 1867.<sup>9</sup> In 1870 The Government of India

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pointed out the expediency of providing facilities for the transport of goods within the town and from there to the Sealdah Station. The Local Government, after consulting the Eastern Bengal Railway officials, asked the Justices to clarify their views on the same. The Justices were willing to allow Tramways to be laid in Bowbazaar, Strand Bank and Bhowanipore Road, but not through Nimtola which they considered was too narrow. In the beginning, the Tramway service was started to serve the interests of the traders and activists indulging in commerce. In this regards the Government of India suggested that the role of Justices of Corporation should be to act as the agents of the Government in respect of the construction, management, and working of the lines, which would then be the exclusive property of the State. It was also considered, that a commencement of the Tramways might be made with a line connecting the Sealdah terminus of the Eastern Bengal Railway to the river bank; the sole object being to look after the convenience of commerce within the city of Calcutta at a minimal cost.<sup>10</sup> Noticeably the financial assistance for the entire service was to be borne by the Government of Bengal. The Justices considering the advice of Bengal Government formed a Committee consisting of members drawn from the Corporation, the Port, and the Railway Departments. This Committee considered that, as far as goods traffic was concerned, the Tramways would be quintessentially used for the removal of country produce from Sealdah Station to the godowns situated in the vicinity of Strand Road and Sobha Bazaar, where they would be stored by the wholesale merchants. They also recommended that the first experiment would be made by laying a line from Sealdah via Bowbazaar to the river and then northwards to Armenian Ghat and *Aheeritollah* Ghat, and from there through Sobha Bazaar to the Chitpore Bridge, crossing the Municipal Railway at Baghbazaar. The Tramway started servicing on a 2.4 miles way, at a cost of about Rs. 1.5 lakhs. It was started with a procession of three tram cars, each being pulled by two Australian horses. The service commenced at Sealdah, and ran along Baitakhana, Bowbazaar, and Dalhousie Square, through the Customs House premises along the Strand Road to the terminus at Armenian Ghat.<sup>11</sup>

A large crowd which assembled on both sides of the car on the first day of its inception, ran throughout to see this “Sahebi” (white mans) innovation.<sup>12</sup>

This imperialist innovation was indeed a site of attraction for many towards the start. Tramways soon became a very popular attraction for the office goers as well. One among them was vocal in *The Englishman*. He stated:

We have to pay four pice for a seat in a ticca gharee and from three to four annas for a palkee when a gharee cannot be procured and gladly would be exchanged both these for the tramway, if only the tramway would deign to offer us a seat.<sup>13</sup>

However, the cargo train run by the Railway Company was initiated soon along the streets of Calcutta thereby relieving the Tramways from carrying the cargo.<sup>14</sup> But, in the changed scenario, the Tramways were left to look after the conveyance of passengers only, thereby losing its economic viability. It incurred a loss of Rs 500 a month. Thus it was permitted to operate upto the 20 November, after which it was gradually shelved.<sup>15</sup> The reason was that the scheme was originally etched out by the Government of India for the carriage of goods, and not for the passengers. The despatch of March 1870 clearly mentioned that the service would comply transport of merchandise from various parts of the river frontage, within the port limits, to the custom-house, private warehouses, the canal banks, and the railway stations. The Justices intended to entrust the responsibility of running the same on private enterprise, if that was practicable. At first the Government of India decided that Eastern Bengal Railway should have no direct concern in any street railways in Calcutta; but soon after the commencement of Tramways in the streets of Calcutta, it was authorized that the Eastern Bengal Railway would extend its line to the river and establish a terminal station at Chitpur - a concession which profoundly influenced the prospects of the municipal scheme. As all goods traffic was at once diverted to the more powerful line, and an isolated Tramway, barely two miles in length, could not obviously pay rich dividends with passenger traffic alone, especially because its alignment too was not well chosen, and the result was that it somewhat lost its importance. The Justices appointed a committee in 1873, with power to dispose off the line with its plant and rolling stock, and also to grant, liberal terms to any responsible speculator who might be bold enough to initiate a more comprehensive Tramway scheme subject to the approval of Government. In December 1873 it was decided to sell the Tramway with its rolling stock

to a Mr. Macallister at cost price, with permission to extend the line. The Local Government did not however favour this method of cutting losses unless the concessionaire was prepared to carry through a general Tramway system in Calcutta. At their suggestion, the correspondence on the subject was published, and other projectors invited to submit offers. One other offer was received, which was considered to be less advantageous to the Justices than that of Mr. Macallister. Noticeably the Corporation in 1876 submitted a memorial to the Governor-General, urging that their claim for compensation should be considered on the ground that the financial failure was largely due to circumstances arising out of the action of the Government. Though the petition was rejected due to lack of any legal claims, the rails and rolling stock were finally sold to the best advantage. Thus, the first initiative of the Corporation to provide the city with a Tramway system ended rather unceremoniously.<sup>16</sup>

## **2. Second phase of its Development**

The first debacle however, did not put an end to the story, as a new step was required to strengthen the commercial activities of the city and more importantly to augment passengers transport. Noticeably, it was far from being an organized, uniform effort meant to simplify mass transport system of the city at the beginning. Nonetheless, the question to extend the scheme on a larger scale was a point of scurry among its own stakeholders. There is little doubt that in the context of an emerging colonial city, where population was rising throughout, the effort was undoubtedly admirable, especially so as the traditional means of conveyance were rendered largely inadequate to meet the growing transport problem of the city.<sup>17</sup>

The second initiative was not a failure. In 1878 schemes for a complete system of Tramways were submitted by independent promoters Dillwyn Parrish and Alfred Parrish, both of London and Robinson Souttar of Liverpool, and on the 2 October 1879 an agreement which had received the sanction of the Local Government, was executed between the Corporation and the Calcutta Tramways Company Ltd. The Company was granted the right to construct and maintain Tramways, with single and (except in certain streets) double lines, with all necessary sidings and connections, on eight routes, and between such other places as might subsequently be approved by

the Corporation and Government. It is noteworthy that the scale of fares was to be fixed by the Company from time to time; an annual track-rent, at the rate of Rs.2000 per mile of single line and Rs 3000 per mile of double line, was to be paid to the Corporation. The rates were subject to periodical increments, which was estimated to bring them upto Rs 3000 and Rs 4000 per mile respectively at the end of the twenty-second year of the agreement. Ordinarily, the Corporation reserved the right of purchasing it at the end of twenty-one years, but if such an option could not be exercised at that point of time, then they were permitted to do so at the end of every subsequent seven years. Act I of 1880 embodied these terms, and conferred on the Corporation and the Company certain necessary powers for the working of the Tramways.<sup>18</sup> The Calcutta Tramways Act of 1880, registered in London, authorized the Company, to install and maintain Tramways in Calcutta and its suburbs according to the terms of the agreement between the Corporation and representatives of Company. The tenure of the agreement was to be valid for twenty one years after which the Corporation was entitled to purchase the same with an undertaking issuable on the twenty second year. It was further notified, that it could also be implemented every seventh year, on payment, either by cash, or by securities of the Government of India, amounting to two fifths of the amount of the invested capital of the grantees. The Company was prevented, according to the agreement from entering into fresh engagements of expenditure leading to an increase in capital. Section 24 of the said Act I of 1880 empowered the corporation to pass regulation safeguarding the interests and safety of the travelling public.<sup>19</sup> During the second phase, the Tramways developed as an organized mass transport, navigating on the streets of Calcutta. Slowly, this new medium of transport began to affect the older modes of conveyance like *palki* or the buffalo-carts which became less lucrative as public means of transport.<sup>20</sup> There were depots in different parts of the city where horses were changed, and generally spare horses were also kept at important street corners for rounding the curves, as occasionally additional ones had to be hitched on.<sup>21</sup> These horses being exposed to severe stress of the hot humid Indian weather met with serious casualties. This necessitated the introduction of the mechanical traction that would prove to be both economical as well as humane.<sup>22</sup>

### **3. Experimentation with the Steam Tramways**

On 1 May, 1882, the Calcutta Tramways Company could avail itself of the permission granted by the Commissioners to run engines on Chowringhee and Kalighat sections of the line.<sup>23</sup> However, this new arrangement was pursued only on an experimental basis, with the rest of the Tramways operating as before i.e., as horse drawn cars.<sup>24</sup> Locomotive engines were run in Chowringhee for a year, and stringent rules regulating their speed, noise, hours of running, length of trains, as well as the conduct of drivers was framed with the sanction of Government. The system was however discontinued.<sup>25</sup> Although, during the Durga pujas or other religious festivals, the Company managed to get special permission each year to run locomotives down Chowringhee, and to provide transport for the pilgrims to and from Kalighat.<sup>26</sup>

### **4. Augmenting the Tramways: Introduction of Electricity**

As the growth of urbanization took concrete shape in Calcutta, the need for a more organised transport system had gained importance.<sup>27</sup> The conversion to electric traction, with overhead or aerial wires, was completed on the 19 November 1902.<sup>28</sup> It is worth mentioning that soon after the electrification process had been over, the tramways had extended to the suburbs as well. It clearly depicts that Tramways were slowly connecting large numbers of local people despite the fact that it was quintessentially an imperialist product. It was also becoming a non-separable part of the city's public transport system.<sup>29</sup> An extension of Tramway lines along the Diamond harbour road to Behala and a cross connection between the Kidderpore and Russa road under section 3 of Calcutta Tramways Act I of 1880 had been sanctioned by the Lieutenant Governor,<sup>30</sup> while a noticeably wider Chowringhee line met the Kidderpore line on Ochterlony Road.<sup>31</sup> Thus, a connection between the heart of the city and its southern outskirts had been established to a large extent. In the same way when the possible extension in the northern outskirts of the city came along the Dumdum and Barrackpore road, it did not gain much support of the local inhabitants. The necessity of filtered water, improvements of drainage system, salvation from malaria were the most immediate points of requirement before them rather than the easy conveyance of their livelihoods.<sup>32</sup> However, Tramways had reached up to Belgatchia Road and Baghbazar terminus in Chitpur,<sup>33</sup> as the preparation for



making the new Howrah bridge had started long before its inception, the steps to run Tramways over this bridge had also been under discussion.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the above discussion clearly show how a larger communication of conveyance through electric tram cars had effectively been developed by the imperial stakeholders within and outside the ambit of the city space. It may also be argued that in course of time, with this progress, a large number of colonized population began to accept the realm of the colonizer's innovation<sup>35</sup>. To facilitate further, the Calcutta Tramways Company decided to issue monthly tickets at a very special rate to sponsor travel in all distances at different times throughout the length and breadth of the city as well as to the suburbs. These facilities however, not only helped the general section of the public but the business community as well.<sup>36</sup> Different commuters within and outside the city found Tramways an important means of communication to attend their workplace on a regular basis. As an outcome of this event new residential areas had emerged in the outskirts of the city. The Tramways in the Ballygunge area had partly paved ways for developing a well-known residential area called the Rashbehari Avenue.<sup>37</sup> In this way Tramways appeared as a crucial 'spine of an intense city'.<sup>38</sup> The statistical estimates of the Bengal Public Works Department indicate that in the year 1923 it carried 5,67,39,531 passengers per year.<sup>39</sup> So the acceptance of this mode of communication by a vast majority of commuters remained undeniable. Interestingly, electric tram cars brought a new meaning of urban excitation and modernity to the indigenous society<sup>40</sup>. Besides, a steady rise in the figures of street accidents had visible by this time. Extension of Tramways in so many narrow streets became a matter of concern for the policemen of the city. It was especially the poorer classes who appeared to come under fire for sleeping on the streets, for their lack of road sense, and for habitually allowing their children to play on the streets, which ultimately led to high rates of injury and mortality. Soon after the electric tram cars were introduced, two accidents involving death of children who were run over and killed by trams took place but the drivers were acquitted. The annual report (1914) of the Police for the Town of Calcutta, referred to 12 death cases and 240 injuries caused by the Tramways. Noticeably some of Calcutta's streets were too narrow so that they could only carry a minimum load of traffic and bear certain speed, without risking accidents.<sup>41</sup> Parking of vehicles

on busy streets was also an area of concern, just as traffic difficulties were, owing to a lack of proper stabling accommodation. Buffaloes, bullocks and carts were stabled in considerable numbers in some of the busiest streets like Strand road connecting an important route between Nimtola and Harrison road.<sup>42</sup> Noticeably, introduction of electric traction to tramways was responsible for the death of two European commuters namely, Mr. Nicholas Mills and Mr. William Henderson Macdonald were run over by the electric tram cars respectively in 1903 and 1904. Subsequent proposals for enforcing life-guards on tram cars, fixation of stoppage at definite points, prevention of people from entering or leaving the cars while in motion, provision of swing gates on cars were likewise raised in different meetings.<sup>43</sup> The responsibility of such fatal accidents however, was put solely on the shoulders of the commuters. It is true that many passengers preferred to ride on the footboards of the tram cars, although there was ample room inside the tram cars<sup>44</sup>. Again, modification of detrimental habits of commuters such as boarding into the tramways while in motion, could have been avoided.<sup>45</sup>

It was during the period of the Second World War when fuel scarcity was too high for running the motor bus system, the electricity driven tramways was considered as the only reliable mode of conveyance for the growing population in Calcutta. Although, earlier on different occasions it was considered as disadvantageous and cumbersome mode of transport. The number of trams that used to carry less than four lakhs of passengers on a daily basis during 1939, were asked to carry eight lakhs of passengers every day.<sup>46</sup> In this backdrop, proposals for rebuilding more coaches in their own workshop, introduction of more trailers to take on the extra human load and increasing the speed of tram cars through a reduction of the number of stoppages on each route drew greater attention of the stakeholders<sup>47</sup>. Moreover, The Indian Chamber of Commerce advised that there could be three coaches in the tram cars instead of two in every run<sup>48</sup>. Thus, the problematic issues during the war became a boon in disguise for the Tramways in particular.

## **5. Augmenting the travel experience**

Stakeholders of the Calcutta tramways were keen to meet new challenges. The issue of overcrowding was to solve in the light of similar problems faced in London or some other parts of Britain. The stakeholders of the Calcutta

Tramways, at that point had decided to allow more passengers during inclement weather, or on Sundays and other holidays including special occasions when additional number of passengers would be accommodated inside any tram car not exceeding one third of the total number of passengers for which such carriages had been licensed to carry. In Glasgow and Birmingham, the seating capacity was limited, but during the peak hours of traffic, six additional passengers were allowed to travel in the lower saloons. Similar provisions were also enforced in most of the Tramway services, available in England.<sup>4949</sup> Municipal Department, Municipal Branch, File no. M.3T-1, Proc. B 315-23, July, 1915

The stakeholders were also concerned over the better connectivity of the Tramways system. Thus, they had planned to reorganize a cheap and easy means of Tramway transport that would cut short the length of routes towards their destination providing direct routes from all parts of the native town to both the railway stations, i.e. Howrah and Sealdah. With a view to meeting this exigency, a double line Tramway route was proposed along the Harrison road from the company's terminus at the Sealdah Railway station to the Stand road which was subsequently approved under section 3 of Tramways Act, I of 1880. It was further conjectured, that in near future this route would reach out to the Howrah Bridge, thereby enabling the passengers commuting through the railways to connect with the Tramway service directly.<sup>50</sup> Again the comfort and safety of passengers remained a major concern for the authorities as well. Thus, using of offensive or obscene language was regarded as a crime punishable by amercement. If any person was drunk or suffering from any infectious disease, he was generally prohibited to board a tram car. Stringent laws were also passed in order to implement necessary steps on such occasions.<sup>51</sup> Noticeably, inconvenience regarding extension and maintenance of the tramways had been given serious attention by the stakeholders. Thus, in a meeting of the Council, attention of the Bengal Government was drawn to the fact that the rundown state of the Calcutta Tramways had become a serious threat to the interests of the common people.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, certain existing rules of the Calcutta Tramways were amended to introduce a provision for reserving seats for lady passengers. Interestingly, 'lady' implied a female passenger over five years of age, and 'seat' included a complete bench

whether containing one or more than one seats. The penalty for infringement of this regulation was once again a matter of fine not exceeding Rs. 20.<sup>53</sup> Thus, it can be argued that when women's education became an instrument of women's emancipation during the first quarter of the twentieth century and higher education for women became a desired goal for those seeking employment, the Tramways Company by affording exclusive seats for the lady passengers helped in unshackling of some of the rigid customs prevailing in the existing society.

Stakeholders were concerned about the hardships and difficulties faced by the inhabitants of this city. If any new hurdle came up in tramways, they were prompt to solve the same at the earliest. One such evidence may be cited from the reports of Commissioner of Police, Government of Bengal. The Commissioner of Police had pointed out that the rail tracks had become worn out over the greater part of the entire Tramway system in the city and its suburbs, and that the roadway was in a very bad plight. The Government of Bengal had appealed to the Corporation to exert pressure on the Company so as to make them carry out the required reconstruction work within a short time in a proper way.<sup>54</sup> The stakeholders of the Tramways system however, preferred to remain inert never initiating a single line arguing that without a proper inspection and thorough preparation this was not possible. Later on, however, the Calcutta Tramways (Behala) had notified in 1907 that no Tramway would be opened for the public, unless and until the same had been inspected and certified by the Engineer to the local Government and declared as fit for use by the public.<sup>55</sup> It was further mentioned in the same order that the revised rates should not exceed two annas per mile for the First class and one anna per mile for the Second class passengers respectively. Thus, convenience and safety of the passengers were always among the foremost priority areas for the stakeholders. Passenger's comfort was another area of concern for them. During the hot summer months, installation of fans in the first class tram cars had been chalked out as an important measure for implementation. But viewing the safety of the passengers, fans were to be installed in caged overhead shutters.<sup>56</sup>

## **6. Concluding thoughts**

From the very day of its inception, the Calcutta Tramways had become an inseparable part of the city's public life. As more and more people from different

walks of life thronged into the city in search of better livelihoods, the need for an organized surface transport system became undeniable. Moreover, daily commuters also wishing to escape the jumbled network of the transport system, with speeding hackney carriages adding to the mess opted for a thorough extension of the Tramways throughout the city which would provide them with a safe journey tied with ease and comfort. In this connection, Tramways paved the way for a better communication system between the city and the suburbs. As a symbol of incredible technology amid the indigenous surroundings of Calcutta, it had to pass through several experiments and trials; but the stakeholders never oscillated with the idea, of abandoning the project, since they were eager to provide the commuters with better convenience. Initiatives were also taken to provide a better standard of conveyance in the light of a swiftly developing world wide transportation system. Further, different facilities were also introduced to attract more people into the realm of Tramways. It may be argued that with this concern and effort for making the tramways more commuter's friendly, urban living also became more meaningful. To conclude, this is how with the involvement of larger people, a quintessentially colonial product gradually became Indianized one by the turn of the twentieth century.

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# The State Language Movement and Bangabandhu: A Review

Muhammad Abdus Salam

**Abstract:** Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the great architect and visionary leader of Bangladesh. When his age was 27 then the state language movement started in East Bengal. This movement was officially started through the arrest of him on 11 March of 1948 and in 1952 it took the form of a democratic or political movement. His role was much more effective, in the days of success of this movement. He became active in the parliament and assumed the role of a great hero in the context of giving Bengali the status of the state language, introducing Bengali at all levels and conducting the daily activities of the parliament in Bengali. Finally, this movement achieved its immediate goal by recognizing Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan in the Constitution of 1956. This article has reviewed the content by collecting data from various primary and secondary sources following the historical review method.

**Key words:** State Language, Bengali, Movement, Bangabandhu, Role, Leadership.

## Introduction:

The State language movement is the most important history of Bangladesh. This movement was officially started with the arrest of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 11, 1948 and in 1952 it took a democratic or political form. He was actively involved in this movement from the beginning. Since 1952, he made strong efforts inside and outside the Parliament to grant Bengali the status of the state language, introduce Bengali at all levels and conduct the daily activities of the Parliament in Bengali. Finally, the movement achieved its immediate goal by recognizing Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan in the 1956 constitution.<sup>1</sup> Many people think that from October 1949 to February 1952, he was often in prison and was not in direct leadership of various organizations formed during the movement, so how did he lead? Moreover, although there is no question about his leadership in all movements for the liberation of the country, his leadership in this movement was a little unclear to many for so long. Hence, this article presents an overview of his role and leadership in this movement. So far many writings have been published on this issue. For example: The contribution of Sheikh Mujib to this movement is mentioned in his book titled '*Osamapta*

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*Atmajibanee*'. Because he himself mentions his participation in it.<sup>2</sup> A book titled *Secret Documents of the Intelligence Branch on the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman* has been published, based on the secret report of the Intelligence Branch against him.<sup>3</sup> In its first four volumes, where he went, where he held meetings, what he said and his role and leadership in this movement from 1948-1956 are extensively written in English. Obaidullah Al Mamun and others in their article titled "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Contributions in Language Movement of Bangladesh: A Review" have briefly highlighted the role and leadership of him in language movement and the impact of it.<sup>4</sup> Therefore this article has reviewed the content by collecting data from various primary and secondary sources following historical review method.

### **Brief Identity of Bangabandhu:**

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born on March 17, 1920 in Tungipara of Patgati Union, Gopalganj sub-division (now district) of Faridpur district of Bengal region. His parent's name is Sheikh Lutfar Rahman and Sheikh Saira Khatun. In 1942 he passed the entrance examination from local Public Mission School. Then he obtained an intermediate degree in 1944 from Islamia College, Kolkata and a Bachelor's degree in 1946 under Calcutta University. After that he was admitted to the Law department of Dhaka University. However he could not complete his studies due to the fascist policies of the Pakistani government. So, he devoted himself fully to the politics of his country. Note that, he actively participated in politics since his student life along with his political mentor Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy (Image-1). This great figure of history and all his family members were brutally murdered on 15th August 1975 by anti-freedom reactionary youths. Notably, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana survived the attack because they were staying at that time with Dr. Wazed Mia in West Germany.<sup>5</sup>

### **The State Language Movement and Bangabandhu:**

The State Language Movement has two phases. The first was in February-March 1948 and the second was in January-March 1952.<sup>6</sup> Below is a detailed discussion about these phases. On 18 May 1947, Khalikuzzaman announced, 'Urdu shall be the state language of Pakistan'. In protest, Bengali intellectuals and writers living in Calcutta took up the pen in favour of the Bengali language. Abdul Haque writes

If Urdu is declared as the state language, Urdu will replace English...As a

result, Five crore people of Pakistan will become unfit for government jobs...Bengalis, despite being numerically superior, will be the second natives...The freedom that is coming without linguistic freedom will be partial and closed-minded Independence.<sup>7</sup>

In July 1947, Ziauddin Ahmad, advocated making Urdu the state language of Pakistan, following the recommendation of India to make Hindi the state language. At that time, Dr. Shahidullah eloquently argued why Bengali should be the state language in his essay titled 'Pakistaner Rashtro Bhasha Somossa'. He said that, 'If Urdu and Hindi languages are adopted excluding Bengali, it will be practically a name for political subjugation. Moreover, it is a recommendation outside of scientific education and principles and principles of provincial autonomy and self-determination rights. So as a teacher, I strongly oppose it'.<sup>8</sup> At this time progressive, liberal Bengali writers and civil society like Dr. Enamul Haque, Motahar Hossain, Abul Kashem, Abul Mansoor Ahmed strongly opposed such a position of the Muslim League and each of them continued to protest from their own positions through sharp and logical writings. In this month, the Gana Azadi League was formed under the leadership of Kamruddin Ahmed. It published a manifesto called '*Ashu Dabhi Kormoshuchi Adarsho*'. Which was the first to insist on making Bengali the state language of East Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> Sheikh Mujib extended his full support and cooperation to this organization.

On August 14, an unusual state was formed by joining East Bengal with Pakistan based on the two-nation theory. However the country was not divided on the basis of the Lahore Resolution (1940), which was in Mujib's heart.<sup>10</sup> The two parts of Pakistan were vastly different in all aspects including anthropology, history, tradition, culture, geography, food habits. But the biggest difference was in their mentality. As a result, within a few days, the Bengali people including Mujib, realized, "The union of the two parts of Pakistan was not on the basis of equality".<sup>11</sup> In the beginning, they carried out cultural aggression under the pretext of taking away the Bengali language to destroy Bengali ethnicity. Moreover, the question of his political and economic interest was also associated with Bengali culture. The flourishing middle-class Bengali population feared losing their jobs if Urdu became the state language. However, they had no problem as Urdu was practised as their second language in West Pakistan. So they accepted it. But the problem was in East Bengal. Because Urdu has not been practised in that way here. So the residents of

East Bengal, nurtured in the tradition of struggle against all the injustices and aggression, stood up.

According to the census, 56% of the total population of Pakistan was the Bengali speaking. Delowar quoted, Pakistan had 54.6% Bengali speakers, 28.04% Punjabi, 7.2% Urdu, 7.1% Pashto, 5.8% Sindhi and the remaining 1.8% English and other languages.<sup>12</sup> Besides, only East Pakistan had 99.35% Bengali speakers and the rest of the people were speakers of other languages.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the ruling elite of Pakistan began to push for Urdu to be the state language. They ignored the arguments of democracy, majority etc. and administratively set the center capital in Karachi. Moreover, the majority of the use of foreign loans, the development projects were carried out in the West, so it was not difficult for the Bengalis to understand that the creation of Pakistan in 1947 only resulted in a change of ruler. The British Government was replaced by the neo-colonial power West Pakistan. Bangabandhu said: “Those of us who joined the movement to establish Pakistan before forty-seven dreamed of independence but after partition we realized that we were once again bound by the shackles of subjugation”.<sup>14</sup> On September 6 and 7, at the East Pakistan Workers Conference in Dhaka, ‘Gonotantrik Jubo League’ was formed. Mujib said that,

The Conference has proposed that Bengali should be made the writing medium and the language of law courts in East Pakistan. The discussion and decision-making on what should be the state language of the whole of Pakistan should be left to the people and the people’s decision should be taken as final.<sup>15</sup>

This month, the semi-political and semi-cultural organization ‘Tamaddun Majlish’ was formed. Abul Kashem was appointed as its convener. Its leaders issued a statement on September 15, publishing a booklet entitled ‘*Pakistaner Rashtribhasha Bangla-Na Urdu?*’ Jatir Pita expressed full solidarity with all the activities of this organization and went to remote areas of the countryside to collect signatures in favor of the Bengali language.<sup>16</sup> In October, a literary meeting was held at FHM Hall. Habibullah Bahar presided over it. Poets Jasim Uddin, Kazi Motahar Hossain, Syed Muhammad Afzal and Abul Kasem participated in the discussion.<sup>17</sup> On November 9, The Central Muslim Sahitya Sangsad, Sylhet organized a meeting on the state language. In this meeting, Muhammad Muslim Chowdhury announced that ‘The state language of East Pakistan should be Bengali’.

Being a high-ranking officer in the education department, the courage he showed that day is rare in contemporary times. Note that this discussion meeting was the first meeting of the state language movement.<sup>18</sup> On November 15, the secretary of the Central Public Commission, Good Inn, decided 31 subjects in a total of 9 languages, excluding Bengali, for the higher civil service examination. Abul Kashem and Abul Mansoor immediately protested. After two days, East Bengal poets, writers, teachers, artists, lawyers, Islamic thinkers, journalists, doctors and others protested and submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister.<sup>19</sup> In December, under the leadership of Nurul Haque Bhuiya, the 'Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad' was formed. Sheikh Mujib participated in the signature campaign in favor of the Bengali language demand with the council and conducted processions and meetings. On 5 December, he took part in a rally demanding Bengali as the state language and included himself as the leader of the movement.<sup>20</sup> At this time, the meeting of the Muslim League Working Committee was also going on at the residence of Nazim Uddin. The council produced a small booklet called '*Rashtra Bhasha- 21 Dofa Ishtihar- Oitihashik Dolil*'. The demand of the second phase of the Ishtihar was 'Rashtrabhasha Bangla Chai'. One of its signatories was young leader Sheikh Mujib.<sup>21</sup>

On January 4, 1948, the East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League was formed under the overall guidance of Jatir Janak.<sup>22</sup> This organization had a successful walk in every movement for the liberation of the country. On January 13, when the meeting of the Muslim League was going on in the presence of the then Prime Minister of East Pakistan, Burdwan House (Now Bangla Academy) in the presence of the Union Ministers of Pakistan, some anonymous activists of the East Pakistan Muslim League Worker's Camp, The booklet published by Mujib titled '*Purbo Pakistane Durvaga Jonosadharon, Koifiot dite hobe amader Dabi*' (*Unfortunate people in East Pakistan, our demands must be vindicated*), priced at R<sup>s</sup> 3, was sold there.<sup>23</sup> On February 23, a decision was taken in the Constituent Assembly, stating that 'Only Urdu and English languages will be represented in the Assembly'. In protest, Dhirendranath Datta, a Congress member, moved an amendment to include Bengali along with Urdu and English in the CA. But his logical claim was rejected as unreasonable. For this reason, the heart of Bangabandhu became very sad. So, he immediately started communicating with other leaders. A strike was called on February 26. On this day, a meeting was

called at Dhaka University. Students of various educational institutions including Dhaka University, Medical College, Jagannath University, Dhaka College, and Engineering College participated in the rally by skipping classes. A procession was held at the end of the rally. Jatir Pita provided strong leadership in the overall management and conduct of this procession.<sup>24</sup> Sangram Parishad was formed on February 27 to conduct the language movement. 2 representatives from Gana Azadi League, 1 from Tamaddun Majlish, 2 from Salimullah Muslim Hall and 2 from Muslim Chhatra League were its members.<sup>25</sup> A joint statement of Abul Kashem, Sheikh Mujib, Naeemuddin and Abdur Rahman was published in the newspaper on March 1. They mentioned in it, 'We appeal to the students and youth of East Pakistan to wake up and crush this conspiracy with your own strength. A nationwide movement was created, as a result of which the government was soon forced to accept Bengali as our state language.'<sup>26</sup>

On March 2, on the proposal of Sheikh Mujib, the 'Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad' was formed for the second time. It was convened by Shamsul Alam. On March 3, a leaflet demanding Bengali as the state language was published. It was signed by nine people including Mujib. The Parishad called for a hartal and strike on 11 March to protest its exclusion from the list of official languages, the non-use of Bengali on Pakistan's currency and postage stamps and the immediate declaration of Bengali as the state language of Pakistan and the official language of East Pakistan. A meeting was held the previous night to make this program a success. In this meeting, some spoke on behalf of compromise. Then Mujib announced in a thunderous voice, 'Has the government offered a compromise? Did Nazimuddin accept the demands of Bengali language? If not then there will definitely be a strike tomorrow, picketing in front of the secretariat.' He was immediately supported by Oli Ahad, Toaha, Shawkat, Shamsul Haque and others. As a result, the conspiracy of the compromisers failed.<sup>27</sup> According to the PIB's report dated March 12, 1948, on March 11, Bangabandhu was in favor of violating Article 144. Based on this decision, small batches of Hindu and Muslim students were sent on that day to picket the GPO, Secretariat and other government offices. On that day, the police took a strong stand at various places of the city to suppress the protesters (Image-2). But the agitators held demonstrations and pickets across the city (Image-3). For providing leadership to the agitators, Mujib was arrested and imprisoned from the street in front of the secretariat (Image-4).<sup>28</sup> Oli Ahad said, 'If Mujib Bhai had

not arrived in Dhaka that evening, the March 11 strike and picketing would have been nothing'.<sup>29</sup> This strike was not limited to Dhaka. Almost everywhere in East Bengal, students went on strike and many were bloody while picketing. About its importance, Mujib later said, 'The first language movement started on 11th March 1948'.<sup>30</sup> Ahmed Rafique quoted, 'This general strike of March 11 is the second largest agitation before 21 February, 1952. It shook the city deeply because it garnered support from all walks of life. Mujib was very active at this stage'.<sup>31</sup>

According to a secret report of IB on April 3, about 400 students protested in Gopalganj on March 15. They shouted slogans demanding the release of the leader Bangabandhu. A strike was observed in all educational institutions on March 13-15. Finally, Nazimuddin got scared of the movement and signed an 8-point agreement with the Parishad on 15<sup>th</sup> March. However, there was another reason for that was to make President MA Jinnah's visit to Dhaka on March 19 smooth. At the time of signing the agreement, the leaders took it to Mujib in jail for ratification. He reviewed various aspects and approved it.<sup>32</sup> As a result, the detainees including Mujib were released on March 15 and Bengali language was recognized as a medium of instruction, albeit temporarily. After their release, Bangabandhu and all of them were given a reception at FHM Hall. But when the government neglected to release some activists, Sheikh Mujib strongly opposed it. He understood that Nazimuddin had cheated the student leaders in the name of the eight-point agreement. Then the movement became stronger under his leadership.<sup>33</sup>

On March 16, an emergency meeting of the Parishad was held under the chairmanship of Mujib. He gave an encouraging speech and took out a huge procession towards the Parishad building with slogans of 'Cholo Cholo Assembly Cholo'.<sup>34</sup> On March 21, MA Jinnah addressed a crowded meeting at the historic Race Course Maidan (Image-5). He said, '...let me make it very clear to you that the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other languages. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan'.<sup>35</sup> At this time, the sound of protest was raised at one end of the venue. Those who raised this voice were led by Sheikh Mujib, Tajuddin and Abdul Mateen.<sup>36</sup> Jinnah repeated the same words in the meeting with Parishad on March 24 and the convocation ceremony of Dhaka University. Then the venue became abuzz with a tumultuous wave of 'no' 'no' sounds. Bangabandhu and others immediately spoke out against it. A few days after Jinnah left Dhaka, a student meeting was held at FHM Hall. A pro-Pakistan

student leader said, “We have to obey whatever Jinnah says. When Jinnah said Urdu as the state language, then it will be Urdu.” In protest, Mujib made a bold declaration to continue the movement until Bengali was recognized as the state language. Then the students immediately supported him. He said,

If a leader asks to do something wrong, the people have the right to protest and explain it to him. As Hazrat Umar (R.A.) was questioned by the common citizens because he was wearing a large garment. Bengali language is the mother tongue of fifty six percent people, Pakistan is a democratic state, the demands of the majority must be accepted. We will continue the struggle until Bengali is the state language. Whatever it is, we are ready.<sup>37</sup>

On April 6, Nazimuddin proposed to make Urdu the state language and medium of education. In response, a meeting was held on April 16 under the chairmanship of Bangabandhu. Gaziul mentioned, “Under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib, the struggling student society on that day stood against all conspiracies.”<sup>38</sup> He also participated in the meeting held on 17 April. On August 13, on the occasion of Pakistan’s Azadi Diwas, a secret statement by Bangabandhu was released by PIB. He said that,

The ‘freedom’ that we got on August 15, 1947, is not mass freedom. It has been clearly proved in the last one year that the Cabinet; In one long year, they did not make any attempt to relieve the accumulated suffering of the people for two hundred years, rather they put a lot of green dough on that burden...In the state language movement, the Muslim student society and in some other cases the crowd was charged with baton, tear gas and shot. By driving they have tarnished Azadi...They will certainly observe ‘Azadi Diwas’, but not as a day of celebration, but as a day of determination to break the tyranny of oppression.<sup>39</sup>

Mujib attended the meeting on 17 November 1948 and made a strong effort to submit a memorandum in this regard to Prime Minister demanding Bengali as the state language.<sup>40</sup> On December 27, Education Minister proposed to write Bengali language in Arabic script in the Nikhil Pakistan Education Conference held in Karachi and the next year on February 7, 1949 in the Education Advisory Board meeting. Bangabandhu strongly opposed it. When Liaquat Ali Khan came to Dhaka on October 11, Bhasani and Mujib addressed the meeting held at Armanitola. After the meeting, a procession of them went towards Ramana through Nawabpur and



was dispersed by the police using batons and tear gas. Bhasani and Mujib led this procession.<sup>41</sup> That day the police arrested a total of 19 people including Bangabandhu. However, from prison, he expressed solidarity with the movement. After his release from jail in January 1949, he strengthened the movement with Tajuddin Ahmad, Abul Kashem, Oli Ahad, Toaha etc. In February, he went to a function in Brahmanbaria. Artist Abbasuddin was going with him. He said to leader Mujib,

Mujib, there is a big conspiracy going on against the Bengali language. If Bengali is not the state language, the culture and civilization of Bengal will all come to an end. The song you love today will lose its sweetness and dignity. Whatever, Bengali must be made the state language'. Leader wrote in reply, 'I gave my word and tried to keep it.'<sup>42</sup>

Awami Muslim League was formed on June 23. Moulana Bhasani and Bangabandhu were appointed as its president and joint general secretary respectively. As the first opposition party in Pakistan, the organization played a vocal role in demanding the state language in the parliament as well as the street movement.<sup>43</sup> On March 11, 1950, the 'Dhaka Biswobiddaloy Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad' was formed. Abdul Mateen was appointed as its convener. In April, the government passed the proposal to write Bengali in Arabic script in the Constituent Assembly and in September constituted a policy committee for the purpose. This committee submitted an incomplete report giving opinion only in favor of Urdu.<sup>44</sup> In protest, the Parishad undertook various programs on the advice of Mujib.

On January 25, 1952, Aatur Rahman Khan, Aziz Ahmad; Oli Ahad; Shamsul Haque and Golam Mahbub met Sheikh Mujib in the hospital. They talk about contemporary political issues. Mujib then advised them about the language movement.<sup>45</sup> Nazimuddin announced on January 27, "The people of the province will decide what will be the provincial language, but the state language of Pakistan will be Urdu...No state can be strong if there are more than one state language".<sup>46</sup> After that, student leaders met with Mujib and decided what to do. As a result, on January 31, the 'Sorbodolio Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad' was formed. Kazi Gholam Mahbub was appointed as its convener. On that day, a resolution demanded the release of detained leaders including Mujib.<sup>47</sup> On February 4, strike and protest programs were taken up in all educational institutions of the country. Then the imprisoned Mujib, while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, urged the Chhatra League and Awami Muslim League leaders to make the program

a success. When government intelligence learned that Mujib was in jail encouraging his party and followers in the anti-government movement, he was suddenly transferred to Faridpur Jail on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Before and after going to Faridpur Jail, he sent several letters to the top leaders of the Chhatra League with suggestions to keep the movement active.<sup>48</sup> Not only that, since then he started a hunger strike in jail and fell ill to demand Bengali as the state language.<sup>49</sup> Awami Muslim League and Chhatra League printed leaflets on this issue and distributed them in different parts of Dhaka City. Besides, more reports and editorials were published in various newspapers demanding his release.<sup>50</sup> Maulana Bhasani in a separate statement entitled 'In the name of humanity' demanded the release of him.<sup>51</sup> At this time, the demand for his release was also raised in the Bengal Legislative Council. Anwara Khatun moved an adjournment motion in the East Pakistan Assembly to discuss his 'fasting'. As a result Bangabandhu was released on February 27. After his release, he along with fellow fighters of Awami League decided the future program of the party and took various steps in this year in favor of making Bengali the state language (Image-6). Then, on receiving the responsibility of acting general secretary of Awami Muslim League, he called a press conference and demanded to make Bengali the state language. In this context, he wrote:

I held a press conference as the general secretary. I demanded that Bengali should be made the state language, the royal prisoners should be released and the families of those who were martyred on February 21 should be compensated and those who unjustly oppressed should be punished. I asked for proof that the government said that this movement was instigated by a foreign country. Hindu students came from Calcutta and protested in payjamas, the Muslim League leaders did not even bother to mention this. I asked them, five-six people including students were killed by bullets, are they all Muslims or not? Ninety nine percent of those arrested are Muslims or not? So many students came from Calcutta, not even one could catch that the government, that government has no right to stay on the mattress...<sup>52</sup>

On February 21, 1952 (8 Falguna 1358) was the budget session of the East Bengal Legislative Council. On this day, the government issued Section 144 of the Criminal Penal Code across the province. Therefore, the Parishad decided to continue the movement by violating Article 144 (Image-7). As a result, the final form of the language movement was revealed.<sup>53</sup> Then the leaders were divided

into two groups regarding the violation of Section 144 the previous night. Gaziul announced the decision in favor of breaking Article 144. The protestors raised slogans like ‘Rashtro Bhasha Bangla Cai’, ‘Fascist Sorker Nipat Jak’, ‘144 Dhara Manina’, ‘Chalo Chalo Assembly Chalo’, ‘Nazim-Nurul Nipat Jak’ etc.<sup>54</sup> A total of four groups then led the violation of Article 144. At that time Bangabandhu agreed with the decision of the Parishad from prison. Toab Khan said, “Many of the political leaders who played a role in the formation of the Sangram Parishad opposed the decision that night. But Mujib, from jail and in hospital, gave unwavering support to it.”<sup>55</sup> On that day, the police resorted to reckless lathicharge, tear gas and arrests on the protestors. As a result Abul Barkat, Rafiquddin, Abdul Jabbar were martyred on the spot. Abdus Salam was shot on that day and succumbed to unbearable pain on April 7.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the streets of Dhaka are stained with the fresh blood of many others whose names are not known. Therefore, the movement spread like sparks across the country. In protest, several members of the Legislative Council including Abdur Rashid Tarkbagish, Anwara Khatun walked out of the session and attended the scene immediately. Jubo League led by Golam Mawla took the leadership of the movement at 9:00 PM that day.<sup>57</sup> On February 22, Shafiur Rahman, Ahiullah, Abdul Awal were martyred and many others were injured. Bangabandhu was able to get some idea about the depth of the murder incident from the march organized in Faridpur and the newspaper. So, he wrote in his prison diary,

We spent all of 21<sup>st</sup> (February 21) full of anxiety, worrying about what was happening. At night the guards on duty told us that there had been trouble in Dhaka. According to the radio, a few people had been shot to death. A general strike had been called in Faridpur, and students had come up to the jail gate in a procession raising slogans such as ‘Rashtrobhasha Bangla Cai’...What a great foolishness the Muslim League government has done. Bengalis are the first in the world to have given their blood in the mother tongue movement...But when our sons have given their blood, there is no way to make Bengali the state language.<sup>58</sup>

On April 27, Awami League’s newly appointed Acting General Secretary Sheikh Mujib spoke in favor of Bengali’s strong position to protect the dignity of Bengali language. He said, “After two and a half years of imprisonment, I have appeared before you. You were engaged in language struggle, I was on hunger strike in prison. I am telling you to unite and unmask the Muslim League”.<sup>59</sup> He also

emphasized on the issue of release of prisoners that day. Mujib got involved when the country-wide 'Signature Campaign' started on May 15. Then he went to Lahore and gave a speech in favor of making Bengali the state language. He wrote, "I put more emphasis on Bengali as the state language, release of royal prisoners, protest against shooting death, autonomy and economic problems."<sup>60</sup> In early 1952 Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy unexpectedly expressed his opinion in favor of making Urdu the state language. He said, "...in accordance with the manner and principles on which Pakistan was founded, Urdu should be the state language of Pakistan..." If he remained steadfast in this position, the language movement and even the party could have suffered a lot. In this context, Bangabandhu said,

At that time, after the language statement of Shaheed Suhrawardy was published, we were in a lot of trouble. So in June that year I went to Karachi to meet him and explained the situation to him and asked him to make a statement in support of Bengal's claim.<sup>61</sup>

So, he changed his opinion with great difficulty. On June 29, a statement by Suhrawardy in favor of Bengali was published in Daily Ittefaq. However, according to *Osamapta Atmajibane*, Suhrawardy did not say that only Urdu should be the state language. He wanted both Bengali and Urdu to be state languages.<sup>62</sup> Sheikh Mujib attended the 'Peace Conference of the Asian and Pacific Regions' held in China on October 2-12 and gave a speech in Bengali language for the first time and raised the status of the Bengali language in the court of the world.<sup>63</sup> December 5 was the Prisoner release Day declared by the Parishad. On this day, a protest meeting was held in Armanitola. In that meeting, Jatir Janak said, "If the prisoners are not released, there will be a mass movement in the country."<sup>64</sup>

On February 21, 1953, Mujib was at the forefront of the Provatferi procession and leadership (Image-8). At Armanitola on that day, he called for constitutional recognition of February as Martyr's Day and declaration of Bengali as the state language. He identified the day as National Karbala Day and said,

Last year, on this same day, the students and public of Dhaka city fearlessly gave their lives to the police to demand that the Bengali language of the four and a half million inhabitants of East Pakistan be made one of the state languages of Azad Pakistan. Now there are two options open to the government of Pakistan. Either they will accept Bengali as the state language or they will leave the mattress.<sup>65</sup>

After that, he and his comrades took part in prayers in memory of the language martyrs (Image-9). In May, Sheikh Mujib held a meeting at Armanitola and gave a statement in favor of the Bengali language (Image-10). In 1954, when the United Front won the Provincial Council elections and formed a cabinet, Mujib was appointed as the Minister of Agriculture, Cooperatives and Rural Development in this cabinet. At that time, he contributed greatly to the improvement of the Bengali language. As a result, the Assembly announced on May 7, "Bengali will be the state language of Pakistan along with Urdu".<sup>66</sup> But have to wait two more years to get constitutional recognition. In 1955, Mujib was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly and was appointed Minister of Industry, Commerce, Labor, Anti-Corruption, Rural Development and Social Welfare in Aatur Rahman Khan's cabinet. On June 17, in a meeting, Mujib demanded the declaration of a public holiday on February 21, the release of all royal prisoners, the implementation of 21 points, etc.<sup>67</sup> The first meeting of the new CA was held in Mari from July 7-14. Suhrawardy, AK Fazlul Haque, Aatur Rahman Khan, Mujib, Abul Mansoor Ahmad and others joined it as representatives of East Bengal. In this meeting, a five-point treaty was signed on July 15. Its fifth point was: Bengali and Urdu shall be the two state languages.<sup>68</sup> On August 25, in speech to the Assembly, Bangabandhu strongly protested against changing the name of East Bengal to East Pakistan and said,

Sir, you will see that they want to use the phrase 'East Pakistan' instead of 'East Bengal'. We have demanded many times that you should use Bengal instead of East Pakistan. The word 'Bengal' has a history and tradition of its own. You can change it only after the people have been consulted. If you want to change it, we have to go back to Bengal and ask them whether they are ready to accept it. So far as the question of one unit is concerned it can be incorporated in the constitution. Why do you want it to be taken up right now? What about the state language, Bengali? We are prepared to consider one unit with all these things. So, I appeal to my friends on that side to allow the people to give their verdict in any way, in the form of referendum or in the form of plebiscite...<sup>69</sup>

On September 21, in another speech, Bangabandhu said to the Speaker,

We want to speak in Bengali here, whether we know any other language or not it matters little for us. If we feel that we can express ourselves in Bengali we will speak always in Bengali even though we can speak in

English also. If that is not allowed, we will leave the House, but Bengali should be allowed in this house; that is our stand.<sup>70</sup>

In 1956, Jatiya Janak said, “Sir, I want to tell you, the principle of numerical equality is no more. We are the majority people of East Pakistan. So we must have population proportional representation.”<sup>71</sup> On January 17, He demanded that the daily program of the parliament be printed in Bengali. He said that,

Rules of Procedure 29(2) clearly state that the minutes of Parliament shall be recorded in Urdu, Bengali and English languages...according to our interpretation it is part of the official record...but now that it is being done in English and Urdu then what can be the purpose behind the exclusion of Bengali? We want to know who did it?...If you do not deal with East Bengal rationally, do not give any satisfactory remedy to their grievances, then in that situation, if the awakened Bengali people want to separate from the western part, then Awami League will have nothing to do. There is still time, try to read the writings on the wall.<sup>72</sup>

Awami League observes resistance day against the regime enacted on January 29. Although it included equal representation of both parties in joint elections, administration, economic development and policy making and recognition of Bengali as the state language etc. But all but one joint election was farce and speculation. Bengali politicians including Bangabandhu understood it immediately. That's why Bangabandhu walked out of the CA without signing this constitution.<sup>73</sup> On February 7, he moved an amendment proposal on the question of Bengali as the state language, targeting the Speaker, saying

...When you were the Minister of East Bengal in 1948 and when I started the state language movement, you ordered your police to lathicharge me and for this my feelings on this question What I know is because I was caned by your police and I was also sent to jail.... I mentioned in my amendment that, it would be the responsibility of the federal and provincial governments to take all possible measures for the development and growth of the ‘two state languages, namely, Bengali and Urdu.’ We must immediately take all necessary steps for the development and growth of these two state languages....It is the demand of the people, the demand of all, the demand of the young and old and every people of East Pakistan wants this amendment that from today and in the future the state language

of Pakistan will be Bengali and Urdu.<sup>74</sup>

On February 16, at a stage of debate on the matter in the National Assembly, according to an amendment proposed by its member Adel Uddin Ahmed of Faridpur, a proposal was raised to make both Bengali and Urdu the state languages of Pakistan.<sup>75</sup> The proposal was accepted on 26 February. Later, when the first constitution of Pakistan was made, Bengali and Urdu jointly received constitutional recognition as state languages in Article 214 (1).<sup>76</sup> This new constitution came into effect from March 23.

