



## **SISTER NIVEDITA'S VISION ON EDUCATION IN INDIA**

DR. POULAMI AICH MUKHERJEE

Assistant Professor

PG Department of History & Research Centre

Assumption College Autonomous

Changanacherry, Kerala India

### **Abstract:**

*For Sister Nivedita, India was an idea, an ideal, a legend, a symbol, a movement, a thought, a summation without the tyranny of geography. With meticulous care, she studied Indian ways of life, thoughts, legends, arts and architecture so that she might be absolutely equipped to play the role her Master wanted her to play — the role of 'the mistress, servant, friend in one' to India. She had become thoroughly 'Indian' in outlook, and loved and understood India better than a progressive Indian. In fact, Nivedita, with her perceptivity, read into many details of Indian life a meaning and a purpose that sophisticated Westernized Indians would fail to recognize. The Present study intends to understand Nivedita's vision and ideals of Education in India.*

The brilliantly gifted disciple of Swami Vivekananda, Margaret Elizabeth Noble, later known as Sister Nivedita, came to India in 1898, and, having adopted it as her own country, breathed her last on its sacred soil in 1911. She conceptualized womanhood as a blending of the beauty of ancient Indian concept of woman with the modern outlook and also the intellect which came from European tradition. Woman of her conception

has the loveliness and softness of ancient Indian tradition and strength of intellect and modern scientific attitude of the European tradition. It may be said that she enriched both the two hemispheres.

She dedicated her life for the service of India, and worked ceaselessly to mitigate the sufferings of Indians. The life of Sister Nivedita is a profile of courage, and devotion — a tribute to humanity. Her Master, Swami Vivekananda once said to Nivedita, 'you have the making in you of a world-mover'<sup>1</sup>. And Nivedita turned her world-moving power to moving the dormant life of India, Bengal in particular. She made this unlucky country her own, and gave her life-blood. She was one of the greatest interpreters of the ideals, culture, religions, and, customs and manners in India, and played an extra-ordinary role in reawakening of Bengal, and India in general at a crucial juncture of history. In India, Nivedita nurtured all the cultural and political movements of the time.

Swami Vivekananda was the mighty flood that carried Nivedita from a far distant land to the Indian shores. In his scheme for the regeneration of the country, Vivekananda attached great attention to the uplift of women in India. When Vivekananda failed to find any woman in India who could shoulder this responsibility, his choice fell upon Nivedita. And the response from Nivedita was immediate, and absolute. She dedicated her life, all her heart and soul to the service of India. To a Calcutta audience Vivekananda aptly described her as a 'gift of England to India'. Quite a few talented and noble ladies from the West responded to the call of Vivekananda, and the names of Miss Muller, Mrs. Oie Bull, & Miss Josephine Macleod deserve special mention. But none, perhaps, offered herself at the feet of her Master with such a degree of complete self-dedication as Nivedita. That an English intellectual giant discarded the prejudices of English character, entered so deeply and intimately into the spirit and soul of Indian culture and civilization, shed her instinctive national loyalty, made India her home and the service of the Indian people the consecrated mission of her life, is indeed a testimony to the genius, dynamic personality and spiritual stature of Swami Vivekananda.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter dated June 07: Letters of Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1970, p. 295.

In Vivekananda the patriotic and spiritual impulses combined in a supreme desire to uplift the humanhood in India, with a view to restoring her, to her proper place among the nations of the world. Swamiji believed that the present warring world might be saved by spiritual teachings which India could import, but before she would do this, she must enjoy the respect of other nations by raising her own status. It was Vivekananda who, for the first time in the modern age, boldly proclaimed before the world the superiority of Hindu culture and civilization, the greatness of her past and the hope for the future. This mingled with his patriotic zeal, made him an embodiment of the highest ideals of the nascent Indian nation.<sup>2</sup>

Nivedita took it as a mission to carry the banner of Vivekananda to every corner of India. She became the Prophet's messenger to the cultural and political life of India. In Swamiji, Margaret Noble found a combination of hostility and opposition to imperialism and capitalism. She was not merely a follower but someone who was inspired by Vivekananda's ideals and ideas to explore original new avenues of thought and knowledge. So, when she came to India in 1898 at the suggestion of Swamiji, she was not merely seeking her personal salvation. She wanted to help, and take part in regeneration of a rich cultural tradition that was anti-British and anti-western. Nivedita felt that it was necessary to decolonize the mind long before the theory of Decolonization was propounded. She dedicated the remaining fourteen years of her life for the 'jana-desha-dharma', the people, the land, and the religion of the country she adopted. It was not a case of so called adoption only, but one of complete identification with India. She did not try to strike root from the surface to the soil, she had her re-birth or new birth in India. There was complete self-effacement and transformation in Nivedita. She became the embodiment of Indian culture.

In contemporary India, there were many distinguished personalities but none could perhaps outweigh the totality of contributions made by Nivedita. To her, the term India was not a mere geographical or ethnic entity, not a clan, caste or blood group, not a subject country, not a black show. Nivedita was not an English woman in search of a black God. India, to her, was an idea, an ideal, a legend, a symbol, a movement, a thought, a

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<sup>2</sup> R.C. Mazumder, H.C. Roy Choudhury, K.K. Dutta: An Advanced History of India, London, 1963, p. 886.

summation without the tyranny of geography. With meticulous care, she studied Indian ways of life, thoughts, legends, arts and architecture so that she might be absolutely equipped to play the role her Master wanted her to play — the role of 'the mistress, servant, friend in one' to India. She had become thoroughly 'Indian' in outlook, and loved and understood India better than a progressive Indian. In fact, Nivedita, with her perceptivity, read into many details of Indian life a meaning and a purpose that sophisticated Westernized Indians would fail to recognize. She also saw clear before her eyes the path that must be followed to instill into India fresh life and vigour so that she might be the dynamic nation that every Indian's cherished dream was to see.

In her writings, we Indians can see ourselves in the sympathetic search light of her keen intellectual analysis. Her analysis shows our strong points without failing to point out our weakness. But Westerners in particular, will have remarkable advantage of understanding India and her ideals as seen and perceived by a Western master-mind. Nivedita emphasized that the future of India depends largely on education of women as well as education of men, and wanted us to recognize the greater urgency of giving knowledge. She felt that if all are trained and equipped to respond in the same way to the same forces, then India's unity will stand self-demonstrated, unflinching. She helped immensely to define Indian culture and tradition, and promoted certain ideas about National Education as against the Western-type education. And yet it must also be said that without a profound cultivation of spiritual life, Sister Nivedita could not have been able to find strength, courage, and energy to develop such practical ideas and interest.

Sister Nivedita's vision was all-embracing and her conception of national movement of India, which was to her not merely a political movement, included industrial development, literature, science, history, sociology, education and folk culture. She called it nationalism, not simply national movement, and she conceptualized this nationalism as national Renaissance. Swami Vivekananda's concept of building a resurgent India on the foundation of Indian tradition and informed by progressive ideas and sensibilities was her basic inspiration and she tried to give it a workable shape during her period of activity spreading over a decade. Her

intellectual leadership in the sphere was not less important than the success she actually achieved within the short span of time. For even only this, she may, without any apprehension of controversy, be considered one of the greatest profunder of the philosophy of Indian nationalism. In Nivedita's work, we find a simple life-story of a humanitarian who deeply understood India and swore that 'humanity is mind, not body; soul not flesh.' She tried to restore India's lost glory and prestige through her activities, utterances and writings, and 'has uttered the vital truth about Indian life', as Rabindranath Tagore once argued.

Tagore called her 'mother of the people' (LOKHMATA), Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose compared her with 'Lady of the Lamp', and Shri Aurobinda thought she was 'Fire' (SIKHAMOYEE). She was philosopher and guide to Gokhale and Tilak, and 'Mahashweta' to Abanindranath Tagore, and Nandalal Bose. Young men of the Dawn Society swore by her name. Nivedita lived up to Swamiji's expectations. No son or daughter of India loved her more than Nivedita. Not a problem arose in the country in those years — whether social, political, or educational; whether affecting man, woman, or youth -- about which she did not feel concerned. S.K. Ratcliffe, the famous editor of the Statesman, once wrote 'The influences that have gone to the shaping of New India are still obscure, but this may be said with complete assurance that among them all, there has been no single factor that has surpassed, or equaled, the character and life and words of Sister Nivedita.'