### **Evaluation:**

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib led the Bengali nation in three stages. Firstly: From the Language Movement to General Election (1948-1970), Secondly: The War of Liberation (1971) and Thirdly: Post-Independence Country Formation (1972-1975).<sup>77</sup> That is why he attracted the attention of PIB since 1948. They did not fail to recognize the enemy. In short, nobody was as dangerous to the ruler group as the rising and brilliant leader Sheikh Mujib.<sup>78</sup> So it can be seen that he has repeatedly come under the fire of the communal government. Many think that prison was his second home. Because he spent 4682 days of his 55 years of life in jail.<sup>79</sup> At last he was able to give the Bengali nation an independent country in 1971.

Most of the Historians have highlighted Mujib's outstanding contribution to this movement in their writings. Muntasir Mamun wrote, 'Bangabandhu actively participated in the language movement of 1948 and 1949. At that time, he was one of those who led this movement from the front'.<sup>80</sup> Gaziul Haque said,

Bangabandhu was imprisoned in various prisons of Pakistan from the time he was arrested in October 1949 to February 1952. As a result, he could not actively participate in the language movement due to natural reasons. However, even from jail, he kept in touch with the leaders of the movement and gave advice on various issues.<sup>81</sup>

According to Saidur Rahman and others, 'He was forcibly thrown into prison during the blood-soaked agitation of 1952. As a result, he took the leadership of this movement from inside the prison'.<sup>82</sup> Obaidullah al-Mamun and others think that, 'From the beginning to the end of the language movement; even in the last days of his life, he dedicated himself to establish the Bengali language at every level and achieved success'.<sup>83</sup>

Mazharul Islam mentioned,

In fact, Sheikh Mujib has been elevated to the level of the undisputed leader of this country as a result of the role he has played in building a non-sectarian mass movement in this country since 1947. Endless sacrifices, many efforts, smooth working methods etc. have brought him to the golden gate of success...But it is true, the signs of single leadership of him were almost absent in the entire movement from 1947 to 1954. It is a shame to hope so, because this period was the preparation phase of his leadership. He participated as much as he could in all kinds of political, cultural and social movements and sometimes directly or indirectly tried to spread his potential influence. And this is how he has passed the preparation stage to develop himself as a strong leader of the future.<sup>84</sup>

Gobindo Chakraborty said,

We want to limit Sheikh Mujib only to Awami League and 1971! But how did we get to 1971? Actually there were two phases of language movement. It started in 1948. So 1948 should be highlighted like 1971. And this Bangabandhu did not become Bangabandhu in one day. The beginning of the story of his becoming this Bangabandhu is from 1948.<sup>85</sup>

Mustafa Nurul Islam said,

He was in Jail during 1952 Ekush movement. He used to give instructions about the movement from prison. At that time of February, his health broke down, so he was admitted to Dhaka Medical College. Then the Medical College and university were located in the same building. Bangabandhu used to discuss with the student leaders late at night about political issues and the demand to make Bengali the state language.<sup>86</sup>

Gaziul said elsewhere,

Bangabandhu carried out the language movement, held the spirit of language in his heart. In his thoughts and consciousness was the determination of the dignity and recognition of the mother tongue. This spirit was always active in the struggle to establish an independent state for Bengalis. In this regard, he was always uncompromising and strict. The Bengali nation will never forget his unique role.<sup>87</sup>

In 1951, Suhrawardy commented, 'If he had 5 people like Sheikh Mujib, then



the whole country would be with him.<sup>788</sup> From this comment of him, the depth of the leadership of Bangabandhu can be easily seen.

### Conclusion:

The father of the nation played a multidimensional role in the state language movement as a youth activist and leader by being closely involved with various programs of Gana Azadi League, Gonotantrik Jubo League, Tamaddun Majlish, Walker's Camp, Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad, Dhaka Biswobiddaloy Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad and Sorbodolio Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad. He provided charismatic leadership to these organizations with his wisdom and advice. He went on hunger strike demanding Bengali as the state language, held meetings inside and outside Dhaka, distributed booklets and leaflets. Since 1952, he made strong demands to the government to give Bengali the status of the state language and introduce Bengali language at all levels in the legislature. Basically, this movement paved the way for East Bengal of her right to self-determination as a nation under the leadership of him. The review of various data in this article proves the authenticity of the rule of him to this movement. So there should be no ambiguity about his active rule and leadership in this movement.

### Images:

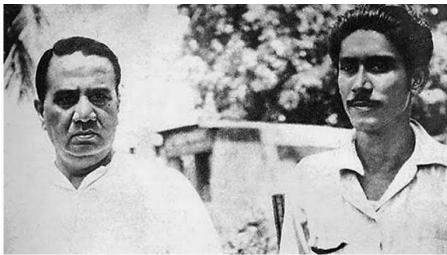


Image-1: Sheikh Mujib with Political Mentor Suhrawardy

<https://mujib100.gov.bd/pages/mujib/photo-archive.html>

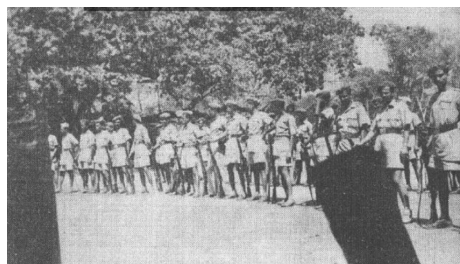


Image-2: Position of the police in suppressing the protestors on March 11,

<https://bangla.thedailystar.net/literature/history-tradition/history/news-460231>.



Image-3: Students marched on March 11



Image-4 Police are taking Sheikh Mujib along with those arrested on March 11

Source of image 3 & 4: <https://bangla.thedailystar.net/literature/history-tradition/history/news-460231>

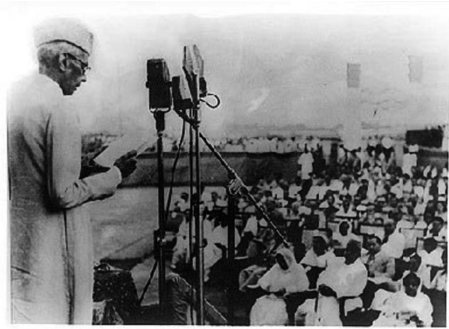


Image-5: Speech of Muhammad Ali Jinnah on March 21, 1948  
<https://www.bbc.com/bengali/news-50060279>,



Image-6: Sheikh Mujib with political colleagues (1952)  
[https://mujib100.gov.bd/pages/mujib/photo-archive\\_bn.html](https://mujib100.gov.bd/pages/mujib/photo-archive_bn.html)

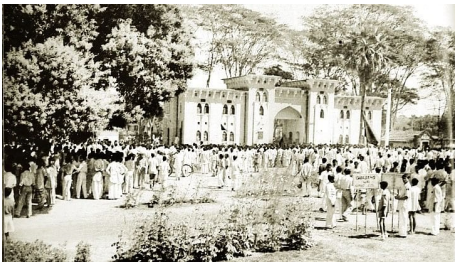


Image-7: 21<sup>st</sup> February 1952: on the eve of violation of Article 144.  
<https://www.bbc.com/bengali/news-50060279>,



Image-8: Bangabandhu with Bhasani on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1953.  
<https://archive.dhakatribune.com/special-supplement/2021/02/21/bangabandhu-s-lifelong-battle-for-bangla>



Image-9: Mujib and others offering prayers on February 21, 1953



Image-10: Mujib at a public meeting in Armanitola, May 1953.

Source of image 9 & 10: <https://mujib100.gov.bd/pages/mujib/photo-archive.html>

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# Exploring Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy through the Lens of Emotional Intelligence

Souravi Ata\* & Samir Chattopadhyay\*\*

**Abstract:** This paper delves into the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi to uncover insights into emotional intelligence. Gandhi, known for his philosophy of nonviolence and civil disobedience, exhibited profound emotional intelligence in his approach to leadership, conflict resolution, and social change. Through a qualitative analysis of Gandhi's writings, speeches, and actions, this research elucidates how his emotional intelligence principles contributed to his effectiveness as a leader and advocate for social justice. Drawing parallels between Gandhi's principles and contemporary theories of emotional intelligence, this paper offers a comprehensive understanding of the role emotions play in personal and societal transformation.

**Keywords:** Mahatma Gandhi, emotional intelligence, leadership, nonviolence, social change

## Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi, revered as the Father of the Indian nation, transcends his role as a political figure to embody the timeless values of truth, nonviolence, and compassion. His life's work, centred on the principles of satyagraha (nonviolent resistance) and ahimsa (nonviolence), continues to inspire movements for social justice and human rights worldwide. Integral to Gandhi's philosophy was his profound understanding of human emotions and their pivotal role in personal and collective transformation.

Gandhi's approach to leadership and social change was deeply rooted in emotional intelligence principles, long before the concept gained widespread recognition in contemporary discourse. He recognized that true leadership extended beyond mere charisma or authority; it necessitated a deep connection with one's own emotions and the ability to empathize with the experiences of others. Gandhi's mastery of emotional intelligence enabled him to navigate the complexities of colonial rule, societal divisions, and personal challenges with grace and resilience.

This paper explores the symbiotic relationship between Gandhi's philosophy and the principles of emotional intelligence. By delving into Gandhi's writings,

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speeches, and actions, we aim to uncover the underlying emotional intelligence framework that informed his leadership style, conflict resolution strategies, and vision for social change. Drawing upon insights from historical accounts and contemporary emotional intelligence theory, this research endeavours to elucidate the enduring relevance of Gandhi's teachings in fostering inclusive, empathetic leadership and promoting sustainable peace in today's world.

### **Objectives of the study:**

1. To Explore Gandhi's Emotional Intelligence.
2. To Identify Emotional Intelligence Components.
3. To Examine Leadership Strategies.
4. To Investigate Conflict Resolution Approaches.

### **Method and methodology:**

Gather qualitative data from primary sources such as Gandhi's writings (autobiographies, letters, and speeches), historical documents, and secondary sources (biographies, scholarly articles). The Researchers have used the historical research method.

### **A. Gandhi's Concept of Emotional Intelligence:**

Gandhi's concept of emotional intelligence, though not explicitly framed in modern psychological terms, is evident throughout his life and teachings. Here's an elaboration on Gandhi's understanding of emotional intelligence:

**1. Self-awareness:** Gandhi emphasized the importance of self-awareness as a fundamental aspect of personal growth and social change. Through practices like introspection and self-reflection, he encouraged individuals to examine their thoughts, emotions, and motives with honesty and humility. By understanding oneself deeply, Gandhi believed one could better understand others and navigate complex interpersonal dynamics with compassion and integrity. **2. Empathy:** Central to Gandhi's philosophy was the principle of empathy, or the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. He believed that empathy was essential for building meaningful connections, fostering solidarity, and transcending divisions based on caste, class, or religion. Gandhi's empathy extended not only to fellow Indians but also to those perceived as adversaries, as demonstrated in his efforts to empathize with the struggles and perspectives of British rulers and oppressors.

**3. Resilience:** Gandhi's unwavering commitment to nonviolence, despite facing countless obstacles and personal hardships, underscores his resilience in the face of adversity. He viewed resilience not as a passive endurance of suffering, but as an active pursuit of truth and justice, even in the most challenging circumstances. Gandhi's ability to persevere in the pursuit of his ideals, despite experiencing setbacks and opposition, exemplifies the emotional resilience inherent in his approach to social change.

**4. Emotional Regulation:** While Gandhi experienced a wide range of emotions throughout his life, he advocated for the disciplined regulation of emotions in service of higher moral principles. He recognized the destructive potential of unchecked anger, hatred, and fear, and advocated for their transformation through practices like satyagraha and ahimsa. Gandhi's ability to channel his emotions constructively, rather than succumbing to their destructive impulses, reflects his mastery of emotional regulation and self-control.

**5. Compassion and Love:** At the heart of Gandhi's philosophy was the belief in the transformative power of love and compassion. He saw love not as a passive emotion, but as an active force for social change and human liberation. Gandhi's advocacy for universal love, kindness, and forgiveness exemplifies his deep understanding of the emotional bonds that unite humanity and transcend barriers of race, religion, and nationality.

Gandhi's concept of emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness, empathy, resilience, emotional regulation, and compassion. Through his life and teachings, he demonstrated how these principles can empower individuals to lead lives of purpose, build inclusive communities, and catalyze positive social change.

## **B. Leadership and Conflict Resolution:**

Gandhi's leadership style was characterized by a unique blend of humility, empathy, and moral courage. Here's an elaboration on Gandhi's leadership style:

**1. Lead by Example:** Gandhi believed in leading by example, embodying the values he advocated for in his own life. He lived a simple and austere lifestyle, eschewing material wealth and status symbols, which earned him the respect and admiration of followers. By practicing what he preached, Gandhi inspired others to emulate his principles of truth, nonviolence, and self-discipline.

**2. Servant Leadership:** Gandhi's leadership was rooted in a deep sense of service

to others. He saw himself not as a dictator or ruler, but as a servant of the people, dedicated to uplifting the marginalized and oppressed. Gandhi's humility and willingness to listen to the concerns of ordinary citizens endeared him to the masses and strengthened his moral authority as a leader.

**3. Inclusive Leadership:** Gandhi was inclusive in his approach to leadership, striving to represent the interests of all communities and social groups, regardless of caste, creed, or background. He emphasized the importance of unity in diversity, recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every individual. Gandhi's commitment to inclusivity and social justice resonated deeply with diverse communities, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity.

**4. Nonviolent Resistance:** Central to Gandhi's leadership style was his advocacy for nonviolent resistance as a means of confronting injustice and oppression. He believed in the power of satyagraha, or truth-force, to awaken the moral conscience of oppressors and effect lasting social change. Gandhi's strategic use of nonviolent tactics, such as boycotts, strikes, and civil disobedience campaigns, mobilized mass participation and exerted moral pressure on colonial authorities.

**5. Conflict Resolution:** Gandhi was a skilled mediator and negotiator, adept at resolving conflicts through dialogue and reconciliation. He believed in addressing underlying grievances and grievances through peaceful means, rather than resorting to violence or coercion. Gandhi's emphasis on empathy, active listening, and mutual respect enabled him to bridge divides and forge consensus among conflicting parties.

**6. Courageous Leadership:** Perhaps most notably, Gandhi exhibited extraordinary courage and resilience in the face of adversity. He remained steadfast in his commitment to nonviolence, even when confronted with violence and persecution. Gandhi's willingness to endure personal sacrifice and suffering for the greater good inspired countless others to join the struggle for freedom and justice.

Gandhi's leadership style was characterized by humility, servant leadership, inclusivity, nonviolent resistance, conflict resolution, and moral courage. His example continues to inspire leaders around the world to lead with integrity, empathy, and a commitment to social justice.

### **C. Social Change and Empowerment:**

Gandhi's approach to social change and empowerment was grounded in principles

of self-reliance, community participation, and nonviolent action. Here's an elaboration on Gandhi's views and methods regarding social change and empowerment:

**1. Empowerment through Self-reliance:** Gandhi advocated for empowerment through self-reliance, encouraging individuals and communities to take ownership of their destinies and work towards their own upliftment. He promoted the concept of *swadeshi*, or self-sufficiency, encouraging Indians to produce their own goods and boycott British-made products as a form of economic resistance. By empowering people to meet their needs and assert their independence, Gandhi sought to undermine the economic and psychological grip of colonial rule.

**2. Bottom-up Approach:** Gandhi believed in the power of grassroots movements to drive social change from the bottom up. He emphasized the importance of mobilizing ordinary people, particularly the rural poor, in the struggle for independence and social reform. Gandhi's constructive program, which included initiatives like *khadi* spinning, village self-governance, and education for all, empowered individuals to take charge of their own development and challenge oppressive systems through nonviolent means.

**3. Inclusive Social Justice:** Gandhi was a staunch advocate for inclusive social justice, striving to uplift the most marginalized and oppressed members of society. He championed the rights of untouchables (*Dalits*), women, and other disenfranchised groups, advocating for their equal treatment and dignity. Gandhi's emphasis on empathy and solidarity with the downtrodden inspired movements for social reform and paved the way for greater inclusion and representation in Indian society.

**4. Nonviolent Resistance:** Gandhi believed in the transformative power of nonviolent resistance as a means of achieving social and political change. He viewed nonviolence not as passive acquiescence, but as active resistance to injustice and oppression. Through campaigns of civil disobedience, boycotts, and peaceful protests, Gandhi mobilized mass participation and challenged the legitimacy of colonial rule. His use of nonviolent tactics inspired similar movements for liberation and civil rights around the world.

**5. Empowerment through Education:** Gandhi recognized the importance of education as a tool for empowerment and social transformation. He advocated for universal education, particularly for girls and marginalized communities, as a means

of promoting equality, self-reliance, and critical thinking. Gandhi's emphasis on practical education, centred on vocational skills and moral values, aimed to equip individuals with the knowledge and confidence to lead meaningful lives and contribute to their communities.

**6. Spiritual Dimension:** Central to Gandhi's vision of social change was the spiritual dimension of human existence. He believed that true transformation required a shift in consciousness, away from materialism and egoism towards a deeper understanding of interconnectedness and compassion. Gandhi's emphasis on spiritual values such as truth, love, and nonviolence provided a moral compass for social activists and inspired movements for peace and justice worldwide.

Gandhi's approach to social change and empowerment emphasized self-reliance, grassroots mobilization, inclusive justice, nonviolent resistance, education, and spiritual values. His legacy continues to inspire movements for social reform and liberation, reminding us of the power of ordinary people to effect extraordinary change through collective action and moral courage.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, Mahatma Gandhi's life and teachings offer timeless lessons on the interplay between emotional intelligence, leadership, and social change. Through his unwavering commitment to truth, nonviolence, and compassion, Gandhi exemplified the transformative potential of emotional intelligence principles in personal and collective transformation.

Gandhi's emphasis on self-awareness, empathy, resilience, and emotional regulation underscores the foundational components of emotional intelligence that guided his leadership style and conflict resolution strategies. By cultivating deep connections with others, understanding their perspectives, and channelling emotions constructively, Gandhi inspired trust, unity, and collaboration among diverse communities. Furthermore, Gandhi's inclusive vision of social justice and empowerment resonates deeply with contemporary efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. His advocacy for self-reliance, grassroots mobilization, and nonviolent resistance continues to inspire movements for social reform and liberation around the world.

The relevance of Gandhi's emotional intelligence framework extends beyond historical context, offering valuable insights for practitioners and researchers

interested in cultivating emotional intelligence for effective leadership, conflict resolution, and social activism. By embracing principles of empathy, resilience, and moral courage, individuals can harness the power of emotions to create positive change in their communities and beyond. As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, Gandhi's legacy serves as a timeless reminder of the enduring power of compassion, conscience, and collective action in shaping a more just and humane world. By drawing inspiration from Gandhi's life and teachings, we can aspire to cultivate our emotional intelligence and lead lives of purpose, integrity, and service to humanity.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi himself, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." Through our commitment to emotional intelligence and social justice, we can honour Gandhi's legacy and contribute to a more peaceful, equitable, and compassionate society for future generations.

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# **The Concept of Rainfall in Colonial Bengali Society: A Historical Outlook**

Agnidev Manna

**Abstract:** In ‘Climate History’, the climate is not considered as a merely physical entity; It also has a cultural implication arising from views, meanings, spirituality, discourse, and different knowledge bases across time and place. The cultural perceptions and narratives provide valuable insights into the climatic knowledge of a social group in a certain time and space and also state its changing nature over time. The present article discusses the native perceptions of tropical rainfall that prevailed in Bengali society during the colonial period. With the advent of the British, the climate began to be perceived with the help of Western scientific technology. But at the same time, the indigenous especially the native Bengali society possessed a great deal of climatic knowledge regarding understanding cloud formation, categorizing clouds, and forecasting rainfall and agriculture. Their climatic beliefs were also influenced by a variety of religious and cultural practices. The study endeavours to understand the significance of the ‘cultural climate’ within Bengali society, deriving from its values, beliefs, rituals, customs, traditions, etc. It also explains how much the scientific advancement of colonial meteorology was able to exert influence on the traditional beliefs of meteorology among the indigenous people.

**Keywords:** Climate History, Rainfall, Native Perception, Culture, Society, Colonial Bengal

**Introduction:** Rainfall is a crucial component of climate. In the Indian subcontinent, monsoonal winds, a seasonal occurrence, largely influence the precipitation pattern. It has enabled the survival of civilizations and shaped the waterways and the physical geography of the country.<sup>1</sup> Everyone in the region, including monks, travellers, poets, traders, and scholars, has anticipated and revered it through the ages.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, there arises several of discourses which remain a matter of intense and multi-dimensional engagement. Climate histories centre around such perceptions and narratives related to cultural constructions of climate. The contemporary phenomena of global warming and climate change have shifted the nature of rainfall causing many disasters and sufferings like drought, flood, increase in the ocean water level, food scarcity, migration, etc. In this respect, studying different types of climate narratives proves to be a major breakthrough in

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understanding how people are trying to survive and adapt to climate change.<sup>3</sup>

In this new sub-discipline of environmental history, limited historical research has been conducted. Some scholars have studied the impact of natural drainage systems, and colonial water control policies on the socio-political and economic life of the region. Environmental historian Ranjan Chakravarti has taken a new approach by examining the cultural and social implications of climatic factors, particularly the changing course of rivers in the Bengal Delta.<sup>4</sup> Recent studies have also focused on the formation of a scientific organization of meteorology in India and the role of various institutions and individuals in incorporating Western technologies into the colonial meteorological system. There is a lack of comprehensive research on the cultural history of water or rainfall in Bengal. The present article aims to fill the gap.<sup>5</sup> The present article attempts to explore the nature of understanding the tropical climate of Bengal by the native Bengalis. The paper is divided into two parts: The first part will discuss various native climatic narratives such as formation and types of clouds, forecasting of rainfall and agriculture, measurement of rain, and various religious rituals related to rainfall. The second part explains how the scientific knowledge of rainfall developed during the colonial period modified or affected the native attitude of conceiving the climate.

## 1. Native Perception of Rainfall

### 1.1. Formation of Cloud and Rain:

The branch of climate science that deals with clouds is called ‘nephology’. Traditional Bengali society held such a predominant conception of cloud. According to the indigenous perception, a cloud was a light, membranous, coiled, wavelike mass floating in the air that caused rain. The clouds were also considered as a visible collection of tiny water and ice particles formed in the form of fog, mist, or haze. As atmospheric pressure dropped, the air expanded and cooled, causing water vapour to condense. These clouds floated at a certain height in the atmosphere. According to Rabindranath Tagore, the aroma of rain was carried by the air.

*“Aabar eshechhe ashard aakash chheye,  
Aashe bristir subas baatas beye.”*<sup>6</sup>

(“Ashard has arrived pervading the sky once again,  
In the breeze wafts the sweet scent of rains”)<sup>7</sup>

In contemporary Bengali literature, there is a large segment of documentation about the clouds, rainfall, monsoon winds, cyclones, and some other climatic phenomena of colonial Bengal. There are a significant number of riddles and folklore associated with the birth, position, colour, sound, size, and shape of the clouds. All of these formed the foundation for understanding rural village society's climatic perception.

In the writings of the folk poets, rainfall in various parts of Bengal was described in different ways. They thought that rain came from the sea, flew on the wind, and lived in the sky. People in Bengal compared clouds to the black cow. In 24 Parganas and Sylhet, people related the roar of the cloud to that of the extortionate call of the cow and expected rain falling from the clouds to resemble a stream of milk. In Khulna and Jessore, people have compared hailstones to the eggs of a cloud or a rock. The rain in Mymensingh was believed to be the silent cry of a lonely old woman. Their riddles and descriptions highlighted the awe and wonder of the clouds, rainfall, and their role in the human-nature relationship in various districts of Bangladesh.

With the help of some natural indicators, people used to predict heavy catastrophic events in the climate. The mention of some important echo-correlative proverbs about clouds is noteworthy in this respect. One such proverb expresses the special relationship between two objects: "If the clouds break and the sun shines, it will be a big storm." There are also proverbs discussing their conception of the scientific phenomena of action and reaction. For example, "There is thunder but no rain" ("Or Gorjan Sei Barshan Nei").<sup>8</sup> It implies that people in general expected rainfall as a consequence of the heavy thunderstorms. People would become disappointed when things were not happening likewise.

During the colonial period, traditional Bengali society possessed knowledge of biological meteorology, a branch of science that deals with the effects of weather and climate on living organisms. Their thoughts on meteorology covered such things as the sudden rise of anthills, the sudden calling of frogs, the sudden running of cats, bees, serpents, and deer, the sudden pain in an arthritic person's injured limb, a snake climbing up a tree, and more. People believed that sudden rains might occur when aquatic animals dried their wings in the sun and made chirping sounds in the sky. When migratory birds flew across the sky, they would provide substantial weather predictions, including rainfall. It was because migratory birds fly thousands

of miles from one country to another, depending on cloud density and the direction of flow. In Bengali society, the *Chatak* bird, also known as '*Meghjivan*', acted as a good indicator of the rainy season, as there was a popular belief that they did not drink anything other than rainwater.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2: Types of Cloud:

In colonial Bengali society, the clouds were primarily of two types: (1) cumulus clouds and (2) layered clouds. Rabindranath wrote about the cumulus cloud. He noticed that the clouds moved in groups in the distant sky, but he was unsure of the reason behind their movement.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the clouds in Bangladesh were divided into four categories: (1) *Avarta* cloud, (2) *Drona* cloud, (3) *Pushkara* cloud, and (4) *Samvarta* cloud. *Avarta clouds were naturally rotating, recirculating, or circling.* These clouds were essentially waterless. In the text, *Kabikangkan Chandi* we find representations of *Avarta clouds*.<sup>11</sup> The *Drona clouds* were named after the unit that referred to the amount of grain.<sup>12</sup> These clouds supplemented rainy crops. A popular lake in Rajasthan inspired the name of the '*Pushkar*' cloud.<sup>13</sup> In drought-stricken Rajasthan, water was very scarce, especially during the summer. So, it was believed that the chance of rain in the clouds was also very rare. The last type, known as '*Samvarta*', represented a deluge cloud.<sup>14</sup>

In Bengal, the names *Alak Megh*, *Urna Megh*, and *Kuntal Megh* were also very popular. '*Alak*' means a cloud that looks like cotton or a tuft of hair. The word '*Urna*' means sheep's hair or wool, and '*Kuntal*' means hair. These three nomenclatures are synonymous. In English, this cloud can be called '*Cirrus*'.<sup>15</sup> In Bangladesh, there was a different kind of cloud described as *Kodale* or *Kurule Megh*. The cloud looked like it was ploughing the land with a spade. We also refer to this as Mackerel Sky due to its design, which resembles broken cotton. Mackerel is a type of marine fish. These clouds may rain at times. Khana made frequent use of this type of cloud. Nazrul Islam also mentioned the term *Kodale Megh* in the same spirit.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.3. Measurement of Cloud:

In colonial Bengal, there were indigenous methods for measuring the clouds in the sky. In cloud science, there is a word called Nephogram, which means photographs of clouds. After the establishment of the Indian Meteorological Department in 1875, there were modern instruments (Nephoscope) for observing the direction

and velocity of clouds, but these were not available in earlier days of the colonial period. As a consequence, the old and experienced people, who were practical experts in agro-climatology, possessed a wealth of mundane knowledge about clouds. This knowledge was based on observation. The legendary woman ‘*Khana*’ and the sage ‘*Dak*’ were such veterans. Through visual observation, they established a scale, ranging from 0 (zero) to 8.<sup>17</sup> A reading of zero indicates a cloudless sky, while a reading of eight indicates a completely overcast sky. The quantifiable number 8 is identical to the eight directions. In traditional Bengali society, these eight directions are East, *Ishan* (the North-East), North, *Bayu* (the North-West), West, *Nairet* (the South-West), South, and *Agni* (the South-East). Moreover, the scale divided into eight parts was associated with the eight deities, or *Ashtadikpals*: *Airavata*, *Pundarika*, *Bamana*, *Kumud*, *Anjana*, *Pushpadanda*, *Sarvabhauma*, and *Supratik*. *Kabikangkan Chandi* stated that ‘*Chari Meghe Jal Dei Ashta Gajaraj*’, or the precipitation in four types of clouds, was due to the blessings of *Gajaraja*. The cloud, known in Bangladesh as *Ishani Megh*, appears in the east corner (The North-East). Rabindranath and Mukund Chakraborty described the cloud many times.<sup>18</sup>

The reason for discussing the eight directions with clouds is that there prevailed a popular belief regarding the connection between the directions of wind and clouds with rainfall. Parashar’s ‘*Krishisangraha*’ mentioned that during the month of *Poush*, there was good rain when the wind blew from the north or west. In Bengali, there was a popular saying: ‘*Bamun Badal Ban/ Dakshina Pelei Jan*’.<sup>19</sup> The *dakshina* of a *Bamun* or Brahmin is the money or remuneration given to him after the performance of the sacred rites. However, in the case of *Badal* or *Badla* cloud and *Ban* or flood, the meaning of *Dakshina* was distinct. In this context, the term “*Dakshina*” referred to a southward direction rather than a monetary reward. If the cloud was southerly or the wind blows from the south in a mellow wind, it could result in flood or heavy rainfall. The physiographic condition of Bengal was quite responsible for such a condition. As the terrain of Bangladesh sloped from north to south, flood water flowed from north to south and created a flood situation.

#### **1.4. Influence of Early and Medieval Conception of Precipitation**

Some of the early medieval texts like *Khanar Bachan*, *Krishi Parasara* and *Daktantra* inscribed some kind of climatic knowledge of colonial Bengal. *Krishi Parasara*, a text written by Parasara in Sanskrit verse, declared rainfall as the

foundation of agriculture in the Bengal region. The text contained several maxims declaring the relationship between rainfall, the direction of winds, seasonal changes on one hand, and planetary movements on the other. According to Parasara, *Vaishaka* (April to May) was the best time to sow seeds and *Paush* (December – January) was for harvesting. However, he suggested the time of *Suchi* (May-July) for sowing the transplantable seeds. He also prescribed the proper methodology of transplantation, paddy cultivation, the importance of manure, and various mystical syllables for eradicating insects, beasts, and diseases from paddy fields. Many seasonal and agricultural festivals such as *Pushya-yatra* (performed before harvesting paddy in Pausha), *go-parva* (cow festival), and *hala-prasarana* (first ploughing ceremony) were mentioned by Parasara.<sup>20</sup>

Two pieces of literature, *Daktantra* or *Dakar Bachan* and *Khanar Bachan*, written in the early Bengali language, are closely related to the climate and soil of Bengal. These texts consist of rhyming aphorisms and wise sayings. Some of their maxims have been serving as a manual of agriculture among the common rural agricultural communities of Bengal. *Dakar Bachan* and *Khanar Bachan* speak of specific weather conditions in different months of the year and their impact on the king and his country. According to the texts, rainfall at the end of the month of *Magh* (January- February) is most suitable for cultivation; it blessed the king and country as well. Rainfall during the *Phalgun* (February-March), helps to grow millet abundantly.<sup>21</sup> However, the texts mention that post-monsoon precipitation in *Agrahayan* (November-December) is most harmful; it obliged the king to go begging. According to Khana, paddy grows well in the sun while betel thrives in the shade. Paddy develops rapidly if it receives abundant sunshine during the day and rainfall at night. In *Kartik* (October-November), drizzling greatly contributes to paddy cultivation. Khana also believes that the presence of mist in the sky during *Chaitra* and an abundance of paddy during *Bhadra* are indicators of plagues and other disasters. In the month of *Ashada*, a prevalence of southern wind predicts floods for the year. Additionally, Khana predicted that if *Poush* remained hot and *Vaishakh* cold, the rains would start from the early part of *Ashada*.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.6. Religious Performances and Rituals Related to Rainfall

In South Asia, climate has been central to the growth or prosperity of human civilizations. It was crucial to rice production or settled agriculture. Due to the heavy reliance on rainfall, people observed numerous religious and cultural rituals

to mitigate the impact of drought and the scarcity of rain. In the districts of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar in North Bengal, the Rajbanshi girls performed a dance pretending to be ploughing in honour of *Varshandev Hudumdeo*. The scene was off-limits to men because it was performed in the darkness of the new moon, nudely in agricultural fields. The next day, they observed the *Kumari-Yoni Puja*. The Rajbanshi people believed that in this way *Hudumdeo* would be pleased, rain would come down on the earth after his blessing, and agriculture would flourish. In addition to that, people performed naked dances secretly in front of *Kartika*, the god who guards crops.<sup>23</sup>

One of East Bengal's popular rituals was '*Megh Ranir Kulo Namano*'. The Namashudra peasant girls celebrated this custom. In this ritual, the girls created a fake rain by sprinkling water. The analogical magic of rain laid the groundwork for this event. People believe that it would lead to actual rain, a crucial element for agriculture. The cloud was considered a goddess. People also regarded the *Vasudhara Vrata* as a wish for clouds and rain. Households in colonial Bengal arranged '*Tulsi Jhara*' during the month of Chaitra-Baisakh. From Chaitra Sankranti to Baisakh Sankranti, households in Bangladesh tied an earthen pot or a small pitcher in place of Tulsi, created a small hole in the bottom, and inserted a clean cloth through the opening. As a result, the water from the pot or pitcher drips on the basil plant. Women bathed in the Vasudhara Vrata, slowly pouring water into the stream while chanting, "*Ganga, Ganga, Indra Chandra Varun Basuki, Tino Kul Vore Dao Dhone Jone Sukhi.*" "*Hey Ganga, Indra, Chandra, Varun, and Basuki, bless the household with wealth, kinsmen, and happiness.*"<sup>24</sup> In Bengali society, the Ganga was considered the goddess of rivers. Images of gods like Indra or Varuna believed to control rain, water, or climate, were common in connection with weather and rain.

With the arrival of the monsoon, Bengal experienced a variety of rainfall-oriented festivals and other forms of entertainment. Some autobiographical works from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries provide a few scant impressions of these activities. These texts described vividly how the village people celebrated the charm of every rainy season. *Asada* and *Shravan*, according to the Bengali calendar, are considered rainy seasons. After suffering the scorching heat of summer, the people of colonial Bengal fell in love with the cloudy and rainy weather of the *Asada*, and removing all of their weariness, they celebrated the new monsoon

with the *Dasahara Ganga* festival, an age-old Bengali festival for observing the rainy season. Every house in Gobindapur originally performed Mansa Puja with great pomp on the occasion, and afterwards, people would come to the Ganga river's shore with flower garlands to appease Goddess Ganga.<sup>25</sup>

Vernacular texts demonstrate the relationship between various religious occasions and the development of popular beliefs about rainfall and other weathering phenomena. In East Bengal, there was a sacred, festive celebration, the *Snanyatra* festival (bathing festival), commemorating Lord Jagannath three days after the *Dasahara*. There was a popular belief that it rained a lot on the day of that festival.<sup>26</sup> Contemporary literary expressions have described several real-life instances of torrential rains, supporting this belief. There was hardly any scientific explanation for the association between rainfall and the sacred festivals, this particular instance of rainfall might be take merely a coincidence. However, in the larger sphere of the rural population, such beliefs formed the basis of the indigenous knowledge system which regulated the materialistic and emotional domain of common people.

## **2. Dissemination of Colonial Scientific Knowledge on Meteorology:**

Along with indigenous knowledge, colonial scientific explorations related to climate rose to prominence in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Newspapers and journals reported how modern and scientific meteorological methods affected the native perception of climate during the colonial period in Bengal. *Digdarshan* was the first Bengali journal produced by the Srirampur Mission in 1818 to discuss native meteorological traditions in colonial Bengal.<sup>27</sup> Another important journal, the *Tattvabodhini* journal aimed to convince the public of the scientific explanation of meteorological superstitions and discussed various aspects of weather and climate. One of its articles entitled '*Kusangskar*' (Superstitions), described people's belief in the *Dakinis* (supernatural power) for natural phenomena like hail, lightning, rain, and sometimes even death. The journal emphasized the success of Western science in explaining natural events and developing a unified belief system. It also covered issues such as air properties, velocity, density, water's practical applications, ocean depth, and cloud formation. The 'Science News' section included discussions on meteorology and physics. Additionally, the journal described various climatic disasters and their contribution to the understanding of

climate change.<sup>28</sup>

Along with this, various periodicals in the 19th century, such as '*Vividhartha Samgraha*', *Bamabodhani*, *Bangamahila*, and *Paricharika* played a significant role in disseminating scientific knowledge, particularly in the fields of meteorology and weather. One of the scientific publications in *Bamabodhani* provided logical explanations for the formation of clouds: "Clouds are nothing more than a form of water. Water turns into smoke, and smoke turns into clouds. As the clouds break, rain falls. If you heat a pot of water, smoke will rise from it. If you immerse your hand in this smoke for a while, it becomes wet and begins to release water. Here, the smoke gathers and transforms into water. When the smoke rises, it turns into clouds."<sup>29</sup> These publications aimed to inform the general public about scientific techniques used to monitor and understand weather patterns. They also made efforts to integrate indigenous knowledge with Western scientific perspectives. However, the scientific articles in these publications were often brief and incomplete. In spite of that, these periodicals helped raise awareness and interest in Western science among the general population.

Between 1818 and 1900, several children's periodicals were published in Bengal that focused on scientific discussions, particularly on weather and climate. One notable publication was *Bondhu*, which was first published in 1863 and edited by Yogendranath Ghosh. Other magazines such as *Bayu*, *Balak Bandhu*, and *Sakha* also featured scientific articles on topics like tornadoes, the atmosphere, and various weather phenomena.<sup>29</sup> This trend continued in magazines like *Mukul*, *Shaishab Sakha*, *Snehmaya*, *Kusum*, and *Anjali*, which aimed to develop children's consciousness through scientific reasoning and analysis of the natural environment. Some of the local newspapers such as *Tamuluk Patrika*, used various literary forms to promote meteorological science and scientific works. The conversation between Madhava and Gopala in the newspaper emphasizes the importance of science over traditional belief and divine knowledge.<sup>30</sup> In the 19th century, Bengali newspapers played a role in socializing and promoting scientific consciousness. However, there was limited discussion on weather and climate in science magazines during that time.

### **Conclusion:**

In colonial Bengal, various indigenous approaches prevailed to understand the tropical climate, especially rainfall. A large number of Bengali proverbs, songs,



poetry, and rhymes, some of which were written during the early medieval period (such as *Daker Bachan* and *Khanar Bachan*), contributed significantly in representing the age-old ‘social memory’ of climate in this region. The myths and cosmologies discussed in the contemporary texts preserved an unwritten record of some important past climate events. These texts also recorded people’s responses to such events and the dynamics of the human-nature relationship. Their observations on climate were based on, ‘economic forecasting’, and ‘apocalyptic prophecy.’ Their primary intention in perceiving the nature of the rainfall was to stay alive by keeping food, and other resources available adapting to climate change, and easily coping with climatic disasters. Their climatic notions, to some extent, relied on ‘scientific modelling’ that followed a practical logic of cause-and-effect relationships. However, in most of the cases, they were fictional, and the influence of God or supernatural power was observable. Their climatic thoughts intertwined with various religious practices, folk cultures, popular beliefs, and their distinctive lifestyle. Therefore, we can classify the climatic perceptions as ‘ethno-scientific’, semi-scientific, or spiritualistic. At the same time, the colonial government developed a well-organised meteorological infrastructure to study the climate of the empire thoroughly. Such Western scientific thoughts began to be disseminated in the public sphere through various vernacular newspapers, journals and articles. To some extent, modern scientific thoughts succeeded in eradicating traditional, spiritualistic and superstitious beliefs. However, as most of the rural people were illiterate, they did not replace the traditional beliefs with the scientific ideas. The native conceptions remained dominant in the social circles of rural people. Thus, in colonial Bengal, the colonial government’s scientific study of Western meteorology and the Indigenous system of semi-scientific or spiritualistic thoughts co-existed in equal measure; however, there were significant opposition and differences in methodology between them.

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# Swami Vivekananda on Women's Question and Gender Relations

Dr. Rajesh Biswas

**Abstract:** Women's question and gender relations are no doubt a relevant topic nowadays. Women are essential part of the society and they are playing very important role in Indian society from the primitive to the modern age. They are associated with social, cultural and political issues due to their empowerment. Now the society is undoubtedly gender based but women are conscious and take challenges to overcome the social discrimination and inequality. Now they have their own voice and rights. Swami Vivekananda was against the stereotype concept about women. He emphasized on women consciousness and women empowerment through proper education. He also raised his voice to overcome deplorable condition of women by education, employment and independence. This paper highlighted Swamiji's view on women. Swamiji believed that upliftment of a nation depends on men and women. Consciousness of men and women is essential for proper progress of the state.

**Keywords:** Society, Empowerment, Consciousness, Education, Rights

Excellence of a civilization depends on the status of women in it. In fact, women's status in India is never static and uniform. So, the limitations of civilization also depend on the position of women in it. Neo social movement started from the second half of the 20th century. This movement influenced every branch of social Science deeply. As a result, many social objects gradually noted as Central context of discussion. Inevitably Gender study, Women study identified women as prominent subject. In the 1970 women study increased very rapidly. In this period socio Political and economics field numerously discussed on women empowerment. This study also highlights the discrimination of men and women. Naturally Dalit and other marginal women became the focal point of this theme. The discussion of women movement for right, position and authority towards power and equality nowadays very relevant subject.<sup>1</sup> Women empowerment, position and authority then discussed by the social scientist and it's also now a pertinent topic.

Swami Vivekananda's vision about social upturn, benefaction and prosperity

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of the society depends on every part of the country. Women are essential and momentous in the society, naturally. So, he thought about blessed, enrichment and beneficence of the women in India. He considered that the prosperity of the world depends on authority and dignity of women.<sup>2</sup> Primarily he learns to respect women from Thakur Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa Dev. Also, he had developed it from the independent women of America.

According to Swamiji there was no social bonding between men and women<sup>3</sup> in the primitive age. Gradually women became the centre of the family. So, society was then women centric. Mother was the head of the family and she was the owner of every wealth which she used for her children<sup>4</sup> but gradually ownership of economic potency moved into the hands of men. So economic and social status of women lost at the time. As a result, they also lose their social rights.<sup>5</sup> In the Vedic age wife was husband's companion<sup>6</sup> so men and women at the time was equal. In the social occasion and customs, women were very essential and important because without wife a man was not complete in the society. According to Swamiji emergence of priesthood decline the social status of women.<sup>7</sup> No other thinker attacks the priest like Swamiji. At that period the priest disempowered the rights of women. After the emergence of priesthood women were deprived and loss the equal right. Gradually the concept of Swati grown the special feature of Indian women is the main ideology of Janani (motherhood).<sup>8</sup> Hindu women were religious and spiritual than other women of the world.<sup>9</sup> Swamiji highlights that the intellectual development of women only develop the society and the world. According to Swamiji the Indian women want to become like Sita. Sita was actually the representative of Indian heritage. Sita is symbolised to Bharat Mata.<sup>10</sup> Swamiji wanted to describe Sita as a pure and pious lady, every Indian woman is the children of Sita.

Women occupy an important place in the Indian social structure since ancient times, the improvement and deterioration of the condition of women can be observed from the 1970s onwards. Extensive discussions on women's empowerment and other issues began. Women are now an important element in the family, society, economy and politics. This has been made possible for the development of women's awareness and the issue of social awareness cannot be ignored. Vivekananda believed that society and the country would improve if women were educated. An important part of a conscious society is that women are equally important for the overall development of the society. Swamiji believes that women should solve

various problems for the overall welfare of the society and that women will solve these problems themselves. A handful of Brahmins in the 19th century regarded women as mere child-producing instruments. Swamiji attacked the Brahminical reform. He preached about women's freedom and equality, he also believed that the development of the country and society is not possible if the condition of women is not improved. He found the similarity of nature between men and women by distinguishing them from the outside, and he also thought that if men and women were given equal opportunities, they would be able to progress in the same way. Swamiji believed that there are no women in the world like this country. Women are the soul of this country. Swamiji believed that women should be worshiped like Goddess Kali. He wanted India to prosper if women were respected as they were in the early Vedic period.

Swamiji thought that the difference between men and women should be accepted from the heart and only then the women's society can be properly developed. He also thought that, Indians are generally think of women as inferior, impure, animals, slaves, unmotivated and because of this thinking, women's society is backward.<sup>11</sup> Swamiji has repeatedly acknowledged that it is necessary to change this attitude of people of this country. Swamiji has compared society to animal society. In order to eliminate gender discrimination in this country, Swamiji believed that, the distinction between men and women will disappear once animalism is gone. He also thinks that a country without respect for women can never progress. Women have many problems and these problems can only go away only by real education. Through education If girls get education they can think about various national reforms. If girls get education, they can solve the problems by themselves. The girls of our country also need to learn the sense of heroism, Self-confidence, Self-defence with these women can develop properly. If necessary, women can also earn their own livelihood through religion, art, science, cooking, sewing. Physical education should be taught to girls and ideal female characters are always in front of students should be pronounced. What is chastity of a Hindu girl? But they will understand it easily and this feeling to give life for chastity in all circumstances whether married or virgin. They are their own welfare and that of others will be an exhibitor. Religion will be at the centre of education and let the girls of our country acquire knowledge. However, it is not desirable to sacrifice purity in acquiring knowledge. Girl's life formed only when more nobles like Sita, Savitri, Gargi would rise again. Girls are responsible for the plight of girls. So, girls should take the

responsibility of reawakening. They should be educated even if they are married. Then they will inspire high feelings towards her husband and a heroic son will be born. There will be no problem in marrying educated girls. Swamiji repeatedly tried to say that Women's education is essential for national reform and Men's right to women should be limited to education only.

Swamiji believed that educated women would become competent and solve their own problems without anyone else working for them. And like the girls of other countries of the world, the girls of our country also need this qualification.<sup>12</sup> Women's freedom is the main spring of development. If woman properly able to live independently the men and women and the country will all prosper. Girls can solve their own problems. If women become believers in India and Indian religion, women will become more radiant and brighter than other nation. Swamiji thought it is necessary that between girls and boys there should be no discrimination. Along with thousands of men as well as thousands of women are needed for the development of the nation. To conquer India with the help of men It may take 50 years according to Swamiji but India can be conquered by 500 women in just a few weeks.

To eliminate deficiencies Swamiji wanted to establish women in high places and establish them. According to him first the mother and her daughters then the father and his son's. Spiritual development of girls is possible only through the establishment of Math for Women.<sup>13</sup> If even one of the girls is celibate then thousands of girls will rise up. For improvement Swamiji tried to say that if one read the history of the world, one will see religion and the prosperity of religion is made possible by girls everywhere in all countries. Women of all races are the bearers and guardians of civilization. Women have a natural tendency in this regard. Religion is an integral part of Indian culture and this religious sentiment women still play a leading role. In India girls of our country are the highest in all spheres of society by getting enough education and freedom. Even if it improves in this situation where their life is still fraught with despair. According to Swamiji, the ideals should be followed deeply and the women of tomorrow can find the right path only by following ideals of noble women of the past, in some cases, they will surpass them. Future women will be like a hero and on the other hand, like a Janani. Swamiji believed that a hero's determination and a mother's heart these are two things are needed in Modern India. The women should use these two things to

understand India's Ancient tradition, Modern science and technology. So, they can become real hope and a symbol of desire.

Swamiji's work towards women's welfare was widely celebrated during his lifetime. Swamiji's plans are being successfully implemented worldwide through the many branch centres of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Sarada field. Many women have responded to Swamiji's call, including foreigners such as Sister Nivedita.<sup>14</sup> Swamiji wrote to Nivedita especially for Indian women. In Indian society women are very much needed than man. India still needs more noble woman but unable to give birth to noble woman. So Swamiji borrowed Nivedita from foreign country. Nivedita's Teachings, Oneness, Purity, Infinite Love, Fortitude, Conduct Devotion influenced the Indian women. Swamiji asked Nivedita to play a leading role in women's education. Swamiji for the betterment of women society in India appointed Nivedita. Swamiji believed about the awakening or welfare of women society. There are two important statements he thought, that men could do anything for women but a woman can do more for a woman. Men have taken the burden of shaping the fate of women into their own hands, so women have suffered. Vivekananda hoped that to achieve Women's Awakening and the development of women's consciousness it is very important to develop Women's education. That will be fulfilled only when the female consciousness is developed and the complete development of the country will happen.

Swami Vivekananda wanted to develop the awareness of women through proper education. In his Swadesh mantra he told "Forget not that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, forget not the god thou worshippers is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Uma; forget not thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for the sense-pleasure, are not for the individual personal happiness; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar; forget not that social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood" So women were very glorious part of Indian Society and also, they were very much active with socio cultural and economic issues of the society. In the colonial India the society was no doubt gender based. Swamiji was against social discrimination and inequality. He believed that women empowerment, consciousness and proper education are essential for the Indian Society. Perhaps all the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda on Women's Question and Gender Relations are reflected through the Swadesh Mantra.



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# Indian Tribal Jewellery: Insight on Past and Present Outlook of Tribal Jewellery and Its Making Technology

Rupa Ghosh

**Abstract:** According to the official Census held in 2011, Adivasis constitute 8.6 per cent of the nation's total population. The tribal peoples are often referred to as "Adivasis," which means "original inhabitants of a particular area." Indigenous tribes constitute India's poorest still relying on agriculture, fishing, or manual labour for survival. Each tribe has its own traditions, clothing, language, and jewellery.

India has a rich tribal culture that, through modernisation, has maintained its unique traditions and values. Tribal jewellery has a distinct earthy appeal. Tribal jewellery reveals enormously about the wearer's social standing, income and possessions, moral values, and even practical behaviours. Apart from portraying a traditionally idealised look, the ornaments often provide a brief insight into a group's socio-cultural customs. The technique of making jewellery has developed over history. Many techniques have continued unbroken till the present day - Moulds and Dies, Repousse/ nakshi/ nakashu-velai, Filigree and Granulation, Minakari and Kundan.

**Keywords:** Tribal Jewellery, India, Tribe, Technique, State, Ornaments, Gold, Silver

The term "jewel" comes from the old French "Joule" - as something that gives joy. "Jewel" Everything that gives joy.<sup>1</sup> Tribal Jewelry is jewelry made by indigenous tribal artisans using local materials to create objects of adornment that contain significant cultural meaning for the wearer. As we know India is a rich land of culture and traditions. Unity in diversity is the uniqueness of India. As many tribes live in many part of india and they have their own culture, traditions and trends. The total population of Scheduled Tribes is 10.43 crore as per the Census 2011 which accounts for 8.6% of the total population of the country.<sup>2</sup> Tribal Jewelry pieces are rarely uniform in shape or exactly symmetrical. The materials used are those found locally, with content and quality varying among the different cultures, artisans, and across time. There may be missing stones, broken sections, considerable wear patterns, and debris still clinging to them from having been displayed in the local marketplace or along the roadside for sale. Much Tribal Jewelry has traveled around the world from village to village, and generation to

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generation – these irregularities are part of its charm, heritage, and value.

### **Adornment**

There is no denying that Tribal Jewellery is primarily intended to be worn as a form of beautiful adornment. Ideals of beauty vary greatly from one tribe to another, however. What one group considers beautiful, another group may find unappealing.

### **Wealth and Status**

Tribal Jewelry has been acknowledged as a repository for wealth since antiquity. Once accumulated, it is easily converted into currency or used directly in barter. It is almost always a significant portion of the marriage dowry, providing a measure of the value placed on the match. Although Tribal Jewelry artisans were usually men, it was the women who actually owned the pieces, acting as keepers of the family's fortune. Tribal Jewelry also makes a statement about the wearer's status within a group.

### **Functional Uses**

Besides being beautiful, some Tribal Jewelry is both practical and functional. Here are some examples.

### **Communication**

The large cylindrical Tumar pendants worn in India were ideal for carrying written messages from one person to another. Servants brought them to the intended recipients – with the caps of the Tumar carefully sealed beforehand to prevent those with prying eyes from opening them.<sup>3</sup>

Work Aid, Some Tribal Jewelry is utilitarian, assisting with chores. In Tibet, for example, milkmaids wear ornately decorated fang-shaped pendants at their waist to support the milk buckets while they worked.<sup>4</sup>

Protection, Perhaps more intriguing, however, is the wearing of Tribal Jewelry as amulets and talismans to protect the spiritual body. Amulets and talisman are very similar. Amulets allow only beneficial energies to reach the wearer, whereas talisman repel evil forces. Frequently Tribal Jewelry combines the properties of both an amulet and a talisman into one piece. Examples of amulets include the coins and ornaments attached to a beggar's necklace in India for attracting more generous donations.<sup>5</sup> Other amulet styles are thought to have mystical powers that can increase fertility, femininity, masculinity, bravery, wisdom, vitality, health, crops, etc...there is an amulet intended to attract every desirable thing imaginable.

## Spiritual Beliefs

Tribal Jewellery often expresses a spiritual connection, for example, through jewellery such as the Tibetan Om, the Crescent shape, or etched sacred verses. In most tribes, religious and social beliefs are so indelibly linked together<sup>6</sup> that they are indistinguishable from one another. Spiritual symbolism, therefore, will often be embedded within the design of the Tribal Jewellery itself, overshadowing any other meaning or use the piece might have. The existence of jewellery is known even in prehistoric times but here we will give a brief description of jewellery in five thousand years of Indian civilization.

The Harappan excavations have yielded a number of ornaments. These include earrings, bangles, strings of beads, necklace, rings, hair pins and such other items. Beads of all varieties are the most prominent. These are of gold, silver, copper, bronze, different types of stones, shells, and clay and semi-precious stones. Among stones steatite is most popular. Other semi precious stones used are agate, carnelian, faience, quartz etc. Ornaments of ivory and bone are also found. The famous statue of a dancing girl discovered at Mohanjodaro is wearing a large number of bangles.

There are large numbers of references of jewellery in the earliest known text-the Rig Veda. Other Vedas and sources for the Vedic period make constant references to ornaments of gold, silver and precious gems. These are worn by the gods, goddesses, men and women of all sorts. Rings, necklaces, earrings, bangles etc. are mentioned as popular ornaments.

Ramayana and Mahabharat also provide enumerable references to ornaments and gold as precious objects. Buddhist and Mauryan literature also refer to a large number of ornaments. A description of ornaments by Sudraka in his celebrated play *Mrichhkatikam* (toy cart) written around the 1st century B.C. or A.D. is worth quoting here. Describing the making of ornaments by a jeweller attached to courtesan's house Sudraka writes "where skilful artists were examining pearls, topazes, emeralds, sapphires, lapis lazuli, coral and other jewels. Some set rubies in gold, some string gold beads in colour thread, some string pearls, some grind lapis-lazuli, some cut shells, and some turn and pierce coral". The sculptures of Sanchi, Bharhut and Amravati, paintings of Ajanta caves and sculptures of later period at Puri, Konark and Khajuraho show the variety of ornaments worn in India. Ornaments of hair, ear rings, necklaces, armlets, bangles, girdles for the waist, anklets and toe

rings in all shapes and sizes are visible in the sculptures<sup>7</sup> and paintings, dating back to thousands of years, with remarkable continuity.

Medieval period and especially during the Mughals the ornament and jewellery making reached new heights. The European travellers visiting India in the 16th and the 17th were dazzled by the large variety and amount of jewellery used by the royalty and common folks. Sir Thomas Roe (early 17th century) described the Mughal court as the “treasury of the world”. By an estimate, the Mughal emperors spent almost 24% and the nobility 20% of their income on jewellery and gems<sup>8</sup>. The most significant feature of jewellery during the Mughal period was the use of jewels. Beautiful pieces of jewellery studded with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls are best examples of craftsmanship and skills of goldsmiths.

This tradition continued during the 18th and 19th centuries. During this period European influence on ornament making is also visible. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Indian jewellery design began to absorb influences from the country’s colonial rulers. Design evolved and the cultural narrative became yet more complex, as renowned European jewellers like Cartier began to create pieces for the maharajahs, setting Indian stones in India-influenced pieces made in Paris.<sup>9</sup>

## **Present Day Tribal Jewellery styles in Different States of India :**

### **The North: A Touch of Nature**

In the northern parts of India, tribes like those in Himachal Pradesh use lots of natural materials in their jewelry, like wood, seeds, and stones. Jewellery like peepalleaf-shaped forehead ornaments, solid iron-headed bangles, hair ornaments, anklets, necklaces known as chandanhaars which can be described as a bunch of long silver chains.<sup>10</sup> The head ornament Bindi is a central pendant hanging from the parting of the hair and silver chains extending on both sides up to the ear. Another head ornament shringar-patti includes a fringe worn on either side of the face<sup>11</sup>, consisting of a star or geometrical shaped pieces linking to each other.

Tribal jewellery of Jammu and Kashmir is prevalent in the state and is mainly made out of gold, silver and stones. Gujjar tribe wears bangles, hair pins, brooches and other ornaments are made up of semi precious stones. Gunus is thick bangle made of solid gold and silver with a snake or lion head at either end. This is one of the popular and most widely worn tribal jewellery of Jammu and Kashmir. Srinagar,

the capital City of Jammu and Kashmir is a center for precious and semiprecious stones. Jhumkas and naths are very famous as they are commonly used by the localites. The women of Ladakh Himalaya region wear an ornament called 'sondus' or 'branshil'<sup>12</sup> which is a marriage symbol usually fixed on the left shoulder having few gold or silver discs connected by a number of long silver strands. It is inherited from the mother to the daughter at the time of marriage.

### **The West: Colourful and Bold**

Moving to the west, in Rajasthan, the tribal jewelry gets really colorful and shiny. Tribes like the Banjaras are famous for their bright beads and intricate silver work. Their jewellery is like wearing a piece of the vibrant, lively desert culture, full of life and energy. Silver is more commonly worn by the tribal women and is certainly more affordable. Here Necklaces are very different and unique in its nature. Rajasthan's silver tribal jewellery is very famous as it is exported in different parts of the country as well as outside India. It is a delightful collection of earrings, bracelets, bangles, amulets, anklets, hairpins and necklaces. The predominant Madliya (pendant) thread necklace of Rajasthan is a beautiful traditionally designed silver necklace which is strung in traditional way in cotton cord with four nice cut silver beads. The bor or rakhdi, which is also known as a ghundi or borla<sup>13</sup> adorns the centre of the forehead, at the hairline. The bor is an essential symbol of marriage and is worn only by married women.

The ethnic tribal communities of Gujrat adorn jewellery to distinguish themselves from the myriad tribes, eg. Rabaris can be easily identified by looking at their women folk, who are usually clad with long black head scrapes, distinctive heavy brass earrings which hang low, stretching the earlobes. They tattoo magical symbols on their necks, breasts and arms. Their jewellery is modest in comparison to other tribal women. Descending from the north of Rajasthan, these nomadic tribes (collectively called as the Gujjars) shared along their way, the designs, resulting in some thirtyfive different kinds of earrings<sup>14</sup> alone for the men, women and children of various communities (like Rabari, Ahir, Bharvad, Jat, Satvaras). Most of the Tribal jewellery of Maharashtra is derived from the legacies of Maratha and Peshwa dynasties. Beads are common in Tribal jewellery of Maharashtra. Kolhapur Saaj, Har and Malas, Mohanmel, boral etc. are the important tribal necklace for Maharashtrian women. Gathla and Putalimal are the gold coins strung together to form a necklace<sup>15</sup>.

## **THE EAST: BAMBOO AND TRIBAL TALES**

In the eastern state, tribal jewellery of Odisha is an intricate part of the community's identity and social customs. These jewellery are derivative of ancestral tradition and hold cultural significance to the men and women who wear them. For example, the aluminium neckbands of the Gadaba tribe are an indicator of married women and their married lives, and the Nose rings worn by Kondh women are believed to ward off the evil spirits<sup>16</sup>. Bonda tribal women are nude, they wear only short skirts and cover their breasts with beads necklaces and wear brass and aluminium rings piled over one another around their neck. They also wear a coin necklace called Dabulubeida.

The tribal adornments of Jharkhand consist of hasuli, thela, tarpat, pahuchi, mandli, jhumka, matar rola, sikri and so forth rings, 'Kadhas' is a genuine hit at the structure<sup>17</sup>. Bihar which is the 13th largest state of India. Tribals like Oraon, Santal usually use many jewellery which are famous countrywide. The popular jewellery is subtle earrings that are worked in filigree with various motifs. Lac is commonly used for costume jewellery. The married women of Bihar state including Bhumji, Mo, Oraon Tribes and Santhal tribes use the bangles and nose rings that are made out of this lac. Bangle has an inner core and an outer one covered by a thin layer of better quality coloured lac. The inner one is strong one mixed with white clay<sup>18</sup>.

Tribal ornaments of West Bengal maintain the cultural ethnicity of India. Hunsuli, Chik or a gold choker is worn around the neck during traditional gatherings and social occasions. Pancha or Sapta lahiri is a necklace having five to seven strands of precious stones or beads. Baju, tabiz or tagaa are the traditional ornaments worn around the arm which are delicate hollow bangles expertly crafted in gold or silver.<sup>19</sup> Santal tribal women wear silver wristlets. Dokra is a form of tribal jewellery in the states of West Bengal. It is symbol of craftsmanship.

### **The South: Detailed and Delicate**

Down in the southern part of India, tribal jewelry becomes more detailed and delicate. Silver is used in abundance in Andhra Pradesh. The silver and gold jewellery which are making in this region have some resemblances with the Mughal tradition. Gold covered jewellery in which the combination of silver, brass and copper are made into alloy and gold is drained into fine wires and alloy which is superimposed on the alloy.<sup>20</sup>

Tribes in Tamil Nadu like the Todas, Badagas, Kotas of the Nilgiri district have silver and other metal jewellery. Toda jewel pieces are made of bent wires and shells. The Kadar tribe of Aanamalai hills have bead jewellery; these are bought and sold by Nari Kuravas or gypsies. The jewellery making tradition, which dates back to the Sangam era about two millennia ago, had acquired a high degree of excellence and the pieces worn today are similar to the ones worn then.

Konda Kapus tribes in Karnataka are known for their special type of ornaments. They like to use silver and copper in their jewellery. The coins play an important part in making their necklaces usually use 25 paisa and 50 paisa which is very simple in look. The pendant on the Mangalsutra indicates the community of the wearer it could be shaped like a tulsi (holy basil plant), the conch and discuss of Vishnu or it could be heavily stone-studded as worn by Chettinad women<sup>21</sup>. The ornaments made of palm leaves, wood and many tribal groups from Kerala use beads from wild plants.

### **THE CENTRAL: METALS AND MIRRORS**

In Central India, tribes like the Gonds and Bhils create jewellery that uses metals and mirrors, with each piece reflecting the tribal spirit and connection to the earth. Their jewellery is both beautiful and powerful, with bold designs that make you feel strong and connected to the world around them. The Bangles they wear are of lac and glasses, they are worn by all the tribal communities. The anklets, which they used, are clove shaped beads.<sup>22</sup> These are usually made of silver. Bastar district tribes are very fond of jewellery. Silver, wood, glass, peacock feathers, copper and wild flowers are used by them for making their traditional ornaments having ethnic value. Bastar tribal women wear necklaces made out of one rupee coin which are very famous here. Some other traditional ornaments of tribes are Basta Kada (armlet), Khilli wala kada (for the wrist), Daal and kavali (bangles), Taagali (necklace), Paan wala haar (an ornament for the neck), Jhumki (earrings), finger rings in spiral forms and toe rings like Bichua, Angootha and kandora.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Northeast: Woven with Tradition**

In the northeastern part of India, tribes weave together bamboo, beads, and even textiles to create jewelry that's light and beautiful. It reflects the lush green landscapes and rich cultural tapestry of the area. In Assam some of the famous necklaces are known by the names – Japi, Thuriya (star shaped pendant), Dugdugi (spade shaped), Lokhaparo (pigeon shape), Dhool (shape of that of the Indian musical instrument -



dholak). A tribe called Sonowal Kacharis was involved in gold extraction from the rivers.

Manipur, literally meaning the land of jewels, is a paradise on earth when Mother Nature has been extra generous in her beauty. Regarding the ornament of Zeliangrong people, Colonel Mc Cullock states that the girls wear glass beads ornaments on their arms till they are married. In the festivals, the men commonly wear most priced necklaces of red pebbles. According to R Brown, the males commonly wear necklaces of beads and shell.<sup>24</sup> A reddish pebble necklace is the most highly priced. Bracelets of brass are also worn besides the upper arm and the legs and ankles are bare of ornaments.<sup>25</sup> The tribal people of the Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo regions of Meghalaya have a sophisticated sense of jewellery design. The Khasi and Jaintia tribes' thick red coral bead necklaces, as well as the Garo tribe's thin fluted glass stems strung on fine thread, are both fascinating works of art<sup>26</sup>.

Miniature trophy masks are worn as a pendant in a necklace by Naga warriors in Nagaland. They are symbolic of their bravery as headhunters. Trophy mask were handed down from one generation to another. Ornaments are very popular in the Arunachal Pradesh and hence, jewelry making is a cottage industry by itself. The various materials used for jewelry are beads, wild seeds, glass beads, colored bird feathers and green wings of beetles. Bamboo is also used by the Akas tribe, for making bangles and earrings. The most well-known of Tripura jewellery is necklace made with coins. Green feathers of the parrot's wings, decorated at their tips, with tussocks of contrasting red wool decorate the upper edge of the quill.

### **Technologies Used in Tribal Jewellery**

In today's time technology has advanced in a big way and it has affected the jewellery industry in many ways. Including the method of designing new jewelry and the process of making jewellery. 3D printing has dramatically changed the way jewelry is designed and manufactured, without using any traditional bench skills to create jewellery pieces. Simultaneously, with the advent of the Internet and mass media, social media, costumes and jewellery can be seen closely in every corner of the country and abroad. It have also been able to get to know the Tribal community through films and movies and have been able to add to their outfits. But there are some tribes still use old traditional form in jewellery making.

Dzi beads are made of stone and are kept as amulets in Ladakh. The original Dzi beads were made of natural agate. The oldest dzi beads that have been found

date back to 2000 B.C.<sup>27</sup> Dzi beads have a series of waves, geometric shapes, and lines that decorate them and still in use. The Dhokra Damar tribes are the traditional metalsmiths of West Bengal.<sup>28</sup> Their technique of lost wax casting is named after their tribe and is known as Dhokra metal casting. The tribe is a nomadic tribe and extends from Jharkhand to West Bengal and Orissa. Dhokra is non-ferrous metal casting using the lost-wax casting technique. Kansari and Ghasi/Ghantara communities utilize brass, copper and white metal wires as raw materials.<sup>29</sup> Beads are made out these wires by heating and hammering them incessantly. Once the beads are buffed various knotting techniques are employed to combine them with threads to make jewelry. Tools such as hammer, cutter, scissors and measuring tapes and a furnace are required for the process. The final step involved checking of the jewelry at Bhubaneswar.

Gold was locally available flowing down with the water of several Himalayan rivers, of which Subansiri is the most important. In fact, a particular tribe of people, the “Sonowal Kachari” were engaged only for gold washing in these rivers. Gold washing and manufacture of jewellery were two important ancient industries in Assam and gold was abundantly found in the sands of different rivers of the state. Ranthali village is famous for “Assamese jewellery business not only in the state but also in other parts of the country.”<sup>30</sup> According to 2001 census, 1946 people are living in this village which is increase to 2032 person in 2011 census. Almost 90 percent of the total families are engaged in Assamese Jewellery business. It is one of the important place of Assam where different types of colorful Assamese jewellery are made.

For preparing Assamese jewellery craftsmen are generally found to use manual method. Here in the preparation process gold is generally through the help of machine to smoothen up. After smoothing the gold, it is cut into required sizes and packing by white paper. After packing the pieces of gold, they are hited by the haturi and other two different types of small instruments used by the goldsmith. Then the pieces of smooth and fine plates of gold will be ready to use in the preparation of ornaments. In case of silver metal, three different types of elements are mainly prepared by silver, such ‘Tar’, ‘vissile’, and ‘pat’ which are the most important elements for the formation of Assamese jewellery. Different types of instruments are used in the preparation of the Assamese jewelry: Haturi, Bhati, Niary, Daish, Phali, Karsani, Kati Nuoni, Lap, Thina, Bakhori, Lamp of candle,

Flame of fire.

A majority of Munda women have tattoos called Godna on their bodies. However, tribal men also use Godna. They believe that Godna are the only ornament which accompanies them after death. The Kol tribe is also well-known for their traditional jewellery-making methods. They make intricate and colourful pieces out of a variety of materials such as beads, shells, and metal. Metal is another jewelry-making technique used by the Kol tribe. They use techniques such as filigree and repoussé to create intricate designs and shapes<sup>31</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

There is a lot of questions regarding tribal jewellery, how do we preserve these symbols of heritage and culture? How do we ensure that the artistry and stories behind Indian tribal jewellery continue to inspire and inform generations to come? These questions loom large, presenting a challenge to both admirers and custodians of tribal art and culture. Though government (Ministry of Tribal Affairs) try to preserve tribal crafts and craftsmanship by arranging in numerous way like the Tribal Artisan Mela. Recently The Tribal Artisan Mela (TAeM) held at Bharmour (Himachal Pradesh) on 28th June, 2024, was a successful initiative in supporting the livelihood of tribal artisans.<sup>32</sup> The Ministry of Textiles of Government of India also provided a platform for these artisans to showcase and sell their traditional crafts, contributing to their sustainable income generation.

Tribal Jewellery was earlier just a simple art form, which was limited to only those communities, but today it has become the choice and is welcomed by all communities, all types of people from all parts of the world. India is a country which is known all over the world for its tradition, culture, dress and jewellery. Indian women fond of jewellery often become the center of attraction with their jewelry, but wearing heavy jewellery in today's season is not everyone's thing. Everyone wants to wear beautiful jewellery of less weight. Tribal Jewellery has also become the trend of the modern era. Silver colored chunky and bold necklaces, rings and jhumkis are alluring women in the modern era.

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# Literature, History and Munshi Premchand: An Intellectual Mapping of a Mutually inclusive Triad

Richik Bhattacharyya

**Abstract:** The interplay between literature and history produces a very intricate arena of study that ultimately illuminates the potential of literary works as viable historical sources. There is no doubt that literature contains the flavour of the history of a specific time. This essay is designed to explore the connection between literature and history through a case study of Munshi Premchand's writings. Premchand had written about various aspects of Indian life. He wrote about complex social dynamics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in his fictional works. His stories and novels show the real face of colonialism and freedom struggle. He extensively explored the problems of women and the people of fringes through his fictional productions. He produced literature not to entertain people but to provide them with critical insights that would help them access and understand the true nature of historical realities. In this paper, we will see how Premchand's writings illustrate the history of the struggle of man against the men in power. This paper will help to understand the true purpose of literature and how we can use it to write an alternative yet truthful history of the time.

**Keywords:** Intellectual history, Literary history, Realist literature, Munshi Premchand, Nationalism.

Literature and history both are connected with each other but the nature of this connection is not at all simple; rather, it is complex and theoretically multifaceted. Scholars across the disciplines have put their efforts to explore the various sides of this mutual relationship. Up to pre-modern times, precisely up to the publication of Gibbons's 'The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (12 vols)' (Gibbon, E., 1906) there was no such distinction between history and literature. The trend of writing authentic history following a scientific methodology has been a thing of the nineteenth century. Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) showed the path to the domain of Scientific history (Boldt, A. D., & Fullagar, K., 2017). But there were people like Macaulay who believed in a process of history writing that involved less objective sternness of scientific history. His entire devotion has been employed to build a domain of history that is made out of authentic archival data but he has never ignored the necessity of emotive decoration of the historical narratives. He writes in his essay, "The task of the modern historians", that "the perfect historian is he in whose work the character and spirit of an age is exhibited

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in miniature. He relates no fact, he attributes no expression to his character, which is not authenticated by sufficient testimony. But by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, he gives to truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction. In his narrative a due subordination is observed; some transactions are prominent and others retire. But the scale on which he represents them is increased or diminished, not according to the dignity of the persons concerned in them, but according to the degree in which they elucidate the condition of society and the nature of man. He shows us the court, the camp, and the senate. But he also shows us the nation. He considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice, which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion, and of education, and to mark the progress of the human mind. Men will not merely be described, but will be made intimately known to us. The changes of manners will be indicated, not merely by a few general phrases, or a few extracts from statistical documents, but by appropriate images presented in every line” (Macaulay, T. B. M., 1901, p. 15 ).

However, without indulging in an intellectual debate between Ranke’s and Macaulay’s history, It is safe to to accept that history can be retrieved from the hardcore literary sources if the historian is intellectually inclined to accept that valid historical imaginations often make structural or narrative beds for realist fictions. Such an intellectual orientation prepares us for doing literary intellectual history that alternatively presents reality in its most essential form which we often struggle to substantiate and it is because we generally rely on hardcore archival sources to picture the true structure of reality. Hence, there is no denying that literature, often soft in tone and artistic in expression, often works as a window into the past. Realist literature never avoids the calling of time and thus contains history of a time. The realist depiction of any historically significant event or character makes that hero or event more vivid and emotionally accessible (Trevelyan, G. M., 1924; Stephenson, G. T., 1958). Modern comparative methodologies used for qualitative research show that literature can be an alternative repository for writing a mainstream socio-political and cultural history of a specific era (Fleming, J. V., 1973).

Hence, we see that modern fields of historical studies like Postcolonial studies, cultural studies, psycho historical studies heavily rely on literature to churn out the hidden history of a time because realist fictions often tell us something important about world views, values, and the belief system of a people (Shmidt, S. O., 2008).

Literary sources provide the lived experience of the contemporary people and modern intellectual historians can not deny the appeal of such a calling that takes them to a different journey to reveal the true face of already known histories ( LaCapra, D., 2013; Fleming, J. V., 1973). However, we need to be very careful while using literary sources as historical evidence because they may offer a fictitious and over the top idealized or biased account of the historical events. So we must put literary sources in their appropriate contexts and juxtapose and corroborate them with other forms of mainstream sources of evidence.

In India, writers of the late nineteenth and twentieth century have displayed a massive level of historical consciousness in their fictional works and Munshi Premchand (1880-1936) is widely considered the beacon in this regard. He was the trendsetter and the true apostle of Indian sub continental realist literature. He was clear about the pragmatic role that literature, literary figures and litterateurs can play in society. This literary maestro from north India held a very sophisticated and nuanced view of the relationship between history, reality and literature. On 10 April 1936, While delivering the presidential address at the ‘First All India Progressive Writers’ Conference’, held at Lucknow, he clearly outlined the nature and purpose of literature. He says that “Literature properly so-called is not only realistic, true to life, but is also an expression of our experiences and of the life that surrounds us. It employs easy and refined language which alike affects our intellect and our sentiments. Literature assumes these qualities only when it deals with the realities and experiences of life. Fairy tales and romantic stories of princely lovers may have impressed us in the olden days, but they mean very little to us today. Unless literature deals with reality it has no appeal for us. Literature can best be defined as a criticism of life. The literature of our immediate past had nothing to do with actuality; our writers were living in a world of dreams and were writing things like Fasanai Ajaib or Chandra Kanta tales told only for entertainment, or to satisfy our sense of wonder. Life and literature were considered to be two different things which bore no relation to each other. Literature reflects the age. In the past days of decadence, the main function of literature was to entertain the parasitic class. In this literature, the dominant notes were either sex or mysticism, pessimism or fatalism. It was devoid of vigour, originality, and even the power of observation. But our literary taste is undergoing a rapid transformation. It is coming more and more to grips with the realities of life; it interests itself with society or man as a social unit.” (Premchand, M., 2011).



Throughout his career, Premchand maintained this tone in his writings. In an editorial, *Sahitya ki Pragati* (The Growth of Literature), published in 'Hans' in March 1933, he writes that "Innumerable definitions of literature have often been attempted but I shall take up only one for my purpose. .... Literature is a critique of life; its aim is the quest for truth. .... Literature is the tussle between truth and untruth." (page 88). At the end of this same editorial he writes that "Literature is a vast sphere. It cannot be defined in a few words. Today's society is degenerate, and the world is a living hell rife with suffering and poverty, injustice and envy, resentment and emotional distress. Literature, along with sociology, is engrossed in addressing these very issues." (Ansari & Nagpal, 2023, p 98)

Premchand was a master of addressing contemporary social issues. His several short stories and novels that are based on 'social realism' show how colonialism has changed the orientation of Indian life. His novels like *Rangbhum* (Playground), and *Gaban* (Embezzlement) show the impact of colonialism on common men. His works like *Godan* (Gift of Cow), *Kafan* show the struggle of common people living in rural areas under exploitative colonial regime. His short story 'Jihad' reveals the discomfort reality of extremist education and its negative impact on societal harmony. He wrote extensively about Indian nationalism. His first collection of stories, *Soz-E-Watan*, was published in 1907. Stories of this collection were so nationalist in nature that the British government banned the publication and distribution of this collection. Historian Sudhir Chandra wrote in an article that "for nationalism, with its genuine and ever increasing mass appeal, was operating at two levels. At the level of sentiment, symbolized by the struggle against alien imperialism, it tended to bring millions of subject people into an undifferentiated fraternity of the exploited. But at another level it so operated as to promote the material interests of some sections within the large fraternity; without, of course, forgetting to make vague generalized promises to all once freedom had been won. As one committed to the wretched of his society, Premchand did not avail himself of the alternative that permitted the underplaying, even overlooking, of internal fissions-howsoever painful and unjust they might be-so that all the national energies could be concentrated against the foreign exploiter. In an article that was to prove seminal for his later work, he saw through, in 1919, the selfishness of 'the leaders of the swaraj movement' and warned them: 'There is no reason for the public to prefer your governance to the governance of foreign rulers.'<sup>3</sup> The awareness of the seamy aspect of nationalism, however, offered no ground for renouncing it

wholesale. It was, after all, the bedrock on which rested the crucial struggle against imperialism; a struggle on the success of which depended the fate of Premchand's dreams of a humanely restructured society, a society that knew neither slavery nor poverty and offered freedom and happiness to all its members. The dilemma facing Premchand was caused by the duality of nation and class. It was inherent in the very logic of a colonial liberation movement. But while many avoided confrontation with this inescapable dilemma by deferring its resolution, in real terms, until freedom was won-and they were not acting necessarily in bad faith-Premchand found himself obliged to deal with it somehow or the other in terms that were more or less immediate" (Sudhir Chandra, 1982). Apart from nationalism he wrote about so many things like progressivism (Majumdar, P., 2017 ), condition of women (Lal Dwar, J.,1987; Jain, N., 1986; Geetanjali Pandey., 1986; Gupta, R.,2023), caste issues and dalit questions (Gulzar, 2005; Rai, S., 1979; Shandilya, K., 2016).

The above discussion shows that Munshi Premchand's writings contain very useful resources that we can use to rewrite the alternative history of modern India. We need to employ highly creative intuitive intelligence to deconstruct the meanings of his fictional writings and juxtapose them with contemporary reality to draw a definitive yet creatively pure picture of true India.

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# **Police torture to suppress nationalist non-violent Non Co-operation movement in Bengal, 1920-1922**

Tanmoy Malakar

**Abstract:** Non Co-operation movement was the first pan Indian mass movement in the history of Bengal as well as India. The main demands of this movement were to achieve dominion status, although the Indians did not resort to any form of violence in this movement, police torture and violence were widely used in this movement. However the British Governor General and viceroys denied the allegations. The legitimacy of the British rule was questioned by the Indian nationalists. Focusing on the Non-cooperation movement in Bengal I have tried to show, based on Ranajit Guha's famous book 'Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India' that how the archival source has been used against its grains. So my essay will help to raise that question in the context of the whole world so that every oppressed nation of the world can speak out boldly against the colonial rulers and their rule.

**Keywords:** Police, violence, Non-Cooperation, Torture, Colonial rule

## **Introduction:**

A professional police system was established in this country through the Indian Police Act in 1861.<sup>1</sup> As a practical application of the terror that the Great Rebellion had instilled in the British mind, a centralized police system was developed in the colonies to suppress crime and maintain peace.<sup>2</sup> Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, in his research on the police system of the colonial period, has shown that in the early stages, maintaining public order was necessary for the British, so training, disciplining people and performing various social duties were the main tasks of the police, but as a result of the development of all-India nationalism in the later twentieth century, this Police responsibilities shift from institutional work to annihilate nationalism.<sup>3</sup> According to David Arnold, a 'police raj' literally took shape from this period, which manifested itself in the enforcement of repression and torture against Indians.<sup>4</sup> Its main objective was to provide protection to the colonial state. Because the British power began to view the revolutionary terrorism that arose after the Swadeshi movement with suspicion<sup>5</sup>, after the rise of Gandhi in Indian politics and his participation in mass politics, that suspicion became a cause of fear for them,

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which resulted in the formulation and implementation of various repressive laws. The use of these laws led to the practice of police brutality against Indians.<sup>6</sup>

### **Discourse on police torture:**

Nandini Gupta argues that the colonial authorities realized that the most active participants in various political activities in the city were the poor people whom she called the urban poor. Their participation in various political gatherings like picketing, and hartals can be seen to a noticeable degree, thereby disrupting state security.<sup>7</sup> During the period of Gandhi's participation in the All-India mass movement, required armed police who could act very quickly; Lathi charge can even fire if needed. In short, the pattern of colonial police activities changed during the period of mass agitation in the first half of the 20th century. Police violence became a reality in public life when the program of ordinary people turned into visible violence and turned against colonial rule.<sup>8</sup>

Although the least important of the three departments of the British administration namely the bureaucracy, the army and the police, the police became the main pillar of sustaining the British state. The use of force and physical abuse by the police and those associated with the police became instrumental in sustaining British imperialism and colonial rule in Bengal. The use of various repressive laws in the colonial state understood that torture was facilitated, systematized and ultimately sanctioned by the police on Indians during the rule of the East India Company and the colonial state.<sup>9</sup> Deana Heath thinks that the colonial state was the regime of exception, in this exceptional empire the police became 'petty sovereign'.<sup>10</sup>

The police have always played an important role in determining the repressive relationship between the colonial state and the colonized people whose main function was to maintain the sovereignty and peace of the state. That is why the police became the 'main tool' to suppress Indians and keep them in chains of subjugation for ninety years after the disaster of the Great Mutiny.<sup>11</sup> Police torture was legitimized by the British authorities whenever the all-India non-violent nationalist movement gained momentum. Torment, suffering and injury to the human body in various ways were forms of torture observed from pre-modern times. These visible punishments, specially flogging and rigorous imprisonment became as important in public life as they were in colonial rule. Non-Europeans, youth, the working class, religious minorities, and women have at times been subjected to violence by Europeans and the police because the body is an instrument of productive labour.

Therefore, attempts are being made to use the bodies of the colonized people through physical torture.<sup>12</sup>

### **Torture and Law:**

During the Emergency, the state used physical violence to maintain its safety and security.<sup>13</sup> Torture was used in common law practice, but in most cases it was used to a significant degree when the police took statements to extract evidence. A person's body was tormented in various ways through torture, although not legal, police torture was used at various times in colonial states.<sup>14</sup> No attempt was made by the British state to quell it, but torture was applied to the people of the colony through the protectors of the society and later the colonial state police. When the security of the state came up, the state demanded or expected torture from the police, and when the state was accused of torture, there was a visible attempt by the state to stamp it out as a stigma.<sup>15</sup>

But why and how did the colonial police use torture as a strategy, knowing it to be a barbaric practice rather than abandoning it? Where the Indian Evidence Act (1872), section 25-26 clearly states that if the police obtain a statement by physically torturing a person, that evidence will not be considered admissible in court.<sup>16</sup> So where was the need for police torture? An attempt will be made to explore the answer to this question in the discussion essay. The Non-violent Non Co-operation movement organized by the people of Bengal was a sign of the end of their empire to the British, so they wanted to crush the movements by the colonial police firing on the Indians, jailing them with rigorous imprisonment, seizure in police custody of nationalists and Indians. Be it by using the third degree on the masses – the highest tactics of police torture on the Bengali and Indian people were applied to sustain the British rule in the colony.

In the second decade of the 20th century, an intense mass movement against the British began with the non-cooperation Khilafat movement organized in Bengal. Bengali newspapers and political leaders said that the assessment of the Disorders Inquiry Committee or Hunter Committee, which was formed to monitor and investigate the police torture in Jallianwala Bagh, was not adequate. A nationalist daily *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote, "Hunter committee has whitewashed all the documents of police torture."<sup>17</sup> Gandhi termed the commission's report as a cover-up of page after page of government cleansing. Significantly, the British sought to remit racism as well as indirect police brutality by giving General Dyer a massive

pension and refusing all his crimes against humanity!

Based on government & official reports, the non-violent non co-operation and Khilafat movement can be identified as popular mass upheavals organized in Bengal. A new type of self-reliant nationalism developed out of this movement. It began as a partly religious and wholly Muslim movement. The humiliating Treaty of Sèvres was imposed on the defeated Ottoman Empire for Turkey's declaration of war against the Allies and the Caliphate's authority or dignity was undermined, so Indian Muslims started the Khilafat movement to restore the Caliphate's dignity. On the other hand, the enactment of the repressive Rowlatt Act and subsequent repression of the Rowlatt Satyagraha and the brutal massacre at Jallianwala Bagh gave Gandhiji an opportunity to re-establish Hindu-Muslim unity, Gandhi announced a four-stage policy of non-violent non co-operation which included a) renunciation of titles b) govt. resignation from service, c) exclusion from military service and d) civil disobedience. When the Central Khilafat Committee gave its opinion in favour of this program, an unbridled mass movement was born, the influence of which was felt in all the cities, provinces and districts of Bengal.<sup>18</sup>

In the context of Bengal, we will try to highlight the police torture in the non co-operation movement mainly through three stages. The first phase will show how police torture was used to suppress the volunteer movement and the caliphate coup; The second stage will focus on the torture of Gorkha forces on the fleeing coolies of the tea plantations in East Bengal, the third stage will focus on how Gandhiji's ideas are being integrated into the movement of the lower classes and the various forms of police torture to suppress the movements of the backward castes including the Santals-Mahisyas. Based on this it can be understood that it was practically impossible to sustain the colonial state without police torture.

### **Torture on Volunteer Movement and Khilafat Upheavals:**

Calcutta was considered a peaceful city towards the end of the 19th century, but gradually it became a city of rebellion. The statistics we find in government reports show that after the Tala riots in Calcutta in 1897, the number of armed police increased rapidly. During this period, from 1918 onwards, several riots continued in Calcutta, including the Muhammadan disturbances in September of that year. During this time Muslims became the cause of state insecurity. Indian Daily News reports that several large gatherings of Muslims have taken place in Calcutta where looting and clashes have taken place, a cause of considerable concern for the police

administration, which has been mentioned in government reports.<sup>19</sup>

The volunteer movement started in Bengal along with the Khilafat movement. The movement, which was initiated by volunteers dressed in Turkish military uniforms, was considered quite harmful by British officials. “Their activities have been taken on a more sinister aspect,”<sup>20</sup> the government report clearly states. This movement, which started in the name of non co-operation, actually took the form of an anti-government movement which originated in Calcutta. The movement was formed with youth and college students attending various political rallies. Shivaji festival gives a new shape to the trajectory of this movement. Volunteers focus on activities such as stick sports, wrestling or physical education at school, from joining various associations to participating in violent activities.<sup>21</sup>

The important role of volunteers was first noticed in the large Congress rally held in Calcutta in late 1917 to mark the arrival of Tilak and Besant. Later, in February 1920, some 800 volunteers played an important role in bringing some of the royal prisoners from Howrah to Calcutta, and through their movement, police constables began to signal the arrival of Gandhi Raj. Bengal government declared unlawful associations under the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 and the movement was driven underground. Police began with a brutal crackdown on volunteers accused of sedition.<sup>22</sup>

### **Torture on coolies in Chandpur of Eastern Bengal:**

When the non-violent non-cooperation movement began in full swing, propaganda by Congress workers instilled deep faith in Gandhi Raj among Assam’s tea estate workers. Coolies living in the Chargola and Langay valleys of Assam revolted against their European owners and managers. At the root of this revolt was their demand for longer working hours, higher wages and a reduction in daily labour. When these demands were rejected by the British owners, about six to seven thousand coolies left the tea plantations of Assam and took refuge in Karimganj in East Bengal. Their food was provided by the government but the coolies refused it because taking government food would mean they would have to go back to the plantation.<sup>23</sup>

Coolies were not willing to make any compromise with the British government, they thought that Gandhi would take them to their own residence by steamer, thus they grew their trust in Gandhi. They announced the end of the British Raj and the arrival of Gandhi Raj. So they boycotted work under the Europeans because Gandhi



himself gave them this order! The report appeared in the headlines of the local newspapers which were 'truly astonishing', the name of the Mahatma was on their lips and the image of the Mahatma was in their hearts. On which thousands of workers marched from Assam towards Chandpur.<sup>24</sup>

On May 20, 1921 when about two thousand coolies reached Chandpur station, a deadlock was created. Armed policemen were brought from Comilla on the orders of the British government the night before. Along with this fifty more armed Gorkha soldiers entered Chandpur from Dhaka. When the train left the station at 9:30 pm, the coolies fell asleep under the passenger shed and on yards of the station. A Nationalist daily newspaper *Amrita Bazar* wrote that Gorkha forces brutally tortured sleeping coolies at night.<sup>25</sup> Noakhali resident Babu Kamini Kumar Saha, the chief clerk of Chandpur railway station, witnessed, "The Gorkha army first saw the gathering of coolies and asked them to leave the railway station and quickly ordered the coolies to move. When they refused to move, the Gorkha soldiers first trampled the coolies with their boots. Then the coolies were lathi-charged. The gathering of coolies was dispersed with batons and bayonets."<sup>26</sup>

### **Gandhi Raj and torture on the mass:**

In November, when the strike reached its peak in the non-cooperation movement, government repression became unmanageable. At this time, the assembly was declared illegal by applying the criminal law. Along with the arrest of various political leaders for seditious activities, measures were taken to suppress the voice of the press. A group formed of Indians loyal to the European, British Indian and British governments who expressed their views in favour of police functions. On the occasion of the Prince's arrival in Calcutta, the most arrests were observed in Pabna, Bakharganj, Faridpur, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Tripura, Howrah, 24 Parganas where the protests were shown in different parts of Bengal. About fifty thousand volunteers were arrested in Calcutta alone. The brutality and physically assaulting of the British government by arresting women, students, mill coolies, lower class Muslims.<sup>27</sup>

The events of the first quarter of 1922 confirmed the fear that the movement had got beyond the control of the leaders. The spirit of violence and contempt of all authority which now began to its head, was not of the leaders, but of the masses. The spontaneity seen among the people in various districts of Bengal alarmed the British Government and the police dispersed the people with batons and bayonets.