When Nivedita was first introduced to Swami Vivekananda, he looked at her as a great teacher who had a philosophy of education. Vivekananda believed that the development and awakening of India depended squarely on the awakening of masses and particularly of the women who had been maintaining a precarious marginalized existence for long. This awakening and resultant development could be realized only through education and so he called upon Nivedita to devote herself to the field of education, in particular female education in India. She started the work of educating the women of India during the life-time of her Master. And when she became involved in other spheres of activities after the premature demise of Swamiji, the work of female education was never out of her mind. What she wrote about education, above all female education in

a number of her articles and books are indeed great signifiers. Education of the Indian masses was always in the mind-set of Nivedita. It is a fact that because of the great work of Gokhale and others, many people of India became aware of the necessity of education, but not many among them were aware of what scheme of education was to be followed, keeping in mind the condition of the Indian peoples and their needs. It is the great credit of Nivedita who gave us a well-thought-out scheme of education befitting this soil; we wonder if anybody after her gave a better concept of education that India really needed and still needs.

It was not merely a sense of duty that made Nivedita give herself in the work of educating the marginalized mass people and the sidelined women kind; she was rather guided by the dictates of her inner self. As Dr. Jadunath Sarkar observed, Nivedita realized that education was the main problem of India. How Indians were to be taught to be complete human beings, to become the true children of India — that was the problem. Education must be as much of the head as of the heart and the essential self. That would establish a link between the people and the past, between the people and the modern world. The scheme of education must so prepared as would achieve that goal — to create true Indian and human beings, not heartless mechanical beings, not just units of man-power.

Nivedita was a social researcher, a social scientist, an analyst of the Indian cultural heritage. This is also to say that she was an historian of rare caliber, who did not recreate the reigns of Kings and Princes, but the ancient India, the people, the time and the culture of the people. It is quite in the fitness of things that she earned in the contemporary times quite wide reputation as an analyst of Indian culture. The great work which drew the attention of such gigantic minds as Balgangadhar Tilak, Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Paul et al is *The Web of Indian Life*. This book has been widely acclaimed as the best analysis of Indian life and thought-current made by an European. It is worth mentioning that Lala Lajpat Rai made a detailed study of another important book of Nivedita, *Footfalls of Indian History*. In this book of Indian history Nivedita's love and adoration for India, her ability to analyze Indian in the correct perspective find ample expression. What Mr. Srinivas Aiyar said about the multi-dimensional talent of Nivedita help us understand her gigantic and noble mind. Srinivas

Aiyar discovered a superhuman mind in the intellect of Nivedita and held that her works put us face to face with a strong and rich mind, full of original ideas and concepts. Her encyclopaedic knowledge and her literary sensibility gave her an attraction which could hardly be resisted.

It is a misrepresentation of Nivedita to hold that she stood for conservative India and supported the various superstitions that captured the minds of most of the Indians of her contemporary times. This view about Nivedita has been strongly refuted by no other than Jadunath Sarkar who categorically held that those who upheld that interpretation of Nivedita did not know her. When we come to know what she told the younger generation of Indians we at once become full convinced that she possessed a scientifically oriented mind. She told the members of the Hindu Students' Association of Bankipur, Bihar, to devote themselves to scientific research.

This is in consonance with what her Master, Swami Vivekananda, also held. It is a great pointer that Vivekananda himself declared that Nivedita had realized that there was no conflict between Hindu spiritualism and scientific study of economies and scientific research. Obviously, it is a useless speculation to hold, as Ramananda Chattopadhyay noted, that Nivedita was merely a conservative Hindu devoid of scientific ideas and attitudes. The truth lies in the opposite speculation that she was a Hindu idealist and spiritualist who also knew that the road to real and lasting nationalism and awakening lies through scientific research and attitudes. What F.R. Alexander said about Sister Nivedita provides us a clue to the understanding of this great soul: Nivedita's demand was that all who stood against progress and all the 'gerontions' of the world who may stand against progress must be thrown into the rubbish-bin of the world. This refutes completely the charge of conservatism leveled against Nivedita.

Nivedita did not read Indian history especially ancient Indian history in a superfluous manner. By way of inspiring the great historian Radhakumud Mukhopadhyay in his younger days, Nivedita noted that for recreating the history of India, the historian must have proper expertise in sociology, for in it is intimately involved history and economics. To her the Sanchi Stupa with all its architectural novelty was not the main thing; rather the main thing was the still-flowing energy that went to the making of this architectural novelty; thus she observed the modern India,

apparently found to foreign yoke, in the architecture of Sanchi. The stone itself was not important to her; rather the energy that gave the stone a meaningful shape was all-important. That is the method of Nivedita's study of history. It needs to be mentioned that this was an integral part of her scheme of education. To her, education is not an end in itself, but a means to create a modern India of her conception. She pondered over the issue of how to proceed to this goal and held that her scheme included co-operation, political science, history, industry, vernacular languages, and physical exercise — a healthy modern mind in a healthy body. She stated that it was easy to victimize an undisciplined, uneducated man, but it was difficult to victimize a community of conscious and educated people. It is clear that to Nivedita nothing was more important than proper education.

In her speech given on the occasion of the opening of Chaitanya Library, Nivedita submitted a long list of subjects which must be studied. The list included such subjects as ancient and modern history, archaeology, poetry, novels, different branches of science, sociology, art, architecture, sculpture, religion and philosophy. This awe-inspiring list vindicates Nivedita's own vast erudition and learning. She also explained in her speech why all these must be studied with equal attention. Nivedita understood and learnt that the education of a nation depends upon its ideal of civilization. The Hindu ideal of civilization from prehistoric times was purely moral and spiritual. Consequently, the civilization of ancient India was based, not upon commercial principles of modern times and not upon the selfish ideal of political gain and power over other nations, but upon the eternal spiritual laws which govern our soul. Intellectual culture was not regarded as the highest ideal, but spiritual realization of the relation that exists between the individual soul and the universal spirit was the principal aim of education. 'Education', as Herbert Spencer has said, 'is the training of completeness of life.' Education is to bring out the perfection of the man, which is already latent in his soul.

Education does not mean that a lot of ideas or information will be poured into the brain of the individual, and they will run riot. But it means the gradual growth and development of the soul from its infancy to maturity. Education should be based upon the spiritual ideal that each individual soul is potentially divine, that it possesses infinite potentiality



and infinite possibility, and that knowledge cannot come from outside into inside, but that all knowledge evolves from inside. No one can teach you, but you teach yourself and the teachers only give suggestions. This should be the principle of education. Today in our universities, we find just the opposite principle. A student is allowed to study and memorize notes of his professors and pass the examination. This is not the ideal of education. Education does not mean intellectual culture, but it means the development and spiritual enfoldment of the soul in all the various branches of learning.

Education should be according to natural inclination of the individual soul, with the idea that wisdom cannot be drilled into the brain of the individual, and that all the books give mere suggestions, and, in reaction, we get the knowledge of the book. In order to understand a book, our mind must vibrate with the mind of the author. Then we get knowledge by itself, for it is a process of transmission. We will have to raise the vibration of our mind to the level of the vibration of the mind of the author, and then, like wireless telegraphy, the wisdom of our author's mind will be communicated to the student's mind. That is the principle of proper education. That system was there in ancient India - the Vidyapith system. A professor would have a few students around him. He would be their guardian, and he would be of pure character, spotless in his ideals. He would be a moral man. One living example would change the whole character of the student, and it would mould his career according to the ideal which is before him. Therefore, for Nivedita, the present system of education was not a perfect one.