Noting the intensity of the movement, the District Magistrate of Pabna Sirajganj marched the police route to scare the people. Around 2000 people were batoned, but when the excitement of the people could not be controlled, the police opened fire. One person was killed and forty others injured in firing during the mill coolies agitation at Titagarh in 24 Parganas. One was shot dead in Dhaka when four Santals were arrested in Jalpaiguri on suspicion of common criminality, Santals wearing Gandhi caps stood in front of the police fire and said that the police fire had turned into water. Three people were killed and fourteen injured in police firing in this incident.<sup>28</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

The structure of the British state was largely responsible for police brutality in the non-violent non co-operation movement of Bengal. Bipan Chandra has adopted Gramsci's concept of hegemony or authority in a revised sense while analyzing the character of the state in British-ruled India. According to him, the British state was semi-hegemonic and legal authoritarian.<sup>29</sup> Although Ranajit Guha did not fully accept Bipan Chandra's view, according to him, the British state was not semi-hegemonic. He characterized the colonial state was absolute state which has 'an extreme periphery', called 'dominance without hegemony'.<sup>30</sup> Sumit Sarkar says at the very beginning of his book *Modern Times*, the British declared the 'Indian Empire' in a grand rally in 1877, that the empire was 'an autocracy veiled thinly'.<sup>31</sup> Historian Taylor C. Sherman says, that is why the colonial rulers built a 'coercive network'.<sup>32</sup> That is to say building a network through the police, military, judiciary and penal system that would always help to maintain the coercive power of the colonial ruler.

One thing is clear from the statements of the discussed historians that the British rule in the colonies was established on the basis of force and to establish this force physical torture on the people of the colonies was very important. And in this case, the police worked as 'petty sovereigns' of the state. Hence torture was not innate in the British state but its practice by the police became spontaneous and periodic. Through this colonial India became 'the policeman's kingdom'.<sup>33</sup>

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# Connecting People through Rituals : A Study of the Sacred Bathing of the Matuas

Mridul Banik

**Abstract:** Baruni Snan (Sacred Bathing) is the biggest festival and fair of the Matua community. During the colonial period Scheduled caste Namasudra community congregated with their fellow community at Orakandi in Faridabadpur district of Eastern Bengal, now Gopalganj district. After the partition of India in 1947, the Baruni mela was bifurcated and held at Thakurnagar Thakurbari in Gaighata, North 24 Parganas. Thakurnagar created post-partition in the image of Orakandi. Baruni festival is simultaneously held annually by both Thakurnagar and Orakandi on the same day. These Namasudra people when became refugees and scattered in different parts of India, they met their fellow community every year during Baruni mela at Thakurnagar. This paper focuses on how sacred Baruni Snan connected the refugees Matua Namasudra community. Baruni Snan is the main festival of the Matua community. This paper also finds out the Matua cultural and religious impacts on refugees' lives.

## Sacred Bathing

Harichand Thakur, considered a spiritual figure and liberator of the oppressed and neglected, was born in 1812 Bengali year during the Phalgun month's Madhukrishna Trayodashi Tithi's Brahma Muhurta, on the day of Mahabaruni, in Saflidanga village of Kashiani upazila, Gopalganj. His childhood name was Hari, his devout followers called him Harichand. He was the second of five sons of his father, Yashobant Thakur. He died at 66 on the same day and Tithi in 1878. His birth blessed the village of Saflidanga. subsequently, the neighbouring village of Orakandi became famous for Harichand Thakur's divine play and miracles. There are many stories about the power of his miracles. The tradition of celebrating Harichand Thakur's day of appearance on the earth with a sacred bathing festival in Orakandi was initiated nearly two centuries ago. Since then, the Orakandi Baruni festival has been held annually. During the colonial period, Orakandi's Baruni mela a religious bathing festival of Matuas as well as a hotspot of the Matua movement. A large number of devotees thronged the pond Kamana Sagar to take a holy bath, a symbolic gesture believed to wash away sins. Kamana Sagar is a sacred pond

situated in Thakurbari courtyard. Matua disciples from various parts of the country participated in this traditional bathing festival in a festive atmosphere. Mahabaruni mela is a five-day long festival held in Orakandi centring this bathing festival, On the occasion of Sri Sri Harichand Thakur's birth anniversary. The bathing festival continues throughout the day and ends at night. The mela continues for a week. Devotees come from remote areas of different districts of the country. Devotees used to come to Orakandi on foot with Matua Dal (Procession). They create a vibrant atmosphere with drums, cymbals and conches while chanting "Hari Bol" and bathing throughout the day in hopes of redemption from sins and attaining sanctity. After bathing, Matua disciples visit Thakur's temple to pray for happiness, peace, prosperity and divine grace by prostrating and rolling on the ground. Around one million devotees participate in the bathing festival every year. Orakandi is a major pilgrimage for lower caste Namasudra Hindu devotees. In the colonial period Orakandi was the epicentre of the Matua religion and the lower caste movement of Eastern Bengal. Orakandi situated in the lower marsh land, depends on ferry-communication for the half of the year. Matua was a lower caste people of East Bengal. Their main occupations were cultivation and fishing. These lower caste people were devoid of education. They were exploited by Jamindars and Mahajans. Harichand Thakur was a divine figure who came forward to uplift Namasudra community from social and religious exploitation and superstition. He offered firm ground to the Matua Namasudra movement. Thakur was a social reformer and a lower caste Namasudra leader. Harichand's radicalism was manifested in multiple areas including politics, religion, economy and education.<sup>1</sup> Under his leadership the lower caste people got relief from the exploitation of Zamindars and Mahajans in East Bengal. He brought the Matua sect to emancipation, who were pejoratively called *Chandals* and considered untouchable. He unified lower caste people and spread education amongst them. He raised the issue of gender equality agenda among the lower caste masses. His leadership also protected Namasudra community from mass conversion to Christianity. His social religious reformation movement gave the new paths to lower caste people and gave the answers to their daily problems of life. His Matua spiritual philosophy also became acceptable among the Muslim people.<sup>2</sup> Thakur called his disciples to focus on household life and advised them not leave home for enlightenment. He said men and women have equal rights in the society. He offered ten commandments in the form of advice. These advices were helpful to solve the basic problems of daily life. His

social religious reformation movement was being popular among the Namasudra community and his ten-points advice was accepted by all lower caste people of East Bengal. Thus, he became a divine figure among the lower caste masses. He is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Harichand's theology was a spiritual discourse structured in terms of material requirements of the poor Dalits. His famous dictum *hate kam, mukhe nam* (work with hands, sing God's praise) is therefore considered as an aphorism against metaphysical, non-materialistic, abstract theologies.<sup>3</sup> Thakur's religion, unlike Brahmanical spiritual discourse, does not promise illusory happiness. He found that the Dalits had been suffering from dire poverty lacking lands for cultivation. He asked them to utilise the waste lands and harvest. He emphasized that Dalits need to be economically empowered to eventually overcome the state of being downtrodden. Furthermore, he realized that the key to the community's success is to make it free of superstition and bring education to them. He gave a blow at Brahmanical patriarchy by promoting equality between men and women, prohibiting polygamy and empowering women through education and job prospects.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Harichand motivated the Dalits to organize, participate, and lead in politics because the political and the administrative power was considered crucial for their liberation. It was open to all Dalits, embraced even Muslims, and preached inter-dining for all. In this way, it aimed at developing into a Bahujan religion<sup>5</sup>. Harichand Thakur himself was uneducated but he had great endeavour to spread education among masses.<sup>6</sup> He gave twelve commands which reflects a glimpse into his philosophy. He said his followers to do: "1. Look at women other than your wife as mothers. 2. Always speak the truth 3. Love everybody in the world. 4. Respect your parents. 5. Never practice casteism. 6. Beware of the temptations of the six senses. 7. Do not condemn other religions. 8. Sing Hari's praise but toil with the hands. 9. Give up outward monkhood and desire for ascetic life away from family. 10. Establish temples of Sri Hari. 11. Pray daily with heads bowed down. 12. Give yourself to Sri Hari."<sup>7</sup> After death of Harichand Thakur, his son Guruchand Thakur (1846-1937) expanded the scope of the movement to include people from other downtrodden communities and religions. Guruchand campaigned successfully to have the Chandal people recategorized as Namasudra in the 1891 census. He also managed to ensure reservation for the community in 1907. Emancipation through education was the cornerstone of the movement as shaped by Guruchand, who established a number of schools in undivided Bengal for the Dalit community. Guruchand Thakur focused on education.



He realised education is the only weapon to develop the condition of this lower caste people. He raised an education movement among the Namasudra community. He established a huge number of schools in Bengal. Guruchand Thakur's another contribution was to protect this scheduled caste people from mass conversion to Christianity. During his time, Christian missionary extensively tried to convert lower caste Namasudras to Christianity. He deals with the Christian missionary C.S. Mead to establish schools for lower caste people and appealed them to stop conversion following his father's instructions regarding the importance of education for the Dalits, he founded the first ever school for the Dalits in 1880 in his house in Orakandi, in East Bengal.<sup>8</sup> However, no teacher was available immediately because the Brahmins refused to teach the 'lower castes' until a Dalit, Raghunath Sarkar of Dhaka, came over and volunteered to do so.<sup>9</sup> To ensure that such schools run smoothly, Guruchand convened the first educational conference of the Matuas in 1881 in Dattadanga. Approximately, 5000 Representatives attended the conference. In the same year, under Guruchand's guidance, the Namasudra Welfare Association was set up and representatives from twenty-two districts joined the Association. In 1908, the first school for English education was founded by Guruchand with assistance from the Australian missionary C.S. Mead. In 1932, the Hari-Guruchand Mission was established in Orakandi and the mission assisted in the establishment of a school for girls.<sup>10</sup>

### **Post-partition Interconnection**

The Partition of India 1947, not only divided a land but also separated a community. Lower caste Matua Namasudra community was disintegration by the partition of India. The Matuas, who began migrating from Bangladesh in 1947 and continued to arrive until the 2000, are now settled different parts of India. In West Bengal, they have a considerable presence in border districts such as the 24 Parganas, Malda, Nadia, Cooch Behar and Howrah and are the State's largest SC community. After the partition they left their home, land, water and soft weather. Their rehabilitation was given Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Andaman Islands, Assam, Tripura, Orissa and others areas. Most of them settled down in West Bengal. Namasudra community was suffered by the worst effect of partition of India. They displaced from their homeland by religious persecution and fears of communal violence. Refugee life made them desperate. They struggle for existence in dangerous and inhospitable environment like Dandakarya, Andaman Islands.

They did not get good environment or developed areas for living. Their rehabilitation was given arid land of Dandakarnya or virgin land of Andaman Islands. All these areas were inhospitable for the living of human beings. Namasudra people came from marshes area and soft weather of eastern Bengal. When refugee life made them desperate and take them in the verge of ruins, they remained connected by Matua religion and culture. They get energy and are encouraged by the advices of Harichand Thakur and Guruchand Thakur. *Harililamrita* and *Guruchandcharat* were two important divine books to them. Refugee people practice matua culture and religious rituals regularly. Matua songs have a great effect on their lives. Their weekly congregation and perform kirtan are called Harisabha. These Matua songs and Harisabha connected the refugee Namasudras in the new land. After finishing their daily works matua men and women congregated in a particular place and practice matua songs. Matua music and instruments like Danka, Kasi and kartal are unique features to connect the refugee people. During the time of Harisabha they performed matam with their instruments Donka-kasi and chanting Hori bol. During the time of Baruni Snan all of them annually congregated a place. The Baruni Mela is their sacred festival. Thakurnagar is the epicentre of Matua community after partition. Promotha Ranjan Thakur established Thakurnagar colony for refugee Namasudra people. Here he established a Hari Mandir and a Kamona Sagar (Sacred pond). This Harimandir become central temple of Matua people in India. As a result, at the time of Baruni Snan lakhs of Matua devotees come to Thakurnagar. They settle all over in India like Andaman Islands, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Uttarakhand and others. They came here in order to take bathe in sacred pond Kamana Sagar and meet their fellow matua relatives. This Baruni Mela become a meeting place of the refugees and the Namasudra people. They meet their friends and relatives scattered different parts of India. They discuss and ruminate their previous homeland of East Bengal. Baruni Snan is not merely a sacred bathing or Mela, rather it is a ground of get-together and find to their childhood friends and relatives of eastern Bengal. Thakurnagar Matua mela, the week-long annual festival observing the birth anniversary of Harichand Thakur. People from Matua community visit Thakurbari to take a holy dip in the Thakurbari pond Kamana Sagar. Matuas were moving in small groups, dancing and chanting Hari Bol on their way to Thakurbari. Thakurnagar remains us of Orakandi. The Matua Maha Mela holds significant cultural importance, showcasing the vibrant traditions of the Matua community. The procession is a part of the Baruni fair.

Religious ecstasy is essential to the Matuas. The word Matua probably comes from the term, *matta* (drunken) to be Matua is to be drunk on faith, absolute faith, uninhibited by caste considerations. While the fair takes place in different parts of Bengal on a smaller scale, its centre is Thakurnagar, where lakhs of Matuas come over to pay their respects to their leader at Thakurbari. There they recite and listen to the words from *Hari Lilamrita*, a collection of Harichand's sayings. In the stalls selling sweets and samosas, various kind of mala (garland) like Tulsi, aiches and images of Harichand and his son Guruchand. The Matuas organise kirtans regularly, they also do periodical gatherings on the eve of Baruni Mela, where various performances are put up.<sup>11</sup> Pramatha Ranjan Thakur established the head-Quarters of the Matua Mahasangha at Thakurnagar in North 24 Parganas.<sup>12</sup> There are, at present, about fifty million Matua followers in India and Bangladesh. For this dispersed population, faith is significant in creating a sense of homeland as it is through their cultural traditions, religious festivals, and music performances that these groups deal with their physical and cultural isolation, especially because they had to resettle as refugees at Andaman Islands in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The local festivals (the three-day mahotsab), as well as the annual Matua pilgrimage Baruni Mela and ritual bathing have unified them. Matuas believe in the sonic potential of devotional togetherness through kirtan sessions and collective repetition of the sacred syllables *haribol* (uttering Hari, the Lord's name) during ritual gatherings, accompanied by powerful and loud drumming.<sup>13</sup> Matua leaders and gosains (spiritual healers) have recommended that followers sing kirtan and perform *matam* (a ritual dance on the rhythm of the sacred drums that is said to impart spiritual and physical strength) to build stronger immunity to prevent diseases. According to Carola E. Lorea, the soundscape of Matua faith enables a blurring of boundaries as sound penetrates the bodies of the devotees and reverberates across the body of the collective.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, not only the devotees touch one another during kirtan, but it is also the sound that, literally and metaphorically, touches the devotees. The Matua ritual dance, *matam*, is essentially performed in congregations and is considered an excellent form of physical exercise or dynamic yoga that helps devotees stay fit, healthy, and dedicated to the divine. The loud sound of the drum and the breath-pacing repetition of *haribol* create a sonic intensification that is impermeable to any other sound, distraction, or even pathogens. Because *matam* is believed to strengthen the immune system, making the mind calm and absorbed in ecstasy, it acts as a cleansing exercise. Such is the potential

of salvific sound, which not only salvages the devotee's spirit but also protects the body from contamination and infection.<sup>15</sup> Whereas in many other areas of the Matua diaspora on the mainland the repertoire of kirtan songs has been constantly expanded by new compositions on the Andaman Islands, apart from very few exceptions, the songs performed are mostly those composed by the earliest saint-composers, Tarak Gosain and Aswini Gosain.<sup>16</sup> Before the start of any kirtan session of the Matua community, during congregational singing, as well as after the end of each matam, the devotees, regardless of their age, gender, or the role they played during the ritual gathering, hug each other for three consecutive times, or bend toward each other's feet, gently touching them, and reverentially bow while on their knees, leaning with their foreheads toward the ground.<sup>17</sup> Hugging dissipates the social hierarchies at play outside of the kirtan arena. As often reiterated by the participants, during kirtan everybody is equal, men and women, elders and children, wealthy and poor. Mutually hugging and taking blessings by touching each other's feet reinforces the fundamental belief in equality among humans that is central to the anti-casteist Matua ethos. This clearly shows that hugs and tears during congregational singing tighten communal bonds also by excluding and othering those who fail to take them as fundamental conventions of the genre, breaking the formalities of proper behavior during kirtan.<sup>18</sup> Matua kirtan always starts and ends with a drumming session led by kasi (gong), danka, (gong), singa (buffalo horn), cymbal and the incessant repetition of the sacred name (haribal), accompanied by a vigorous and ecstatic dance called matam. Matua kirtan is also distinctive for collective weeping of devotees. Participants matua devotees hug each other in particular moments of the congregational singing session. They touch each other's feet. They shed tears together. The devotees revere one another by exchanging garlands of flowers. The hosting Matua Dal (group) welcomes the other participants by marking their foreheads with a flower dipped in fragrant sandalwood paste.<sup>19</sup> Embracing and shedding tears together have long been interpreted as an affirmation of a bond of social solidarity between the matua devotees take part in kirtan or mohasab.<sup>20</sup> Matua songs, kirtan, mahosab and harisabha interconnect the displaced matua people.

## Conclusion

The partition of India in 1947 disrupted the territorial unity of the Matua community,

who are now scattered across the subcontinent after decades of forced migration. There was no end to the misery in the lives of matua refugees who left land, homes and relatives. As refugees, they dreamt of a new life in inhospitable areas, clinging to their culture and religion. Baruni Snan tied the Namasudras Matua with a single thread. This Sacred Bathing is exceptional in the sense it is a ground of get-together where the Matuas get united with their old friends and relatives. This congregation bathing gives them temporary relief from a desperate refugee life. Annual get-together on the occasion of Baruni Mela, arise a sense of brotherhood and strengthen the Matua refugee soolidarity.

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# **Blue Economy in The Context of India-Bangladesh Relations: An Assessment**

Dr. Kousik Baidya

**Abstract:** The Blue Economy conceptualizes oceans and seas as “Development Spaces” where spatial planning integrates conservation, sustainable use of living resources, oil and mineral wealth extracting, bio-prospecting, sustainable energy production and marine transport. The littoral states like Bangladesh have a good incentive in exploiting the advantages relating to resource utilization of the blue economy. In Bangladesh, the concept of the blue economy was initiated after the maritime boundary delimitation dispute with Myanmar and India was settled. Bangladesh has a huge possibility to boost its economy with sea-based resources by ensuring a sustainable balance between the protection of marine ecosystem and marine resources.

**Keywords:** Blue Economy, Mercantile, Marine,

## **Introduction:**

### **Concept of Blue Economy**

Water comprises two-thirds of the earth’s surface. Hence oceans and bluewaters may be considered as lifelines of the states in the international system. The concept of blue economy has an intrinsic linkage with the notion of sustainable development. The concept of the blue economy gained ground with the inception of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which is famous as the Rio+20 Conference. The concept is coined by Gunter Pauli, a Belgian economist. Blue economy aims at utilizing the resources of the ocean for strategic and sustainable economic development through systematic utilization of ocean resources. It aims at minimal waste through effective resource utilization. Blue economy plays a pioneering role in engendering social capital and income.

The Blue Economy conceptualizes oceans and seas as “Development Spaces” where spatial planning integrates conservation, sustainable use of living resources, oil and mineral wealth extracting, bio-prospecting, sustainable energy production and marine transport.

The littoral states like Bangladesh have a good incentive in exploiting the advantages relating to resource utilization of blue economy.

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### Fundamental Principles of Blue Economy:

- Development and optimal utilization of marine environment including fishery, oil extraction and use of marine resources.
- Promoting gender equality, national equity and employment generation.

### Sectors and Activities of Blue Economy

The list of sectors and the activities falling within the blue economy are highlighted below;

Sectors	Activities
Fishing	Capture fishery, Aquaculture, seafood processing
Marine Biotechnology	Pharmaceuticals, chemicals, seaweed harvesting, seaweed products, marine derived bio-products.
Minerals	Oil and gas, deep-sea mining (exploration of rare earth metals, hydrocarbon)
MarineRenewable Energy	Offshore wind energy production, wave energy production, tidal energy production
Marine manufacturing	Boat manufacturing, sail making, net manufacturing, boat and ship manufacturing and repairing, marine instrumentation, aquaculturetechnology, water construction, marine industrial engineering.
Shipping, Port & Maritime logistics	Ship building and repairing, ship owners and operators, shipping agents and brokers, ship management, liner and port agents, port companies, ship suppliers, container shipping services, stevedores, roll-on roll-off operators, custom clearance, freight forwarders, safety and training.
Marine Tourism & Leisure	Sea angling from boats, sea angling from the shore, sailing at sea, boating at sea, water skiing, jet skiing, surfing, sail boarding, sea kayaking, scuba diving, swimming in the sea, bird watching in coastal areas, whale, dolphin watching, visiting coastal natural reserves, trips to the beach, seaside and islands,
Marine Construction	Marine construction and engineering.
Marine Commerce	Marine financial services, marine legal services, marine insurance, ship finance & related services, charterers, media & publishing.
Marine ICT	Marine engineering consultancy, meteorological consultancy, environmental consultancy, hydro-survey consultancy, project management consultancy, ICT solutions, geo-informatics services, yacht design, submarine telecom.
Education and research	Education and training, R&D.

(Sources: Compiled from Morrissey et al. (2010), EIU (2015a), Govt. of Ireland (2012) and Marine Institute)





## Blue Economy in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the conception of blue economy was initiated after the maritime boundary delimitation dispute with Myanmar and India was settled. On 14 March 2012, The declaration of verdict by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in Germany in the delimitation case with Myanmar aided Bangladesh in establishing sovereign rights over the living and nonliving resources of the Bay of Bengal in the Exclusive Economic Zone within 200 nm and in the continental shelf beyond 200nm. In the same way, the verdict with India declared on 7 July 2014 also allowed Bangladesh's sovereign rights on all the living and mineral resources of the Continental Shelf extending upto 354 nautical miles. Bangladesh's economy is sea borne to a good extent and with \$ 130 billion GDP the country's economy stands the 44<sup>th</sup> in the world.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September'2014 in the International workshop on Blue Economy at Dhaka Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asserted the importance of the blue economy of Bangladesh saying such activities could create a new horizon for the development of a coastal country like Bangladesh. Today, 90% of the country's trade is transported through the sea. The fish stocks and other inorganic resources in the Bay of Bengal can contribute greatly to our economy. Bangladesh earns substantially

by exporting marine fishes like Hilsa to India and neighbouring states Bangladesh relies heavily on ocean resources and management of such resources through the concept of Blue economy. HE Sheikh Hasina, PM also mentioned in the workshop that owing to the absence of maritime boundary demarcation, the people of Bangladesh, especially the fishermen were not able to effectively utilise resources in the Bay Of Bengal region, whereas other countries were easily plundering her resources.

The concept of the blue economy in Bangladesh comprises the following: Fishing, Marine Bio-technology and Education & research Sectors.

### **Maritime Environment**

Bangladesh is land-locked on three sides and in the south there is a coastline of the Bay of Bengal. Most parts of the country are about 10 meters above Mean Sea Level (MSL). Geographically Bangladesh may be divided into three specific segments; the continental segment formed by the northern parts, the littoral segment in the southern lower Bengal and the maritime segment formed by the Bay. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covering four potential fishing grounds. The four major fishing grounds are:

- South Patches and South of South Patches lies between 20° 50'N to 21° 40'N latitude and 91° 00'E to 91° 50'E Longitude, covering an area of about 6200 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The Middling fishing ground situated between 20° 50'N to 21° 20'N latitude and 90° 00'E to 91° 00'E longitude that covers an area of about 4600 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Finally, the Swatch of no ground lies between 21° 00'N to 21° 25'N latitude and 89° 00'E to 90° 00'E longitude, which covers an area of about 3800 km<sup>2</sup> (Shahidullah, 1983).

The Bangladesh coastline extends 710 km along the northern edge of the Bay of Bengal, from the mouth of the Naaf River in the southeast, to the mouth of the Raimangal River in the southwest. The coastal zone of Bangladesh enjoys a tropical maritime climate. Its four distinct seasonal weather patterns, which are principally governed by the Southwest and Northeast Monsoons, are:

- The dry winter season from December to February.
- The transition period from March to May (pre-monsoon).
- The rainy season from June to September.

- The second transition period between October and November (post-monsoon). Normally about 80-90% of the annual rainfall is confined to the monsoon months (June- September).

## EMERGING DIMENSIONS OF BLUE ECONOMY:

### 1) Maritime Trade, Shipping and Transport:

The steering force of the global economy is shipping which is secure, efficient and environmentally viable means of mass transportation. South Asian countries have rapidly growing economies which have interlinkages with the global economy. The geographical location of Bangladesh offers an opportunity to act as a bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia and thereby act as a hub of connectivity for South Asia and Southeast Asia (Figure 3).

*Figure 3: Geographic location of Bangladesh-connectivity*

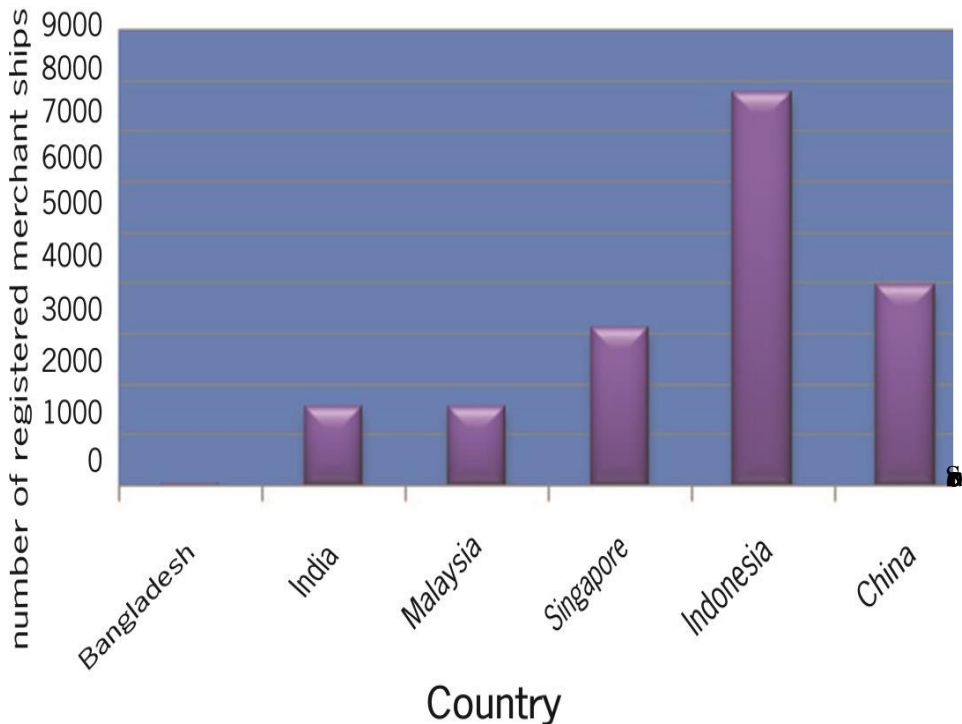


Source: Based on the data from Bangladesh Bank

Maritime transport is very important for Bangladesh as its socio-economic prospects largely depend on their ability to connect to the rest of the world and access international markets. This is the area where Bangladesh can play an important role and can get distinct benefits offered by the blue ocean. More than 90% of the Bangladesh's exterior freight trade is seaborne. Presently Bangladesh's value of export and import stands at about USD 67 billion (2013-14) and are supported by 2500 foreign ships visiting her ports.. Except for some limited trade with India and Myanmar, the bulk of her international trade is seaborne.

Unfortunately, there are only 71 registered (2021) Bangladeshi merchant ships which cannot adequately carry requisite cargo. From Figure 4, Bangladesh has the least number of registered ocean-going ships which indicates the lower fleet level in comparison with countries like Malaysia, India, Singapore and China.

Figure 4: Comparison of Number of Registered ships



Source: Mercantile Marine Department, Bangladesh2.Seaports

In today's globalized world, ports play a strategic role for the national trade and economy. The seaports that we have are our great assets. Bangladesh must develop them and utilize them to the maximum extent.

The projected shipping growth in Bangladesh suggests that by 2043 Bangladesh will handle more than 124 million tonnes of cargo. In these circumstances the expansion of port facilities and increase in the number of national fleets is time demanding. Considering the facts Chittagong port alone has taken various mega initiatives along the coast to expand the port area in different strategic locations sector wise like Oil & Gas, Bay terminal, Coal based mega Port, Patenga container terminal, Laldia container terminal etc. Experts' opinion is that, Chittagong port, can become a regional economic hub, if the facilities are modernized/upgraded,

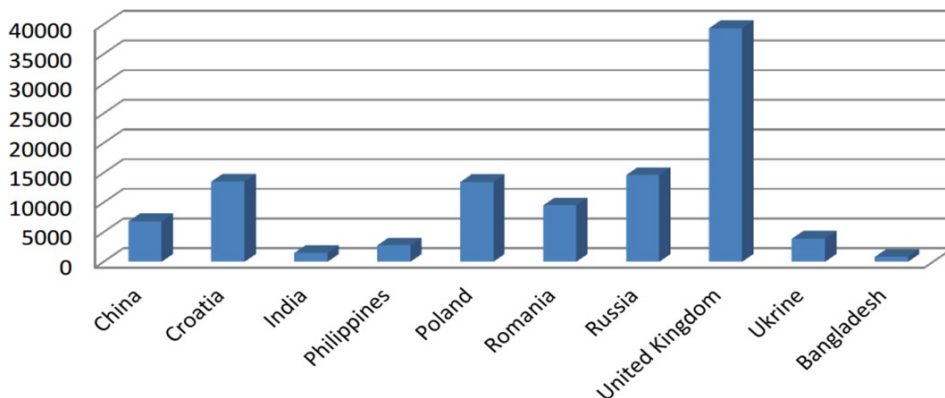
including capacity in all the sectors i.e. the requirements for a standard international sea port. Bangladesh must enhance the existing handling capacities of ports and develop deep seaports with more capabilities. The Establishment of seaports can significantly reduce export lead times and earn a steady flow of revenue for the country.

## 2) Maritime Education and Research

The multi-disciplinary sectors under the blue economy require highly skilled technical manpower and a motivated group of research scientists. Hence Bangladesh needs to prepare skillful human resources for maritime sectors on i) Maritime security; ii) Maritime pollution; iii) Preservation and protection of marine living and non-living resources; iv) Oceanographic and marine sciences research and transfer of technology; v) Protecting marine environment; vi) Global climate change, etc.

Well trained, skilled and educated human resources are the driving force of the development of an economy.

*Figure 5: GDP per capita of Bangladesh and other seafarer supplying countries in 2013*



Source: World Bank (2013)

Figure 5 compares the GDP per capita in USD of the major seafarers-supplying countries with that of Bangladesh. Bangladeshi Mariner's contribution of USD 235 million per year was duly commended at 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Parliamentary Committee on Shipping Ministry held on 18 March 2019 at National Parliament. This can be accelerated if we can avail to fill up the shortage by supplying well trained officers and ratings in the world market. Hence promoting this sector, Bangladesh can play

a great role and could be a major seafarer supplying country in the future and thus can grab the seafaring market which will increase the GDP rate of the country like others.

### **Emergent Challenges against Blue Economy**

The challenges militating against the Blue Economy in Bangladesh include a lack of proper legal framework for ocean governance, Security threat in maritime area, dangerous and destructive fishing activities, Pollution in the Bay of Bengal etc.

#### **1. Effective Legal Framework for Ocean governance**

Although there are a few international conventions and regional agreements (like UNCLOS, BWM, MARPOL, UNEP Regional Seas Convention etc.) to which Bangladesh is signatory (Rahman & Mahmud, 2018), but they are not yet harmonized with national regulation. In fact, there is no national regulation to address and ensure the compliance with international law (Patil et al., 2018).

For maritime and ocean governance, Bangladesh government earlier adopted various legislation and regulatory framework like Coastal Zone Policy-2005, Coastal Development Strategy-2006, Port Act 2006, Marine Fisheries Ordinance and Rules 1983, National Energy Policy-2004, etc (Shamsuzzaman & Islam, 2018). But most of them were enacted a long time back. So, in the context of rapid changes in social, economic, cultural and environmental circumstances, the legal framework now appears insufficient for tackling new challenges (Islam & Wahab, 2005).

Hence the key challenge is to adopt new policy or to update the existing policy as required for ensuring ocean governance.

#### **2. Security Threat in Maritime Area**

Bangladesh being at a strategic location of the Bay of Bengal, encounters a number of challenges to ensure Security in her sea area.

Although the country has a competent national security apparatus, i.e., the Navy and Coast guard, maritime security in the Bay of Bengal demands more security. At present Bangladesh Navy & Coast Guard is mostly limited to coastal patrolling. As a result, many of the threats are not being handled properly. Hence Capacity building is a challenge at this stage.

Monitoring the EEZ area is essential to ensure the security of the Bay to protect her resources from international piracy and IUU fishing etc. or to monitor marine incident/accidents at sea. Hence it is required to bring whole area under a

proper surveillance. However the huge expenses to ensure surveillance over the Bay is a challenge.

The vast ocean area is surrounded by socially and economically backward coastal population who can be de-motivated any time with very negligible economic wellbeing. They are mostly engaged in fishing. Most of the fishermen are illiterate and do not have any knowledge of environmental sustainability and the security related policy of ocean space, having less knowledge of ocean. So, creating awareness of Bangladesh's Maritime domain is a key challenge.

### **3. Mismanagement and destructive fishing activities**

Assessing the fish stock remains another management challenge. In Bangladesh till today, marine fish stocks are being assessed and based on fragmented and less reliable catch data from commercial vessels which is unable to give true picture of the fish stock. This situation obviously leads the sector towards over exploitation. Among all fishing methods, bottom trawling is the most destructive fishing method which is common in this area. Bottom trawling is unselective and severely damaging to benthic ecosystems. But the people engaged in this activity cannot properly realize the long-term effects of the same. These are basically due to insufficient knowledge and education among the coastal community. Some other factors which influence this activity are over-population of the coastal zone, low incomes, low social & economic status, lack of alternative employment opportunities, and low environmental awareness. Due to this reason withdrawal of the Bottom trawling practice is a challenge for the fisheries sector.

### **4. Pollution in the Bay of Bengal**

Bangladesh is a party to MARPOL 73/78 with all its annexes. However, the country has not enacted any enabling act to give effect to the MARPOL Convention in her domestic sea area. This resulted in a short fall in application of Coast Guard Act 1994 (CG Act). There is a lack of management for debris disposal from shipbuilding yard infrastructure & recycling of steel for producing iron rods for construction which is hold by local businessman & politicians. The same are the main cause of shipbreaking pollution. Therefore, the lack of political willingness to enact a law for pollution control is the challenge.

Bangladesh is lacking in the institutional capacity of responsible govt. agencies. Combating vessel-source marine pollution involves a huge amount of investment in

facilities and equipment. Bangladesh Coast Guard is currently facing an extreme shortage of patrol boats and other equipment for detection of marine pollution..

### **Strategies to mitigate Challenges militating against Blue Economy**

Each sovereign country has the right to make use of its sea resources for her sustainable development. This national responsibility led the govt. to make the development strategies to overcome the challenges. These are subsequently discussed.

### **Development of Effective Governance**

Bangladesh needs to adopt a comprehensive maritime strategy with concentration in ocean governance. These strategic plan should be based on stakeholder consultations and effective institutions to ensure proper uses of her ocean resources. In order to harmonize the International and regional conventions with national regulation, Bangladesh government should enact a new act which will serve as a single uniform policy and law to address all the issues in consistency with national legislation. Needless to mention that the process of making a new act namely the IMO Convention Act is a good step to address all maritime issues affecting everything concerning IMO Conventions and related UN and international conventions (Rahman, 2017). Also, regarding National policies and Acts, different govt. agencies like the Department of Shipping (DOS) and Fisheries (DOF) should update their rules as required or make a new shipping and fisheries act (Islam et al. 2017).

### **Maintenance of Security in Maritime Area**

Although Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard are technically competent, but they lack proper equipment and effective manpower. The policymakers should focus on protecting the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and continental shelf from any maritime security threat. Therefore, The Bangladesh Navy has to be modernized. So, it needs a commitment for the commissioning of a new warships into the fleet.

With the help of own satellite, Bangladesh can develop a surveillance system for ensuring the security of the Bay. The same will also assist in effective communication among ships and prevent marine accidents. New surveillance technologies can increase monitoring capability and guide law enforcement agencies to suspicious activities like piracy, illegal fishing

Developing maritime awareness: Sustainable progress in maritime security can



be acquired by developing awareness among the general people about the ocean. Schools and colleges should include ocean literacy in their syllabus to create awareness from the beginning.

### **Mitigation of unsafe fishing activities**

**Effective Governance & adequate law enforcement:** For the conservation of marine living resources of Bangladesh, the government should apply applicable rules and regulations in collaboration with local and foreign expertise to the betterment of our marine resource stock and sustainable practice of marine fishing for future generation. Needless to mention that the Bangladesh government has taken various legislative measures to protect overfishing, and conserve and enhance the ecological sustainability of fish and other marine resources.

**Banning unsafe fishing practices:** Practice of bottom trawling to be banned and adopt safe methods of fishing to save our ecosystem. To implement the same, first we need to create awareness/motivate/educate among fishing boat owners and crew members about the bad effects of this unsafe fishing practices, the effect of overfishing/ IUU fishing. Quite often this big community has been ignored by the policymakers in Bangladesh (Shamsuzzaman & Islam, 2018).

### **Prevention of pollution in the Bay of Bengal**

**A National comprehensive policy for the prevention of pollution:** Govt should adopt a national policy for pollution prevention. However it is appreciable that to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris/litter and nutrient pollution by 2025, „Ministry of Water Resources has been nominated as lead ministries. Different actions, such as formulation of coastal zone policy and strategy, establishing proper Waste Reception Facilities at port(s) etc. are identified to achieve the targets.

**Effective steps by Flag State & Port State Control:** The pollution of oil, garbage and sewage by ships is governed globally by MARPOL convention. The government should take necessary steps for ensuring environmental compliance by the ships which are entitled to fly the Bangladeshi flag by way of introducing a proper system of survey, certification and monitoring as prescribed by the relevant international legal instruments such as the MARPOL Convention.

Use of the sea and its resources for sustainable economic development is the key theme of Blue Economy. With its huge living and non-living marine resources,

The Bay Of Bengal has every potential for sustaining a deeply entrenched blue economy.. Sustainable use and management of these resources would leverage economic development and engender the job creation process in Bangladesh.

Blue Economy has a huge potential for the development of Bangladesh. But there are constraints to the development of blue economy potential like rapidly degrading ocean resources through unsustainable extraction of marine resources, destruction of marine and coastal habitats, climate change, and marine pollution.

### **Recommendations**

Bangladesh has a huge possibility to boost her economy with sea-based resources by ensuring a sustainable balance between the protection of marine ecosystem and marine resources. For successful implementation of the Blue Economy concept some recommendations may be suggested:

- a. Govt. may develop/strengthen national policies to better integrate governance frameworks with Blue Economy sectors
- b. The governance system needs to be reformed. Better coordination between government agencies under the auspices of the Government is needed.
- c. Bangladesh Navy along with other coastal security agencies like Coastguard may undertake advanced security management of the coastal areas.
- d. Budget allocation needs to be augmented for sustaining and managing various sectors of the blue economy.
- e. Maritime Community may take resort to social media for engendering awareness regarding the initiatives undertaken by Govt and the common people for sustaining the Blue Economy.
- f. Govt. should encourage private sectors to play key role in SEZs and thereby boost the blue economy.

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# Mughal Eclipse: Exploring the theories of Decline

Supriya Chanda

**Abstract:** The article is divided into eight parts, where first part addresses the earliest work where communal divide was blamed for the decline, and also cites examples of how that theory was rejected by Modern day Historians. the Second part tried to reexamine the decline from an institutional perspective where the mishandling of Jagir resulted in crisis which brought the empire down. The third part draws attention on J F Richard's argument where he blames Aurangzeb's wrong policy as reason of decline. The fourth part gives different approach where peasant's response in the form of an 'arm struggle' against the exploitative state is the top reason behind decline. The fifth part deals with bankers who were politically inactive and also addresses how the shifting of their loyalties towards newly developing regional blocs paralyzed the empire. The sixth part explores social and cultural factors of decline where lack of intellectual and technological upgradation justifies the fall. Other interpretation and theories of Mughal decline is presented in the seventh part and the final part concludes with summarization of all theories mentioned in the paper.

**Keywords:** Mughal Empire, Jagir Crisis, Agrarian Crisis, Mansabdar, Decline etc.

## Introduction

For, long the eighteenth century in India was regarded as period of decline and chaos, an inexorable interlude between collapse of the Mughal Empire and the rise of British.<sup>1</sup> The process of replacing Mughal with the British attracted many scholars. As a result; the eighteenth century occupies an interesting position in the history of India. In recent years it has also emerged as major site of debate and deliberations among historians.<sup>2</sup> Not all historians accepted the idea 'decline of Mughal', in response they described 'decline' as relative term. Historian Tapan Raychaudhuri described the 'decline' itself based on narrow assumption by highlighting 'not decline of India as whole' which was justified by evidence of economic boom and urbanization in Northern India. Historian Muzaffar Alam described it as decentralization not decline by highlighting the clash of interest between zamindars and the state, which developed due to increasing revenue demand (as a result of increasing agricultural prosperity) in 18th century. Zamindars gradually developed the idea that by defying the center authority they could get

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more shares in revenue and more power to control resources. As a result Mughal state fragmented. Historian C. A Bayly advocated continuity thesis where events in eighteenth century will analyzed as a continuous process rather than the rise and fall of the empire. He added 18th century was the period where traders, merchants, intermediate class etc. developed and funded the rise of regional power. According to this school in the eighteen century weak center failed to handle flourishing of resources and resulted into fragmentation.

Early Historians, such as Sir Jadunath Sarkar, placed the blame squarely on Aurangzeb's religious bigotry and the weakness of later Mughals and their nobles.<sup>3</sup> Sarkar's monumental work History of Aurangzib underlines Aurangzeb's orthodoxy discriminatory policy on communal divides like imposition of Jizyah, destruction and plunder of temples, intolerance that provoked and generated 'Hindu Reaction' among Rathor, Bundela, Maratha, and Sikhs on the cost of destroying age old stability which was laboriously built from the time of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan through policies of secular state, religious non-interference and also through representation of Hindu-Muslim friendship by employing both in higher posts of administration. Due to incapability, the scenario became much more difficult for later Mughal to handle.

Similarly like Sarkar, Scottish Historian William Irvine described decline could be explained in terms of a personal deterioration in the quality of the kings and their nobles.<sup>4</sup> The Harem influence grown which made the later Mughal and nobles involve in debauchery with increasing materialistic luxuriate, where the main focus from administration shifted towards hedonism. Historian Muzaffar Alam in The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North: Awadh and Punjab, 1707-1748 described, it was not only Hindus, but also the Muslim nobility and members of religious orthodoxy who created problem for Mughal<sup>5</sup> countering Sarkar's view that only Hindu created problems. (As result of provocation) Modern Historian also identified the uprising against Mughal in terms of class (zamindars, peasants) and region or clan (Maratha, Gujuran, or Rajputan) not as 'Unified Hindu'. English Historians T.G.P. Spear have pointed out that there was no dearth of able personalities in eighteenth century India. It was indeed a period marked by the activities of such able politicians and generals as the Sayyid brothers, Nizarn-ul-Mulk, Abdus Samad Khan, Zakaria Khan, Saadat Khan, Safdar Jung, Murshid Quli Khan or Sawai jai Singh. But unfortunately, all these able statesmen were preoccupied more with self-

aggrandizement and had little concern for the fate of the empire. So at times of crises, they could not provide leadership and even directly contributed to the process of decline.<sup>6</sup> Spear's description countered the earlier view (i.e. decline due to incapable successor in Late Mughal). The lack method to delve into the personal sphere of luxuriate questions the idea of 'how one can differentiate later Mughals with 16th and 17th Century in terms of personal expenditure'.

### **The Institutional Failure and Decline of Empire**

Satish Chandra's *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-1740*, drew attention to the 'Jagirdari crises of the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth century as the root cause of Mughal Weakness.'<sup>7</sup> Jagirdari and Mansabdari systems are regarded as important instruments in sustaining of centralized administration which (Jagirdari and Mansabdari system) gradually evolved from long experimental process and flourished from the time of Akbar. Literally Mansab means rank, and dar means holder, therefore rank holder. Historian M Arther Ali described each mansabdar holds two numbers, one zat (rank, salary) and sawar (No. of military contingent to be maintained). The system was developed strategically to make the military of 'war state' flexible and extend virtual control through politics of personal loyalty. Mansabdars were given Tankha (Salary) or land assignment (Jagir) to collect revenues and maintain a small military contingent. It is interesting to note that different ethnic groups were also assigned Jagirs. Employing Turani group of Turkish decedent followers of Sunni Muslim, Iranian group from Iraq and Iran of Sunni community, and also employing Hindus like Rajputs, Marathas indicates the politics of incorporation, justifying the argument of Historian Andre Wink where he described Mughal rested on a "balancing system of continually shifting rivalries and alliances."<sup>8</sup> In other words The Mughal system was prepared to accommodate "fitna" or sedition, and always tried to incorporate the ascendant localized powers, either indigenous or foreign, into its concept of universal dominion and on the effective functioning of this mechanism of conciliation and coercion depended on its continued existence.<sup>9</sup> After the Deccan conquest the number of Mansabdars increased due to the incorporation of new mansabdars from the Deccan region. Theoretically more numbers of Mansabdars were incorporated in compare to available and utilized space. To explain Jagirdari crisis I will draw the background. Due to the increase in numbers of Mansabdars, mutual rivalry (rivalry due to unequal distribution of shares, like out of 8000 Mansabdars, only 443 hold 61% of



finance) among Mansabdar increased, and such rivalry increased much in Aurangzeb's time. (As result a of aggressive policy and poor strategic incorporation), such rivalry affected land assignments badly. The pressure created on centre was cooled down by oppressing peasants. Historian Satish Chandra describes "The available social surplus was insufficient to defray the cost of administration, pay for wars of one type or another and to give the ruling class a standard of life in keeping with its expectations".<sup>10</sup> Due to oppression, rivalry etc. Jagir became stagnant or less, while the Mansabdars were increasing. Such a situation was solved by reducing salaries and jagirs on the cost of creating sense of insecurity, jealousy among jagirdars. Gradually there came the situation where number of jagir less jagirdar increased.(known as the Jagirdari crisis) And this crisis destroyed fundamental institution on which centralization was surviving. Satish Chandra further argued increasing inability of the Mughal jagirdars to resist the growing assertiveness of the zamindars and to protect the peasantry, gave an impetus to a crisis which was essentially interplay of social and administrative factors. The increasing imbalance in the tripartite relationship between the Jagirdari, zamindars and the peasantry, tended to upset the working of the Mughal Jagir system at all levels.<sup>11</sup> We have to also understand not all zamindars are willing to get exploited; there are evidences of Jagirdars using military force to extract revenue etc. such situation gradually provoking rebellion of Zamindars against the central state.

### **Was it Aurangzeb's Mistake?**

Historian J.F. Richards has argued that the problem was to some extent artificial and due to wrong policies of Aurangzeb,<sup>12</sup> He criticized Aurangzeb's policy of using conquered lands as Khalisa and using increased revenue (after the conquest of Golconda and Bijapur 23% revenue increased) to meet the demands of soldiers, military and wars. Richard pointed out the land could be used to meet Jagirdari crisis which Aurangzeb missed the chance to solve. This argument was countered by Satish Chandra as he mentioned Deccan as deficit region, and would not be that much productive as Historian Richard thought.

### **Agrarian Crisis**

Historian Irfan Habib argued that the Agrarian crisis was the primary cause of Mughal decline in eighteenth century. The crisis caused due to endemic state oppression, which generated resistance on the part of exploited peasants who had to choose between 'starvation and slavery' and armed resistance<sup>13</sup>. The high

demand as revenue to maintain military needs promoted extensive exploitation of peasants by Jagirdari. We can't also overlook the fact that with opening of Cape of Good Hope attracted large-scale European import on a background of oppressive peasantry resulted price of rice. To satisfy the growing pressure of economy the surplus was taken from peasants with very high revenue (in comparison of what they produce) and pushing the peasantry class into chronic darkness and poverty. Though there was unequal distribution of taxes based on fertility and surveys. In general, peasants have to give one-third of what they produced. As we know the importance of the Jagirdari system in the maintenance of military. Habib says that the military power of the Mughals was premised on a smooth flow of revenues from the countryside. The flow of taxes was achieved through the system of jagirs (territorial assignments) which were divorced from any permanent rights to the land.<sup>14</sup> It is also interesting to note the psychological approaches of Jagirdars where due to transfer in jagir, affection towards land reduced and the selfish nature activated. Here Jagirdars exploited as much as they could from peasants. The anger increased and busted in forms of armed rebellion against Mughal state as a result of extensive oppression which was sponsored by rich Zamindars and powerful peasants (as they did not like oppression or hard work taken by centre). Irfan Habib in *Introduction to Resistance and Modernization under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan* mentions of events where zamindars given refuge to escaped peasants. There is even evidence of Zamindars maintaining of small army for defense against Mughal state. Even the attack on Mughal by Jat or Maratha claimed to be done by Zamindar's army. So, the Zamindar and rich peasant class got upset by the aggressive behavior of Mughal nobility (jagir assignment) and invested peasant's anger to fight against Centralized Mughal dominance, than the armed rebellion brought the Mughal down. I would like to add analysis; there was a lack of urbanization or craft production, as a result the economy was very largely dependent on agriculture. If there was strong urbanization then it would have worked like a safety valve during the agrarian crisis.

### **Did Bankers Broken the Stability of Empire?**

Historian Irfan Habib described the functions of banks in Mughal Empire; the task performed was generally without any political motive behind it. Banks were responsible for the maintenance of the monetary system, transactions, loan and credit and conversion and exchange rates. D R Gadgil has also discussed bankers

at length, delineating their functions as money changers and dealers in hundis and adding a major role in government finance.<sup>15</sup> He also referred Bankers as financiers of tax farmers etc. The 'Great -Firms' played a crucial role in determining the fortunes of the Mughal Empire between 1650 and 1750. As soon as the bankers shifted their financial support from the Mughal Empire to the post-Mughal states, imperial decline became inevitable.<sup>16</sup> This theory also explores that during the time of agrarian crisis; bankers did not supported state too much which made the empire very weak. On the other hand rising trader and merchant class were completely targeting to make bankers in favor of them to extract resources. Even the English East India Company joined these bankers, gradually these bankers (Shaukars, Shroffs, and Mahajans) community started to provide resourceful support by pinching the central authority. The shift in their loyalty from the imperial government to raising regional power between 1650 and 1750 caused severe erosion of Mughal Power and eventually caused its downfall.<sup>17</sup>

### **Cultural Factors Related to Crisis**

In the eighteenth century not only Mughal Empire decline, Ottoman, Safavid also have the same fate and there was rise of European dominance. It is not mere coincidence as greatest empire of the medieval world broke down due to European arm end attack, but from the point of historical investigation it is not easy to figure out similar or connecting reason behind the fall. The increasing gap between European scientific approach and the stagnation of Islamic society due to religiosity, made the Islamic world to surrender against rise of European dominance.

Historian Marshal Hodgson has suggested that after a period of overall efflorescence, the Islamic world was gripped by "social and cultural stalemate" as compared to the burgeoning dynamism of Europe.<sup>18</sup> The denouncing of 'Rationalism' by Mughal religious leaders has paused the development of growing scientific conscience, French traveller Bernier pointed out there were no academics, which could promote new thought. In other words, Indian society stagnated when the European society was enjoying innovation, and as a result division increased. Historian M. Athar Ali holds "cultural failure" to be the root cause underlying the technological stagnation in the Islamic societies. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards Europe forged ahead while Islamic societies lagged behind in terms of the modernization of warfare and productive forces.<sup>19</sup> As the Mughals lacked scientific enquiry (in comparison to Europe) they failed to understand the importance

of oceanic dominance. Even there was no modernization in military warfare as Marx pointed Indian society as traditional unchangeable etc. All the above reasons are enough to justify why Later Mughal failed to counter the European attack.

### **Other theories**

There are many more theories, investigating the cause of decline, like Soviet scholar Reisner developed a new theory The rise of 'nationalities', subverting and shattering the unified empire. This idea was maintained by a school of popular Indian Marxist writers, who have received strange corroboration from 'young and youngish' American scholars who have found new regional power-groups in the states that arose during the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Mughal decline is one of the most debated issues among scholars, before starting the decline debate; the word 'Decline' itself is in question. The centrist view where analysis is based on impacts, consequences and what came after it agrees that it was a Decline, while revisionist historian analysis is based on the complete eighteenth century where events are perceived as continuous transformation, and also points to the rise and urban growth during political problem. It is also interesting to see the changing view in analysis which is evident from the rejection of JN Sarkar's argument on communal margins. Another angle of institutional crisis is explored by Satish Chandra where the Jagirdari crisis was given prime cause of decline. J F Richard argued Jagirdari crisis was artificial in nature and created due to Aurangzeb's wrong policy. Irfan Habib explored the oppressive condition of peasants and it is also important to note the utilization of anger to demand regional autonomy and shaking the principle of empire (where incorporation was part of vital politics). Understanding Habib and Chandra's argument gives analytical view of the condition and enough space to imagine the decline. Historian M Ashraf and Ather Ali pointed 'societal crisis' responsible for the Mughal decline, where economic failure coincided with political failure and increased the pace of decline. I have also touched the politically silent bankers who shifted loyalty towards new merchant, and trader class and played an important role in fragmentation by supplying credits. Assignment also touched on the cultural perspective where the decline of the Mughal is interpreted in terms of decline of the Islamic world where stagnation, and religiosity was blamed.

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# Archaeological Remains at the Confluence of the Kangsavati-Kumari River (10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Century AD)

Sushanto Mahato

**Abstract:** The confluence of the rivers Kangsavati and Kumari, situated in present-day Bankura district of West Bengal, is important for ancient archaeological sites. The sites found in the region contain various traits of architecture and sculptures associated with Jainism and Brahmanism. Several archaeological sites in the region are associated with the early medieval and medieval sites and bear witness to multiple regional variations. The spread of regional settlements mainly based on agriculture and animal husbandry is closely related to the religious patterns of the region. The paper attempt to represent all the spiritual architecture and sculptures associated with the temple from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD at the confluence of the rivers Kangsavati and Kumari. It also tries to explore the economic and social life of the places famous for sacred and religious architecture and sculpture in different regional areas.

**Keywords:** - Bankura, Kangsavati-Kumari River, Archaeological Sites, Temple Architecture, Socio-Economic Life, Jainism and Brahmanism.

The confluence of the Kangsavati-Kumari river valleys in present-day Bankura district of West Bengal witnessed the existence of human civilization since prehistoric times. The Kangsavati and adjacent Suvarnarekha river basins have often yielded a large number of artefacts, including tools used by primitive human groups, various metal objects, terracotta sculptures, vases and vases. Recently, evidence of Tamashri civilization has been found in the vast plateau region about 150 km from the Kangsavati valley.<sup>1</sup> It is in this Kansai valley that the Jain culture can be traced back to ancient times. According to Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay,<sup>2</sup> the region was dominated by Jainism from the first to the twelfth century AD. However, the report of eminent scholar and surveyor David Begler,<sup>3</sup> published in 1872, mentions the establishment of Jain settlements in the Kangsavati valley in the second-third century BC. In ancient times, the small towns here became the target of the propagation of river-centred Jainism, and it was through the hands of this Jainism that the settlement, agriculture-economy, religious practice, idols, temples, architecture, sculpture and

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art flourished in this region. The present article attempts to show how these buildings and sculptural monuments bear witness to a significant phase of social and cultural development in the region during the early medieval period from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries.

Several scholars and experts<sup>4</sup> have mentioned the buildings and sculptures found in the valleys of the Kangsavati and Kumari rivers dating from the early medieval period between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, but have remained silent on how these past monuments helped shape the cultural character of the local communities of that time. The present paper attempts to create a picture of the cultural landscape of Southwest Bankura, located at the confluence of the Kangsavati and Kumari rivers, based on early medieval archaeological records. Questions that are more important to explore in this larger arena are: How did religion help unite people of different communities in the region? How were the dominant religious ideologies of the time used to create regional and sub-regional secular authority? After all, how did religion accelerate the process of early medieval society formation in the region to investigate these questions, the archaeological sites of several important places like Sarengarh, Chitgiri and Kechanda under Ranibandh police station and Ambikanagar, Barkola, Paresnath and Chiada/Navachiada under Khatra police stations of Bankura have been highlighted.

But before entering into the main point it is necessary to gain a proper understanding of the river Kangsavati and its tributaries where the above archaeological sites developed. The combined name of Kansai and Kumari is Kangsavati. The name of the river in Mahabharata was ‘Kapisha’<sup>5</sup>. However, there is room for debate as to whether the Kapisha River refers to the Kansai or the Golden Line. This ‘Kapisha’ is mentioned in King Raghu’s period in the fourth praise of poet Kalidasa- ‘Raghuvansam’. Among the branches and tributaries of Kangsavati, rivers like Jam, Kulandari, Hanumtya, Bandu or Tarafeni, Bhairabbanki enriched the human civilization. The history of the upper, middle and lower basins of the Kangsavati dates back at least ten to five million years. Between 200 and 250 AD, Kol, Bhil, Munda, and Nishads lived here.<sup>6</sup> A sense of dharma was captured through nature worship in the group life governed by their own tribe. Thus it can be seen that Jainism believed in non-violence out of Hinduism, making this region, first Aryans and later Dravidian influenced, a prosperous and cultural hub. Jain Tirthankara Mahavira preached in Radh for 12 years and laid the foundation for



Jainism in the region. These small townships were once the targets of river-centred Jainism and the development of idol temples in the region was their hand. After some time, traces of a high-class civilization based on agriculture and trade can be found here. Across the river valleys, Magadh, Pataliputra or Hazaribagh are connected to Shikhara (present-day Pareshnath) hills with ancient oil-pumping settlements. Through Kariya, Dhanbad, and sometimes along the Damodar and Kangsavati rivers, merchant-shrenis and preachers of religion and culture, state authorities began to travel to this region. The rural economy was flourishing here based on farming and mineral resources. The main force to implement all these ideas was the gradual spread of Jainism. The origin of the civilization which developed mainly around the Kangsavati Valley of South Bankura gradually spread to the vast areas of the district and beyond.

### **Archaeological sites:**

Ambikanagar site (under the jurisdiction of Ranibandh police station) is located just at the confluence of the Kangsavati and Kumari rivers, about 16 km from Khatra, and has been least affected by the construction of the Kangsavati reservoir. It lies about 4 km southeast of the reservoir. The survey carried out by archaeologists recorded specimens consisting of early historical sherds, architectural and sculptural remains etc. Mitra<sup>7</sup> conducted an extensive survey which resulted in the discovery of Jaina images and temples still lying in various parts of Ambikanagar. Apart from the temple ruins at Sasthitala or the site in and around the modern Ambika temple, several stone sculptures belonging to c. 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Century CE were also recorded. It was perhaps a reasonably important religious centre. Mitra noted that the village was a flourishing Jaina centre as evidenced by the existence of a large number of remains relating to the Jaina pantheon. Recorded sculptures include images of Jaina Tirthankaras, Ganesa, Jaina Sasanadevi, Vishnu and other sculptural fragments. Apart from the sculptural and architectural monuments, the western end of the village is known to be full of shards, iron slag and other remains. From these, it seems that the fragments belong to the early medieval period. A section of river cliff shows a thin deposit of ancient remains from which a few early medieval sherds have been collected. The site is practically a part or extension of another important place, Tulsipur<sup>8</sup>. The settlement history of the area where both sites can be located represents an extended chrono-cultural sequence from the EVF phases associated with the BRW to the late medieval period or later. More precisely, the

residential area of Ambikanagar starts from the extended part of the Tulsipur hill in which the concentration of Homes can be located, hence Dompara<sup>9</sup>. The researcher believes that further excavations at Dompara will surely reveal the relationship and connection between Tulsipur and Ambikanagar settlements.

D. Mitra has thoroughly studied the architectural details of the Ambikanagar temple and its sculptural remains. According to him- “Like the Orissan temples, its bada has different divisions-pabhaga, jangha and baranda. Built on a low narrow platform (upana), the pabhaga consists of the four lowermost mouldings, khura, kumbha, khura and inverted khura, the last two relieved at intervals with heart shaped motifs. The north, west and south sides of the jangha are relieved with six pilasters, three on both sides of the central projection, the last containing a niche, meant for the parsva devatas (no longer existing). The pilasters are plain except for the two mouldings, khura and inverted khura at the base and the top. The baranda is a projected moulding, the recess over which, demarcating the bada from the sikhara, is crowned by a series of mouldings forming the sikhara of the temple. Five of these mouldings are now extant. The temple is tri-ratha on the plan, it's inside 42 23 square. The thickness of the walls is 22 13 so that the outer sides are exactly double the inner sides. The interior of the temple corbels inwards up to the garbha-muda (lowermost ceiling of the sanctum), which is formed of two stone slabs. There was at least one more cell over the garbha-muda, approach to which was provided by a narrow opening above the lintel of the door”<sup>10</sup>.

Barkola site (under the jurisdiction of Ranibandh Police Station) is located 4 km east of Ambikanagar. A large number of antiquities have been recovered from the site, which mainly include the ruins of a Jaina temple and three stone images, two votive shrines (Caumukha), a stone plinth and another fragment of a Jaina image. Mitra visited the site for proper documentation of the remains. The ruins (brick structure) of a Jaina temple were also recorded here<sup>11</sup>. The foundations of the temple were the target of brick hunters. At present, the temple is a mere heap of debris of bricks and brickbats.

Paresnath site is under the jurisdiction of Ranibandh police station. The site is no doubt named after the shrine of the twenty third Tirthankara Parsvanatha. Due to the construction of the Kangsavati dam, area and village settlements were reduced. The site is just below the banks of the Kangsavati-Kumari reservoir. To the south of the site lies the dry bed of the Kumari river. There are several small

hills around this location. There is a small hill near the village after the Pareshnath locality and is currently part of the bank of the water reservoir. Close there is a red stone temple ruin in the locality. During the construction of the dam, the area was greatly affected. The temple is now reduced to a mere plinth. Architectural fragments, masonry, etc. are scattered throughout the site<sup>12</sup>. At the top of Pareshnath Hill is a hut-like tin shed built by Ashutosh Ganguly (retired employee of the Kangsavati project). The shed is dedicated to Lord Siva. In the central part of the shed, there is a Siva linga. Apart from the linga itself, there are also a large number of sculptural remains- a large image of Parsvanatha (extensively damaged) lies in and around the shed. The site, in the heyday of its glory was a great religious centre, its importance and significance being further enhanced by the existence side by side with the Jaina religion, of five principal Brahmanical cults- Saura, Sakta, Saiva, Vaishnava and Ganapatya. All the specimens are said to have been collected from neighbouring sites, including the submerged temple of Sarengarh<sup>13</sup>.

The Chiada/Navachiada site (under the jurisdiction of Ranibandh police station) is a settlement that moved from the old Chiada after the Kangsavati reservoir flooded the old settlement. The modern site is about a few kilometres west of Ambikanagar. D. Mitra<sup>14</sup> and V.D. Krishnaswami<sup>15</sup> explored the old settlement of Chiada, which is currently submerged. Krishnaswami reported historical remains alongside prehistoric artefacts from the site. Mitra also visited the old site during the construction of the dam. Mitra states: "At the western end of the village, not far from the river bank, there are three statues lying in the open air. None of them are out of place. One of these represents the figure of a Tirthankara (eleven and a half feet high, without a pin) flanked by attendants on either side of his feet". On the right side of the back plate is a smaller figure of another Tirthankara. Chattopadhyay's<sup>16</sup> recent exploration at Navachiada has resulted in the recovery of two stone statues preserved in a modern Siva temple in the village.

Sarengarh site (under the jurisdiction of Khatra police station) is situated on the right bank of the river Kangsavati and extreme south-west of Bankura district. Recent excavations revealed sarengarh as the centre of religious practice. The site had several temples and many beautiful statues but has been submerged along with its priceless artefacts after the Kangsavati river project. J.C. French<sup>17</sup> was the first who shed light on the Sarengarh archaeological site and according to him, the etymology of the word 'Sarengarh' is derived from two words i.e., Santali

saran devata and Garh-Durga. Later Banerjee came to survey and inspect the vast area and suggested that the word sarengarh originates from sarna, incidentally sarna is the religion of the tribals. Rakhaldas Banerjee observed that the site contains five or six broken temples on the bank of the river testify to its past glory. The largest temple here is the Jain temple of Parsvanath. Here the sculpture of Parsvanath has a close affinity with the Parsvanath sculpture discovered at Charra near Purulia town. The second idol in Sarengarh is dedicated to god surya that can be compared with the excellent ganesha idol of the Ekteswara temple. The third temple has a linga and a broken Durga idol. There was another temple at sarengarh also seems to have had a linga.

Sarengarh site gained the status of an ideal place for trade, evangelization and rest along the river. The Jain pilgrimage route was the main link between Bihar-Bengal-Odisha in early times. River Damodar-Kangsavati-Kumari was important in this route and equally important was the Suvarnarekha river course, along with smaller rivers like Dwarakeswara, Shilavati, Jaypanda and Tarafeni. The sarengarh was more important as there are ancient towns in the upper basin of Kangsavati and Kumara rivers like Budhpur, Pakbirra, Tuisama etc.

This part of Bankura is also known to have had more or less influence of the Pala king (Ramapala). As per Ramacharitam of Sandhyakar Nandi, Ramapal conquered the Utkala region (comprising south Bankura and Purulia regions). After ruling for a long time, it was probably during the Odishan king Anantavarman Chodganga in 1135 AD invaded this region via Medinipur and asserted his rights. It is believed by many that he established his second capital at Sarengarh. After 1157 AD, this area came under the control of Sena kings. Probably the Sena dynasty kings defeated the Samanta kings held by Sarengarh and Parsvanath and brought the area under their control. During the period of Sena dynasty, Shaivism and Lokayuta Hinduism spread throughout the region conquered or controlled by them. Naturally Sarengarh gained status as the best place not only for Jainism but also as the centre of Brahmanical practice of Vaishnava, Surya, Ganesha and Shakta Mahapeetha have been evident not only from Sarengarh but also from the surrounding areas like Ambikanagar, Chitgiri and several shiva temples on both banks of Kangsavati is established. Sarengarh which followed the totemic system of primitive public life became the meeting place of religious practice.

In the Beglar reports<sup>18</sup>, Jain settlement began here in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

According to him, the temples here were built in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. The eminent scholar Vinay Ghosh in his book ‘Culture of West Bengal’ says Jain temples were built in the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century AD in the old Jain settlement areas. The Jainas were then established as a prosperous community by agriculture and trade. On the other hand, R. D. Banerjee<sup>19</sup> writes about the religion of this region, “Jainism was the main religion from the first century to the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD”. Because of this, Bankura, Purulia, Singhbhum, Medinipur and the northern part of Mayurbhanj Jain idols are more common than Buddhist or Hindu idols.

Chitgiri site (under the jurisdiction of Khatra police station) is a small modern site directly opposite Ambikanagar on the north bank of the Kangsavati at its confluence with the Kumari. Currently, the municipality has no archaeological remains of special importance. Mitra<sup>20</sup> reported several sculptural and architectural monuments from the site. According to him, “there once existed a red sandstone temple here now stripped completely beyond recognition. Two images, one of an Ekamukhalinga and the other of a Tirthankara it now lays above meager remains.” Near the foothill, there is a village market at the back of which there is a modern Siva temple. Inside of the temple is an abraded image depicting Narsimha, the fourth incarnation of Vishnu (Narsimha Avatara). The painting is pasted on the inner wall of the temple. According to Upendra Roy, the priest of the temple, the sample was collected from the submerged area of the Kangsavati dam and its place of origin is likely to be Sarengarh.

Kechanda site (under the jurisdiction of Khatra police station) is about 7 km from Khatra towards Ranibandh, on the Khatra-Ranibandh road. The river Kangsavati flows due south in this area. The place is not too far from Kangsavati reservoir. A cluster of memorial stones including Dolmen and Menhir were found near the left bank of Kangsavati and one amalaka, two memorial stones are recorded from the eroded bank. An image of Siddhayika was also found in this village. The figure is approximately 8 feet tall and on the top of the back plate are five Jaina figures. Branches of a mango tree laden with fruit are seen above Siddhayika’s head. The sides of the stele are fully covered with bas-reliefs in thirteen rows depicting some narratives of the Jain canonical literature. Below the lotus on which Sasanadevi stands is a seated lion, the emblem of the goddess. Both images can be dated to around the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>21</sup>.

## Discussion:

The confluence of the Kangsavati and Kumari rivers is important to both Jain and Brahmanical religions. The area is part of an abandoned temple complex with scattered architectural and sculptural remains. But in most cases, the architectural and sculptural traces of the old temple have been removed from their original building and installed in a modern temple.<sup>22</sup> In some cases, the temples are being renovated for their long-term preservation. Archaeologically the history of this valley region can be estimated; however, several points of disagreement arise here. Archaeologically, the monumental construction of settlements here dates back to the period between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. These were mostly confined to religious spheres in the form of monasteries, temples and sculptures. Some of the important features of the early medieval period observed in this region are expansion of settlement area, emergence of new agro-pastoral settlements, formation of commercial units, practice and continuation of traditional industrial activities like ceramics, development of metal work, lapidary and masonry work, basket making, carpentry. Development of silk and cotton weaving, leather work processed bone industry etc<sup>23</sup>. The role of the above elements is essential in the reconstruction of the early-medieval society here. Ethno-archaeological data is also very important in this context. Art and architectural monuments represent the religious practices of various ideologies. Jainism and Brahmanism were then classified as major and Buddhism as a minor category. Ethno-archaeological research provides a wealth of information about the dominance of folk elements and folk traditions in the context of discussions of the functioning of orthodox or conservative and other religious institutions. But in the chronological study of these religious expressions, we may encounter problems in determining the function of temples, the installation of deities, and when the element of the people was incorporated into daily worship practices. It is clear, however, that local beliefs and practices included mythological or orthodox religious elements and folklore.

The topography of the region consists of forest cover and degraded laterite soils. The region was rich in mineral and forest resources; As a result, the people living there were forced to work other than agriculture as an alternative or temporary means of survival. Perhaps the Jain clans preferred to live in an area rich in natural resources where they had the advantage of making money. The Jain settlement must have started by creating a network to purchase metals, minerals and later

forest products. Merchant agents were also involved here taking advantage of the hard labour of the tribal groups. Dalton,<sup>24</sup> in his writings on the local traditions of the Jain community, mentions the Saraks, who were responsible for beautifying sacred buildings or temples.

Archaeological evidence from the early medieval period suggests that the region had some social and cultural characteristics of its own. Many art-historians and scholars have written about the stone carvings of the region for more than a hundred years. Their main focus was on the archaeological value of the object and the sculptural content; not on their monumental character or sense of the past as the context in which the artefact was created. Modern research contains a wealth of information on Brahmanical and Jain sculptures of this period. These images belong to the iconoplastic art style which is considered to belong to the East Indian school of medieval sculpture. Some images of Brahmanical and Jain's exhibits recorded during this period prove that they were very similar to Orissan style of architecture. There are many sculptures and architecture belonging to Jainism, some of which were purposely altered to look like Brahmanical deities. This indicates that the Jain "mode of religious appreciation"<sup>25</sup> certainly proceeded (in some cases at the same time as) Brahmanism. Temple buildings at places like Ambikanagar, Sarengarh (a submerged site) and Pareshnath can be used as evidence.

Most scholars believe that Jainism began to spread in the region from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. They built religious centers, shrines and temples in places like the Damodar Valley, Dwarakeswar, Silavati and the Kangsavati rivers. These places were all successful Jain settlements with temples. Temples and icons were erected to guide the way along the main line of the network for the purchase of metals, minerals and other forest products. This article discusses the historical evidence of Ambikanagar and Sarengarh, two sites built to focus on the Kumari River and the Kangsavati region. Ambikanagar, Chitgiri, Kechanda and Sarengarh are the major cities which are connected to this network. R. D. Banerjee<sup>26</sup> writes in *East Indian School of Medieval Sculpture*, "There is no doubt that the region was once a major Jain centre and Jainism was associated with both the Radh region and West Bengal. Begler<sup>27</sup> described There must have been a road between Tamluk (Tamralipta) lies north and west between Gaya and Rajgir. The main road extended from Tamluk to Bishnupur, Chatna, Raghunathpur, Telkupi, Jharia, Gaya, Rajoli and Rajgir. The second road goes from Tamluk to Ambikanagar and ends at Pareshnath. People

have been trading goods along the routes of Subarnarekha, Kumari, Silavati, Dwarakeswar and Damodar rivers for a long time. Some of the temples in the region are also believed to have been built by traders as a thriving commercial community was observed in these places over the centuries for the construction and maintenance of temples.

In the early medieval period the region was ruled by people chosen by the Orissa and Pala kings.<sup>28</sup> In 1078 AD, King Anantavarman Chodganga Deva Orissa king was in charge of the region. His second palace was built at Ambikanagar. He was a follower of Jainism and also built several Jain temples on his land. Some of these are still seen today in Bankura and Purulia districts and their adjoining areas.<sup>29</sup> These temples were built by the Digambara community between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were originally dedicated to Parsvanatha or Mahavira, the last two Tirthankaras of the Jains. Excavation of some of the mounds here revealed the existence of old bricks. People of the area say that these are the remains of fort of Anantavarman Chodganga. The Jain temples of Southwest Bengal were similar to the Brahmanical Hindu temples built at the same time, but their general design was very simple. Around the 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD, many Jain temples became Brahmanical Hindu temples. The idols of Jain Tirthankaras were worshiped as Hindu deities, such as Parshvanatha as Vishnu and Mahavira as Shiva, or as other deities such as Dharma Thakur. In most cases the kings of Orissa played a major role in transforming the temples. This is because the later kings of the Ganges were Shaivas and they erected Hindu temples in place of the old Jain temples and installed Shiva idols in the newly dedicated temples. Such Shiva temples are widely observed in Bankura and Purulia districts.

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# Archiving the Local History, Heritage and Culture: Role of the Public Libraries in West Bengal

Biswajit Adhikary

**Abstract:** It is known to us that a distant villages also have their own history and heritages; they have some unique etiquettes and rituals. Even a few decades back those were confined inside the oral stories of local people. Now after the printing system has become easily available and affordable the talks and stories are being documented. Usually, the authors of those documents are common men and they don't know how to publish and distribute their works. The formal publication houses are also ignorant and disinterested in this regard. Inevitably, the small presses and the little magazine are the only reliable sources in this regard. And it must be said that the small presses and little magazines have been doing the job over the years. In every small town of West Bengal, there are one or two small presses and some little magazines. They publish some exclusive books and articles of local history, local heritage, folklore, folk arts, etc. It is not possible to create an archive on local history and culture overlooking those documents. However, those presses and magazines are usually small-scale, sick and non-profit industries; and thus very short-lived. Therefore, the books and articles they publish are also volatile, ephemeral, irregular and inconsistent. The public libraries must take some responsibility in this regard. They can assure some monetary return for those poor and non-profit organizations subscribing their publications. In exchange, the library can get some invaluable literature on local history and heritage. This paper tries to focus on that tripartite association and the probable benefits out of that.

**Keywords:** Small Press, Little Magazine, Public Library, Preservation, Local History, Folklore, Folk arts.

## Introduction

If schools (especially we are talking about the Govt. or Govt. sponsored schools) are the gateway of knowledge for the children of poor and middle-class families, the public libraries are the major repository of knowledge for them. During the last few decades of the 20th century, in rural and suburban areas of our country the public library network was the second most popular and effective system (just behind All India Radio) for common men to get information as well as entertainment. Once, Alvin Johnson, the well-known American economist and educationist dreamed

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that the public library would be developed into a people's university (Johnson, 1938). In our country public libraries, especially outside the urban areas, have been acting as a convenient destination for the common knowledge-seeker. Still today, there are thousands of such villages in India where the people dependent on the nearby library to read the daily newspaper. Therefore, we can certainly consider the public libraries to take the responsibilities of collecting, preserving and disseminating the local literature, culture, heritage, etc. Already we have ample infrastructure of the public library network throughout the country. We have to utilise that network in this regard.

History in our country means only the history of emperors, their relatives, some close courtiers and at most the history of feudal kings. History means the history of the capital and other big cities over the years. There has been an age-old tendency to treat history, culture, art, literature, etc. of any country, state or province with the central perspectives. However, in the recent past we have heard about the term "subaltern studies". Slowly we are becoming acquainted with the practice of observing history, heritage and culture from the viewpoints of the "other" side. We realised that each and every locality has some special belief, custom, etiquette, ritual and culture; every classes of people have some exclusive art forms and literatures, which not have been documented yet. Now the time has come to collect and preserve those intellectual and traditional works and artefacts with proper care. Local little magazines and small presses have started the collection and documentation works decades back in their own interest and initiative. If the public libraries come forward and provide necessary assistance to these magazines and publishers, then the initiative may be more effective for the preservation of local literature, culture and heritage.

In this paper, we will try to examine the feasibility of the mutual alliance among public library system, little magazine and small press. Also, we will try to assess the outcomes of the probable coalition. The scope of the study will be limited within the state of West Bengal. Sample will be selected from a district of the state of Medinipur (undivided), and the study will be made through simple bibliographical analysis. Most of the data are collected from the primary sources.

### **Review of Some Relevant Literature**

Banerjee opines that the public library in India is a living force for education, culture, and information. The country has had public libraries for nearly two hundred years,

but public library development has not come up uniformly and systematically all over country. The objectives of a rural public library are to be concerned with rural development in all aspects. Such libraries are required to serve various sectors of the population. However, rural public libraries have not been developed as per expectations. (Banerjee, 1996)

Dim and Osabebe write about the challenges and strategies of public libraries of Nigeria in preserving the cultural heritage. Public libraries can serve as the mirror through which the reflection of the community can be seen. The cultural Heritage of a Nation or community needs to be preserved for posterity. Moreover, it should be the hub around which all development efforts should originate otherwise the community will lose its identity, culture, and heritage. (Dim & Osadebe, 2009)

Library can play a significant role to preserve knowledge and cultural heritage in society. They help to ensure that the voices of all communities are represented. Many libraries in the United States have dedicated collections for preserving materials from specific cultures. 'The UTSA Libraries in San Antonio have made it a mission to contribute to the preservation and access of South Texas histories, many of which encompass the thriving Hispanic community in the area.' (Sweeney, 2021)

The study of Munshi and Ansari (2020) reveals that public libraries in West Bengal have some serious problems and thus need urgent attention. There is collection development policy, but the libraries are largely dependent upon the available documents at the local book fairs. The number of e-resources in the rural public libraries is almost zero. Moreover, there are serious problem of shortage of staff.

Britishers played a significant role to set up the public libraries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in India. Now, the development and evolution of public libraries is mostly dependent upon the mission of the contemporary state government of the state. West Bengal Public Library Act was amended subsequently in 1982, 1985, 1993, 1994, 1998, and 2000. Since 2003, the Act has not been amended again. it is essential to revise the West Bengal Public Library Act according to the changing environment of every segment of society. (Munshi & Ansari, 2021)

Public libraries broaden information access and enhance and extend existing systems of education. More and more access to information may improve or lead to democracy and freedom, and that providing such access adds to the overall

well-being of individuals and societies. (Jones, 2017)

The libraries, archives, and museums once have taken separate paths to professionalization. However, in the digital environment of recent times are those separate entities again coming close to each other? There are enough hints which reveal such tendency. (Marcum, 2014). All the organizations e.g. libraries, archives and museums (LAM) perform more or less same kind of tasks, collect, manage, preserve and share. Although the materials they handle may differ, they perform some overlapping set of jobs. So any kind of collaboration among these bodies may enhance their effectiveness. (Waibel, 2023). From LAM we have moved towards GLAM. “GLAM is an acronym for galleries, libraries, archives, and museums, and refers to cultural institutions with a mission to provide access to knowledge. GLAMs collect and maintain cultural heritage materials in the public interest. As collecting institutions, GLAMs preserve and make accessible primary sources valuable for researchers.” (2023)

Frederick J. Hoffman, (1945) assistant professor at Ohio State University, asserted “The little magazines are of inestimable value for the scholar and the critic because in their pages we find the source materials of the only scholarship worthy of the name. There is no doubt of this fact, and it will be recognized with increasing readiness in the years to come.”

Adhikary and Rath (2015) in their study prove that little magazines are alternative sources of information for some areas of social sciences besides formal research journals. They carry some exclusive works on subjects like local history, archaeology, folklore folk arts etc. therefore they should be archived with proper care for the interest of the people as well as the society.

Little magazine discovers some unknown authors who can deliver first-hand information on some areas of knowledge. Moreover, they promote non-academic study and research on some unexplored field of the social sciences. These publications can be extremely useful for the scholars and researchers to have an extensive idea on the cultures and heritage of a particular town or village. Moreover, they promote research in the vernacular. (Adhikary B., 2021)

Small presses are important for the new author, for the publishing industry, and for the art. Because, they publish those works which the big publishers avoid or neglect to publish. They create a robust and vibrant ecosystem where many more authors, ideas, modes of publication, and other factors can thrive without the

pressures of Big Business weighing them down (Sullivan, 2021).

### **Little Magazine and their concern about the local history heritage and culture**

Little magazines are basically a special kind of literary magazines. They are generally short-lived, irregular, poorly circulated, non-commercial and small-scale publications. However, in spite of these weaknesses they are avant-garde. Various modernist literary movements, theories, new genres initiated at the pages of such magazines. Many great poets and authors of the West like James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, etc. wrote their masterpieces in these unknown publications. In Bengal (undivided) most of the major authors like Manik Bandyopadhyay, Premendra Mitra, Jibanananda Dash, Subhas Mukhopadhyay, Kamalkumar Majumdar, Amiyabhusan Majumdar, etc, started their literary careers in such magazines.

Little magazines were first initiated in the West as the modernist literary journal. However, right from the beginning, they had a rich tradition to publish thoughtful essays on different social issues. There were magazines like *Poetry* or *Little Review* dedicated to creative literature. Also there were *Freewomen* or *Dial* to analyse and comment on contemporary social phenomena. The importance of these magazines as the literary media have been tested and recognized decades back. Now the question arises, are they equally relevant for the study of local history, heritage and culture?

In 2013-2014, there were approximately 1565 living little magazines in West Bengal (Hasan, 2014). The combined figure of the numbers of the Little magazines published from the two parts (east and west) of Medinipur (137) is only next to the number of such magazines from greater Kolkata (608).

**Table: Types of Little Magazine (LM)**

Types of LM		Percentage
Pure Literary LM	Only poetry	65.9
	Only Fiction	5.3
	Only Essays	2.0
	Mixed	10.2
	Others	0.8
Literary and Socio-Cultural LM		13.5
LM with Special Interest		2.3

It is generally found that, out of the total, almost 70 to 75 percent magazines are dedicated only to poetry (Dutta, 2014). The residue, i.e. 25 to 30 percent of magazines also prints poetry with fiction, essay and criticism. Little magazine without poem is very rare in West Bengal. The Magazines, which have rich prose sections, publish thoughtful articles on various disciplines that are considered for the present study.

Out of 137 magazines published in undivided district of Medinipur, 21 magazines publish articles on different local issues. We have selected following six magazines for our study because they print nonfiction articles on topics like local history, culture and heritage.

1. *Amritalok*, edited by Samiran Mazumdar from Midnapore, Pachim Medinipur
2. *Shabder Michhil*, edited by Ajharuddin Khan from Midnapore, Paschim Medinipur
3. *Ebang Sayak*, edited by Surya Nandi from Dantan, Paschim Medinipur,
4. *Srijan*, edited by Lakshman Karmakar from Ghatal, Paschim Medinipur
5. *Sahajiya*, edited by Madhusudan Mukhoadhyay from Kolaghat, Purba Medinipur
6. *Punyipukur*, edited by Bhaskarbrata Pati from Panskura, Purba Medinipur

Analysing the collected articles on Social Sciences (621 approximately, 64% of the total non-fiction articles excluding the book reviews), it has been found that maximum percentage of share is occupied by the range of classes-301 to 309 (i.e. Sociology, Social Anthropology), 320 to 329 (i.e. Political Science), 380 to 389 and 390 to 399 (i.e. Folklore etc.). The Subject wise breakup is given in the following tables. The subjects included in “Others” are Social Psychology, Dialects, Social Geography, Local History and Biography, Archaeology etc.

**Table: 5.2 Class-wise breakup of the published literature**

Classes (DDC, 21 <sup>st</sup> ed.)	Percentage
300-309	31.80
320-329	15.18
330-339	6.24
360-369	1.44
370-379	4.61
380-389	18.73
<b>390-399</b>	<b>10.66</b>
Others	11.34



**The findings analysing the published articles are listed below:**

1. The magazines publish enough number of articles on local history, culture and heritage.
2. Leading Social Scientists along with some unknown non-academic authors contribute with their works on the concerned subjects in these magazines regularly.
3. The information presented on folklore, folk arts, social anthropology, local history, and archaeology etc. are exclusive.
4. Some near exhaustive information on those areas are published in the little magazines.

As for example, a Classified List of the Articles (titles have been translated from Bengali) published in magazine *Ebang Sayak* during the period from 2001 to 2012 (Adhikary & Rath, 2015) are presented below.

Class No.	Subject	Title	Author	Year
301	Sociology and Anthropology	The rivers of Medinipur , in search of the sources	Maity, Bankim	2004
301	Sociology and Anthropology	Transformation in the society in medieval Medinipur	Mahapatra, Rajarshi	2009
306.4	Culture	Bahurupis About the	Das, Dipankar	2004
306.4	Culture	Social and cultural progress: an introduction	,Chakrabarty Boiragya	2004
306.4	Culture	In the land of <i>Gayna Bori</i>	Parua, Sabyasachi	2006
306.41	Culture	On the culture of Dantan (a village of Medinipur)	Ray, Sulekha	2005
306.874	Culture and institutions; Mother	<i>Dhaima</i> (rural midwife): looking for the other 'mom'	Parua, Sabyasachi	2005
381.180954	Fair	About the fairs of Dantan	Ghosh, Biswajit	2008
398	Folklore	Witch-art and folklore: a review	De, Madhup	2007
398	Folklore	Evolution of feminist culture in rural areas: special reference to the "Nija" gram-panchayet of Narajol	Bhattacharya, Nilanjana	2009
398	Folklore	Paddy and grain festival of Bengal	Maity, Bankim	2010
398.2	Folk literature	Saint poet Bhimbhoi	Khanra, Tapan Kumar	2002
398.2	Folk literature	The <i>pala</i> of <i>Sati Champavati</i> or <i>Baghambar</i> : a debate	Bera, Shyamal	2002
398.2	Folk literature	The witchcraft of the <i>Rā?hare</i> region	Maity, Bankim	2003
398.2	Folk literature	Pala of Lalita-Shabar	Bera, Shyamal	2003
398.2	Folk literature	Snake mantra: south-west frontier Bengal	Maity, Bankim	2003
398.2	Folk literature	<i>Shabarshabari</i> the extinct <i>jatrapala</i> (folk-theatre)	Mukhopadhyay, Subrata	2004
398.2	Folk literature	Bengali folk drama <i>Vanrhjatra</i> and one <i>pala</i> "Kheyali raja"	Bera, Shyamal	2005
398.27	Folk Medicine	Folk medicine in Medinipur	Maity, Bankim	2004
398.41	Folk belief	Folk God - <i>Pandasura</i>	Patra, Upen	2001
398.41	Folk belief	Castiesm in India and the birth story of a golden lotus	Biswas, Nitish	2004
398.41	Folk belief	Goddess of <i>Virā?a Manasa</i>	Maity, Bankim	2006
398.41	Folk belief	Idol of Goddess <i>Śītālā</i> : fictional or relevant	Mukhopadhyay, Subrata	2006
398.41	Folk belief	Folk God and Goddess of Medinipur	Chattopadhyay, Sougata	2007
398.41	Folk belief	The folk goddess <i>Śītālā</i> has become universal today: a survey	Konar, Gopikanta	2010
398.8	Rhymes	Archaeology of rhymes	Pal, Animeshkanti	2002
398.8	Rhymes	Almost extinct folk sports in Bengali rhymes		2007
398.9	Proverbs	Bengali proverbs with birds and animals	Santra, Kshitish	2004
398.9	Proverbs	Money as subject in the proverbs and rhymes	Acharya, Madhusudan	2009
398.9	Proverbs	Bengali proverbs with stool	Acharya, Madhusudan	2011
398.9	Proverbs	Bangla Proverbs and Bangla Literature	Santra, Kshitish	2011
745	Folk Arts	a (Pattachitra) industry in Narajol	Bhattacharya, Nilanjana	2008
745	Folk Arts	The Songs of Pata	Pal, Animeshkanti	2009
781.620095	Folk Music	The almost forgotten Kandnagit(cry song) of the valley of Subarnarekha)	Mukhopadhyay, Subrata	2004
781.620095	Folk Music	(lulling songs)Ghumparanigaan	Das, Dipankar	2010
793.31	Folk Dance	The <i>Lodha</i> tribe and decaying folk dance " <i>Chang</i> "	Mukhopadhyay, Subrata	2005
930	Local history	Regional historiography of medieval period	Mahapatra, Rajarshi	2011

930.1	Archaeology	From Dantan to Bamyan	Bera, Shyamal	2001
930.1	Archaeology	Tax rules” in the place names of Medinipur“	Maity, Bankim	2001
930.1	Archaeology	<i>Satdeula</i> : a wonderful archaeological site of Dantan	Das, Tapan Kumar	2004
930.1	Archaeology	Buddhist sculpture of Dantan	Maity, Bankim	2005
930.1	Archaeology	Moghulmari, the archaeological site	Maity, Bankim	2005
930.1	Archaeology	Moghulmari of Dantan, the buried town	Maity, Bankim	2006
930.1	Archaeology	Moghulmari of Dantan :the archaeological site	Nandi, Surya	2006
930.1	Archaeology	The Buddhist monastery on the outskirts of Dantan	Maity, Bankim	2007
930.1	Archaeology	Temple of the <i>Shyamleshwar Shiva</i> : the architecture and folklore	Ghosh, Biswajit	2007
930.1	Archaeology	Subarnarekha: from source to the estuary	Maity, Bankim	2007
930.1	Archaeology	In the basin of Subarnarekha	Maity, Bankim	2008
930.1	Archaeology	Architectures of the temples in Dantan	Ghosh, Biswajit	2009
930.1	Archaeology	Lower basin of Subarnarekha and the estuary	Maity, Bankim	2009
930.1	Archaeology	The Buddhist monastery at Moghulmari	Ghosh, Biswajit	2010
930.1	Archaeology	: Satdeula folklore and archeology	Ghosh, Biswajit	2011
930.1	Archaeology	Excavation at Moghulmari: a Pre-Pala Buddhist monastic complex	Asoke Dutta	2012
930.1	Archaeology	Moghulmari at present	Mishra, Shyamali	2012
930.1	Archaeology	Dantan: A few suggestions about the glorious excavation of ancient history	Das, Dipankar	2012
930.1	Archaeology	Dantapur – Dandabhukti - Dantan	Samanta, Lalitmohan	2012
930.1	Archaeology	Excavation of Moghulmari and Dr. Ashoke Dutta	Nandi, Surya	2012
930.1	Archaeology	Excavation of Moghulmari: a report	Dutta, Ashoke; Sanyal, Rajat	2012
930.1	Archaeology	The phases of excavation of Moghulmari	Khan, Firoz	2012
930.1	Archaeology	Archaeological tourism in Moghulmari	Sing-Mahapatra, Tarun	2012
930.1	Archaeology	Moghulmari: archaeological excavation	Ghosh, Biswajit	2012
930.1	Archaeology	The medieval history of the Moghulmari	Sit, Bimal Kumar	2012
930.1	Archaeology	From Satdeula to Mogulmari: in search of legends and history	Nandi, Surya	2012
930.1092	Archaeologist	Tarapada Santara, the archaeologist	Dash, Chinmay	2003
930.1092	Archaeologist	Archaeologist Tarapada Santra and some of his letters	Hajra, Prabalkanti	2007

### Small Press: the publisher of local history, heritage and culture

A small press is a publisher with annual sales below a certain level or below a certain number of titles published (Small Press, 2022). The standard industry definition for a small press in the US is any publisher with annual sales below \$50 million, or those that publish on average 10 or fewer titles per year (Sullivan, 2021). Small presses developed in the late nineteenth century as a reaction to the major publishers. Small presses are alternatives to the commercial establishment, issuing works that larger publishers avoid for commercial or editorial reasons. (Henderson, 1983)

Like the little magazines, the small press also has some unique characteristics. They are literally small in respect of their capital, manpower engaged, a number of titles published, commercial foresight, etc. Sometimes terms like “indie publisher” and “independent press” are used as synonym of small press. The two terms indicate

that those presses are basically non-commercial in nature. In the West, there are mutual compassion between little magazine and small press. However, in our country, especially in West Bengal, little magazine and small press are closely related with each other, or in other words, they are almost the reverse of the same coin.