Again the ideal of a nation should be the ideal of education. The Indians learnt different branches of science from religion. In Europe, religion was against all science and all improvements. Think of the miserable condition of the Galileo who said that the earth was moving. The Roman church put him into a dungeon under torture, and asked him to retract his statement. But Galileo said: 'A/o, you can torture me today, but the earth still moves. I cannot retract it, for it is the truth.' That truth is an established fact of modern astronomy. The warfare, between science and religion in Europe was a long-standing one. The fire of inquisition was kindled, and hundreds were burnt alive at the state simply because they did not submit their intellect to the dogmas of the Church, Giardano Bruno was

burnt alive in the streets of Rome in 1600 A.D., because he was a believer in one Supreme Spirit, whose body was matter and mind was the cosmic one.

So, if religion were powerful in Europe, there would have been scientific culture, and no improvement or discovery, because their religion says about the creation in six days out of nothing, while modern science teaches evolution with scientific facts. Religion tells them that the earth was created six thousand years ago before our sun came into existence. But modern astronomy teaches that the sun was created before the earth; and Galileo tells us that our earth is millions of years old, and that the first appearance of man was about one hundred thousand years ago. How can the contradictory statements be reconciled? Nivedita understood that if one was accepted, the other had to be rejected.

Nivedita realised the truth that Sanatana Dharma never stood against science or free thought. One might believe in God or one might not, but so long as one was a moral and spiritual man, one was worshipped and honoured by the masses as the ideal of the nation. Buddha did not believe in a personal God yet he is regarded as an Avatara. Kapila did not believe in a personal God; in his Sankya system he said, 'There is no proof for the existence of a personal God who is Creator of the universe.' Still Kapila was regarded as the greatest of all sages. Nivedita understood that free-thought was the watch-word of the Hindus in ancient times. They had no bigotry and no sectarianism; they did not mean by the Vedas a set of books which must be accepted as true in every letter, but what they meant by Veda is wisdom.

There is only one source of wisdom which occasionally reveals itself to the mortal minds, and through them the world learns something about the eternal Truth. Truth is not confined to any particular individual or nation, but it is for everybody. This conception has made the Hindu mind broad and tolerant. It does not condemn anybody. The Hindu embraces a Mohammedan because Mohammedanism is a path to the realization of truth. He accepts Christianity, because Christ revealed the universal Truth among the Jews who had sectarian ideals. Christ said: 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' (St. Joan, VIII, 32).

Nivedita learnt that Vedas also say the same thing; and the essentials of all religions are one and the same, and that is self-mastery, God-consciousness, self-control and purity. He is regarded as a civilized man by the Hindus who live a pure and unselfish life, who is living, kind and compassionate to all, and he conquers avarice by generosity and hatred by love. 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.' (St. Mathew, V. 8).

Purity of heart is the *sin qua non* of God-vision. Man must be pure in heart and loving to all, irrespective of caste, creed, and nationality. Any education that separates mortals from mortals, and disunites brothers from brothers, is not uplifting and should not be the ideal. Nivedita understood that the aim of education should not be mere intellectual culture with commercial ideals, to gain our livelihood in the struggle of competition, but that the ideal of education should be such as would elevate man from his ordinary selfish state into the unselfish universal ideal of Godhood. Anything, that would make man kneel down before that grand ideal, is uplifting.

During the Buddhistic age, the culture of the people was great and improved in various lines. Ten thousand students from different parts of the world used to live in the Nalanda University. Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveler, lived there for many years and gave description of the University in his writings. From his writings, it is understood that one hundred pulpits instructions were given every day to different classes of students, and that no student disobeyed the orders of the University or its rules and regulations during the seven hundred year of its existence. What a discipline the Nalanda University had ! Several thousand students used to live in the Taxila University also. Here the Chinese scholars used to come and study various branches of science and philosophy from the Hindu teachers. The principal of the Nalanda University was Shilabhadra, the teacher of Hiuen Tsang, who was a Bengalee from Cauda, the then capital of Bengal. Dipankar, whose birth place was Vajrayogini in Vikrampur in East Bengal, was a great philosopher who went to Tibet to preach the gospel of Buddha. Buddhist preachers also went to Egypt, China, and Japan. At one time, the inhabitants of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissya were all Buddhists, and Biharies and Bengalees were brothers who had one

Magadhi language. The Jagannath Temple in Orissya was a temple of the Buddhists. There was no caste distinction, and all were brothers. Nivedita felt that the brotherliness must be revived once more. At that time, of course, Islam had not risen, and Christianity was not there. But still the idea of universal brotherhood was preached by Buddha; and even Krishna, who ante-dated Buddha, declared in a trumpet voice before the world: 'Vidya-vinayasampanne Brahmane gavi hastini, Shuni chaiva shvapake cha panditaha Samadarshinaha.' 'He is a pundit, a true philosopher and a scholar, who can see the same universal Spirit in a well-cultured Brahmin, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog, and in a pariah.'

The Sanskrit prinner told the Indians: 'Ayam nija paro veti ganana laghuchetasan, Udarocharitanantu Vasudhaiva kutumvakam.' 'This is mine, or this is yours, such distinction is made by low-minded people, but those who are broad and liberal should consider the whole world, as their relative.' Did not Christ teach: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself?' If our neighbour be a pariah or a chandala or a Brahmin, or any other religion.

Christian or Mohammedan, him we should regard as our own self, and him we should love as our own self. This is Indian religion. Abandoning this ideal of Universal religion, if man simply cultivates his intellect for commercial purpose, will that be the ideal of proper education? It is degrading the humanity to install commercialism in the place of universal religion in educational lines. Therefore, Nivedita understood that Indian national ideal should be brought forward and should be emphasized in every branch of Indian teaching. According to Nivedita, as was also propagated by her Master, education should be based upon universal principles and not upon sectarian religious ideals. It would otherwise be degrading the humanity.

The object of education should be attainment of perfection. Physically man should develop and train his body, so that he can have muscles of iron and nerves of steel, and then he should educate his mind so that he may be able to acquire self-mastery, and not remain slaves of passions, desires, and selfishness. Self-conquest should be his ideal in training his mind. In the West there is psychology without a psyche, which means the soul. There, in the study of psychology, the existence of a psyche is not admitted, but Hindu psychology is far better. Man should

educate his intellect, so that he can see the all-pervading spirit, and reason that although there are various manifestations, yet there is an underlying unity of existence. Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and that plan he should discover by training his intellect. Furthermore, he should realize what is eternal and what is non-eternal, what is unchangeable and what is changeable. That should be the function of the intellect which is trained, and has reached its ideal education.

In the line of Indian school of thought Nivedita understood that proper education should include moral training. The whole ethics depends upon love, which means not a selfish love, but the expression of oneness in spirit. Love means the attracting of two souls which would vibrate in the same degree, and which would be tuned in the same key. Where there is true love, there cannot be any selfishness. Where man loves anyone, he should be ready to give one all that he possesses because he would say: 'O my brother! Thy necessity is greater than mine. Whatever is mine is thine.' He must learn to merge his small personality into the bigger personality of humanity. That should be the ideal of moral education. And any system of education which is based upon fundamental principle of potential divinity in the soul of the individual would be considered as the highest.

Nivedita felt that education should not degrade man or woman, and it should not be for money-making only; but it should be the culture of the soul for the good of all, and that soul-culture would bring in perfection as its ideal, and the whole world would be benefited by such education. Sister Nivedita had concerned herself much with education. She had established, under the inspiration of her Master Swami Vivekananda, a school for girls in Calcutta, a school which still survives and flourishes under the protecting wings of the Ramakrishna Order – an institution which is a fitting tribute to the memory of a great lady who gave her all to the national cause of India.

But Nivedita did not devote all her attention to the problems of women's education. She spent her best time in India in the hectic days of the national movement in India in the first decade of the present century when the country was astir and afire over the partition of Bengal. At the Calcutta congress of 1906 one of the most important resolutions that were adopted was on National education. Leaders like Aurobindo and

Rabindranath were thinking and writing a great deal on education at this time. Nivedita also bestowed much attention on the problem of national education. We are especially interested in this context in her thoughts.