In financial yardstick most of the publishers of our country look as if small press. However, we must remember that all financially weak or small-scale publishers are not small press. Not the ability but the attitude is to be considered in this regard. The manuscripts which don't have the possibility of commercial success are not generally published by the big publishers. Only the small presses have the courage and spirit to publish those manuscripts. They don't care about the prospect of financial loss. Obviously they publish large number of substandard works. However, they also publish some offbeat masterpieces. In West Bengal, they are the major publishers of books on topics like local archaeology, local anthropology, local history heritage and culture, folklore and folk arts.

Small press generally publishes those works which previously appeared in the pages of some little magazine. As the publishers don't have formal distribution chain the books published by them are not marketed properly. The books are mainly financed by the author and also gifted and donated free to some friends and well-wishers. The major challenge for the scholars is to find out such books after some years of its publication, because they are not archived or preserved properly.

Some major Small Presses in the district of Medinipur (undivided), West Bengal

1. Amritalok
2. Shabder Michhil
3. Jwaladarchi
4. Kabitika
5. Upatyaka
6. Lokokriti
7. Srijan
8. Ebang Sayak
9. Kabitar Kagaj
10. Dighalpatra
11. Turja

12. Apanjan
13. Laketu
14. Bakpratima
15. Sankalita Suchetana
16. Mahaprithibi
17. Suryadesh
18. Kalbela
19. Benuka
20. Astrik

The number of total books published during last 15 years by these local publishers is approximately 4300. Out of which nearly 12 percent books contain subjects like folklore, folk arts, local dialects, local culture, local history, local heritage, archaeology, etc. The lists of such books published by three of the leading small presses of Medinipur are listed below. The titles are translated from Bengali.

### 1. Books published by *Upatyaka*

Sl.	Titles	Subject
1	Heritage tourism in Medinipur/ edited by Tapas Maity	Local history
2	Durga-puja in Medinipur / edited by Tapas Maity	Cultural property
3	Stories of the villages of Medinipur (published 12 vol. so far) / edited by Tapas Maity	Local history
4	Lalgarh – regional history / edited by Tapas Maity	Local history
5	Palaces of Raja and Jamindar of Medinipur, 2 vol. / edited by Tapas Maity	Local history
6	Stories of urban Medinipur / edited by Tapas Maity	Local history
7	Stories of <i>Tamralipta</i> , the historical port city / edited by Tapas Maity	Local history
8	Stories of the jungle-mahal of Medinipur / edited by Tapas Maity	Local history
9	The lost villages of Medinipur / edited by Tapas Maity	Local history
10	Rivers of Medinipur / edited by Tapas Maity	Cultural property
11	Christian cemetery in Medinipur/ Dr. Tripura Basu	Local history
12	Mother of <i>Ekanna Pith</i> / Tapan Chakraborty	Local history
13	History of Khejuri/ Prabalkanti Hajra	Local history

14	Folk arts of Medinipur/ Bhaskarbrata Pati	Folk arts—Medinipur
15	Hapugan of Medinipur/ Bhaskarbrata Pati	Folk arts—Medinipur
16	Forgotten archaeologist Tarakchandra Dash/ Abhijit Guha	Archaeologists
17	Collected works of Amirul Muslim	Archaeologists
18	About the beginning of Vidyasagar University/ Kumaresh Ghosh	Local history

## 2. Books published by *Kabitika*

### Sl. Titles Subject

1	Revolutionary history of Tilka Majhi and Sidhu-Kanu-Birsa/ Swapan Poirā & Shyamapada Mandi	Local history
2	Famous travellers in the history of Medinipur/ Madhup De	Local history
3	Princess of Chandrarekhagarh/ Madhup De	Local history
4	Family festival for the worship of goddess Durga/ Sugata Pain	Cultural property
5	History of Manoharpur/ Pranabkumar Giri	Local history
6	Museum and study centre established by <i>Maliburo</i> (pseudonym of Judhithir Jana)/ Susnata Jana	Archaeologists
7	Sri Chaitanya, the pioneer of mass movement	History-cultural
8	In quest of history	Local history
9	The cursed dynasties/ Rupeskumar Samanta	Local history
10	Purana of Bhanga Mana/ Manisha Basu Palmal	Cultural property
11	Birharh of Purulia/ Shibshankar Singh	Cultural property
12	National Teacher Acharya Ishwar Chandra Pramanik	Local history
13	Folklore of Jangalmahal (Ku[amāli and SubarGaraikhika) / Fatikchand Ghosh	Folklore
14	Mango in culture and rituals/ Mananjali Bandyopadhyay & kalia Chakraborty	Cultural property
15	Nachni culture in Manbhum/ Nimaikrishna Mahata	Cultural property
16	Story of Ahira/ Thakurdas Mahata	Cultural property
17	Voice of the downtrodden/ Amrita Pal	Cultural property
18	Revolutionary freedom fighter Debendranath Mahata/ Bhupalchandra Mahata	Local history
19	Notations of Jhumir and Baul songs/ Bhupenchandra Mahata	Folk arts
20	Agricultural rituals of Santal/ Mananjali Bandyopadhyay	Cultural property
21	History of Declining Culture of Bengal/ ed. by Sannyasi Maity	Cultural property

22	Antiquities and Places of Worship of Panshkura/ Rupeshkumar Samanta	Cultural property
23	Educator and activist Sushil Kumar Smritimalya/ ed. by Haripada Maity	Local history
24	Gopiballavpur/ Madhup De	Local history
25	Dialects of Medinipur/ Susnata Jana	Bengali language—dialects
26	Our independence/ Bhupenchandra Mahata	Local history
27	Dalits in Bengali literature/ Gitika Panda & others	Bengali language—dialects
28	Bibliography of regional history of Medinipur/ ed. by Haripada Maity	Local history
29	Valley of flowers: tourism in Panskura/ Rupeshkumar Samanta	Cultural property
30	Sabang: regional history/Goutamkumar Mitra	Local history
31	Folk Gods and Folklore of Coastal Region of Medinipur/ Shankar Bishai	Folklore
32	Freedom movement and political history of Panskura/ Rupeshkumar Samanta	Local history
33	Revolutionary leader Bolailal Dasmahapatra/ ed. by Haripada Maity	Local history
34	An untold story of the suffering and deprivation of the Kurmis of Jangalmahal / Devendranath Mahata	Local history
35	Folk paintings of Bengal / Tagari Das	Folk arts
36	Languages of the valley of Subaranrekha/ Upendranath Patra and Promishpratim Panja	Bengali language—dialects
37	Dantan-Mohanpur in Freedom Struggle / Surya Nandi	Local history
38	Conventional Tusu-gita	Folklore
39	Yammhakāra jinisa sa'umhē mānā a/ Basudev Ghosh	Local history
40	Madhupur: local history	Local history

### 3. Books published by *Bakpratima*

#### Sl. Titles Subject

1	Our Mahishadal/ed. by Harprasad Sahoo	Local history
2	Our Haldia / ed. by Harprasad Sahoo	Local history
3	Our Panshkura / ed. by Harprasad Sahoo	Local history
4	Our Nandakumar / ed. by Harprasad Sahoo	Local history

5	Our East Medinipur / ed. by Harprasad Sahoo	Local history
6	History of Mahishadal/ ed. by Harprasad Sahoo	Local history
7	Pargana Kashijora/ ed. by Sudhanshushekhhar Bhattacharya	Local history
8	Sixteenth Janapadakatha/ ed. by Sudhanshushekhhar Bhattacharya	Local history
9	Panskura Parikrama/ ed. by Sudhanshushekhhar Bhattacharya	Local history
10	Panshkurarjanpad/ ed. by Sudhanshushekhhar Bhattacharya	Local history
11	Panskura Gaurav/ ed. by Sudhanshushekhhar Bhattacharya	Local history
12	Kotulpur: History and Culture/ ed. by Laxmikanta Pal	Local history
13	Mahishadal dynasty/ ed. by Bhagwaticharan Mahata	Local history
14	Rath Yatra of Puri Mahesh and Mahishadal/ ed. by Sankarshan Maiti	Cultural property
15	Past and present of the culture of Mallabhum/ Dr. Chinmay Das	Local history
16	Folk arts of Medinipur/ Dr. Nilotpal Jana	Folk arts
17	Bibliography on Medinipur: vol. 1/ edited by Haraprasad Sahoo	Local history

The lists are enough to prove that we may lose huge precious information and knowledge on regional culture and heritage if the books are not collected and preserved properly.

### **Public Library: possible repository of local history, heritage and culture**

In 1977 total number of public libraries in the state of West Bengal was 762. During the years 1977 to 1985, the number increases to 1659. That means a growth was almost 200 percent. Obviously this is a great achievement of the then State Govt. In recent times, the total number of public libraries in the state is 2480. The detailed statistics is presented in the following table :



Sl. No.	Name of the District	Govt. Libraries	Govt. Sponsored Libraries-Dist. Library	Govt. Sponsored Libraries-Town /Sub-divisional / Upgraded Town Library	Govt. Sponsored Libraries-Rural / Primary Unit / Area Library	Total- Govt. Sponsored Libraries	Govt. Aided Libraries	Total Number of Books in the district	Total (Libraries)
1	Alipurduar		1	2	34	37		2,45,529	37
2	Bankura		1	7	122	130		10,95,990	130
3	Birbhum		1	10	113	124		8,52,669	124
4	Paschim Burdwan		2	6	53	61		7,85,075	61
5	Purba Burdwan		1	15	135	151		16,03,703	151
6	Coochbehar	1		7	102	109		5,75,390	110
7	Dakshin Dinajpur		1	4	52	57		4,97,488	57
8	Darjeeling – GTA	1		4	66	70		2,42,021	71
9	Kalimpong	1		2	27	29		87,254	30
10	Darjeeling – SMPA	1	1	4	23	28		2,12,449	29
11	Hooghly	1	1	22	135	158		16,22,573	159
12	Howrah		1	12	123	136	1	13,29,450	137
13	Jalpaiguri		1	7	65	73		6,53,848	73
14	Kolkata	2		8	88	96	3	5,34,611	101
15	Maldah		1	9	95	105		6,90,543	105
16	Murshidabad		1	12	146	159		8,63,681	159
17	Nadia		1	10	99	110	1	8,13,952	111
18	North 24 Parganas	3	1	38	182	221	1	18,03,392	225
19	Paschim Medinipur		1	13	101	115		7,50,012	115
20	Jhargram			2	41	43		2,01,297	43
21	Purba Midnapur	1	1	10	110	121		9,13,099	122
22	Purulia	1	1	5	111	117		80,87,318	118
23	South 24 Parganas		1	19	136	156		10,65,950	157
24	Uttar Dinajpur	1		4	50	54	1	4,98,201	55
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>2209</b>	<b>2460</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2,60,25,495</b>	<b>2480</b>

Source: Dept. of Mass Education Extension and Library Services, West Bengal (Govt of West Bengal, 2023)

So, the total number of public libraries in undivided district of Medinipur (Paschim Medinipur + Purba Medinipur + Jhargram) is 280.

Let's have a look on the demography of the districts—

District	Area (sq. km)	Population
Paschim Medinipur	9,295.28	59,43,300
Purba Medinipur	4,736.00	50,95,875
Jhargram	3,024.38	11,37,163
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,055.66</b>	<b>121,76,338.00</b>

Source: District Administrations, Govt. of West Bengal

So, in undivided Medinipur there is a library per 61 sq. km area, or a library per 43,487 people. The statistics are not so satisfactory, but not so bad too. It can be said that the public library network is adequate as we compare it with other aspects of the state. Now the all-important question is: is the network efficient and effective in fulfilling its social responsibilities?

There are three ways of collection development in the public libraries—i) purchase from book fair, ii) gifts from Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (an autonomous organisation funded by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India), and iii) personal gifts. The libraries are provided with an annual fund to purchase books from the district book fair. For a rural library, the fund was Rs. 6000.00 in the year 2007-08, and recently it is Rs. 15000.00 which is not enough.

There was a good practice of the Local Library Authority (LLA) before the year 2010-11. Although there was no written order or amendments, LLA used to select and purchase some books published by local publishers and distribute the books among the libraries. The small presses had the opportunity to submit their published titles for the consideration of LLA. However, that practice has not been continued in recent years.

### **Conclusion, Findings and Recommendations**

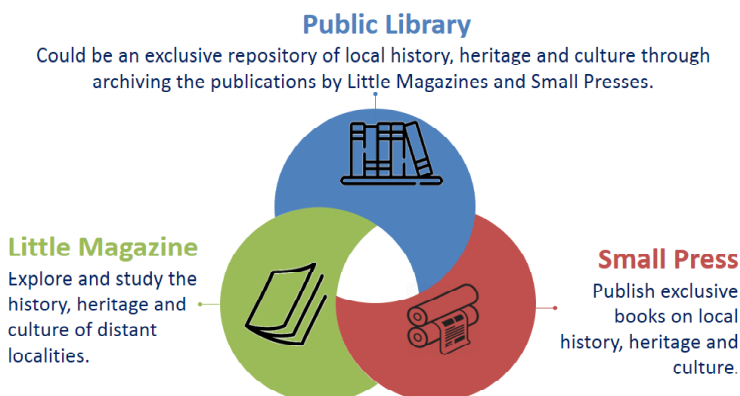
There are public libraries in towns and villages; there are little magazines and small presses too. That means there are enough available documents, and the organizations to collect and manage them. The all-important infrastructure is ready. Only some adjustments of policies by Govt. and the necessary intent to initiate the programme can do the residue.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the little magazine and small press publish some invaluable articles and books on topics like folklore, folk arts, local history, archaeology, etc. however they don't have proper distribution and marketing. As a result of which those publications are volatile and ephemeral in nature. It is almost impossible to find out any book of a particular small press or a certain issue of any little magazine after a decade of their publication. Moreover, there is no market, stall or kiosk for those publications in the towns and villages.

Nowadays, the district book fairs have been providing some marketing opportunities to the small press and little magazines. They set up a corners specified for the little magazines. However, there are no Govt. policies to acquire the books

and magazines from these small scale industries. If it is possible to pass an order in this regard that will be beneficial for all concerned.

## The Inevitable Alliance



The mutual alliance among public libraries, little magazines and small presses can play a significant role in the preservation and conservation of local history, culture and heritage. The preservation of the culture and heritage of a country like India with full of diversity must be decentralised. The public library network may be the right organ to be utilised in this regard. The archive of books from small press and little magazines would be a rich repository of information for the scholars and researchers.

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## **Marginality and Disability: Some Prospects for Social Inclusion**

Goutam Majee

**Abstract:** When referring to marginalized people, It is generally noticed that the first tendency to analyze them on the basis of caste-religion-gender-region. But beyond this, the marginalized people who may exist, do not usually come up in the mainstream discourses. In this article I will try to highlight a handful of people who are physically and mentally disabled and they are somehow marginalized in our society. Irrespective of caste and gender, these disabled people have been neglected in every aspect of their lives, even in the second decade of the 21st century. According to the census of India in 2011, 2.21 per cent of the total population of the country, i.e. 2 crores 68 lakh people are identified as disabled in some way. There is no doubt that the number increased over the next decade. The government of India has passed 'PWD Act' and 'RPD Act' in 1995 and 2016 respectively for safeguarding disabled persons. Despite having legal recognition and rights, people with disabilities still face deprivation at various levels of society. However, it is true that the enrollment of students with disabilities has increased in educational institutions After the enactment of these disability laws. Various fields of employment have been exposed as well. Enrollment rates also increased among people with disabilities after the passage of the Right to Education Act in 2009 and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Innumerable persons with disabilities have gradually got job opportunities in the fields of school-colleges, banks, railways, government offices-courts etc. On the other hand, the Copyright Act of 2012 provides for the provision of assistive devices and the introduction of accessible websites for the disabled. But how far our society has been able to accept the disabled? For the majority of people in society, the disabled still mean the negative nuances. Despite being economically well-off, professionally established, they are completely deprived of their actual social status. It is not possible to inculcate social acceptance simply by manipulating laws, increasing education rates, or through employment. Recent revolutionary tools, information technology and digital media can play an important role for the social inclusion of the disabled people.

**Keywords:** Marginalization, disability, disability laws, social disparity, Digital Media, social inclusion.

## Introduction

The concept of disability is not new in the history of human civilization. But, at the end of the Second World War, disability was felt as a deep problem all over the world, especially in the second half of the twentieth century. Because countless soldiers and civilians were killed as well as injured in wartime situations. A lot of people were enrolled in the disability group after losing one or more limbs for the rest of their lives. What would be the rehabilitation of those who had lost their limbs for the country, appeared as a deep problem to the statesmen. Some developed and underdeveloped countries of the world started thinking about the proper rehabilitation of these war victims with disabilities. The United Nations recommended that Member States take initiatives for the welfare of persons with disabilities. Not only that; The United Nations declared the years 1983 to 1992 as the Decade of the Disabled. After the UNO Conference held in the mid-1990s, the Government of India passed the Persons with Disabilities Act (PWD ACT, 1995) in 1995. Despite this, the disabled remain neglected in Indian society. Due to poverty, illiteracy, superstition and unconsciousness, they remain outcasts from the mainstream of society. Media is called the fourth pillar of Indian democracy. This fourth pillar can play an important role in the socialization and empowerment of the disabled. Since the end of the 20th century, there has been a radical change in the character of the media. In developing countries like India there are many problems like food, clothing, housing, health, unemployment etc. But today's society cannot think of anything without Social Media Networks (SMN) and the Internet. We cannot afford to ignore the impact of new media on our minds and culture. This new media can play an important role in changing the attitude of the society towards the disabled.<sup>1</sup>

Disabled persons were not specifically mentioned in the three censuses conducted in India from 1941 to 1971. However, in the 1981 census, only 3 types of disabilities were mentioned for the first time after independence. In the 1991 census report, the issue of the disabled was completely ignored. Meanwhile, the United Nations designated the period from 1983 to 1992 as the Decade of Disability; Movements started in various parts of the world to give legal rights and dignity to the disabled. Protests were also held in different parts of India through blockades, protest marches, sit-ins, handing out memorandums, etc. Unable to ignore international pressure and the disability movement, the Indian government was

eventually forced to enact a separate law for the disabled in 1995. On the other hand, in 2000, the United Nations published a declaration called the United Nations Millennium Declaration. In that declaration, the heads of state of all the member states talked about the 'Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)'. The declaration emphasized awareness campaigns, literacy campaigns, elimination of malnutrition, polio vaccination etc. for the socialization of the disabled. By 2015, each country had committed to having appropriate programs in this regard. Apart from this, several steps were also taken for the socialization of the disabled.

### **The Indian State and Disability**

Almost 50 years after gaining political independence, the Government of India passed the 'Persons with Disabilities Act' in 1995 to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. On 12 December 1995, the Parliament of India passed a bill in this regard. It was signed into law by the Honorable President of India on 7th February 1996. This was the first disability law ever passed in India. The act sought to provide equal opportunities, equal participation and several social and economic rights to persons with disabilities. Sections 27 to 31 of the law provide for various rights for persons with disabilities to access education. It has also been said to provide various employment opportunities. In fact, it has been said to reserve 3 per cent seats for the disabled in recruitment and admission in government jobs and educational institutions.<sup>2</sup> However, in a special case of the Supreme Court, it has been clearly mentioned that this reservation policy will be applicable in the case of private educational institutions or private jobs.<sup>3</sup>

How is the association of the disabled defined in this law? P.W.D. According to the law, any person who is permanently incapacitated in any way, either physically or mentally. That is, their disability cannot be cured in any way through treatment and their disability rate must be at least 40 percent or more. A person can legally obtain a Disability Identity Card only if a certificate to this effect is issued by any district medical college or sub-divisional hospital in India. Imprisonment and monetary penalties are also specifically mentioned for misuse of this law. Sight, hearing, bone, and mental, a total of 7 types of disabilities were mentioned in that law. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India was said to be responsible for proper implementation of this Act.

However, this law could not protect the disabled from social deprivation and misconceptions. It is true that because of this law, as many disabled people saw

the light of education, new employment opportunities were also opened to many. Besides, in 2002, the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' adopted by the government played an important role in spreading education among the disabled in one way or another. In the first decade of the 21st century, 'Inclusive Education' emphasized the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream schools. Instead of special schools, which have been in use for a long time, more emphasis was placed on providing education with general students, thinking about the socialization of the disabled. In that case, importance was also laid on having special trainers or SPECIAL EDUCATORS in general schools. Above all, the 'RIGHT TO EDUCATION Act' (Right to Education Act) of 2009 called for compulsory unpaid elementary education for children aged 6 to 14 years at the primary level. As a result, children with disabilities were also included under such laws.

In 2016, the Government of India amended the Disability Act of 1995, considering several shortcomings and problems. A lot of new things were added in this Act called 'Revised Persons with Disabilities Act' (RPD Act, 2016). In the previous law, only 7 types of disabled people were mentioned. But in this new act, a total of 21 types of disabilities including acid attack victims, thalassemia patients, and cerebral Palsy have been mentioned. Besides that, the reservation rate has been increased by 1 per cent to 4 per cent instead of the earlier 3 per cent. However, this increase has not been implemented everywhere even today. Apart from this, more emphasis was placed on infrastructural changes in educational institutions and government offices-courts so that the disabled could move freely. Education for all is the main motto of the new National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. So, the disabled persons are not excluded from this new law. Although, a number of provisions had been mentioned in NPE 1986, SSA 2002, RTE 2009 and other education laws for widening education among the disabled persons.

### **Social Attitude Towards The Disabled Persons**

Generally, sociologists analyze barriers for disabled people in three ways; Social Model, Religious Model and Medical Model. The social stream lays greater emphasis on the socialization of the disabled through administrative, legal and technological empowerment. In other words, various plans have been made to bring back the mainstream of society by issuing law to assist the disabled, giving special benefits to the disabled from the administrative level and handing over some assistive technology to them. In the medical model, emphasis has always



been placed on actual treatment methods and related research to relieve the disabled from their disabilities. In addition, this model also calls for the adoption of various types of safety rules to remove barriers from society. On the other hand, in the religious model, 'karma' (past deeds) or sins of previous births are said to be the root cause of hindrances.<sup>5</sup> In our ancient epic 'Mahabharata', the blind Dhritarashtra is blamed for the Kurukshetra war and his post of administrative chief is repeatedly denied due to hindrances. On the other hand, due to his limping leg, Shakuni is portrayed as cruel and crooked. In other words, the reflection of the social mentality has been brought out through these characters in one way or another. The majority of people in today's society judge people with disabilities based on various prejudices, superstitions and stereotypes. The literacy rate may have increased in our country since independence. However, the awareness towards the disabled has not increased in that proportion. Today's powerful digital media can play an important role in raising social awareness among the common people.

### **Role of Digital Media in Socialization of Disabled People**

In developing countries like India, disabled people are victims of social deprivation and humiliation in various fields. But in a United Nations Conference held in 2006 (UNCRPT-2006) regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, it was clearly stated that raising awareness about them, creating a supportive environment and providing access to information is the primary responsibility of every state. It is the urgent duty of each Member State to provide adequate Internet facilities for persons with disabilities to obtain new information and establish communication, as they are not capable of roaming around all of a sudden. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in collaboration with The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ICT) proposed to provide mobile phones and services to every prisoner in the world.<sup>6</sup> A joint convention of these two organizations proposed that; Every state has pledged to make education, cultural, entertainment and government affairs accessible and understandable to persons with disabilities.<sup>7</sup> However, India's Information and Technology Act of 2000 did not take any initiative on 'web accessibility' for persons with disabilities. However, on December 3, 2014, the United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki-moon said that Modern technology can guide the disabled from all obstacles. According to him; If assistive technology is provided to the disabled, they will be able to exercise their true abilities and abilities appropriately.<sup>8</sup>

We should remember 10 per cent of the world's population has some form of disability. That is, more than 700 million people with disabilities live around the world. According to a World Bank statistic; 80 per cent of this large number of people with disabilities live in developing countries. According to (UNICEF) account; More than 90 per cent of people with disabilities in developing countries are still deprived of primary school education. According to the 2011 Indian Census report; Out of 2 crore 68 lakh 10 thousand 557 persons with disabilities in the country, about 1 crore 86 lakh have not received primary education.<sup>9</sup> Poverty and disability are largely synonymous. Because research shows that malnutrition is mainly responsible for disability.<sup>10</sup>

In developing countries like India; Most people are indifferent to the disabled. Our mass media can play an important role in increasing the acceptance of disabilities among illiterate and ignorant people. When the number of candidates with disabilities and the marks obtained by them at secondary and higher secondary level are published in a daily newspaper; Then very naturally it has a positive effect on the public mind.<sup>11</sup> A new light of hope is awakened about the disabled who are considered a burden to the family and society. People who thought of begging as an easy way of earning, get a crack when electronic media broadcasts the news of the success of a person with disabilities in a competitive examination. Visually Impaired Ajit Kumar and Pranjal Patil's I.A.S. The event of success in the examination naturally brings a new message to the ignorant, unconscious people.<sup>12</sup> Every year 3rd December is observed as 'Day of the Persons with Disabilities'. But most media, government and private organizations; It is said to give some facilities only to the disabled on that particular day. But when a media highlights the smooth electoral process adopted by the Election Commission, where Braille ballots, RAM etc. are said to be provided,<sup>13</sup> it undoubtedly helps in spreading the positive message. In the largest democratic country like ours, elections are celebrated as a festival of democracy. As a result, if disabled people can be included in the festival, awareness naturally increases.

In a country like India, where 74.04 per cent of the population is literate and nearly 70 percent of the population lives in villages, radio and television can be important mediums in raising awareness of the disabled. In this context the 'Uttaran' program aired on Kolkata 'Gitanjali' channel;<sup>14</sup> where it is promoted how a disabled person has succeeded in various spheres of life despite the impairment. Similarly,

various TV programs broadcast on Doordarshan. Shows, serials, dramas can create a lot of awareness among common people. In this case we can talk about the serial ‘Sanjer Bati’ aired on Star-Jalsa channel earlier; Where it was shown, how a visually impaired person coped with the problems of ordinary family life.<sup>15</sup> A program called ‘One Plus One’ was aired in our neighboring country China. The program was run entirely by disabled journalists.<sup>16</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, Indian films repeatedly depicted the poor, miserable and depressing lives of the disabled.<sup>17</sup> However, by the mid-1990s, there was a slight shift in this traditional mindset. Incidentally, it was at that time that the first disability law was promulgated in India. Since this time, films like ‘Koi Mil Gaya’, ‘Black’, ‘Tare Jamin Par’, ‘Iqbal’ etc. have highlighted various messages of socialization of the disabled. Which has undoubtedly helped to develop a different mindset in the minds of common people.

But now we don’t depend only on Doordarshan, Radio, Newspapers like that. With the ever-expanding spread of the Internet, various opportunities have opened up in the pursuit of information. These internet and social media networks can therefore be used as an important tool in raising social awareness about disabilities. According to Barnes Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web (WWW), there is no difference between the able-bodied and the disabled when it comes to using the Internet. Anyone can use it easily. According to the declaration of ‘World Wide Web Consortium’ (W3C); All barriers to internet access for disabled people should be removed.<sup>18</sup> The Indian government is currently promoting ‘Digital India’ as its motto. As a result, access to smartphones, laptops and internet services has become much easier. As days go by, the world is getting smaller and smaller. We live in McLuhan’s ‘global village’ in the age of information revolution.<sup>19</sup> The 2012 ‘Copyright Bill’ clearly stated that every government website should be accessible to people with disabilities to facilitate access to information and education.<sup>20</sup> International Workers published in 2015 A report by the Organization (ILO) stated that the media can play an important role in empowering and establishing the dignity of persons with disabilities.<sup>21</sup>

## **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the Disability Acts enacted in 1995 and 2016 have brought about a change in the establishment of power and dignity. But despite nearly 6 percent of India’s total population has some form of disability, only 2 percent of the disabled have access to higher education. They are still largely deprived

of studying science or commerce in higher education. Moreover, no attempt was made to print a copy of the Disability Act in Braille for the visually impaired. No sign language is used while broadcasting news on official Doordarshan. No newspapers or magazines are available in Braille for the convenience of the visually impaired. Moreover, legal power could not protect the disabled from social deprivation. But in this article, I will not focus on that deprivation, how the disabled can be freed from that deprivation; I have emphasized more on that. So finally I say again; Digital media and the internet or social media networks can remove that social deprivation and bring the disabled back into the mainstream of society. Forum for Students with Disabilities, an organization run by disabled students currently studying at Jadavpur University, has recently launched a mass movement on social media called ‘Amar Boi Koi?’ (Where is my book?) to get visually impaired books in an accessible format. Another organization called Blind Presence Association has been publishing a quarterly audio magazine called ‘Shrutikalpa’ on social media for the past one year. If awareness messages about disabilities can be broadcasted in Doordarshan and Betar prime times, if disabled people are used in advertisements, if assistive device ads are shown more,<sup>22</sup> if disabled experts are brought on popular TV shows, inclusive education. If this issue is publicized more, then the mentality of most people in the society towards the disabled will change and the disabled can also return to the mainstream of the society. Recent examples of the use of disabled actors in advertisements for Ness Coffee and KFC have been noted.<sup>23</sup> More encouragingly; Commercial companies like Amazon have started selling Blind walking sticks, hearing aids, audio recorders, crutches etc. for the disabled. Hopefully, these small initiatives will play an important role in bringing disabled people back into the mainstream of society.

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# Expression Of Sovereignty in Delhi Sultanate Coins

Soumitra Samanta

**Abstract:** This coin is the most reliable source of information to learn the directive principle of a state. In other words, the coins are the expressions of a state's sovereignty. Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sind and Multan, defeating Dahir in 712. Sind became a part of the Arab administration and was governed as a province of the Umayyid Caliphate of Islam. Adi Shankara, exponent of Advaita Vedanta was perhaps 12 years by then. He died in the year 750, when the Islamic penetration was not altogether unknown in all over India, though he never mentioned Islam in his discourses.

Islam entered in India political scenario with a bang. The coins of Delhi Sultanate India, successor to the imprints of the Muhammad bin Qasim legacy, show Islamic rulers had a state directive to spread Islam in this darul-i-herb. In the initial stage (1206 – 1299), the sultanate tried to woo India, the ambit of their administrative influence, slowly but religiously. By 1300, Allauddin of Khilji dynasty simply declared India, an extension of Caliphate of Islam. This tradition continued till the end of the Delhi Sultanate in the downfall of Ibrahim Lodhi in 1526. India was more or less a theocratic state in these days as its coins bear the Persian legend.

## Keywords From Coin:

Shams al duniya wal din abul muzaffar : (Iltutmish) : din – Islamic practice and teaching.

Sikandar al thani yamin al khalifa Nasir amir al muminin. (Allauddin Khilji) : al Khalifa - , right hand of the caliphate, commander of the faithful.

Abul Muzaffar : Gitasuddin Tughlaq : The servant of the Allah and the victorious.

Al tai awa ( obey ) allah – wa al tai awa (obey ) al Rasul ( the prophet ) : Muhammad bin Tughlaq

Al wala al ( loyalty and disavowal for the sake of the Allah ) : Muhammad bin Tughlaq

Fi Zaman ( destiny is ) al Mominin ( believer ) amin ( faithful ) khalifat khilafatuhu ( inheritor of the caliph ) / Al mutawakkir ( one who has faith in Allah ) : Sikander Shah Lodhi & Ibrahim Lodhi.

Coins are the expressions of sovereignty. Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sind and Multan, defeating Dahir in 712. Sind became a part of the Arab administration and was governed as a province of the Umayyid Caliphate of Islam. The Caliphate

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*West Bengal Land Reforms Service.*

used to appoint Amirs– the Governors to rule the newly conquered territory of Sind. The Amirs became independent in course of time. These Amirs of Sind were the first to issue coins of Islamic tradition. These coins were in silver, called Qanhari Dirham, extremely small in size, weighing around 0.5 grams. As expression of sovereignty, the coins bore the first Kalima- “Laa lhaaha IIIa IIaahu Muhammadadur Rosuolu Ihaah” “There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah”-in one side and the name of Amir on the other. Amirs like Abdullah, Abd ur Rahaman, Ali and Muhammad issued coins.




After an interlude of 286 summers, Mahmud Ghazni stormed India in 998 first and later for fifteen times till 1030. On the way back to Ghazni, the Jats attacked his army in 1030. He died in the same year. He issued coins with Kalima with its Sanskrit transliteration- “Avyaktamekam Muhammad Avatar”, followed by the legend “Amir ud daula wa Amin ul millat bismillah al dirham zarb be Mahmudpur sanah”. The expression through coins is direct, here is a new avatar – Muhammad Avatar, who is superior to all. India is under the shadow of peace, that is Islam. The Sanskrit transliteration is meant for the intelligentsia – the think tank of Indian states – a new avatar has come, leave old avatars.

The coins of the successors of Muhammad Gazani are significant in the sense that , they tried to woo the Indian mind with the concept - the new rulers are none but the better replacements for the non-believer ruler. They continued the old pattern with the direction “Accept the new”. For example, The Hindu Shahi ruler Spalapatidev, in and around 9<sup>th</sup> century, introduced the bull/horse type coins in kabul. This coinage became most acceptable in northern India. The successors of Muhammad Gazani – Masud, Maudud and many others imitated this pattern of coinage of bull /horse type.

The Turkish invader Muhammad Ghori, defeated Prithviraj Chauhan in second



the battle of Tarain ( 1192 ) and a full fledged Islamic rule became a reality in the northern part of India. He also followed the same strategy of extending Islam as the successors of Muhammad Gazani , with the acceptance of coinage of Prithviraj Chauhan , - the bull / horse pattern and Nagri legend

<p>COIN OF PRITHVI RAJ CHAUHAN ( 1178 – 1192 )</p> 	<p>Obverse : Nagri Legend : Asavari Sri Samantadev, Portrait of horse.</p> <p>Reverse: Nagri Legend : Sri Prithvi Raj Deva</p>
<p>COIN OF MUHAMMAD GHORI ( 1193 – 1206 )</p> 	<p>Obverse : Nagri Legend : Sri Mahammad Sam</p> <p>Reverse: Nagri Legend : Sri Hamiraha, Portrait of horse</p>


After the death of Muhammad Ghori , his slave Qutubuddin Aibak became his successor and founded the Slave dynasty – Mameluk dynasty with Delhi his capital . After his death , his son –in-law , Iltutmish ascended the throne and ruled the Delhi Sultanate from 1210 to 1235. Iltutmish considered India as a part of caliphate – Abbasid caliph of Bagdad . His coins bore kalmia and the name of Abbasid caliph – al Mustansir. But, he continued the tradition of bull/horse pattern of Prithviraj Chauhan very carefully. His expression of sovereignty – coins gave two fold impressions. India is the land of Islam and the new Sultan is better than erstwhile non believer ruler, though all things of the erstwhile non believer ruler were not abandoned for fear of revolt. In other words, Islamic rulers, it was meant, were their own rulers.

<p>COIN OF ILTUTMISH ( 1210 – 1235)</p> 	<p>Obverse: Nagri Legend : Sri Hamiraha, Portrait of horse</p> <p>Reverse: Persian Legend : Shams al duniya wal dinabul muzaffar Iltutmish al sultan.</p> <p>Metal : Billion , Jital , It has 0.25 grams of silver , 11 grams silver constituted a Tanka, the forerunner of rupiya.</p>
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This same trend bull / horse pattern of coin was followed in the reign of Razia  
( 1236-1240 ) , the daughter of Iltutmish.

<p>COIN OF RAZIA SULTANA ( 1236 – 1240)</p> 	<p>Obverse: Stylized horse.</p> <p>Reverse: Persian Legend : Al sultan al muazzam Radiyyat al d bint al sultana.</p> <p>Metal : Billion , Jital .</p>
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One of the forty slaves of Iltutmish, Giasuddin Balban (1266 – 1287) took  
another step to woo India's sentiments to reconcile to the Islamic rule. He  
popularized the Nagri legend, mixing with Arabic legend. – Sri Sultan Gayasadan in  
Nagri, but Balban in Arabic, in a massive manner, but dropped the horse pattern..

<p>COIN OF GIYAS UDDIN BALBAN ( 1266 – 1290)</p> 	<p>Obverse: Persian Legend : Al sultan al azam Giyath al dunia wal din.</p> <p>Reverse: ( Around ) Nagri Legend : Sri Sultan Gayasadan( centre ) Balban.</p> <p>Metal : Billion , Duo Gani , It has 0.25 grams of silver , 11 grams silver constituted a Tanka, the forerunner of rupiya.</p>
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This tradition continued with the last sultan of the slave dynasty – Muizz uddin  
Kaiquad ( 1287- 1290 )

<p>COIN OF MUIZZ UDDIN KAIQUAD ( 1287 – 1290)</p> 		Obverse: Nagri Legend : Sri sultan Muījūdi
		Reverse: Persian Legend : Al sultan al azam ( great ) – Muiz waldin ( ruler )
		Metal : Billion , Jital


After the slave dynasty, came the Khiljis to rule India. This tradition of Nagri legend continued with the first sultan of the Khilji dynasty – Jalal uddin Khilji (1290- 1296 ). Here the tradition of Giyas uddin Balban was followed - Nagri legend, mixed with Persian legend. – Shah Firaz in Persian but Sri Sultan Jalaludi in Nagri in the same vein and within the same context.

<p>COIN OF JALAL UDDIN KHILJI ( 1290 – 1296 )</p> 		Obverse: Persian Legend : Sal sultan ala ( zam ) Jalal aidu niya waldin.
		Reverse: Persian Legend : shah Firaz , ( square ) Nagri Legend : Sri Sultan Jalaudi
		Metal : Billion , Jital

After Jalal uddin Khilji , Alauddin Khilji ( 1296 – 1316 ) ascended to the sultanate . He initially continued the tradition of Nagri Legend , but later in and around 703 A.H - 1300 A.D , the very practice of Nagri legend was dropped for ever . The coins were of absolutely Persian legend with authoritarian Islamic character . Alauddin Khilji was declared as an “ excellence of faith“ and “ commander of the faithful.“

<p>COIN OF ALAUDDIN KHILJI ( 1296 – 1316 )</p> 	<p>Obverse: Persian Legend :</p> <p>Al sultan ala(zam) ala al duniya waldin abdul Muzaffar Muhammad Shah al sultan . ( The sultan, magnificent , excellence of the world and of faith , supreme commander Muhammad Shah , the sultan )</p> <hr/> <p>Reverse: Persian Legend :</p> <p>Zarb Hazihi al Fizzat bi hazrat Delhi fi sanat 705 Sikandar al thani yamin al khalifa Nasir amir al muminin. ( This silver coin was struck at hazarat ( honourable ) delhi in year ( A.H : 705 ) , second Alexander , defender , right hand of the caliphate , commander of the faithful )</p> <hr/> <p>Metal : Silver , Tanka .</p>
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It is to be mentioned, the Sultanate state character went into a sea change in the time of Ala uddin Khilji's reign. His coins show the Sultanate was heading to an absolute Islamic state. The first sultan of the Tughlaq dynasty – Giasuddin Tughlaq ( 1320 – 1324 ) declared himself as “Abul” - the servant of Allah and “al sultan al Ghazi”- a warrior against the opponents of Islam. The state policy was to battle against the critics of Islam , rather to battle against the non believers. Here is well marked the transition from bull / horse type and Nagri legend policy to the policy of combating in defence of Islam.


<p>COIN OF GIYASUDDIN TUGHLAQ ( 1320 – 1324 )</p> 	<p>Obverse: Persian Legend :</p> <p>Abul Muzaffar Tughlaq Shah al Sultan ( The servant of the Allah and the victorious is Tughlaq Shah )</p> <hr/> <p>Reverse: Persian Legend :</p> <p>Al Sultan al Ghazi Giyath al duniya waldin .</p> <hr/> <p>Metal : Billion , Chou Gani</p>
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State sectarianism became a policy in the hands of the Islamic scholar sultan – Muhammad bin Tughlaq (1324 – 1351). His coins were the dictates to obey Allah and be loyal to Allah.



<p>COIN OF MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLAQ ( 1324 – 1351 )</p> 	<p>Obverse: Persian Legend : Al tai awa ( obey ) allah – wa al tai awa (obey ) al Rasul ( the prophet ) wa al wali (  those in authority among you ) Muhammad . A.H : 731.</p> <p>Reverse: Persian Legend : Al wala al ( loyalty and disavowal for the sake of the Allah ) – Sultan akal al Nas be azam ( respected ) Tughlaq.</p> <p>Metal : Billion , Chou Gani</p>
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The sectarianism , as a sultanate policy found its harshest expressions in the days of Lodhi dynasty. The coins of Sikandar Shah Lodhi ( 1489 – 1517 ) express the Sultanate state policy as “ khaldat khilafathu “ - inheritor of the calipha .The state respects a subject , who has faith in Allah – al mutawakkir.

<p>COIN OF SIKANDAR SHAH LODHI ( 1489 – 1517 )</p> 	<p>Obverse: Persian Legend : Fi Zaman ( destiny is ) al Mominin (  believer ) amin ( faithful ) khaldat khilafatahu ( inheritor of the calipha ) A.H : 913</p> <p>Reverse: Persian Legend : Al mutawakkir ( one who has faith in Allah ) ala al Rahaman ( the most beneficent ) Sikandar Shah – Bahol Shah Sultan .</p> <p>Metal : Copper , Jital.</p>
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The Delhi Sultanate ended in the battle of Panipath , 1526 with the defeat of the last Lodhi sultan – Ibrahim Shah Lodhi ( 1517 – 1526 ) . The state policy of Ibrahim Lodhi was nothing but the continuation of his father Sikandar Shah Lodhi.

<p>COIN OF IBRAHIM SHAH LODHI ( 1517- 1526 )</p> 	<p>Obverse: Persian Legend : Fi Zaman ( destiny is ) al Mominin ( believer ) amin (  faithful ) khaldat khilafatahu ( inheritor of the calipha ) A.H : 928</p> <p>Reverse: Persian Legend : Al mutawakkir ( one who has faith in Allah ) ala al Rahaman ( the most beneficent ) Sikandar Shah – Bahol Shah Sultan .</p> <p>Metal : Copper , Jital.</p>
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The coin units of the Delhi Sultanate should be described . Here is the relation in between.

$$1 \text{ silver Tanka} = 50 \text{ jital} = 4 \text{ Ganis} = 240 \text{ Paikas.}$$

The purchasing power of the currency was very high. In Alauddin Khilji's time a soldier was paid annually 234 silver Tankas as salary. One maun ( 37.324 K.g ) of wheat was available for 7.5 jital and 1 seer ( 0.933 K.g ) of sugar was priced at 1.333 jital in his reign in Delhi. During Sikandar Shah Lodhi, 10 mauns of corn or 5 seers of butter was available at 1 silver Tanka.

To conclude, the Delhi Sultanate was a sectarian state from the very beginning, though at the outset, it tried to woo the local sentiments, but with the course of time, the sectarianism reached its acme and the sultanate considered the Delhi sultanate as the part of caliphate. The coins are the most reliable source of the information to comprehend a sovereign's policy. The coins, on display, justify the conclusion. All displays have been portrayed from my own collections.

### **Bibliography**

This is a fundamental analysis on the basis of deciphering Persian legends from the coins of different dynasties. Hence, there is no assistance from anybody's writings. So there is no scope for bibliography.

# **The Struggling Identity and the Glorious Contributions Jaanki Bai: The Lady- Doyen of North Indian Classical Music**

Sujata Roy Manna

**Abstract:** Indian Classical Music, both in North India & South India, has so many Pearls & Gems of Classical-vocalists or Vocal-musicians, since the ancient era. Let us now have the acquaintance with one of them, who was a precious jewel of North Indian Classical Music, especially in Hindustani Classical Vocal Music regarding Jaanki Bai, through her struggles, amazing & remarkable life sketches as well as through her precious & memorable Musical-contributions.

**Keywords:** Raga, Court-singer, Gharana, Raja, Mujra, Kotha, Khayal, Tarana, Tappa, Thumri, Dadra, Chaiti, Kajri, Hori, Jhula, Chanchar, Bhajan, Ghazal, Taalim, Sarangi, Artist, Rendition, Darbari-era, Swaras, Glorious, Bol-banav, Begum Akhtar (Akhtari Bai Faizabadi), Maahawl, Riyaz, Bai/Baai, Tawaif, Baiji, Sadhana.

## **Jaanki Bai (1875/1880-1934):**

The word “Bai/Baai” is frequently used in Indian Music & in Indian Culture, which actually means,— A lady, who has some special quality or efficiency apart from the other general qualities of a lady. This term is generally used with the ladies of the state of Maharashtra, India to show respect & regard to them.

Later on the term “Bai” was transferred into a different meaning to address or describe some ladies, who are historically known as courtesan by predominantly used in the Indian subcontinent to mention this identity — “a woman skilled in classical music, dance and poetry, often associated with the Mughal period & in the later period too. But in other countries, the word Tawaif means “Prostitute”. Thereafter, the Indians also treated the ladies i.e. Bai as prostitutes, though all of the Bai-s are not in such professions.