She began: 'We all know that the future of India depends, for us, on education. Not that industry and commerce are unimportant, but because all things are possible to the educated, and nothing whatever to the uneducated man. We know also that this education, to be of any avail, must have technical education, and we must have also higher research, because technical education, without higher research, is a branch without a free, a blossom without any root. We must have education of women, as well as education of men. We must have secular education, as well as religious. And, almost more important than any of these, we must have education of the people, and for this, we must depend upon ourselves<sup>3</sup>.'



<sup>3</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, Hints On National Education in India, p. 329

The sentence shows how Nivedita attached the greatest possible importance to the education of people. Education must reach down to the lowest class of men. It must not be confined to the top layer of the society. This was a most radical idea. But Nivedita knew that for the translation of this idea into reality it was not possible to depend on the government; we Indians had to depend on our own initiative and enterprise.

Nivedita proceeded to draw attention to the historical background of India. It had its distinctive hall-mark. She said :

“Our civilization has never been backward in bringing to the notice of the individual his responsibility to the society. There is none so poor that has never tried to feed the starving. From this time we must recognize the still greater urgency of giving knowledge. There is no other way of making the unity of our country effective. If one class of the people derive all their mental sustenance from one set of ideas, and the bulk of the population from something else, this unity, although certainly present, cannot easily be made effective. But if all the people talk the same language, learn to express themselves in the same way, to feed their realization upon the same ideas, if all are trained and equipped to respond in the same way to the same forces, then our unity will stand self-demonstrated, unflinching. We shall have acquired national solidarity, and power of prompt and intelligent action<sup>4</sup>.”

Sister Nivedita expressed a novel idea by pointing out that the imparting of education must be given the character of military training. She wrote:

“In most western countries, it is required that every young man, when his education is complete, shall give three, four, or five years to military service. He goes into barracks, is regimented, and drilled, makes a unit in the standing army, and passes out, usually, when his term is ended, an efficient soldier, to remain, for the rest of his life, ready at any moment to join in the armed defense of his country...What we have to do, is in like fashion, to organize the army of education. Why should it be thought impossible that every student, when his own education is over, should be called upon to

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<sup>4</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, Pp. 329-30.

give three years to the people? It is of course understood that just as the only son of a widow is in the west excused military service, so one whose earnings are absolutely necessary to others must be excused the educational service. The villagers, on the other hand, would easily maintain a single student, living amongst them as a school-master. And when his own three years were over, it is to be supposed that he could, from his own three years were over, it is to be supposed that he could, from his own old school or college, arrange for another to take his place. Some would learn to love the simple village life, and elect to live and die, poor school-masters. Most, however, would serve the years of their vow, and pass on, returning to the city, to bear their part in the life of a more complex community. On the one hand, the duty of teaching, on the other, the duty of maintaining, so teacher and taught make the perfect social unit. And so the great masses of the people might be swept within the circle of articulation. It takes thirty years to make a whole people literate, even supposing that an idea like this were carried out in its fullness<sup>5</sup>.

Nivedita stressed on compulsory primary education for all. In her paper on 'Primary Education: A Call for Pioneers' (1910) she speaks of creating an army of educationists. She suggests that every student after finishing his education should be called upon to give three years to educating other people. This Nivedita suggested in 1910 while the Sargent Report was published only in 1944. That a somewhat similar recommendation was made by the Government, but not put to practice even now to remove literacy<sup>6</sup>.

It becomes clear that Nivedita was keen about making the common masses literate. Mass education, rather than education of the upper classes, was what she aimed at and insisted upon.

Nivedita considered how this was to be made effective. She wrote:

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<sup>5</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, Pp. 330-31.

<sup>6</sup>. Pravrajika Almaprana – *An Homage to the founder of the School*, Platinum Jubilee Sourvenir, 1977, Ramakrushna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, December, 1977, p. 45.



“No central organization could arrange a scheme like this. Only by a common impulse of the people and the students themselves could it be made a reality. But it is not impossible. The initial thought comes, it is true, from the city, but once sent out, all depends upon the number of lives that can be laid upon its altar. All must always in the last resort depend upon this, the quantity and quality of human life that can be sacrificed to it. Without men’s lives, no seed of the mind germinates. How many will give up comfort, lace, opportunity, ease, even perhaps their whole life for this, the elementary education of the Indian people?”<sup>7</sup>

The peculiar merits of the Hindu system of education were forcefully emphasized by Nivedita. She wrote :

“Fortunately for the civilization of India, the Hindu has always clearly perceived the mind behind the method, as the thing with which education has fundamentally to deal. It is this which, in spite of so many catastrophes, has in the past, saved the Indian genius from destruction. And it is this which constitutes its best security for the future. Just so long as the Brahminic system of directly training the minds of the young to concentration persists, will the Indian people remain potentially equal to the conquest of any difficulty that the changing ages may bring them...At present – owing largely to the peculiar psychological discipline, received by girls as well as boys, along with their devotional training – the most salient characteristic of the Hindu intellect is its reserve of strength. Its conservation of power. As we read the history of the country, we are amazed at the unforeseenness with which geniuses occur, and the brilliance of their isolated achievements. Within the last twenty years. In spite of universal clerkship, we have given to the world men who have enriched humanity in Religion, in Science and in Art... India has shown herself potent to add to knowledge itself”<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, Pp. 331-32.

<sup>8</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, Pp. 333-34.

The personalities that Nivedita thought of were evidently the following : in Religion the outstanding figure was Swami Vivekananda; in science Dr. J. C. Bose; in Art Abanindra Nath Tagore and Rabindranath Tagore. Paying tribute to the intellectual eminence of the Indians Nivedita continued to say :

“These things are some indication of the sleeping power of the Indian mind. They are the chance blossoms that show the living-ness of the whole tree. They tell us that what Indian people have done in the past, that Indian people can do in the future. And if it be so, then we owe this undying vitality to the fact that whatever may have been the characteristic expression most prized, at any given moment, our forefathers never neglected the culture and development of the mind itself. The training of the attention-rather than the learning of any special subject, or the development of any particular faculty – has always been, as the Swami Vivekananda claimed for it, the chosen goal of Hindu education<sup>9</sup>.”

This was undoubtedly a very important matter. The development of the mind, the training of attention was a basic requirement in the matter of education. By cultivating and acquiring in a high degree the power of concentration one could master the key what could easily open the gate to any specialized branch of knowledge. This was a matter on which great emphasis was laid by Swami Vivekananda.

Nivedita, however, proceeds to develop another point of view. It is arguable that the individual of every nation should be able to pursue the studies necessary to the earning of a livelihood. This way of approach to education is rather deprecated by Nivedita. She writes :

“There is nothing so belittling to the human soul, as the acquisition of knowledge, for the sake of worldly reward. There is nothing so degrading to a nation, as coming to look upon the life of the mind as a means to bread-winning. Unless we strive for truth because we love it, and must at any cost attain, unless we live the life of thought out of our own

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<sup>9</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 334.

rejoicing in it, the great things of heart and intellect will close their doors to us<sup>10</sup>.”

Education will not be worthy and noble if it is concerned only with the matter of bread-winning: it must value truth and thought for the joy involved in them. Then only education will be worthwhile. Nivedita earnestly pleads for broadening the purpose and ideal of education. Why not elevate it to a high goal? She argues:

“Why should we limit the social motive to a man’s own family, or to his own community? Why not alter the focus, till we all stand, aiming each at the good of all-the-others, and willing, if need be, to sacrifice himself, his family, and even his particular social group, for the good of the whole? The will of the hero is ever an impulse to self-sacrifice. It is for the good of the people – not for my own good – that I should strive to become one with the highest, the noblest, and the most truth-loving that I can conceive<sup>11</sup>.”

Thus, Nivedita insists that education should be motivated by a high purpose. Not personal good- not bread-winning as such- that should be the aim of education. The aim should be more elevated, more exalted. For one thing, ‘the good of the people’ should be aimed at. But the ideal should be even nobler than that – there should be an earnest striving towards self-identification with ‘the highest, the noblest and the most truth-loving’, that is conceivable.

This brings into focus the national ideal-the ideal of learning and living for India. The idea of concentration of the mind, which is the older idea, will still be there, but it will be harmonized with and fitted into the newer ideal of the service of the nation. Nivedita developed her idea in this regard as follows:

“We have to think, then, of the concentration of the Indian mind on the Indian problem. In order to do this, we are not asked to abandon that older system of training the mind itself, ... But whereas, at present, the great bulk of our popular mind is preoccupied with schemes of instruction, for the purpose of

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<sup>10</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 336.

<sup>11</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, p. 336.

earning individual livelihoods, we now desire to consider the best means for bringing about a conscious unification of that mind, in order that we may be better able to compass thereby the common weal, the good of the whole. This substitution of the common good for the particular good – with the result that a higher level of individual good is rendered possible!<sup>12</sup>

Thus, according to Nivedita a higher common good subsumes under it a higher level of individual good, because there is no basic conflict between the common good and the individual good if the relation between the two is viewed in right perspective. Nivedita proceeds to point out that there are three elements in perfect education. She develops them as follows. Regarding item number one she writes:

“First, if we would obtain from a human mind the highest possible return, we must recognize in its education the stage of preparing it to learn, of training it to receive impressions, of developing it intensively, as it were, independently of the particular branch of knowledge through which this is done<sup>13</sup>.

The mind itself must first be trained and developed in a proper and thorough way – it must be made a fit instrument of receiving ideas and impressions irrespective of the subject it is taught.

Next Nivedita mentions the second point – ‘the second element of perfect education’, She writes :

Secondly, in all historic epochs, but pre-eminently in this modern age, there is a certain characteristic fund of ideas and concepts which is common to society as a whole, and must be imparted to every individual, who is to pass, in his mature life, as efficient. This is the element that is supposed in the common acceptance to be the whole of education. It bulks the largest. It costs the most labour. It is the process that it is most obviously impossible to eliminate. And yet it is really only one of three elements. And strange to say, it is the very one which is least essential to the manifestation of what we call genius<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 337.

<sup>13</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, p. 338.

<sup>14</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 338.

What Nivedita actually means is that the second element of education involves the loading of the mind with packets of information bearing on different subjects. Geography, history, algebra, and arithmetic etc. are taught with great care, but these do not develop the inner faculties of the human mind. Knowledge of such subjects does not enkindle in the human mind the fire of genius.

Then as regards the third element of education, she says :

“But thirdly, these two elements taken together, in their highest degree ... will only prepare the mind for real education. They are nothing more than preliminary conditions. They are by no means the essential itself. Having them, the mind has become a fit instrument. But of what? What shall be its message? What is to constitute the burden of its education? What is it that so much preparation has prepared it for? The third element in a perfect human development sweeps away the other two. It takes note of them only by implication, as it were, in the higher or lower fitness of the mind itself. The man meets his Guru<sup>15</sup>, and devotes himself to a perfect passivity. Or he surrenders to some absorbing idea, which becomes the passion of his life. Or he takes up a pursuit, and lives henceforth for it, and it alone ... He now stands a chance of contributing to the riches of humanity as a whole<sup>16</sup>.

Nivedita introduces the concept of Guru, a peculiarly Indian concept. He is not a task-master so much. He does not load the pupil's mind with packets of information. He is a guide, an inspirer. He enables the student to develop his inner powers which lie dormant in him.

What is the role of Guru? Nivedita says :

“... the Guru emancipates : he does not bind. It would be a poor service to him, if we felt compelled in his name to arrest the growth of an idea. Eventually we have to realize that the service to which he has called us is not his own, but that of Truth itself, and that this may take any form. But in the first place, it is essential that we begin where he left off. In the first

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<sup>15</sup>. The master or teacher.

<sup>16</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, Pp. 338-39.

place, emptied of self.,we have to labour to give expression to that idea which has struck root in us through him. ...<sup>17</sup>

The Guru (the teacher) does not convey so much information to the pupil, as he inspires him with an idea. It should be the task and responsibility of the student to grasp the idea thoroughly and to work it out with earnestness and devotion. Character-building must also be regarded as a major objective of education. Character-formation on right lines can alone promote high-level culture. The growth of character can be much aided by intellectual activity, besides requiring it in its maturity as a means of self-expression. We do not want to identify the mere drill of learning to read and write, and the memorizing of a few facts conveyed by that vehicle, with the idea of culture. ... But we do not wish, on the other hand, to forget that it is a duty to develop our intellectual powers. No Hindu, who wishes to fulfill his obligations to the jana-desha-dharma\* can afford to neglect any opportunity of leaning that he can possibly make for himself<sup>18</sup>. The goal of education is visualized by Nivedita as follows:

“... that the education of all, the people as well as the classes, woman as well as man, - is not to be a desire with us, but lies upon us as a command. Humanity is mind, not body, soul, not flesh. Its heritage is in the life of thought and feeling. To close against any the gates of the higher life is a sin far greater than that of murder, for it means responsibility for spiritual death, for inner bondage, and the result is ruin unspeakable. There is but one imperative duty before us today. It is to help on Education by our very lives if need be<sup>19</sup>.

Thus to Nivedita it was essential that education should be brought within the reach of all – the masses as well as the classes. To deny education to anyone is worse than murder – for murder means only physical death, whereas denial of education meant intellectual death – nay more, spiritual death. To spread broadcast throughout the length and

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<sup>17</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, Pp. 339-40.

<sup>18</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 341.

\* That is, the people, the country and religion.

<sup>19</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, Pp. 342-43.

breadth of the country should be the duty of all those who have already received the benefit of education.

Some vital implications of education are elucidated by Nivedita as follows:

“Our conception of education must have a soul. It must form a unity. It must take note of the child as a whole, as heart as well as mind, will as well as mind and heart. Unless we train the feelings and the choice, our man is not educated. He is only decked out in certain intellectual tricks that he has learnt to perform. By these tricks he can earn his bread. He cannot appeal to the heart, or give life. He is not a man at all; he is a clever ape. Learning, in order to appear clever, or leaning, in order to earn a livelihood, - not in order to become a man, to develop one’s own manhood and manliness, - means running into this danger. Therefore, in every piece of information that is imparted to a child, we must convey an appeal to the heart. At every step in the ascent of knowledge, the child’s own will must act. We must never carry the little one upwards and onwards; he must himself struggle to climb. Out care must be to put just so much difficulty in his way as to stimulate his will, just so little as to avoid discouragement. When, within and behind the knowledge gained, there stands a man, there stands a mind, then the task of instruction can be changed into one of self-education. The taught is now safe : he will teach himself<sup>20</sup>.

In the above description a vital element of Nivedita’s theory of education is summed up. The feelings and choice of the child must be trained. An appeal must be made to his heart, not merely information is to be imparted to him to enable him to make a show of knowledge. His will must be stimulated. The child must be given full opportunity to develop himself – to rise to higher and higher stages by his own effort. He must grow into a man with a distinctive mind of his own. There will be no further need to teach him – he will teach himself.

Education must also have a definite national aspect. It should aim at nation-making. Nivedita wrote :

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<sup>20</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 344.

“Education in India today, has to be not only national. But NATION-MAKING<sup>21</sup>.

The people must above all things develop a national sense – a national feeling. What is to be understood by national feeling?

“National feelings is, above all, feeling for others. It is rooted in public spirit, in a strong civic sense. But these are only grandiloquent names for what may be described as organized unselfishness. The best preparation for nation-making that a child can receive is to see his elders always eager to consider the general good, rather than their own<sup>22</sup>.

What is to be understood by a nation?

We are a nation, when every man is an organ of the whole, when every part of the whole is precious to us, when the family weights nothing, in comparison with the People<sup>23</sup>.