Still, the sensible, cultured, literate & liberal people of India used to mention & address those ladies as “Baiji”, in which they were honoured by mentioning with “Bai” & “Ji”, in order to make stable & more emphasised with respect for their qualities & excellence. In this reference to paying respect to the “Bai”, the eminent lady of Indian Classical music Jaanki Bai was not only trained in Music & Dance, but she also learnt English, Sanskrit, Persian & Urdu languages. Even she wrote a collection of Urdu poetry. She was from Allahabad actually.

The great Jaanki Bai performed in the court of the Maharaja (the Hindu Emperor of Allahabad), though her Muslim-society has the restriction to perform. Even she was such dedicated to classical music, that she had decided to perform from behind a veil. In fact, the Maharaja was a great connoisseur of Arts & Music. He was inspired by the richness of the melodious voice of Jaanki Bai, to arrange a Classical Vocal Performance at the wedding-party of royal house. Hence, he was eager to invite her to his court to perform. Later on, before her performance, he was informed about Jaanki Bai (to turn out from that concert) that, she was one of the most popular courtesans & heart-throbbing classical vocalists of the North Indian town of Allahabad.

The patron of Indian Classical Music, that Maharaja remained spell bound & showered Jaanki Bai with valuable gifts & honour after her great performance. This lady had so much struggling-period apart from the achieving position in the society of classical music by her excellence of performance. Once, before that court performance, she was the victim of a violent attack by a King, by whom her face was wrath & terminated the concert because she refused to unveil her face in front of the King & other invitee-guests. In that saddened memory, after the performance in the wedding-party of the court of the Maharaja (the patron), Jaanki Bai spoke to him from behind her veil to tell him about her veiling that, her face had been scarred by 56 slashes of a knife. So, she was most uncomfortable & embarrassed to show herself to anyone in any situation. Hence, she was popularly known as “Chhappan Chhuri” (“The woman with 56 stab-wounds”), being attacked by a dagger and thus this name was called her nickname.

Jaanki Bai was born in Benaras approximately in 1880 (in 1875) and died approximately in 1934. But her childhood was not smooth & not upon the petals of roses. She was not born in a ‘Kotha’; she was found & brought by a train. Her father, who was a wrestler, abandoned little Jaanki & her mother Maanki. Thereafter, Maanki trusted a man as her friend, but she was betrayed by him. That person sold the only one property of Maanki Bai, the “Kotha” i.e. the house in Allahabad. So, Jaanki had been grown up in a brothel. The struggle of her mother, Jaanki Bai was found as a great dedication in Classical Music & Dance. Through the earning by Mujra (Singing & dancing classical music, in front of the rich-people of the society or in a court or rich parties, having remunerations in Rupees or Mohars for each concert), the mother appointed Ustad Hassu Khan



(one of the founders of Gwalior Gharana) to be the teacher of Jaanki. Some of the music-critics used to denote that, Jaanki Bai has not grown up in so called 'Maahawl' (the ambience) of classical music. But, Ustad Hassu Khan of Gwalior himself was the great witness (being her teacher in classical music) to abolish all the said criticism as well. It's firmly true that, she survived this attack in her childhood, but she left herself scarred for her whole life. She had to live with scars, which was covered by her golden & glorious singing and enormous poetry-writings.

Not only that, Jaanki was extremely educated by the languages of Sanskrit, English, Urdu, Persian & other languages of Uttar Pradesh & Maharashtra of India. She had the deep knowledge & amazing excellence in performance in North Indian Classical Music, simultaneously, she was a good poet. She wrote a good number of rich poetry in Urdu. She published all her poetries in her 'Deewan' (own collection of poetries written by). Jaanki Bai was not from a family of classical music-performer. Her mother is more courtesan, less performer of it. So, Jaanki was found as an extraordinary talent or prodigy in the history of North Indian Classical Music through her bright & rich voice. She was a memorable persona for her "Deewan" too. She was the most influential North Indian (Hindustani) Classical Singer of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

She fell in love, later her husband, Abdul Haq and she had to face many ups & downs with him during their family-life and had to survive with their troubled-relationship all through. With the uncountable qualities of Music & Culture, the devotee of Music, Jaanki Bai got friendship with her mentor, Akbar Allahabadi, who was the eminent Urdu-poet.

Later on, we have 'Dastaan-e-Dilrubai', it is a series by Shreya Ila Anusuya about Jaanki Bai & her glorious singing. Here it was narrated by the author about the history of Indian Women who delighted & enriched Indian Classical Music with their skills & excellence in singing, dancing, acting, writing, composing—with self-identity & dedication, like Jaanki Bai. She had outstanding skills in voice & touching melody of singing whenever she sang. Our Music is fortunate to have the recordings of her great singing in Khayal, Thumri, Ghazal, Chanchar, Chaiti, Jhula, Dadra etc. She was among those early talents, whose identities were found in the gramophone- period has started. She had numerous records ( more than 150) of her songs, being like Nightingale. There was a trend to say self-announcement the name of the singer, after the completion of the performance,

both on stages, on courts and also in the recordings: — for example—

“Mera naam Akhtari Bai Faizabaadi” (“My name is Akhtari Bai Faizabadi),

“Mera naam Jaanki Bai Illahabaadi” (“My name is Jaanki Bai Allahabadi),  
etc. Jaanki Bai had a great deep relationship with Hindustani Classical Music (North Indian Classical Music) and she believed that, a truly devoted singer of classical music can melt & can hypnotise the audience by singing. She proved her thoughts & beliefs true by her glorious singing.

**Contributions of Jaanki Bai: —**

1. Rumjhum Badarwa Barse— (Her famous song),
2. Dard-e-Firaq dil se,
3. Maza lelo Rasiya,
4. Aay soz, hoshiyar,
5. Majmua ke Rasiya,
6. Jab se us zalim se ulfat,
7. Hazrat-e-Dil aap hein,
8. Bin Badar biju kahan,
9. Mukh per daarey rang,
10. Sunta hoon Gopi Chanda se,
11. Jao jao rw chali jahan,
12. Tabbur mein naqshe,
13. Us se kuch mera bhi,
14. Dola liye jao bainya,
15. Phool gaindhwa na maaro,
16. Matwale nainawa julam,
17. Saiyan mora pakrat re,
18. Ali dekho, haath chhedo,
19. Ishq Mein kyun ke bachey,
20. Jamuna Tath Rama khelan,
21. Nanadiya, jiya na mane mor,
22. Mil gayee bekhudi & a lots of Ghazal, Chaiti, Dadra, Bhajan on Raga Bhairavi, Asavari, Des.

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# বাংলা আধুনিক কবিতায় বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদের প্রতিগ্রহণ

উত্তম রায়

**সারসংক্ষেপ-** আধুনিকতাকে কেন্দ্র করে বুদ্ধদেব বসু ও তরুণ কবিদের সঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের যে বিরোধ বেধেছিল, বুদ্ধদেব বসু সহ তরুণ কবিরা রবীন্দ্রনাথকে সরিয়ে রেখে বাংলা কবিতায় আধুনিকতা আনবার জন্য যে আন্দোলন করেছিলেন তার নেতৃত্বদানে প্রধান ছিলেন বুদ্ধদেব বসু। বাংলা কবিতায় আধুনিকতা আনবার জন্য তাঁর প্রধান সহায় ছিল অনুবাদ কবিগণ। তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিগণের মধ্য দিয়ে তিনি ইউরোপীয় কবিতার যে নতুন স্বর, কবি ও কবিতার বিষয় নিয়ে যে নতুনতর ভাবনা তা বাঙালি কবিদের সামনে হাজির করলেন। ইউরোপীয় কবিতায় রোমান্টিকতার নতুন সংজ্ঞা নির্মিত হচ্ছে, কবিতায় সমসাময়িক জীবন ভাবনাকে, সমাজ পরিস্থিতিকে ধরতে চাইছে। সর্বোপরি আধুনিকতার নতুন অর্থ তৈরি হচ্ছে। এই সমগ্র বিষয়টি বাংলা কবিরা জানতেই পারত না, যদি না বুদ্ধদেব বসু অনুবাদ কবিগণের মধ্য দিয়ে তা বাঙালি কবি ও পাঠকের সামনে তুলে ধরেন।

**সূচক শব্দ-** আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতা, অনুবাদ সাহিত্য, প্রতিগ্রহণ, অনুবাদ ও বাংলা কবিতা

আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতায় বুদ্ধদেব পরবর্তীতে এমন কিছুই প্রায় নেই, যেখানে বুদ্ধদেব বসুর প্রত্যক্ষ বা পরোক্ষ উপস্থিতি টের পাওয়া যাবে না। বাংলা কবিতা যখন রবীন্দ্রনাথের সর্বগ্রাসী প্রতিভা দ্বারা কবলিত ও যে সমস্ত কবিদের রবীন্দ্রপর্বে আগমন ঘটেছিল তাঁরা সবাই প্রায় কমবেশি রবীন্দ্রনাথের রচনার চর্চিত-চর্ষণ করেছিলেন। বাংলা কবিতায় অন্য কোন দৃষ্টান্ত স্থাপিত হবার যে কয়েকটি প্রয়াস দেখা দিয়েছিল তা মৃদুভাবে। বুদ্ধদেব বসুই বাংলা কবিতায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই সর্বগ্রাসী প্রভাব থেকে মুক্তির দিশা দেখিয়েছিলেন। আজকের দিনে বাংলা আধুনিক কবিতার যে বহুবিচিত্র রূপরেখা দেখা যায়, আজকে বাংলা আধুনিক কবিতা যে নিজেই স্বাবলম্বী, তাকে যে আর কারো মুখাপেক্ষী হয়ে থাকতে হয় না, সেই সাহস ও শক্তি বুদ্ধদেব বসু পরবর্তী কবিদের দিয়েছিলেন। আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতায় অনুবাদচর্চার মধ্য দিয়ে নতুন পথ খুঁজে নেওয়া, অনুবাদের মধ্য দিয়ে সপ্ত সিঙ্কু দশ দিগন্ত কে প্রত্যক্ষ করা তা বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিগণের অবদান। আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতায় বুদ্ধদেব বসুর এই অবদান ও পরবর্তীদের কাছে তাঁর যে প্রভাব, তার পিছনে যে অনুবাদ কবিগণেরই মুখ্য ও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ- তা সাম্প্রতিক কালের আধুনিক কবিরাও স্বীকার করেন।

আমরা জানি যে, আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতার সূত্রপাত মূলত ইউরোপীয় সাহিত্য পাঠের অভিঘাতে। আর বুদ্ধদেব বসু বাংলা সাহিত্যে আধুনিকতা প্রণয়নের প্রথম সাহিত্যিক ও কবি। বুদ্ধদেব বসু তাঁর ‘কালের পুতুল’ (১৯৪৬), ‘সাহিত্যচর্চা’ প্রভৃতি গ্রন্থে আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতার সপক্ষে নানা দৃষ্টান্ত স্থাপন করেন। বুদ্ধদেব বসু যেমন নিজের রচনাতে আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতার স্বরূপটিকে তুলে ধরার চেষ্টা করেন সঙ্গে নানা প্রবন্ধের মাধ্যমে তৎকালীন অন্যান্য কবিদের আধুনিক কবিতা সম্পর্কে বোঝাবার চেষ্টা করেন। ‘রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও উত্তরসাধক’ গ্রন্থে তিনি যেমন বাংলা আধুনিক কবিতা ও কবিদের কাছে আধুনিকতার শিল্পরূপ দেখিয়েছেন, তেমনি আবার রবীন্দ্রনাথের অক্ষম অনুকরণে বাংলা কবিতা যে গতানুগতিক হয়েছিল তা বোঝানোর চেষ্টা করেছেন। বুদ্ধদেব বসুর ‘বন্দীর বন্দনা’ বাংলা কবিতায় আধুনিকতার উৎসমূল বলে মনে করা হয়; এইখানে বিচূর্ণিত মূল্যবোধের এক শিল্পরূপ দেখা যায়। একেই বলা যায় নতুন ভাবনার প্রতিফলন, সক্ষম স্থির দর্পণ। ‘প্রেমিক’ কবিতার ভিতরই এই জীবনতত্ত্বের প্রথম স্বনির্ভর প্রকাশ। বুদ্ধদেব বসু তাঁর সমকালীন বাংলা সাহিত্যকে যেমন প্রভাবিত করেছিলেন, একই ভাবে পরবর্তীকালের কবিদেরও কবিতা রচনার পাঠ দিয়েছিলেন। বুদ্ধদেব বসুর এই আধুনিক কাব্য ভাবনা তাঁর বিদেশি সাহিত্যপাঠ ও অনুবাদের মধ্য দিয়েই তিনি অর্জন করেছেন। এই সাহিত্যপাঠসংজ্ঞাত

সহকারী অধ্যাপক, বাংলা বিভাগ, সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহ সার্থ শতবার্ষিকী মহাবিদ্যালয়, পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুর

মনোবীজ তিনি আধুনিক কবিতার মুক্তিতে কাজে লাগিয়েছেন। উত্তরকালের কবিদের কাছে তাই তিনি অনুধাবনযোগ্য কবি ব্যক্তিত্ব।

বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলিতে যেমন আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতায় মুক্তির অনুঘটক হিসেবে কাজ করেছে, তেমনি এর সংগ্রামক শক্তিও পাঠকের বিস্ময় তৈরি করে। তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতায় প্রথম টের পাওয়া গেল বাংলা মৌলিক কবিতার নতুন স্বর। ‘ক্লোজ কুসুম’-এ নেই এমন ছন্দ, পংক্তি বিন্যাস, মিলের জটিল অনুক্রম যা বাংলা কবিতায় অনুপ্রবেশ করেনি। বোদলেয়ারের অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে বাংলা আধুনিক কবিতা ও কবিদের তিনি কতদূর প্রভাবিত করেছিলেন তা নিম্নের উদ্ধৃতি থেকে স্পষ্ট হয়;

তাঁকে বাংলার মত এক সুদূর ভাষার অনুবাদক! এটা যিনি পারেন, তিনি নিজে যদি এই যুগের একজন প্রধান কবি না হতেন, কৃত্তিবাস কি রাজা জেমস,এর বাইবেল অনুবাদকের মত চিরস্মরণীয়। বস্তুত শুধু যদি কালিদাস ও বোদলেয়ারের ভূমিকা দুটি সারাজীবনে লিখে থাকতেন কেউ, তাহলেও বাংলা সাহিত্যে অমরদের তিনি হতেন অন্যতম।<sup>৭</sup>

বুদ্ধদেব বসু যেমন তাঁর সময়ের আধুনিক কবিদের প্রশংসা করে তাঁদের ভাবীকালের জন্য প্রস্তুত করে গিয়েছিলেন তেমনি বুদ্ধদেব বসুকে সামনে রেখে যাঁরা আধুনিকতার প্লাবন বাংলা সাহিত্যে এনেছিল তাঁরাও বুদ্ধদেব বসুকে বিনীত নমস্কার করেছেন। বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতার দ্বারা তাঁরা যে নতুন পথ খুঁজে পেয়েছিলেন সেই সময়ের কবি ও সমালোচকদের কথায় তা ধরা পড়ে। জীবনানন্দ দাশ যেমন মন্তব্য করেছেন,

আধুনিক বাংলা সাহিত্যে তিনি একজন প্রধান কবি। প্রধানদের ভিতর অন্যতম।<sup>৮</sup>

বুদ্ধদেব বসুর বন্ধু অজিত দত্ত বললেন,

... পুরুষের ন্যাকামিহীন প্রেমের এমন বলিষ্ঠ বিচিত্র প্রকাশ বাংলা কবিতার বিরল বললেও অত্যুক্তি হবে না।... আমার মতে বুদ্ধদেব বাবু তখনই সবচেয়ে বড় কবি যখন তিনি বলেন বিচ্ছেদকে কেন ভয় করব, যদি পাই আশ্বাস।<sup>৯</sup>

কবি বুদ্ধদেব বসুর বাংলা আধুনিক কবিতার ক্রমবিকাশে তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেছে, আমাদের আলোচনার প্রথম থেকেই তা বলার চেষ্টা চলছে। কবিতার অনুবাদকে তিনি একটি সৃষ্টিশীল রূপান্তর ক্রিয়া হিসেবে দেখতেন। তিনি অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে কবিতা থেকে কবিতা তৈরি করতে চাইছিলেন। এই অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির মধ্যেও তিনি পরবর্তী কবিদের মধ্য দিয়েও তুমুল আলোড়ন তুলেছিলেন। পরিচিত কাব্য চর্চার মধ্যে দিয়ে অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির মাধ্যমে নতুন ভিন্নধর্মী কবিতার চলন তিনি নির্মাণ করেন; পরবর্তী কবিদের কাছে যা নতুনতর দিশা হিসেবে কাজ করে যায়।

এর মধ্য দিয়ে পরিস্ফুট হবে বহির্বিষয়ের কবিতার প্রতি কবির আকৈশোর অনুরাগ ও অনুবাদের প্রতি আগ্রহের এক আবহমান ইতিহাস।<sup>১০</sup>

তিরিশের কবিদের কাছে বুদ্ধদেব বসু ছিলেন দ্রোণাচার্য। আধুনিক কবিতার সঙ্গে এই পর্বের কবিদের তিনিই প্রথম পরিচয় করিয়ে দেন। রবীন্দ্র-পরবর্তী কবিতা কী ও কেমন হবে তার রেখাচিত্র বুদ্ধদেব বসুই এঁকে দেন। কেবল কবিতা নয় কবিদের কাজ কী হবে তারও সংকেত তিনি অনুবাদ কবিতা ও তার দীর্ঘ ভূমিকা ও নানা প্রবন্ধের মাধ্যমে অন্যান্য কবিদের কাছে পাঠিয়ে দেন। এই সংকেত দ্বারাই ভবিষ্যতের কবিরা দুটিমান। বুদ্ধদেব পরবর্তী কবিরা অকুণ্ঠ চিন্তে তা স্বীকারও করেছেন—

... আমরা বুদ্ধদেবের পাশে দাঁড়াই এবং দেখতে থাকি তাঁরই চোখ ধরে সেই সকল কবিকে চিনে উঠতে থাকি কাকে বলে সমসময়ের লেখা আর কি করেই বা আবিষ্কার করে নিতে কবির অক্ষর গভীর থেকে কবিকে,

স্বতন্ত্র করে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ থেকে আলাদা করে, সমসময়কার নির্মাণে, উচ্চারণে ও অভিপ্রায়ে।<sup>৭</sup>

বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতার মধ্য দিয়েই তিরিশ ও পরবর্তী দশকের কবিরা আবিষ্কার করতে থাকেন কবিতার বিশ্ব উপত্যকা। এই অনুবাদ কবিতার মধ্য দিয়েই তাঁরা গাহন করতে থাকেন নতুন নদীজলে। তাঁরাও মত্ত হয়ে ওঠেন নতুন ভূভাগ যোজনায়। আর তাঁদের সামনে দৃষ্টান্ত স্থাপন করেন বুদ্ধদেব বসু ও তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতা বিশ্ব। তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলি পরবর্তী প্রজন্ম নতুন ও বৃহৎ জানালার মাধ্যমে বিশ্বদর্শন করতে পেরেছেন—

বুদ্ধদেব কৃত বোধলেয়ারের অনুবাদ আমাদের নতুন মহাদেশে দাঁড় করিয়ে দিচ্ছে, শুধু বোধলেয়ারের কবিতার কারণেই নয়, বাংলা ছন্দ, শব্দ, মিল, অন্তর্মিল, মধ্যমিল আর বাক্য গঠনে নতুন বিন্যাস আমাদের ধবল করে দিচ্ছে জ্যোৎস্নায় যেন। একটি শব্দও যে কতখানি ভাবাতে পারে একজন কবিকে কালিদাসের মেঘদূতের প্রথম সেই পংক্তির অনুবাদ, ‘জনেক যক্ষের কর্মের অবহেলা ঘটল বলে শাপ দিলেন প্রভু’,র ঐ ‘জনেক’ শব্দটি নিয়ে কত না ভাবনা এবং সিদ্ধান্তে না পৌঁছতে পারা।<sup>৮</sup>

বুদ্ধদেব বসুর কাছে থেকেই এইভাবে দক্ষতা অর্জন করে পরবর্তী কবিরা বাংলা কবিতায় আধুনিকতার ধারাকে বহমান রেখেছিলেন। ‘কবিতা’ পত্রিকার সঙ্গে আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতার সম্পর্ক গভীরভাবে জড়িত। তাঁর অক্লান্ত পরিশ্রম আর নিরলস প্রচেষ্টার মাধ্যমে পত্রিকার পাতায় পাতায় অনুবাদ কবিতা প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে, তিনি উৎসাহ দিয়ে যাচ্ছেন তরুণ কবিদের আর অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে আধুনিকতার দৃষ্টান্ত তৈরি করছেন। এই সময়েই বুদ্ধদেব বসু তরুণ কবিদের কাছে শুভাশী ও প্রভাবশালী হয়ে উঠলেন। রামেন্দ্রকুমার এই প্রসঙ্গেই বলেন, বাংলা কবিতায় ভাষা ও ছন্দকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ দিয়েছেন ‘লাবণ্য’ এবং বুদ্ধদেব বসু দিয়েছেন পৌরুষতা এই উত্তরাধিকার বাহিত হয়ে প্রকাশিত হয় অরুণ কুমার সরকারের কবিতা—

কিন্তু আনন্দ কোথায়দ: বুদ্ধদেব বসু বললেন / অসুরোপের আজকের কবিতায় কিংবা উপন্যাসে/।<sup>৯</sup>

বোঝা যায় এই সময়কার কবিদের নির্ভরতা হয়ে দাঁড়াচ্ছে বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলি। অরুণ কুমার সরকারও বুদ্ধদেবের কবিতা পাঠ করে পেয়ে যান কবিতার নতুনতর পথ। বুদ্ধদেবের কবিতার প্রতি একই রকম আগ্রহ দেখিয়েছেন শরৎকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় লিখেছিলেন—

... সদ্য যৌবন প্রাপ্ত একটি বালককে অভিভূত করেছিল এইসব। ... বাংলাদেশের সব যুবকদের হয়ে বুদ্ধদেব বসু তখন পৃথিবীর শ্রেষ্ঠতম।<sup>১০</sup>

বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির উপর ভর করেই পরবর্তী বাংলা কবিতার আবহাওয়াগত পরিবর্তন। পঞ্চাশের দশকের কবিদের পরিবর্তন ঘটেছিল এই অনুবাদ কবিতার মাধ্যমেই। বুদ্ধদেব বসু বোধলেয়ার, রিলকে ও মেঘদূতের অনুবাদে প্রোজ্জ্বল হয়ে উঠল তাঁর সুনির্দিষ্ট অভিপ্রায়, একাগ্র অভিনিবেশ ও মগ্নতা। এই অভিপ্রায় পরবর্তী কবিরা স্বীকার যেমন করেছেন, তেমনি পরিগ্রহণ করেছেন। কেননা সাহিত্যে গ্রহণ-পরিগ্রহণ যে কোন গর্হিত কাজ নয় তা বুদ্ধদেব বসুই প্রমাণ করে গেছেন। অনুবাদের মাধ্যমেও যে মৌলিক কবিতা সৃষ্টি করা যায় তার উজ্জ্বল দৃষ্টান্ত তাঁর কৃত অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলি। অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির মধ্য দিয়েই তিনি যেন নতুনদের আধুনিক কবিতায় দীক্ষা দিচ্ছেন। সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় এই ঋণ স্বীকার প্রসঙ্গে বলেছেন—

বুদ্ধদেব বসুর কাছে আমাদের সবচেয়ে বেশি ঋণ কবিতার জন্য। যাকে আমরা এখন আধুনিক কবিতা বলি সেই আধুনিক কবিতাকে তিনি একাই জিতিয়ে দিয়ে গেছেন। আরও অনেক বড় বড় কবি এসেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরে, কিন্তু সকলের হয়ে লড়াই করেছেন বুদ্ধদেব বসু। ‘আধুনিক কবিতা’ ছাড়া অন্য যে কবিতার ধারা, সাধু-ত্রিষ্যপদ ইত্যাদি সেটি এখন হেরে গেছে নিশ্চিত ভাবে। এটা বুদ্ধদেব বসুর একক কৃতিত্ব তাতে কোন

সন্দেহ নেই।<sup>১১</sup>

এ প্রসঙ্গে পাঠকের একটি বিষয় মনে পড়ে যে বুদ্ধদেব বসুর মৌলিক কবিতাগুলিও সৃষ্টি হয়েছে পাশ্চাত্য কবিতার ভাব ও ভঙ্গী নিয়ে। তাঁর অনূদিত কবিতার মেজাজ ও মন মৌলিক কবিতাগুলিতেও পাওয়া যায়। এ প্রসঙ্গ অবতারণার মূল কারণ বুদ্ধদেব পরবর্তী কবিরা তাঁর মৌলিক কবিতার কাছ থেকেও আধুনিকতার পাঠ নিয়েছিলেন। আর আমরা জানি বুদ্ধদেব বসুর মৌলিক কবিতাগুলি তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতার অভিঘাতে উদ্বেলিত। ফলত, তাঁর মৌলিক রচনা যে আসলে অনুবাদ কবিতার কাছাকাছি তা আর বলার অপেক্ষা রাখে না। এই অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির মধ্য দিয়েই তিনি মৌলিক কবিতা সৃষ্টিতে অনুবাদের উপযোগিতা ও মৌলিক কবিতার সঙ্গে অনুবাদ কবিতার সম্পর্কের খতিয়ান বোঝানোর চেষ্টা করেন। যার ফলে পরবর্তীকালে বাংলা সাহিত্যে অনুবাদ কবিতা একটি স্বতন্ত্র ধারা হয়ে উঠেছে।

বুদ্ধদেব বসু তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলিতে মূল কবি ও কবিতার সঙ্গে মানসিক নৈকট্য অনুভব করেছিলেন। তাই তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলিতে ধরা পড়েছে ব্যক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতার প্রক্ষেপ। তিনি অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির মূলের সঙ্গে মানস সাযুজ্য উপলব্ধি করেছিলেন বলেই অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলি তাৎপর্যময় ও সংক্রামক হয়ে উঠেছিল। এই নৈকট্যের জন্যই তাঁর অনুবাদগুলি শিল্প সার্থক সজীব বাংলা কবিতা হয়ে ওঠে, যা পরবর্তী বাংলা কবিতাকে প্রভাবিত করে। মানবেন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের মন্তব্য এ প্রসঙ্গে উদ্ধৃতিযোগ্য—

অরণ্য মিত্র প্রমুখ ফরাসি জানা অনুবাদকের চেয়েও বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ যে অধিকতর সার্থক, তার কারণ বুদ্ধদেব বসু বোদলেয়ারে দেখেছেন নিজেরই ভাবনার নিজেরই সন্ধানের প্রকাশ। তারফলে বোদলেয়ারকে আত্মসাৎ বা স্বীকরণ করা, অনুবাদ-কবিতাকেও বাংলা ভাষায় ভাল কবিতা রূপান্তরিত করা, তাঁর পক্ষে অনেকের চেয়ে বেশি সম্ভব হয়েছে।<sup>১২</sup>

বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলি কী কারণে পরবর্তী বাংলা আধুনিক কবিদের কাছে আদরণীয় ও গ্রহণীয় হয়ে উঠেছিল তা আমরা উপরের মন্তব্যে অনুমান করতে পারি। তিনি অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলিকে ঘিরে সর্বদা বাংলা সাহিত্যের পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষা করতেন। কেবলমাত্র ভালোলাগা থেকেই তিনি এই অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলিকে বাংলা সাহিত্যের আঙিনায় আনেননি, তা আমরা সবাই জানি। বস্তুত বুদ্ধদেব বসু নিজেই স্বীকার করছেন যে তাঁর কাব্য প্রবন্ধে অনুবাদ সাহিত্যের প্রত্যক্ষ প্রক্ষেপ পড়েছে এবং তৎকালীন বাংলা কবিতার তরুণ কবিদের কাব্যতেও এই অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির প্রভাব দেখতে পাওয়া যায়। পঞ্চাশ ও ষাটের দশকের কবিদের কবিতায় এই অনুবাদগুলি গভীর ছায়া ফেলেছে। তার সাক্ষ্য বহন করে শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের ‘হে প্রেম, হে নৈঃশব্দ’, সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়ের ‘আমি কি রকম ভাবে বেঁচে আছি’, পবিত্র মুখোপাধ্যায়ের ‘শবযাত্রা’ ও ‘হেমস্তের সনেট’ প্রভৃতি কাব্যগ্রন্থগুলি। শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায় তাঁর ‘হে প্রেম, হে নৈঃশব্দ’ কাব্যগ্রন্থের মুখবন্ধে লিখে দেন বোদলেয়ারের কবিতার অনুবাদ ‘স্তোত্র’-এর একটি পংক্তি, তপ্তপ্রিয়তমা সুন্দরীতমারে যে আমার উজ্জ্বল উদ্ধার।

বুদ্ধদেব বসু কেবলমাত্র অনুবাদচর্চা করেই থেমে থাকেননি। শুধু মাত্র বিদেশি সাহিত্যের সঙ্গে বাঙালি কবি ও পাঠকদের পরিচয় করিয়ে দেওয়ার মধ্যেই তাঁর উদ্দেশ্য সীমাবদ্ধ নয়। অনুবাদচর্চার মধ্যে দিয়ে তিনি গড়ে তুললেন বাংলা কবিতার এক বিশেষ ভঙ্গি। তিনি অনুবাদের মধ্যে দিয়ে বাংলা কবিতা ও কবিকে প্রাদেশিকতার হাত থেকে বের করে এনে বিশ্বসাহিত্যের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে দিলেন। আজকের দিনে কবি হিসেবে বাঙালি আর প্রাদেশিক কবি নন। তিনি বিশ্বসাহিত্যের মূল স্রোতের কবি। এইখানেই বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদগুলির অবদান অপরিমিত। ইউরোপীয় কবিতা ছাড়া তিনি ভারতীয় কাব্য কবিতাকে নতুন করে পাঠ করাতো শেখালেন—

... কালিদাসের মেঘদূত অনুবাদ করে, তার বিখ্যাত ভূমিকাটি রচনা করে একই সঙ্গে দেখালেন সংস্কৃত

ভাষায় আমাদের যে বিশাল উত্তরাধিকার রয়েছে, সেখান থেকে আমরা কেমন করে চয়ন করে আনতে পারি খাঁটি ভারতীয় নাগরিক মানসিকতাকে, আমাদের নিজস্ব কবিতায় তাকে ব্যবহার করতে পারি, তা ধ্রুপদী অবয়বের মধ্যে আমাদের আধুনিকতার প্রাণবস্তুর ভরে দিতে পারি।<sup>১১</sup>

আমাদের আলোচনা থেকে একথা উঠে আসে যে, বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির মাধ্যমে যেমন তিনি বাংলা ভাষা-সাহিত্যকে প্রভাবিত করেছেন তেমনি, পরবর্তী কবিদের কাছে বাংলা কবিতা কীভাবে লিখতে হয়, পাঠ করতে হয়, তা তিনি হাতে ধরে শিখিয়েছেন। আর এর পরিণতি হিসেবে বাংলা সাহিত্যে অনুবাদচর্চার ব্যাপকতা দেখা যাচ্ছে।

বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ সাহিত্য বাংলা সাহিত্যকে যেমন আধুনিকতার দোরগোড়ায় পৌঁছে দিয়েছেন তেমনি ভাবীকালের কাছে দৃষ্টান্ত রেখে গেছেন, কীভাবে অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে নিজের সাহিত্যের শোধান করা যায়। অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে কীভাবে মৌলিক সাহিত্যের মোড় ঘুরিয়ে দেওয়া যায়। বুদ্ধদেব বসু নিজেই একথা স্বীকার করতেন যে, পৃথিবীর সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে অনুবাদ সাহিত্য কোনো কোনো দেশের সাহিত্য সম্পর্কিত সংজ্ঞাটিকেই পাল্টে দিয়েছে। বাংলা সাহিত্যেও আমরা অনুরূপ ঘটনা দেখতে পাই; যেখানে বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতা বাংলা কবিতায় আধুনিকতার বীজ বপন করেছে। কবিতা যে একটি ভাষার ঘেরাটোপে বন্দী নয়, কবিতার ভাষা যে এক ও অবিভাজ্য তা তিনি অনুবাদ কবিতার মাধ্যমে বাঙালি কবিদের দেখিয়েছেন। একইসঙ্গে তিনি বুঝিয়েছেন যে কবিতা টুকরো টুকরো করে অনুবাদ করে লাভ নেই। কোন কবির কবিতা পরম্পরাকে সম্পূর্ণ অনুবাদ করলে, যেমন তাঁর কবিতাবিশ্বের সামগ্রিক ধারণা পাওয়া যাবে, তেমনি নিজেদের সংস্কৃতির সঙ্গে তার সত্যিকারের যোগসূত্র স্থাপন করা সম্ভব হবে। তিনি এই ধারণা কেবলমাত্র নিজেই পোষণ করেননি, তা পরবর্তী আধুনিক কবি ও অনুবাদকদের কাছে সঞ্চার করে দিয়েছেন। ফলত পরবর্তীতে আমরা বাংলায় পাশ্চাত্য অনুবাদ সাহিত্যের প্লাবন বয়ে যেতে দেখব।

বুদ্ধদেব বসু পরবর্তী অনুবাদ সাহিত্যে আমরা তাত্ত্বিকতার অনুপ্রবেশ বেশি করে দেখতে পাই। আসলে বুদ্ধদেব পরবর্তী অনুবাদ সাহিত্য কেবলমাত্র কার্যকারণ সম্পর্কের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ থাকেনি। অনুবাদ হয়ে উঠেছে স্বতন্ত্র ডিসিপ্লিন। বিষু দে-র নাম আমাদের সর্বপ্রথম মনে পড়ে। তিনি বিভিন্ন সময়ে নানা বিদেশি কবিতার অনুবাদ করেছেন। বিষু দে-র প্রথম কাব্যানুবাদ ‘হে বিদেশি ফুল’, এরপর তিনি ‘এলিয়টের কবিতা’ ও ‘মাও সে তুং-এর কবিতা’ নামে দুটি কবিতার অনুবাদ গ্রন্থ প্রকাশ করেন। কবির মৃত্যুর পর এই তিনটি অনুবাদ কবিতার গ্রন্থ ও অগ্রস্থিত আরো কিছু অনুবাদ কবিতা একত্রিত করে প্রকাশিত হল ‘তুমি রবে কি বিদেশিনী’ (১৯৮৬)। আখ্যাপত্রে দেওয়া আছে, বিষু দে- কৃত বিদেশি কবিতার অনুবাদ সমগ্র ১০ বিষু দে-র অনুবাদ কবিতায় আমরা পরিশ্রমী মানসিকতার ছাপ পাই। তিনি অনুবাদ নিয়ে নানা তাত্ত্বিক অবস্থানের কথাও বলেছেন। ঠিক যেমনটি বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ সম্পর্কে আমরা শুনেছিলাম। বিষু দে-র ‘হে বিদেশি ফুল’-এ যথা সম্ভব চেষ্টা করেছেন মূল কবিতার বিন্যাস, ছন্দ বা নিদেন পক্ষে মেজাজ অনুবাদে বহন করতে। বিষু দে তাঁর অনুবাদে মূলের আভাস যেমন রেখেছেন, তেমনি তাকে বঙ্গীয়করণও যথাসম্ভব করেছেন; চেয়েছেন বিদেশি কবিতাগুলিকে বাংলা কবিতার কাছাকাছি আনতে। আমাদের মনে পড়ে যায় বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অভিপ্রায়। এই পর্বে প্রেমেন্দ্র মিত্র বেশ কিছু অনুবাদ কবিতা বাংলা সাহিত্যের আঙিনায় হাজির করেন। ‘ছইটম্যানের শ্রেষ্ঠ কবিতা’-র অনুবাদে আমরা প্রেমেন্দ্র মিত্রের অনুবাদে যথেষ্ট অভিনিবেশ দেখতে পাই। এই দশকেই আমরা অরুণ মিত্রকে পাব যিনি অনুবাদে পাণ্ডিত্যের সঙ্গে রসবোধের সমন্বয় সাধন করে অনুবাদকে একটি অন্য মাত্রা দান করেছেন। তিনি যেমন অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলিকে মূল স্বর অক্ষুণ্ণ রাখার চেষ্টা করেছেন, তেমনি তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলিকে নতুন কবিতা

হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠা দেওয়ার চেষ্টাও করেছেন। এজন্য তাঁর বিদেশি সাহিত্যে অগাধ পাণ্ডিত্যের বিষয়টি নজর এড়ায় না। ‘পাঁচশ ফরাসি কবিতা’ নামে তিনি যে অনুবাদ গ্রন্থ প্রকাশ করেন তাতেই আমরা বুঝতে পারি তাঁর বিদেশি সাহিত্যে ব্যুৎপত্তির বিষয়টি। এই অনুবাদে তিনি রিলকে, রবের দেসনস ও ক্লোদ রোয়ার প্রভৃতি কবিদের কবিতা অনুবাদ করেছেন। অনুবাদকালে অনুবাদকের যে মৌলিক সৃষ্টি ক্ষমতার অনুপ্রবেশ অবধারিত তা তিনি জানতেন। তাই তিনি চেষ্টা করেছেন যথাসম্ভব নিজের সৃষ্টিশীল ব্যক্তিত্বকে সরিয়ে রাখতে।

সুধীন্দ্রনাথের প্রখর ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্য চিহ্নিত শৈলী তাঁর অনুবাদ রচনাকেও একান্তভাবে সুধীন্দ্রনাথীয় করে তুলেছে। সুধীন্দ্রনাথের লেখক সত্তা তাঁর অনুবাদক সত্তাকে সম্পূর্ণ অধীন করেছে। অন্যদিকে সাহিত্য-অনুবাদক অরুণ মিত্র তাঁর লেখক-ব্যক্তিত্বের অবিচ্ছেদ্য অংশ, তাঁর নিজস্ব রচনারীতিকে নিয়ন্ত্রিত ও প্রসারিত করে বিভিন্ন উৎস-রচনার চরিত্রকে গ্রাহক রচনায় ধরতে চেয়েছেন।<sup>১২</sup>

বুদ্ধদেব বসু যেমন একজন কবির কাব্য পরম্পরাকে অনুবাদের পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন, অরুণ মিত্র তেমনি ষোড়শ শতাব্দী থেকে বিংশ শতাব্দী পর্যন্ত ফরাসি কাব্য-কবিতার অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে পাশ্চাত্যের কাব্যভাবনার পরম্পরা বুঝতে চেয়েছেন, অবশ্য তা আমাদের বাংলা কবিতার সঙ্গে তার সাযুজ্যতা রেখে। তিনি বোদলেয়ার, পল ভের্লে, র্যাবো, পল ক্লোদেল, মাক্স জাকব, গান্তম আপোলিনের, স্যাঁ-বান-পের্স প্রভৃতি আধুনিক ফরাসি কবিদেরও অনুবাদ করেছেন। বোদলেয়ারের অনুবাদে তিনি বুদ্ধদেব বসুর পদ্ধতিকে গ্রহণ করেও সাফল্যের দিক থেকে তাঁকে ছাপিয়ে গেছেন। বুদ্ধদেব অনুবাদ কর্মে যেমন মূল কবি ও কবিতার প্রতি আত্মিক যোগ অনুভব করতেন, ফলে অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলিতে যুক্ত হত এক অন্য মাত্রা, তেমনি অরুণ মিত্রের মূল কবিতায় কবির সঙ্গে আত্মিক সংযোগের গাঢ়তায় র্যাবো, পের্স ও এল্যুয়ারের কবিতার অনুবাদে তা এক বিশেষ মাত্রা লাভ করে।

সাম্যবাদী কবি সুভাষ মুখোপাধ্যায় বুদ্ধদেব বসুর কাছ থেকে যেমন নির্ভর কবিতা লেখার পাঠ নিয়ে স্বনামধন্য হয়েছিলেন, তেমনি অনুবাদে তিনি যে কাব্য মহিমা স্থাপন করেন তা আমাদের স্পর্শ করে যায়। অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির মধ্য থেকেই তিনি নতুন করে সৃষ্টির প্রেরণা খুঁজে পেয়েছিলেন। ‘নাজিম হিকমতের কবিতা’-র অনুবাদে সুভাষ মুখোপাধ্যায় আশা, স্বপ্ন, প্রেম প্রভৃতি যেমন নতুন করে শিখে নিতে পেরেছিলেন তেমনি ইংরেজি ও কিছু ফরাসি কবিতা অনুবাদের মধ্যে দিয়ে তাঁর সংগ্রামী মানসিকতার সাযুজ্য খুঁজে পেয়েছিলেন। তিনি পাবলো নেরুদা-র কবিতার সঙ্গে মানসিক সংযুক্তির দিকটি আবিষ্কার করেছিলেন, তাই তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলি এক আশ্চর্য সজীবতা লাভ করে। তিনি প্রথমে ‘পাবলো নেরুদার কবিতাগুচ্ছ’ এবং ‘পাবলো নেরুদার আরো কবিতা’ নামে দুটি অনুবাদ কবিতার বই প্রকাশ করেন। পরে এই দুটি গ্রন্থ থেকে কিছু কবিতা নির্বাচিত করে ‘নির্বাচিত পাবলো নেরুদা’ নামে একটি গ্রন্থ প্রকাশ করেন। এছাড়াও ‘দিন আসবে’ নামে নিকোলাই ভাপৎসারভ-এর কবিতা অনুবাদ করেন। এই পর্বেই পাবলো নেরুদা ও লোরকার কবিতা অনুবাদ করতে দেখা যায় মঙ্গলাচরণ চট্টোপাধ্যায়কে। এখানেও তিনি অনুবাদগুলি করেছেন মূলত মানসিক সংযুক্তিজনিত কারণে।

লোকনাথ ভট্টাচার্যের নাম বাংলা অনুবাদ সাহিত্যে বিশেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। তাঁকে রথ্ণাবোর কবিতা অনুবাদ করতেই বেশি দেখা যায়। আসলে র্যাবোর প্রতি আন্তরিক অনুরাগ ও র্যাবোর মানসিকতা, কাব্যস্বভাবের জন্যই তিনি অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে তাঁর দ্বারস্থ হয়েছেন। আর এই জন্যই তাঁর অনুবাদ কবিতাগুলির সজীব প্রাণবন্ত আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতার সমান হয়ে উঠেছে। র্যাবোর Le Bateau ivre-এর অনুবাদ ‘মাতাল তরণী’-তে যেমন তাঁর কবিপ্রতিভা প্রকাশিত, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বুদ্ধদেব বসুর প্রভাব ও স্মরণীয়।

চল্লিশের দশকে পাশ্চাত্য কবিদের কবিতার অনুবাদের ব্যাপকতা দেখা যায় না। এই দশকে দীপ্তিকল্যাণ চৌধুরী-র ‘লুই আরাগার কবিতা’ ও সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ মৈত্রের ‘মায়াকভ্‌স্কির কবিতা’-র অনুবাদ বিশেষভাবে



উল্লেখযোগ্য।

পঞ্চাশের দশকে বাংলা অনুবাদ সাহিত্যে নানা তাত্ত্বিকতার পাশাপাশি অনুবাদের মধ্য দিয়ে নানা অভিনবত্ব আনার চেষ্টা দেখতে পাওয়া যায়। এই সময়ে ইউরোপীয় অনুবাদকে নিয়ে যে সমস্ত তাত্ত্বিক আলোচনা হচ্ছিল, তার প্রভাব বাংলা অনুবাদ ক্রিয়াকে প্রচুরভাবে প্রভাবিত করেছে। যার ফলে এই শতকের অনুবাদে নানা মাত্রার সংযোজন চোখে পড়ে। অলোকরঞ্জন দাশগুপ্ত এই দশকের একজন উল্লেখযোগ্য অনুবাদক। তাঁর অনুবাদে যেমন দায়িত্ববোধ, নির্বিশ্বস্ততা ও বিশ্বস্ততার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়, তেমনি অনুবাদ কবিতাকে তিনি বাংলা কবিতা হিসেবে স্বাভাবিক দান করতে সক্ষম হয়েছিলেন। অলোকরঞ্জন দাশগুপ্ত অলোক সরকারের সঙ্গে যৌথ উদ্যোগে প্রকাশ করেন ফরাসি অনুবাদ কবিতার ‘ভিনদেশী ফুল’ নামে এক নিবন্ধ। তিনি যেহেতু বহু বিদেশি ভাষায় ব্যুৎপত্তি লাভ করেছিলেন, তাই তাঁর অনুবাদে নানা পাশ্চাত্য কবির কবিতা স্থান পেয়েছে। তিনি অনুবাদ ক্রিয়াতে বেঞ্জামিনের অনুবাদ নিয়ে মন্তব্য দ্বারা প্রভূত প্রভাবিত হয়েছেন। তাঁর অনুবাদগুলি তাই বাংলা ভাষায় মৌলিক কবিতা হওয়ার দাবি রাখে। তিনি ‘প্রসঙ্গত’-এর ভূমিকায় বলেন, ‘বাংলা কবিতার কালোত্তীর্ণ অথচ সমযোচিত বিশ্ব কবিতা থেকে আহরণের চাহিদায় এই সংগ্রহের প্রস্তুতি। প্রসঙ্গত আমাদের মনে পড়ে বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদের প্রয়োজনীয়তা সম্পর্কিত মন্তব্য। যেখানে বাংলা কবিতাকে সমসাময়িক করে তোলার জন্যই বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদে হস্তক্ষেপ। অলোকরঞ্জন দাশগুপ্ত কোল্‌থ্রিঞ্জের ‘দি রাইম অব দি এন্থসিয়েন্ট ম্যারিনার’-এর অনুবাদ ‘বুড়ো নাবিকের উপকথা’ (সপ্ত সিন্ধু দশ দিগন্ত), তে পাণ্ডিত্যের সঙ্গে বাংলা কবিতার এক আশ্চর্য মেলবন্ধন ঘটাতে পেরেছেন। অলোকরঞ্জন দাশগুপ্ত হেন্ডার্লিনের বেশ কিছু কবিতাও অনুবাদ করেছেন, যা ‘ইথারদুহিতা’ নামে প্রকাশিত। পরে হেন্ডার্লিনের আরো কবিতার অনুবাদ প্রকাশ করেন ‘নিয়তি ও দেবযান’ নাম দিয়ে। ‘প্রেম পরবাসে’ নাম দিয়ে হাইনরিশ হাইনের কয়েকটি অনুবাদ তিনি করেছেন।