The ideal of education must become wedded to the ideal of high patriotism. Nivedita weites with fervor:

“Let love for country and countrymen, for People and Soil, be the mould into which our lives flow hot. If we reach this, every thought we think, every word of knowledge gained, will and in making clearer and clearer the great picture. With faith in the Mother, and Bhakti for India, the true interpretation of facts will come to us unsought. We shall see the country as united, where we were told that she was fragmentary. Thinking her united, she will actually be so. The universe is the creation of mind, not matter. And can any one force in the world resist a single thought, held with intensity by three hundred millions of people? Here we have the true course of a nation-making education<sup>24</sup>.

Whereas her Master Vivekananda thought of man-making as his goal, Nivedita’s whole emphasis was on nation-making.

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<sup>21</sup>. C.W.S.N., vol. IV, p. 347.

<sup>22</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, Pp. 347-48.

<sup>23</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 348.

<sup>24</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 349.



“A national education is, first and foremost, an education in the national idealism<sup>25</sup> .

The reconstitution of the nation is possible only through its ideals.

“The ideal presented must always be first clothed in a form evolved by our own past. Our imagination must be first based on our own heroic literature. Our hope must be woven out of our history<sup>26</sup> .

Again Nivedita says :

“It must never be forgotten that nationality in culture is the means, not the end. There is a level of achievement where all the educated persons of the world can meet, understand and enjoy each other’s associations. This level is freedom. Intellectually speaking. It is Mukti. But it can be reached only by him whose knowledge is firm-rooted in love for mother and motherland. ...<sup>27</sup>

Incidentally, Nivedita discusses the place of foreign culture in the education of Indians. Nivedita is firmly of the view that Indian students must be firmly rooted in national culture before they turn their attention to foreign education. To go in for foreign education without getting properly acquainted with indigenous culture is wrong in Nivedita’s view. To send out young men to foreign countries for foreign education without grounding them thoroughly in national culture is to put the cart before the horse. This is as much true as in literary education as in scientific education. We have given some quotations from Nivedita. Nivedita asks :

“Can foreign learning ... ever be so deeply grafted upon the stem of a man’s own development that it forms a real and vital part of his intellectual personality?<sup>28</sup>

Again she says :

“In all learning we should try to give knowledge, only in answer to enquiry. This is the ideal. If we could attain it perfectly, every child would grow up to be a genius. But how can there be curiosity about truth that is not within our world?<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 351.

<sup>26</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 352.

<sup>27</sup>. C.W.S.N, vol. IV, Pp. 352-53.

<sup>28</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 354.

<sup>29</sup>. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 355.

This means that knowledge cannot be forced upon anyone. Knowledge can be imparted only if there is a craving for knowledge on the part of the student. But how can there be such craving or curiosity in respect of surroundings unknown or unfamiliar to the student? Some distinction is, however, made by Nivedita between knowledge of science and of art. She says :

“In pure knowledge, and therefore in science, there can be neither native nor foreign. Emotion, on the other hand, is entirely a matter of locality. All form is purely local. Every man’s heart has its own country. Therefore, art, which is form infused with emotion, must always be strongly characteristic of the place, the people and the mental tradition, whence it has sprung<sup>30</sup> .

Nevertheless she says :

“Even in science ... it will only be those men who believe themselves to be inhering and working out the greatest ideals of the Indian past, who will be able to lay one stone in the edifice of the national future... it there is to be such an edifice at all<sup>31</sup> .

On this matter she concludes :

“The whole body of foreign knowledge can be assimilated easily by one thus rooted and grounded in his relation to his own country<sup>32</sup> .

Finally, we complete this discussion by a quotation from the writing of Dr. Biman Behari Majumdar which runs as follows:

“The Education Commission and Committees which have made voluminous recommendations during the last fifty years have often ignored ... basic facts and the result has been a progressive deterioration of our ethical and educational standard. It is worth nothing also that Nivedita emphasized the need of imparting manual training to students long before the formulation of the Wardha Plan of Education<sup>33</sup> .

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<sup>30</sup> . *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 356.

<sup>31</sup> . C.W.S.N, vol. IV, p. 359.

<sup>32</sup> . *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 360.

<sup>33</sup> . Amiya Kumari Mazumdar (ed.), *Nivedita Commemoration Volume*, Calcutta, June 1968, Dr. Biman Majumdar’s article on *Social and Political ideas of Sister Nivedita*, p. 63.



## **AssAm “The LAnd of misery”: Labour Migration and technOLogy of tea cuLture, 1840-1906**

DR. J. Shunmugaraja,  
Head, Department of Modern History  
School of Historical Studies  
Madurai Kamaraj University  
Madurai Tamilnadu India

### **Introduction**

Assam, prior to its occupation by the East India Company in 1826 was a sovereign state at that time which was ruled by the Ahom Kings.

<sup>1</sup> Until 1833, the East India Company's Government was undecided about its policy towards Assam. With the charter of 1833 which abolished the company's monopoly over commercial interests, there opened up the prospects of colonization of Assam with import of private enterprise and capital from Britain. From this year onwards, Englishmen were encouraged by the British administration to invest their capital in the wasteland of Assam to raise cash crops such as indigo, sugarcane and tea. Francis Jenkins (in charge of North-East Frontier 1834-66) pursued a policy of attracting British capitalists to Assam for developing freehold farms growing commercial crops but of no avail.

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<sup>1</sup> Umananda Phukan, *The Ex-Tea Garden Labour Population in Assam* (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1984), p.2.

The studying paper has its purpose to trace the, 19<sup>th</sup> century, history of colonial Indian labour emigration into the tea plantations of Assam. To provide lucidity to the subject the paper has been classified into four parts. Commencement of European private investments over the Assam tea gardens through stock-exchange companies, expansion of tea cultivation, influx of indentured emigrant laborers into the tea plantations are narrated in the first and second parts. The hard working environment in the tense forest, the repulsive living conditions, poor wages and the fraudulent recruitments for the high profit of middlemen are emphasized in the rest of the parts.

## I

### **Colonial Private Investments over Tea Plantations: Assam**

British private capital began to respond to the prospects of tea by 1830s. The Assam Company was formed in 1839 and began its operations forthwith. During the next two decades, as many as 95 Europeans had been to Assam for short or long stay as staff members of the company.<sup>2</sup> The British officials observed the possibilities of growing tea in Assam even before 1826 and this possibility was confirmed in 1831 when the existence of wild tea plant in Assam jungles was certain. The industry could not make much progress up to 1850. There was one established tea garden in that year and the area under tea was above 2,311 acres.<sup>3</sup>

All developments in Assam during the years 1840–1859 centered round tea and the Assam Company. The total acreage under tea plants—mature and immature increased from 2,311 acres in 1841 to about 8,000 acres by 1859.<sup>4</sup> By 1859 the number of estates under private proprietors had increased from 1 to 51.<sup>5</sup> The number swelled to 295 with 31,303 acres of tea crops in 1870. In the year 1883, the total acre under tea worked to 1,89,453 acres. Since then there was no let up in the expansion of tea cultivation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Amalendu Guha, “Colonisation of Assam: Second Phase 1840-1856”, *Asiatic Review*, 1977, p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> Umananda Phukan, *The Ex-Tea Garden Labour Population*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Amalendu Guha, “Colonisation of Assam: Second Phase, 1840 – 1856”, p. 289.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> *Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam for the years 1877 to 1915*.