অলোকরঞ্জন এছাড়াও নানা সমকালীন পাশ্চাত্য কবিদের কবিতা অনুবাদ করেছেন। এক্ষেত্রে তিনি নিজের কবি সত্তাকে যথাসম্ভব দূরে সরিয়ে রেখে অনুবাদ করেছেন। কিন্তু তা হলেও তাঁর অনুবাদগুলি কেবলমাত্র আক্ষরিকতায় শেষ হয়ে যায় না। তাতে যেমন মূলের প্রতি বিশ্বস্ততা দেখা যায় তেমনি তাতে বাংলা আধুনিক কবিতার কাছাকাছি পৌঁছানোর অভিজ্ঞতাও ধরা পড়ে। শঙ্খ ঘোষের অনুবাদচর্চা বাংলা অনুবাদ কবিতাকে সাফল্যের শীর্ষে উন্নীত করে। তিনি কেবলমাত্র অনুবাদ করেই থেকে থাকেননি। অনুবাদ নিয়ে নানা বক্তব্য ও প্রবন্ধ রচনা করে বাংলা অনুবাদ সাহিত্যকে নতুনতর দিশা দান করতে সমর্থ হয়েছেন। অনুবাদে শঙ্খ ঘোষের তাগিদ কী বা কবে থেকে এই আগ্রহের শুরু তা আমরা সঠিক ভাবে জানি না। কিন্তু আমরা আগেই আলোচনা করেছি যে একজন সৃষ্টিশীল যথার্থ কবি তাঁর কাব্যকে বা সৃষ্টিকে প্রসারিত রাখার জন্য অনুবাদকে এক সহায়ক মাধ্যম হিসেবে ব্যবহার করেন। অনুবাদক যদি কবি হন তাহলে তাঁর রচনার অন্তর্গত পর্বে অনুবাদের সাহায্যে আনতে পারেন সৃষ্টির নব উদ্যম। আর এই কথা বুদ্ধদেবের অনুবাদ প্রসঙ্গে আমরা বারবার আলোচনা করেছি।

শঙ্খ ঘোষের অনুবাদের পরিধিও কম নয়। তিনি ভারতীয়, অ-ভারতীয় ভাষার নানা গ্রন্থের বহু অনুবাদ করেছেন। অ-ভারতীয় ভাষার তিনি যে অনুবাদ করেছেন তার হিসেব নিলে দেখা যাবে ইংরেজি কবিতার অনুবাদ সংখ্যা, ২, জার্মান, ১০, স্পেনীয়, ৪, রুশ, ১, ভিয়েতনামী, ১, ফরাসি, ২, চীনা, ৩, জাপানী, ১। তাঁর প্রথম অনুবাদ কবিতার বই ‘দেশ বিদেশের কবিতা’। তারপর কয়েকজন বিদেশি কবির কবিতার অনুবাদ নিয়ে প্রকাশ করেন ‘বহুল দেবতা বহু স্বর’ গ্রন্থ। এছাড়াও আছে অলোকরঞ্জন দাশগুপ্ত ও তাঁর নিজের যৌথ সম্পাদনায় ‘সপ্ত সিন্ধু দশ দিগন্ত’-এর মতন মহান কাব্যগ্রন্থ।

শঙ্খ ঘোষ অনুবাদকে যান্ত্রিকতার হাত থেকে রক্ষা করার তাগিদ অনুভব করেছিলেন। তিনি অনুবাদের

মাধ্যমে মাতৃভাষাকেই ঋদ্ধ করতে চেয়েছেন,

... মোটের উপর এমন কোন দামী জিনিস পাওয়াই যাবে, যা হয়তো আমাদের মাতৃভাষার সাহিত্যে নেই, আর যার সঙ্গে পরিচয়ের ফলে সেই সাহিত্যের ঋদ্ধির সম্ভাবনা বেড়ে যায়।<sup>১০</sup>

শঙ্খ ঘোষ অনুবাদকে নিয়ে নানা মন্তব্য ও সমালোচনা করেছেন, যা আমরা বুদ্ধদেব বসুর ক্ষেত্রেও দেখতে পাই। ফলে বোঝাই যায়, বুদ্ধদেব বসুর প্রভাব তাঁর উপর প্রত্যক্ষ ভাবে পড়েছে। তিনি মনে করতেন যে, অনুবাদে যদি কোন সৃজনের আনন্দ না লেগে থাকে তাহলে তা বৃথা আয়োজন। বুদ্ধদেব বসু যেমন মনে করতেন অনুবাদের সজীবতা ও স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য আনতে হলে মূল কবির সঙ্গে একাত্মতা দরকার। শঙ্খ ঘোষের অনুবাদক্রিয়া ও অনুবাদ নিয়ে মন্তব্যে তারই প্রতিফলন শুনি। তিনি মনে করতেন অনুবাদকের নিজের ভাষার কবিতা হিসেবে পাঠযোগ্য আর স্মরণীয় হয়ে ওঠতেই অনুবাদ কবিতার প্রধান সার্থকতা। আর সেই কাজে এটা হতেই পারে যে, মূল কবির সঙ্গে মিশে থাকে অনুবাদকের সত্তা।

দেবীপ্রসাদ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ও শঙ্খ ঘোষের মত নানা দেশের ও বহু কবির কবিতা অনুবাদ করেছেন। তার মধ্যে ইংরেজ কবি ব্লেক, হিম্পানীর দুই কবি, লোরকার কবিতা। তাঁর প্রথম কাব্যানুবাদ গ্রন্থ মিমেনেথের কবিতার অনুবাদ ও সংকলন ‘শিকড়ের ডানা’। এছাড়াও হিমেনেথের গদ্যকাব্য ‘প্লাতেরো আর আমি’ নামে কিছুটা অনুবাদ করেন। লোরকার কবিতার অনুবাদ ‘ষাঁড় ও কিম্বদ’ প্রভৃতি তিনি অনুবাদ করেন। অনুবাদকে তিনি মনে করেন, “স্বীকার করতাই হয় অনুবাদও একভাবে কবিতাটির ভাষা।” আমরা বুঝতে পারি কবিতায় আক্ষরিক অনুবাদকে তিনি প্রাধান্য দিচ্ছেন না। আসলে তিনি অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে দেশীয় ভাষা-সাহিত্যকে ঋদ্ধ করতে চান। মূল কবিতার ভিতরের ভাবটিকে বজায় রেখে একটি স্বতন্ত্র কবিতাকে খুঁজে পেতে চান তিনি। অনুবাদ বিষয়ে তাঁর যে মন্তব্য একথার সমর্থন করে।

সুবিহিত অছিদ্র অনুবাদ আমার দুঃসাধ্য জেনে গোড়া থেকেই শুধু চেষ্টা করেছি কবিতার বিনিময়ে একটি কবিতা যদি পাওয়া যায়। তার মধ্যে; যথাসম্ভব, অন্তর্ভুক্তটুকু অন্তত যাতে না হারায়। যাতে তা একটু পাঠযোগ্য হয়ে উঠতে পারে আমার ভাষায়।<sup>১১</sup>

পঞ্চাশের দশক ও তার পরবর্তী সময়ে শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায় ও সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় অনুবাদে হাত দেন। আমরা আগেই আলোচনায় দেখেছি এঁদের মৌলিক কাব্যভাবনায় বুদ্ধদেব বসুর প্রভাব কতখানি। অনুবাদকর্মে যখন এঁরা হাত দিয়েছিলেন সেই প্রভাব এখানেও কার্যকরী হয়েছে। সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় অনেক অনুবাদ গ্রন্থ প্রকাশ করলেও শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের সেই প্রাচুর্য দেখতে পাওয়া যায় না। সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়ের ‘অন্য দেশের কবিতা’-র ভূমিকাতে তাঁর বস্তু্যবে আমরা অনুবাদের বিশুদ্ধতার সমর্থন পাই না। তিনি ভূমিকাতে বলেছেন, অনুবাদে বিশুদ্ধ কবিতা পাওয়া যাবে না। ঠিক সেই কারণেই তিনি অনুবাদে কোন উচ্চাশা রাখতে পারেননি।

মানবেন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় অনুবাদ সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে একজন স্মরণীয় ব্যক্তিত্ব। তিনি সেই সমস্ত কবিদের কবিতা অনুবাদ করেছেন, যাঁরা প্রচলিত কবিতা ধারার বিপ্রতীপে কবিতাকে রাখেন। কবিতা দিয়েই কবিতার যাঁরা পালাবদল করতে চান, সেই সমস্ত কবির কবিতা অনুবাদে তাঁর আগ্রহ বেশি। তিনি তৃতীয় বিশ্বের কবি ও কবিতার অনুবাদে অধিক মনোযোগী ছিলেন। তাই তিনি হোলুক-এর কবিতা অনুবাদ করছেন এবং নাম দিয়েছেন ‘পুরোপুরি খোলামেলা কবিতা’। তাঁর কৃত অনুবাদের সম্ভারও যথেষ্ট, ‘দেশ বিদেশের কবিতা’ গ্রন্থে তাঁর চারখানি কাব্যানুবাদ গ্রন্থ স্থান পেয়েছে। যেমন, জগ্ধবিগ্ধনিয়োভ হেরবেটের ‘ভাবুকবাবু’, পেটার হান্ধটকের ‘অর্থহীনতা আর সুখ’, হানস্ধ মাগ্ধনুস এনৎসেন্ধরারগারের ‘ফেনা: কবিতা যারা পড়ে না তাদের জন্য কবিতা’ ও ‘ইয়েশি হারাসিমোভিচের কবিতা’। কাব্যানুবাদে মূল কবিতার ভাববস্তু, রূপকল্প ও সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বাংলা

কবিতা হিসেবে অনুবাদের সার্থকতা পুঙ্কর দাশগুপ্তকে সবথেকে বেশি ভাবিত করেছে। তাঁর অনুবাদ এই দ্বৈততাকে ধারণ করে আছে। তিনি মূলত ফরাসি কবিদের কবিতা অনুবাদে অধিক মনোযোগী ছিলেন। বাংলা কবিতাকে সাম্প্রতিকতম করার জন্য ‘বিশ শতকের ফরাসি কবিতা ও আটজন কবি’ নামে অনুবাদ গ্রন্থ প্রকাশ করেন। স্পষ্টতই এখানে বুদ্ধদেবের অনুবাদের রাজনীতি পুঙ্কর দাশগুপ্তের মধ্যে ত্রিাশীল। এছাড়া ‘পিকাসোর ম্যাজিক লর্গন’ নামে যে অনুবাদ গ্রন্থ প্রকাশ করেন তাতে বাংলা কবিতার প্রভূতপূর্ব উন্নতি সাধিত হয়। কবিতার অনুবাদক হিসেবে পুঙ্কর দাশগুপ্ত প্রথম থেকেই মূলের প্রকাশ সীমাকে নিয়ন্ত্রিত ও প্রসারিত করে অনুবাদকে নিজস্ব ভাষার স্বতন্ত্র কাব্যমূল্য দেওয়ার পক্ষপাতী। আমরা এর পরেও অনেক কবিতার অনুবাদক পাব, যাঁরা মূলত অগ্রজদের অনুগামী ও প্রত্যেকের উপর বুদ্ধদেব বসুর প্রত্যক্ষ ও পরোক্ষ প্রভাব দেখা যায়।

আলোচনায় এই পর্যন্ত আমরা দেখলাম যে, বুদ্ধদেব বসু পাশ্চাত্য কবিতার অনুবাদ করে বাংলা কবিতায় আধুনিকতার বীজ বপন করেছিলেন, তেমনি পরবর্তী কবি সাহিত্যিকদের উৎসাহ দান করে বাংলা কবিতায় আধুনিকতার জোয়ার এনেছিলেন। অনুবাদ কবিতার মাধ্যমেই যে তিনি বাংলা কবিতার আধুনিকতা বিষয়ক খুঁটিনাটি পরীক্ষাগুলি করে নিতে চাইছিলেন তা সর্বজনগ্রাহ্য। বুদ্ধদেবের সমসাময়িক ও পরবর্তীকালে এই প্রভাবের ব্যাপ্তি আমরা দেখতে পেলাম, যেখানে পাশ্চাত্য কবিতার অনুবাদ প্রচুর সংখ্যক কবি-সাহিত্যিকরা করছেন। তাঁরাও বুদ্ধদেব বসুর মত অনুবাদের মাধ্যমে যেমন বাংলা কবিতায় আধুনিকতা চলমান রাখছেন, তেমনি এর মধ্য দিয়েই নিজের সৃজনী সত্তাকেও উজ্জীবিত করছেন। এঁরা সবাই কমবেশি বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অনুবাদ কবিতা ও তাঁর অনুবাদ বিষয়ক মন্তব্য ও দর্শনের দ্বারা প্রভাবিত।

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- দে, সুধাংশুশেখর, স্বাগত সংলাপ : বুদ্ধদেব বসুকে নিবেদিত, কলকাতা, দেজ পাবলিশিং, নভেম্বর ২০০৮।
- বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, শ্রীকুমার, ইংরেজি সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস, কলকাতা, ওরিয়েন্ট বুক কোম্পানি, ষষ্ঠ সংস্করণ, জুলাই ১৯৮৪।
- বুদ্ধদেব বসু, ‘শার্ল বোদলেয়ার: তাঁর কবিতা’, কবিতা সংগ্রহ, (চতুর্থ খন্ড), নরেশ গুহ (সম্পা), কলকাতা, দেজ পাবলিশার্স, ১৯৩৪, পৃ. ২০৫।
- ভট্টাচার্য, তপোধীর, কবিতার রূপান্তর, কোলকাতা, সাহিত্যলোক, ১৮ই সেপ্টেম্বর ২০০৩।
- মুখোপাধ্যায়, ধ্রুবকুমার, ও, ঘোষ ঋষি (সংকলন ও সম্পাদনা), বুদ্ধদেব বসু : বৈচিত্র্যে নানা মাত্রা, কলকাতা, রত্নাবলী, বইমেলা ২০১০।
- মুখোপাধ্যায়, সুভাষ, নির্বাচিত নাজিম হিকমত, কলকাতা, দেজ পাবলিশার্স, ১৯৯৪।
- মিত্র, অরুণ, কাব্যসমগ্র (প্রথম খন্ড), কলকাতা, প্রতিভাস, প্রথম প্রকাশ ১লা সেপ্টেম্বর ১৯৮৮।
- মিত্র, অরুণ, পল এলুয়ারের কবিতা, কলকাতা, সারস্বত লাইব্রেরি, ১৯৮৫।
- মিত্র, অরুণ, সৃজন সাহিত্য : নানান ভাবনা, কলকাতা, প্রতিভাস, প্রথম প্রকাশ ১লা মার্চ ১৯৮৭।
- মিত্র, মঞ্জুভাষ, আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতায় ইউরোপীয় প্রভাব, কলকাতা, দেজ পাবলিশিং, প্রথম প্রকাশ আগস্ট ১৯৮৬।
- মজুমদার, অতীক, ‘তরজমা’, রোববার, কলকাতা, প্রতিদিন প্রকাশনী লিমিটেড, ২৬শে জুন ২০১১।
- মজুমদার, আশীষ, ঐক্যের গান : অনুবাদ ও অনুবাদ-বিষয়ক আলোচনা, কলকাতা, প্যাপিরাস, জানুয়ারি ২০০২।
- মণ্ডল, সুজিতকুমার, বিদেশী ফুলের গুচ্ছ, কলকাতা, প্যাপিরাস, ২০১১।
- রুদ্র, সুরত (সম্পাদনা), প্রিয়জনের চোখে বুদ্ধদেব বসু, কলকাতা, অরুণা প্রকাশনী, আশ্বিন ১৪১৫।

- সিকদার, অশ্রুসুন্দর, ‘একলব্যের সম্পর্ক : কবিতার অনুবাদ’, আধুনিক কবিতার দিকবলয়, কলকাতা, অরুণা প্রকাশনী, পৌষ ১৩৮৬।
- সেন, নবেন্দু (সম্পাদনা), পাশ্চাত্য সাহিত্যতত্ত্ব ও সাহিত্য ভাবনা, কলকাতা, কালার ইন্ডিয়া, প্রথম প্রকাশ মে ২০০৯।
- সেনগুপ্ত, সমীর, বুদ্ধদেব বসুর জীবন, কলকাতা, বিকল্প প্রকাশনী, ৩০শে মে, ১৯৯৮।
- সৈয়দ, মুজতবা আলি, ‘অনুবাদ সাহিত্য’, সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলির রচনাবলী, প্রথম খন্ড, কলকাতা, মিত্র-ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স, অষ্টম মুদ্রণ, কার্তিক ১৪০৫।
- সরকার, পিনাকেশ, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতা, কলকাতা, প্যাপিরাস, নভেম্বর ১৯৯৫।

## মেদিনীপুরের লৌকিক দেবতা ধর্মঠাকুর ও ঘনরামের ‘শ্রীধর্মমঙ্গল’

সেখ সাব্বির হোসেন

সংক্ষিপ্তসার : অবিভক্ত মেদিনীপুর জেলা একসময় ছিল আর্য-অনার্য সংস্কৃতির সঙ্গমস্থল। দিন বদলের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সংস্কৃতির ধারার সংঘর্ষ ও সমন্বয়ের সরণী পেরিয়ে বর্তমান পূর্ব ও পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুরের জন্ম হয়েছে। এই দুই মেদিনীপুর জেলার সঙ্গে বিভিন্ন লৌকিক দেব-দেবীর সম্পর্ক জড়িয়ে রয়েছে। রয়েছে বিভিন্ন শৈব দেবতা, বিষ্ণু আদি দেবতা, শক্তির আরাধনা ও বিভিন্ন ধর্মরাজের পূজা। এছাড়াও এসেছে লৌকিক ও গ্রাম্য দেব-দেবীর পূজা পুণ্য স্নানাদি পর্বকে কেন্দ্র করে উৎসব, বিভিন্ন তিথি ঘটিত পর্ব। তবে ঐ সকল দেব-দেবীকে কেন্দ্র করে গ্রাম্য মানুষের যে সংস্কৃতি গড়ে উঠেছে তার ইতিহাস পর্যালোচনা করা অত্যন্ত দুরূহ কাজ। লৌকিক দেব-দেবীর উৎস, প্রাচীনত্ব প্রভৃতি বিষয় তমসাচ্ছন্ন কিন্তু তার উদ্ভব ও বিকাশের মধ্যে একটা সর্বজনীনতার ছাপ দেখা যায়। মেদিনীপুর জেলার কোনো কোনো অঞ্চল ধর্মপূজার জন্য পাঠস্থান হিসাবে পরিচিত। ঘনরাম চক্রবর্তীর শ্রীধর্মমঙ্গল কাব্যে এর বিশেষ উল্লেখ আছে। আলোচ্য নিবন্ধে তার একটি পরিচয় তুলে ধরা হবে।

সূচক শব্দ : মেদিনীপুর, ধর্মঠাকুর, পূজা, দেবদেবী, মন্দির।

অবিভক্ত মেদিনীপুর জেলা একসময় ছিল আর্য-অনার্য সংস্কৃতির সঙ্গমস্থল। দিন বদলের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সংস্কৃতির ধারার সংঘর্ষ ও সমন্বয়ের সরণী পেরিয়ে বর্তমান পূর্ব ও পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুরের জন্ম হয়েছে। এই দুই মেদিনীপুর জেলার সঙ্গে বিভিন্ন লৌকিক দেব-দেবীর সম্পর্ক জড়িয়ে রয়েছে। রয়েছে বিভিন্ন শৈব দেবতা, বিষ্ণু আদি দেবতা, শক্তির আরাধনা ও বিভিন্ন ধর্মরাজের পূজা। এছাড়াও এসেছে লৌকিক ও গ্রাম্য দেব-দেবীর পূজা পুণ্য স্নানাদি পর্বকে কেন্দ্র করে উৎসব, বিভিন্ন তিথি ঘটিত পর্ব। তবে ঐ সকল দেব-দেবীকে কেন্দ্র করে গ্রাম্য মানুষের যে সংস্কৃতি গড়ে উঠেছে তার ইতিহাস পর্যালোচনা করা অত্যন্ত দুরূহ কাজ। লৌকিক দেব-দেবীর উৎস, প্রাচীনত্ব প্রভৃতি বিষয় তমসাচ্ছন্ন কিন্তু তার উদ্ভব ও বিকাশের মধ্যে একটা সর্বজনীনতার ছাপ দেখা যায়। যেমন, পূর্ব মেদিনীপুর জেলার তমলুক মহকুমার অন্তর্গত ময়না থানা। এখানে ধর্মঠাকুর ‘বুড়া ধর্ম’ নামে পরিচিত ১। মেদিনীপুরের ঘাটাল মহকুমা ও চন্দ্রকোণার কোনো কোনো অঞ্চলে ধর্মঠাকুরের প্রতিপত্তির কথা জানা যায়। সাধারণত ‘কূর্মমূর্তি’তে এই এলাকায় ধর্মঠাকুরের পূজা হয়। এই অঞ্চলের কোথাও কোথাও আবার পাথরের প্রতীকে ধর্মঠাকুরের পূজা হয়ে থাকে। এই মূর্তিগুলি দ্বাদশ থেকে চতুর্দশ শতাব্দীর মধ্যে গঠিত হয়েছিল বলে সমালোচকেরা অনুমান করেন ২। এই দেবতার অবশ্য বহু মন্দির রয়েছে। ময়না ব্লকে এইরূপ মন্দিরের আধিক্য বেশি দেখা যায় ৩। পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুরের চন্দ্রকোণাতেও এই দেবতার বহু মন্দির চোখে পড়ে। তবে বর্তমানে এই দেবতার পূজার প্রচার বেশি দেখা যায় না। পূর্বে এই দেবতার পূজা সাধারণত দৈনিক ও বার্ষিক হত। সাধারণ মানুষেরা ধর্মঠাকুরের কাছে মানত করতো এবং তা পূরণ হলে ধুমধাম করে ধর্মঠাকুরের বিশেষ পূজার আয়োজন হতো। ফাল্গুন, চৈত্র, বৈশাখ ও জ্যৈষ্ঠ এই চার মাসের যে কোনো শুক্লপক্ষের তৃতীয়ায় শুরু হয়ে পূর্ণিমায় অনুষ্ঠান শেষ হতো ৪। সাধারণত হাড়ি, ডোম, মুচি প্রভৃতি তথাকথিত নিম্নশ্রেণীর লোকদের দ্বারা পূর্বে ধর্মঠাকুরের পূজা হতো। তবে বর্তমানে কোনো কোনো জায়গায় ব্রাহ্মণ ও মাহিষ্য সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষ ধর্মপূজার পৌরহিত্য করে থাকে ৫। সবং ব্লকের খোড়াই গ্রামের ধর্মরাজের পৌরহিত্য করতেন তাঁতি সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষ। এই গ্রামেই

আবার ধর্মঠাকুরের বাৎসরিক পূজা উপলক্ষে বৈশাখ সংক্রান্তিতে ধর্মের গাজন হয়। সংক্রান্তির পাঁচদিন পূর্ব থেকে এই গাজন শুরু হয়। শিবের গাজনের মতো এই গাজনেও ভক্তরা থাকে। ১৬ জন ভক্ত এই গাজনে অংশ নিয়ে থাকে। ধর্মঠাকুরের গাজনের বিশেষ বৈশিষ্ট্য হল, এই গাজনে অবশ্যই একজন মহিলা ভক্ত থাকবে। ধর্মঠাকুরের বাৎসরিক পূজার সময় এখানে গায়নের দ্বারা ধর্মের গান গাওয়া হতো। ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল কাব্যে উল্লিখিত ‘পশ্চিম উদয় পালা’ই সাধারণত গাওয়া হতো।

এই ‘ধর্মঠাকুর’কে কেন্দ্র করে মেদিনীপুরের বিভিন্ন জায়গায় জমজমাট মেলার আয়োজন হয়। মূলত নিম্নজাতের মানুষের ব্যবস্থাপনায় মেলা পরিচালনা হলেও সকল সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষ অবাধে এই মেলায় অংশ নেয়। সাংস্কৃতিক আদান-প্রদান ঘটে মানুষের সাথে। ময়না ধর্মঠাকুরের মেলার জন্য বিখ্যাত। ময়না ছাড়াও মেদিনীপুর জেলার আরও কয়েকটি গ্রামে এই ঠাকুরের মেলার খবর পাওয়া যায়। প্রণব রায়ের লেখা থেকে জানা যায় ৬। খড়গপুর থানার গোকুলপুর গ্রাম, পাঁশকুড়ার দেউলিয়া গ্রাম, সবং থানার খোড়াই গ্রামে ধর্মঠাকুরের মেলা হয়ে থাকে। এই সকল মেলায় পূর্বে ধর্মঠাকুরের মাহাত্ম্য কীর্তন হলেও বর্তমানে আর হয় না তার জায়গায় স্থান নিয়েছে নানা চটুল অনুষ্ঠান। ধর্মঠাকুরের পূজায় বাজনা ও বাদ্যির ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে। তাছাড়া পাঁঠা ও কুকুর বলিরও ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে। তবে ময়না বা পার্শ্ববর্তী গ্রামে বলির ব্যবস্থা নেই। কেবলমাত্র মেদিনীপুরের খোড়াই ও সুন্দরনগর গ্রামে অতীতে বলিপ্রথা প্রচলিত ছিল ৭। মেদিনীপুর জেলার ময়না, সবং, ঘাটাল প্রভৃতি এলাকার বিস্তৃত অঞ্চলে বারোদিনের পরিবর্তে এক বা দুইদিন ধর্মমঙ্গলের গান হয়। বাৎসরিক পূজানুষ্ঠান অথবা নানা মঙ্গল অনুষ্ঠানে কেবলমাত্র পশ্চিম উদয়পালা, জাগরণপালা এবং স্বর্গারোহণ পালা গীত হয়। নানা মঙ্গল অনুষ্ঠানে ধর্মঠাকুর এই সব অঞ্চলে পূজিত হন। এ প্রথা দীর্ঘকালের। ময়নায় ‘ধর্মকে লোকে বাড়ি আনিয়াও পূজা দেয়, খুব ধুমধাম করে, ঢাক-ঢোল বাজায়’। বর্তমানকালেও এর বিলোপ ঘটেনি। তবে কোথাও কোথাও নিম্নবর্ণের পুরোহিতের পরিবর্তে ব্রাহ্মণ নিযুক্ত হয়েছেন। ধর্মপূজার আচার অনুষ্ঠানের সঙ্গেও ধর্মমঙ্গলের যোগ অতি ঘনিষ্ঠ।

নবম-দশম শতাব্দীতে উদ্ভূত এই দেবতাকে কেন্দ্র করে বাংলাদেশে এক বৃহত্তর সাহিত্য গড়ে উঠেছিল। রামাই পণ্ডিতের ‘শূন্যপুরাণ’ এবং ‘ধর্মপূজা বিধান’ প্রাচীনতম। এই দুটি গ্রন্থে ধর্মঠাকুরের উৎপত্তি বিষয়ক কাহিনি ও পূজা পদ্ধতি আলোচিত হয়েছে। তাছাড়া খ্রীষ্টীয় পঞ্চদশ শতাব্দী থেকে ‘ধর্মঠাকুর’কে কেন্দ্র করে অনেকগুলি উচ্চাঙ্গের মঙ্গলকাব্য রচিত হয়েছে। এই সকল কাব্যের সর্বাপেক্ষা উল্লেখযোগ্য ঘনরাম চক্রবর্তীর ‘শ্রীধর্মমঙ্গল’ কাব্য। তিনি সপ্তদশ-অষ্টাদশ শতকের কবি। বর্ধমান জেলায় তাঁর জন্ম। তিনি ছিলেন রাজসভা কবি। রাজসভাকবি ঘনরাম রাজার আদেশে এই ধর্মমঙ্গল কাব্য রচনা করেন। ঘনরাম তাঁর কাব্যকে ‘শ্রীধর্মমঙ্গল’ নামে অভিহিত করেছেন। এছাড়াও আরো বিভিন্ন নামে ঘনরাম তাঁর কাব্যকে অভিহিত করেছেন। যেমন, শ্রীধর্ম সংগীত, শ্রীধর্ম কীর্তন, নূতন মঙ্গল, ধর্ম ইতিহাস, অনাদিমঙ্গল, মধুর ভরতী, মধুর মঙ্গল ইত্যাদি। এই সুবিশাল কাব্যটি ২৪টি পালায় বিন্যস্ত। স্থাপনা পালা, ঢেকুর পালা, কর্ণসেন-রঞ্জাবতীর বিবাহ, হরিশচন্দ্র-লুইচন্দ্র, রঞ্জাবতীর শালে ভর ও ধর্মের কাছে পুত্রবর লাভ, লাউসেনের জন্ম, আখড়া পালা, ফলা নির্মাণ পালা, গৌড়যাত্রা, কামদল পালা, জামতি পালা, গোলাহাট পালা, হস্তীবধ পালা, কাঙুর যাত্রা পালা, কামরূপ যুদ্ধ পালা, কলিঙ্গা বিবাহ, কানাড়া স্বয়ম্বর পালা, লোহার গুণ্ডার দ্বিখণ্ডিত করণ, মায়ামুণ্ড পালা, ইছাই বধ পালা, অঘোর বাদল পালা, পশ্চিমে উদয় পালা, মহামদ কর্তৃক লাউসেনের আক্রমণ ও শাস্তি, পশ্চিমে উদয়---লাউসেনের অসাধ্য সাধন, স্বর্গারোহণ পালা।

মহাকাব্যোপম এই গ্রন্থে রয়েছে অজস্র ঘটনার সমারোহ, অসংখ্য চরিত্রের সমাবেশ। বাংলা ১২৯০ সালের চৈত্র মাসে বঙ্গবাসী কার্যালয় থেকে ঘনরাম চক্রবর্তীর কাব্য প্রকাশিত হয়। ঘনরামের কাব্য এই ধর্মমঙ্গল কাব্যের ধারায় প্রথম মুদ্রণ সৌভাগ্য লাভ করে। সে কারণেই হয়তো প্রচারের পাদপ্রদীপের আলোয় এ কাব্যই বেশি পরিমাণে আলোকিত।

ধর্মমঙ্গল কাব্যের কাহিনি বিন্যাস রাঢ়বাংলার ভৌগোলিক উপাদান ও লোকজীবনের পরিবেশ থেকে গৃহীত। ব্রতকথারূপে যার কাহিনিগুলি বহুপূর্বেই রাঢ়ের লোকসমাজে প্রচলিত ছিল। সুতরাং বৃহত্তর রাঢ়জনগোষ্ঠীর বিশ্বাস, সংস্কারকে তা অস্বীকার করেনি। নানা অলৌকিক ঘটনা ও অবিশ্বাস্য কার্যকলাপ বর্ণিত হলেও লোকজীবনের প্রভাবকে কবি অস্বীকার করতে পারেননি। ধর্মমঙ্গল কাব্যে তিনটি মূল কাহিনি রয়েছে। প্রথমে রয়েছে দেব খণ্ড বা বিশ্বসৃষ্টিতত্ত্বের বর্ণনা। দ্বিতীয়াংশে রয়েছে ধর্মঠাকুরের পূজা ও তার প্রচারের ইতিহাস এবং তৃতীয়াংশে এসেছে লাউসেনের কাহিনি। ধর্মঠাকুরের মাহাত্ম্য প্রচারকল্পে নটী অম্বুবতীর মতো আগমন ঘটেছে রঞ্জাবতী রূপে। তার পিতা বেনুরায়। মাতা মম্বুরা। ভ্রাতা মহামদ। পতি কর্ণসেন এবং পুত্র লাউসেন। কর্ণসেনের সঙ্গে রঞ্জাবতীর বিবাহসূত্রে গৌড় থেকে তারা রাঢ়ের ময়নানগড়ে (ময়না) বসবাসের জন্য প্রেরিত হয়েছিল। এই কাব্যে উল্লিখিত নায়ক লাউসেন আসলে অনেকের মতে, ময়নার কাছে অবস্থিত বৃন্দাবন চকের ধর্মঠাকুর। এখানকার ‘বুড়াধর্ম’ হলেন লাউসেনের মা রঞ্জাবতীর আরাধ্য দেবতা। রঞ্জাবতী ধর্মঠাকুরের কাছে মানত করেছিলেন এবং তারই বরে পুত্রসন্তান লাভ করেন।

ময়না রাঢ়ভূমির দক্ষিণে এবং সমুদ্রের একেবারে তীরবর্তী। ঘনরাম চক্রবর্তী লিখেছেন, ‘ময়নানগর বাটী সাগর সমীপে’। অবিভক্ত মেদিনীপুর জেলার অন্তর্গত তমলুক মহকুমার দক্ষিণভাগে ময়নার অবস্থান। ‘তমলুক মহকুমায় ময়না নামক একটি স্থান এখনও আছে’। ঘনরাম লিখেছেন :

গোলাহাট জামতি জলন্দ তারাদীঘি।  
পিঠে রাখি নাগরাধ্বনি উঠে ডিগিডিগি।।  
কত কব যত গ্রাম থেকে ডানি বামে।  
প্রবেশে মঙ্গলকোট মোকামে মোকামে।।  
থাকিতে প্রহর নিশা চলিলা সত্বর।  
দুই দণ্ড দিবায় দাখিল দামোদর।।  
স্নান পূজা করি পুনঃ করিলা গমন।  
উড়ের গড় এড়াল আসিলা উচালন।।  
পার হয়ে দ্বারিকেশ্বর দিবা দুই যামে।  
ময়নাসমীপে এল মোকামে মোকামে।।<sup>৮</sup>

ঘনরামের কাব্যে রঞ্জাবতীর বিবাহ পালায় প্রথম অবিভক্ত মেদিনীপুর জেলার ময়নার কথা পাওয়া যায়। যেখানে রাজা গোড়েশ্বর কর্ণসেনকে ময়নার অধিপতি করে পাঠিয়েছে। এরপর লাউসেনের জন্মপালায় যখন ধর্মঠাকুর হনুমানকে বললেন লাউসেনকে রঞ্জাবতীর কাছে ফিরিয়ে দিতে তখন হনুমান লাউসেনকে খোঁজার জন্য দেবজের বেশে ময়নায় উপস্থিত হয়েছিল। পরবর্তীসময়ে লাউসেনকে এখান থেকে উদ্ধার করে রঞ্জাবতীর কাছে তুলে দিয়েছিল। এতে ময়নার সকলে আনন্দিত হয়েছিল। লাউসেনের জন্য চারজন দেবকন্যা বিমলা, অমলা, কলিঙ্গা ও কানাড়ার জন্ম হয়েছিল।



ঘনরামের কাব্যে বীররসের পরিচয় গভীরভাবে এসেছে। বৃহত্তর রাজসমাজের ধর্ম ও জাতিবিন্যাস যুদ্ধের বর্ণনায় এসেছে। সেই সঙ্গে এসেছে রণকৌশল ও যুদ্ধাস্ত্রের কথাও। মহামদ ময়না অভিযান করেছে বিচিত্র সেনাবাহিনী যোগে :

বীরমল্ল কৈবর্ত সাজিল সবিশেষ।  
একরাতি হানা দিল তিন রাজার দেশ।।  
সাজিল ধানুকী ঢালী ছত্রিশ বরণ।  
আড়ঘরে চঞ্চল তরণি দেবগণ।।  
কুশমেট্যা বাগদি সাজিল রণজিৎ।  
দেখা দিল তিন কাহন ধানুকী সহিত।।  
অসম সাহস গুরু অগেয়ানে লেই।  
রণমদে মাতিলে আগুনে ঝাঁপ দেই।।<sup>৯</sup>

যুদ্ধের বর্ণনায় এবং বীরত্বে মেদিনীপুর অঞ্চলের অন্ত্যজ জনসমাজের চিত্র ঘনরামের কাব্যে বিশেষ বীররসের সঙ্গে উপস্থিত হয়েছে। রাজবাংলার জীবনের যথার্থ বীরাঙ্গনা ঘনরামের লখ্যা ডুমুনী। স্নেহ, কর্তব্যবোধ, নিষ্ঠা, বীরত্ব, তীক্ষ্ণ বিচারবোধ ও বুদ্ধিবৃত্তিতে লখ্যা মধ্যযুগের বাংলা সাহিত্যে অত্যন্ত উল্লেখযোগ্য একটি চরিত্র। ময়নানগরের বিপদকালে কালুও তাই প্রবল বিশ্বাসে লখ্যার হস্তে ময়নার নিরাপত্তার দায়িত্ব অর্পণ করেছে। কাহিনি অংশে পাওয়া যায় :

লখে বলে প্রাণনাথ করি নিবেদন।  
আমারে সাঁপিতে চাও ময়না ভুবন।।  
অবলা কেবল আমি কিবা বল ধরি।  
কালু বলে ছাড় কলা কোলে কাল অরি।  
তোর যত বল বুদ্ধি মোরে নাই হারা।  
লখে কয় নাই শক্তি সেকালের পারা।।<sup>১০</sup>  
তার বীরত্বে মুগ্ধ বিস্মিত হয়েছে কালু ডোমও। তার কথায় :  
কালু বলে সাবাসি তোকে শাখা শুখার মা  
শুভক্ষণে সেবেছিলে ওস্তাদের পা।।<sup>১১</sup>

এরপর ঘটনা ধারা অন্যদিকে এগিয়ে যাবে। লখাই কালুকে যুদ্ধ করতে বলবে কিন্তু কালুর ওপর দেবীর অভিষাপ থাকায় সে যুদ্ধ করতে যাবে না। কালুর পুত্র যুদ্ধ করতে গেলে তার মৃত্যু হবে। সেই সঙ্গে তার ভাইদেরও মৃত্যু হবে। তারপর কালু পুত্র শোকে অধীর হয়ে যুদ্ধ যাওয়ার জন্য প্রস্তুতি নেবে। সে কথা শুনে মহামদের দলে ত্রাসের সঞ্চার সৃষ্টি হবে। মহামদ পুরস্কার ঘোষণা করবে যে কালুর মাথা কেটে আনতে পারবে। তাকে ময়না নগর পুরস্কার দেয়া হবে। কালুর ভাই কালুর মাথা কেটে আনার প্রতিশ্রুতি দেয়। সে ছলনা করে কালুকে গিয়ে বলে যে, পূর্বের শত্রু ভাব ত্যাগ করে আবার ভাতৃত্বভাব স্থাপন করবে। কালু সরল বিশ্বাসে তাকে গ্রহণ করবে ভাইয়ের কথা শুনে। ভাই কালুকে দিয়ে শপথ করিয়ে নেবে যে সে যা চাইবে তাই কালুর কাছে পাবে। কালু সম্মতি দিলে সে কালুর মাথা কাটতে চাইবে। সত্য রক্ষার জন্য কালু তার মাথা কাটতে বলবে কিন্তু কালুর মাথা কেটে যখন তার ভাই চলে যাবে তখন লখাই তাকে বধ করবে। ডোমপাড়াই কালুর মৃত্যুতে যখন শোকের রোল উঠবে তখন লখাই তাদের থামিয়ে লাউসেনের মহলে খবর দিতে চলে যাবে। কলিঙ্গা যুদ্ধে

যাবে এবং পরাজিত হয়ে আত্মহত্যা করবে। কলিঙ্গার মৃতদেহ কানাডা সংরক্ষণ করে সেই বিপদে পার্বতীর পূজা করবে। পার্বতী আশীর্বাদ দেবে কানডাকে যে তিনি তাকে বিপদে সহযোগিতার হাত বাড়িয়ে দেবেন। অবশেষে কানডার যুদ্ধে আগমন এবং পার্বতীর কৃপায় কানডার যুদ্ধে জয়লাভ। মহামদকে ধরিয়া যথেষ্ট অপমান করবে কানডা। মহামদ অপমানে লুকিয়ে রাত্রে ঘরে ফিরতে চোর ভ্রমে নিজের ঘরেই যথেষ্ট অপমানিত হবে। এদিকে কানডা পার্বতীর নিকট কলিঙ্গার প্রাণভিক্ষা করবে এবং পার্বতী আশ্বাস দিবে এই বলে যে পশ্চিম উদয় দিয়ে লাউসেন ঘরে ফিরলেই সকলেই প্রাণ পাবে।

পশ্চিম উদয় পালায় লাউসেনের কঠোর সাধনা ও সূর্যের পশ্চিম উদয়ের কাহিনী এসেছে। ময়নার অমঙ্গল আশঙ্কায় লাউসেনের চিত্ত চঞ্চল হয়ে উঠবে। ময়নার সংবাদ আনতে সারিশুককে চিঠি দিয়ে লাউসেন পাঠাবে সেখানে। সারিশুক ময়নার সংবাদ নিয়ে ফিরবে। সেই সংবাদ শুনে লাউসেন শোকে ব্যাকুল হয়ে উঠবে এবং সে তপস্যা শুরু করবে। কঠোর সাধনা তে যখন লাউসেন সফল হবে না তখন নিজে দেহ নয় খণ্ড করে দুশ্চর সাধনা শুরু করবে। ধর্ম ঠাকুর লাউসেনের সাধনায় নড়েচড়ে বসবে। তখন ঠাকুর সূর্য ও অন্যান্য দেবগণসহ হাকন্দে আসবে। বাটুয়া কুকুর তাদের পথ রুদ্ধ করবে। কুকুরকে বর দিয়ে তারা লাউসেনের নিকট চলে আসবে। লাউসেনের তপস্যায় সন্তুষ্ট হয়ে ধর্ম ঠাকুর লাউসেনকে আশীর্বাদ করবেন। লাউসেন সূর্যের পশ্চিম উদয় বর প্রার্থনা করবে এবং সূর্য পশ্চিম দিকে উদিত হবে। সবশেষে লাউসেন গোঁড়ে ফিরবে।

স্বর্গ আরোহণ পালায় সমগ্র কাহিনীর পরিসমাপ্তি ঘটেছে। এখানে রয়েছে লাউসেনের স্বর্গ আরোহণ কাহিনী। লাউসেন গোঁড়ে পিতা মাতাকে মুক্ত করে রাজসভায় এসে পশ্চিম উদয়ের কথা বলবে কিন্তু মহামদের বিশ্বাস হবে না। লাউসেন হরিহর বাইতিকে সাক্ষী মানাবে। মহামদ তাকে অর্থ লোভে বশীভূত করবে কিন্তু সাক্ষী দিবার সময় তার জিহ্বাতে সরস্বতী ভর করলে সে সত্যকথাই বলবে। মহামদ চক্রান্ত করে তাকে চোর অপবাদ দিয়ে শুলে দিবার ব্যবস্থা করবে কিন্তু শেষ পর্যন্ত হনুমানের হস্তক্ষেপে তার মুক্তি হবে। মহামদ ভাবল ভুলে গেলেই মুক্তি হবে তাই সে পুত্রদের শুলে চড়িয়ে দিল। কেবল বংশরক্ষা করবার জন্য লজ্জাবতীর অনুরোধে লাউসেন মহামদের কনিষ্ঠ পুত্রকে পুনরুজ্জীবিত করবে। মোহাম্মদের কুষ্ঠ হবে লাউসেন ময়না তে ফিরে আসবে এবং ধর্ম ঠাকুরের কৃপায় ময়নায় মৃত সকলেই নতুন প্রাণ ফিরে পাবে। ধর্ম ঠাকুরের পূজা মতৌ প্রচারিত হতে হনুমান লাউসেনকে স্বর্গে যেতে বলবে। লাউসেনের মুক্তি হবে এবং সে স্বর্গে ফিরে যাবে।

মেদিনীপুরের নানা জায়গায় প্রচলিত ধর্মঠাকুরের বিভিন্ন নাম

ধর্মঠাকুরের নাম	স্থান
কাঁকড়াবিছা/বুরবুরিরায়	চন্দ্রকোণা
কৌতুকরায়/ঝাপড়া সিং	চন্দ্রকোণা
চাঁদরায়/জগৎরায়	চন্দ্রকোণা
পীরসাহেব	সবং
ফতেসিং	মাংরুল
বুড়োধর্ম	ঘাটাল
বুড়োধর্ম	ময়না
যাত্রাসিদ্ধি	খড়ার

তথ্যসূত্র

১. প্রদ্যোৎকুমার মাইতি, মেদিনীপুর ধর্ম উৎসব ও মেলা, পুস্তক বিপণি, কলকাতা, ২০০৪, পৃ. ২৮
২. বিনয় ঘোষ, পশ্চিমবঙ্গের সংস্কৃতি (২য় খণ্ড), প্রকাশভবন, কলকাতা, ২০০৭
৩. সুকুমার মাইতি, তাম্রলিপ্তিক উপভাষা : জনগোষ্ঠী ও সংস্কৃতি, ২য় খণ্ড, পৃ. ১০৪
৪. কে পি চট্টোপাধ্যায়, ধর্ম ওয়ারসিপ, জার্নাল অফ এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি, ভলিউম ৮, কলকাতা, ১৯৪২, পৃ. ১২৪-১২৬
৫. সুকুমার মাইতি, পূর্বোক্ত, পৃ. ১১০-১১১
৬. প্রণব রায়, মেদিনীপুর জেলার প্রত্ন সম্পদ, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার দ্বারা প্রকাশিত, কলকাতা, ১৯৮৬, পৃ. ১০৫
৭. সুকুমার মাইতি, পূর্বোক্ত, পৃ. ১০৮
৮. ঘনরাম চক্রবর্তী, ধর্মমঙ্গল, পীযুষকান্তি মহাপাত্র (সম্পাদনা), কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ২০১২, পৃ. ৭৯
৯. রূপরাম চক্রবর্তী, ধর্মমঙ্গল, অক্ষয়কুমার কয়াল (সম্পাদনা), জাগরণ পালার অংশবিশেষ, ভারবি, কলকাতা, ১৯৯২
১০. ঘনরাম চক্রবর্তী, পূর্বোক্ত, পৃ. ৫৯৬
১১. পূর্বোক্ত, পৃ. ৫৯৭

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