Assam had dense and uninhabitable jungles. In the clearing forest and converting it to cultivable land the villagers found the income adequate and were therefore, least interested in the employment offered by the early tea planters. The population of the more developed parts of Assam were, as a rule, neither inclined, nor compelled by circumstances, to leave home in search of livelihood. In 1839, Bruce complained bitterly of the shortage of local labour and in 1841 the Assam Company attempted to import labour from Chota Nagpur. An outbreak of cholera proved disastrous at that juncture and none of the recruits reached the company's gardens.<sup>7</sup>

The discovery that the tea plant would grow wild in upper part of the Brahmaputra Valley was made by Robert Bruce. He visited Garghaon for trading purpose in 1823 and there learnt of its existence from a Singpho Chief, who promised to obtain some specimens for him. In the following year these were made over to his brother C.A. Bruce, who, in the outbreak of the Burmese war, volunteered for service and was sent up to Sadiya in command of a division of gunboats. Some of the plants thus obtained were passed on to David Scott, who forwarded them to the Superintendent of the Botanical Gardens, Calcutta, for examination. They were pronounced to be the same family, but not the same species, from which Chinese manufactured their tea.<sup>8</sup> Nothing further seems to have happened until 1832.

In 1834, a Tea Committee consisting of seven civilians, three Calcutta merchants, two native persons and Dr. Wallich of the Botanical Gardens was appointed to report on the possibility of cultivating tea in India. Meanwhile fresh enquiries were instituted in Assam and the reports submitted by Captain Jenkins and Lieutenant Charlton convinced the botanists, the Tea Committee and the Government of the identical nature of the Assam plant with that of China.<sup>9</sup> In 1835 Government attempted to establish an experimental garden in Lakhimpur, which however failed. A garden was then started at Jaipur in the Sibsagar District, which was sold to

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<sup>7</sup> Edward Gait, *A History of Assam* (Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co., P. Ltd., 1905), p. 267.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 405.

the Assam Company in 1840, which had been originally founded in 1839.<sup>10</sup> As early as 1845, the Assam Company had opened or repaired since 800 miles of public roads, had erected 266 bridges and established several ferries across the rivers. Only after 1859, the Government came forward to take up road construction works.<sup>11</sup>

In 1855 the first tea garden was set up in Cachar and cultivation began a few years later in Sylhet. In 1859 a boom began. Companies were formed to acquire those gardens which had been developed by private enterprise. A general scramble ensued to obtain land which resulted in planting out some seedlings and disposing it of to a London Company at an exorbitant price. These gardens, made only to sell, could not pay and by 1866 the bubble burst and a period of severe depression in the Tea industry set in. However, those gardens which had been honestly worked were paying and from 1869 onwards the industry began to flourish.<sup>12</sup> In the Assam Valley the principal tea areas were in the district of Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Darrang. Tea was grown on the higher alluvial flats, which were unsuitable for rice cultivation. A high quality of tea was produced but the valley was not so healthy for imported labour as Cachar and Sylhet (Surma Valley).<sup>13</sup> The Surma Valley Planters had always depended mainly on private recruitment, either through the agency of sardars or of labourers of their gardens who had gone to home on leave.<sup>14</sup>

The years 1840–1859 saw the gradual evolution of the new technology of tea culture. Scientific principles of agriculture were systematically experimented with an applied technology. Seedlings were carefully raised. In the 1850's innovations in pruning and plucking were introduced. Many of the manufacturing process were already organized in such a manner as to make their mechanization easy in the subsequent

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<sup>10</sup> S.D. Punekar and Varickayil (ed.), *Labour Movement in India: Documents 1850 – 1890*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1989), p. 134.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>12</sup> Punekar and Varickayil, *Labour Movement in India*, p. 135.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 144 – 145.

period. The heavy cost of early experimentation in Assam tea was entirely borne by Government.<sup>15</sup>

The planters came up with a three-point prescription of their own to solve the problem of labour shortage. (1) Introduce a regular steamer service Government owned or subsidized to facilitate their recruitment of labour from outside, (2) Suppress poppy cultivation as well as the sale of opium, (3) Enhance the assessment of land revenue to compel villagers to work in the tea industry for wages. All these suggestions except that of stopping the sale of Government opium were accepted by the administration in due course. Poppy cultivation was prohibited from 1 May 1860.<sup>16</sup>

## II

### Way Cleared for Immigration

Thus way was cleared for emigration of indentured labour from 1859. Planters sent recruiting agents (“arkatis” first and then “sardars”) to selected areas, where groups of potential coolies were rounded up and made to sign a contract for full time labour, obeying all the conditions set out in the contract, for a stipulated period of five years. There was no demand for any particular skill, but only a capacity to do hard work under trying conditions.<sup>17</sup>

The returns of the dispatch of indentured labourers in August 1865 shows that 7,230 men, 2,944 women, 620 boys, 508 girls, 241 baby boys and 224 baby girls were dispatched to Assam. The proportion of females to males was 40 to 42 percent. In August of the same year the British India Steam Navigation Company’s steamer ‘Punjab’ carried 600 labourers for Assam, Cachar and Sylhet from Kakinada in South India. Being overloaded, 200 of the labourers were disembarked at Vizagapatnam for

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 305 – 306.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 302.

<sup>17</sup> Utsa Patnaik and Manjari Dingwaney, *Chains of Servitude: Bondage and Slavery in India* (Madras: Sangam Books, 1998), p. 115.

the safety of the vessel.<sup>18</sup> By the mid sixties, the policy of recruitment of labour from other provinces was well under way.<sup>19</sup>

In January 1875 the Governor-General in Council declared the station of Dhubri in the district of Goalpara an additional place of embarkation for the emigrants proceeding to Assam. Dhubri situated on the right bank of the Brahmaputra river near the meeting of the boundaries of Rangpur district of Bengal and the Goalpara district of Assam.<sup>20</sup>

In 1886, J.G. Grant, Superintendent of Labour Transport at Calcutta, reported to the Bengal Government the five routes available during 1878 to 1880: 1. (via) Calcutta to Goalundo, 2. (via) Mugra and Kancharapara to Goalundo, 3. (via) Calcutta to Dhubri, 4. (via) Mugra and Kancharapara to Dhubri and 5. (via) Rajmahal to Dhubri.<sup>21</sup>

Arrangements were made with the steam companies on the Brahmaputra to convey labourers more cheaply and more quickly into the labour districts and the journey was further shortened by the construction of a tramway between Dhubri and Teesta. The result was that the land route was hardly used, but in spite of its greater length, many of the labourers chose to travel by it arrived in better condition than those conveyed by water.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the Act of 1882 gave sanction for the facilities for free recruitment of labourers, but allowed the emigration to be put under contract on his arrival in the tea districts and this was almost invariably done in all the Assam tea plantations.<sup>23</sup>

In 1882, of the 12,434 local contractors registered, 12,205 were made under Section 111 and only 228 were under Section 112 of 1882 Act. In the case of the contractors under Section 112, the employer or his agents appear with the contracting labourers before an Inspector or a Magistrate. Contracts under Section 111 were executed on the garden and then

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<sup>18</sup> J.C. Jha, *Aspects of Indentured Inland Emigration to North-East India 1859 – 1918* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1996), p. 147.

<sup>19</sup> Amalendu Guha, *Planter-Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam 1826-1947* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1977), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Report on Moral and Material Condition of India, 1877 – 1878*, p. 111.

<sup>21</sup> J.C. Jha, *Aspects of Indentured Inland Emigration to North-East India*, pp. 112 – 113.

<sup>22</sup> *Report on Moral and Material Condition of India, 1880 – 1881*, p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> *Assam Labour Enquiry Committee Report, Calcutta, 1906*, p. 45.



forwarded to the Inspector for registration the popularity of the latter form of contract was easily understood. The Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam for the year 1883 quotes that: 'It is believed that none or hardly any of these were recruited in Madras, but they were Madrasis, who had found their way to Calcutta, were there enlisted by professional contractors.'<sup>24</sup>

The daily mail service on the Brahmaputra river was running throughout the year 1884. Already the number of coolies sent by Dhubri, in preference to the Goalundo route, had increased to 90 percent of the total number imported. Of the 26,040 coolies who started from Dhubri, not less than 21,497 went by the daily mail steamers, the remainders being taken up by large steamers running single handed on occasions when the mail steamers were unable to carry off the large number of coolies that had accustomed in the depots at Dhubri.<sup>25</sup>

In 1886 free emigration was more active than in 1885. The recruitment under the other two systems fell to the lowest level recorded for five years. Initially the recruitment through contractors did not decrease, even though the number of contractors decreased from 10 to 8 in 1882. The number of certified garden sardars increased by 600 but they recruited a far small numbers than might have been expected.<sup>26</sup>

The Chief Commissioner made special inquiries into the relations between the employers and labourers and he reported that in the non-manufacturing season the average monthly wage for Act labourers was Rs.4-13-3 for men and Rs.3-1-8 for women, while the highest monthly rate was Rs.6-10-6 and Rs.5-15-1. In the manufacturing season the average monthly wage for Act labourers was, for men Rs.5-0-5 and for women Rs.4-5-9. The highest rate was Rs.12-4-6 and Rs.11-10-8. For non-Act labourers (free labourers) in the non manufacturing season the monthly average wage was, for men Rs.6-1-5, for women Rs.3-1-10, for children Rs.2-5-10. The highest monthly rate was Rs.13-0-3 (for men), Rs.5-11-11 (for women) and Rs.4-1-3 (for children). In the manufacturing season the monthly average wage for non-Act labourers was for men, women and

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<sup>24</sup> *Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam, 1883*, pp. 19 – 20.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid* for 1884, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Jha Aspects of Indentured Inland Emigration*, p. 39.

children were Rs.6-13-10; Rs.4-6-5 and Rs.2-10-10 respectively. The highest wage was Rs.10-0-5, Rs.12-13-1 and Rs.4-14-9. The non-Act labourers wage always remained higher than that of the Act labourers respectively for each of them.<sup>27</sup>

Contracts under Act XIII of 1859 were also freely employed in some of the labour-districts. The bulk of the contracts in the labour-districts were executed either for three years or for one year, but a considerable number for two years were also executed in Sibsagar district. The larger contracts were made by the newly arrived coolies.<sup>28</sup> While in 1890-1891, there was a large decrease in the use of these contracts in the Surma Valley districts, but there was a considerable increase in the Assam Valley. Generally the local contract was used in the former area among the fresh immigrants but in the later among the timer-expired labourers.<sup>29</sup>

In 1892 Madras appeared for the first time as a recognized source from which labourers could be legally drawn and the provisions of the Inland Emigration Act brought into operation in the Ganjam district.<sup>30</sup> In 1893-94, there was a large decline in the number of labourers imported from the Madras Presidency, which caused by the favourable season and the quantity of work available in Ganjam, the district from which most of the emigrants were drawn into Assam.<sup>31</sup>

The demand for labour went on increasing and there was a keen competition amongst the various recruiting agencies. The two legalized systems of recruitment, tat by the licensed recruiters and the other by the certified garden sardars, suffered at the hands of the self constituted free recruiters.<sup>32</sup> The Deputy Commissioner of Golpara reported in 1896 that the increase was probable attributed to the two new railway routes had been sanctioned (a) Khana junction via Sahebganj and Kathiar to Jatrapur and (b) Lakhisarai via Sahebganj and Kathiar to Jatrapur. The coolies traveled

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<sup>27</sup> *Report on Moral and Material Condition of India, 1887 – 1888*, p. 156.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid* for 1889-1890, p. 196.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid* for 1890-1891, p. 212.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid* for 1892 – 1893, p. 147.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid* for 1893-1894, p. 148.

<sup>32</sup> *Jha Aspects of Indentured Inland Emigration*, p. 67.

by these routes did not pass through the central station in Bengal at which contracts could enter into.<sup>33</sup>

In 1896-97, it was noticed that the 'contractors' recruits' were falling of in number, whereas those enlisted by 'garden sardars' were becoming more numerous. These sardars secured the best class of labourers and on an average as each sardar enlisted two coolies. In 1898 due to the outbreak of plague, emigrants were stopped at Calcutta depots for the preliminary period of quarantine. The Bengal Government also decided that the indentured labourers from 'up-countries' would not be permitted to enter Calcutta lest they brought cholera. They were to proceed straight via Nihati. The coolies from Ganjam in Orissa and elsewhere were to be quarantined at Goalundo, apart from other emigrants, for ten days before being allowed to proceed further to Assam.<sup>34</sup>

In 1899 there was a striking decrease in immigration into Assam. Fewer coolies, indeed, were imported into the labour-districts. As compared with 1898, there was a very large decrease in the number of Act coolies brought by sardars and in that of 'free' coolies. The total number of labourers who entered Assam was 31,908. In spite of this general decline, there was an increase of importations from Madras and Central Provinces.<sup>35</sup> In 1903 the number of immigrant labourers whom under Act VI of 1901 plunged from 93,2788 in 1902 to 84,306.<sup>36</sup> In the same year the railway routes via Dhubri and via Chandpur and Tinsukia were opened as alternative route for all emigrants to reach Brahmaputra Valley.<sup>37</sup>

In 1905 a conference of the Secretary, General Department of the Bengal Government, the Agent, East India Railway Company and the Superintendent of Emigration Calcutta decided that all indentured labourers for the North-East except from the Central Province, the Chotanagpur labourers traveling through Asansol and all other labourers traveling by the East Indian Railway via Asansol should be halted for not less than 24 hours

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<sup>33</sup> *Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam, 1896*, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> *Jha Aspects of Indentured Inland Emigration*, p. 129.

<sup>35</sup> *Report on Moral and Material Condition of India, 1892 – 1893*, p.6.

<sup>36</sup> *Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam, 1903-1904*, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Report on Moral and Material Condition of India, 1903 – 1904*, p. 169.

and the others for not less than eight hours. After that they proceed to Goalundo or to Saraghat without any halt at Naihati.<sup>38</sup>

During this year there was an increase in the number of immigrants from the plain districts of the United Provinces, Bengal, Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas, but the increase was entirely of non-Act coolies (free), those imported under Act (indentured) showing a decrease.<sup>39</sup> Thirty eight steamers carried the emigrants to Assam and either to Cachar and Sylhet as against 31 and 9 respectively in the previous year. The trip to Assam took 5 days and 12 hours and the trip to Cachar and Sylhet took 3 days and 12 hours.<sup>40</sup>

Even in 1905-1906 the emigrants were transported from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra Valley districts in the steamers of the Indian General Navigation and Railway Company Limited and the River Steam Navigation Company Limited, either fully or partly, up to Gauhati or Chandpur and from there by rail. To the Surma Valley districts they were either taken direct or by steamers to Chandpur and then by rail.<sup>41</sup>

The Bengal Government decided in 1905 that the labourers from Madras Presidency, Orissa division and the Midnapur district of Bengal traveling via Naihati should be halted at this station for not less than eight hours, as previously. Similarly, all the emigrants except the sardari coolies traveling via Saraghat, Parvatipur and Dhubri should be halted, as in the past, at Saraghat for a period long enough to have them at least one meal.<sup>42</sup>

In November of this year the Government of Madras issued revised rules, removing certain restrictions on sardari recruitment in the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatnam as yet given practically no results.<sup>43</sup> Since the close of the year 1906, Assam-Bengal Railway and the East Indian Railway arranged to issue tickets to tea garden immigrant labourers on presentation of a credit note, signed by the manager or superintendent of any garden in

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<sup>38</sup> Jha *Aspects of Indentured Inland Emigration*, p. 67.

<sup>39</sup> *Report on Moral and Material Condition of India, 1904 – 1905*, p. 169.

<sup>40</sup> Jha *Aspects of Indentured Inland Emigration*, p. 131.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Resolution on Immigrant Labour in the Assam Districts of Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1906*, p. 2.

Assam. The East Indian Railway had further arranged a carriage for immigrant labourers from Assanoli to Goalundo and reduced the third class fare to Rs.1 ½ per mile for coolies carried over 100 miles, on the hope of stimulating sardari recruitment. This was improved the un-indentured immigration into the Assam tea plantation. Thus the number of adults imported without any contract into Assam formed 75 percent of the whole during this year.<sup>44</sup>

In 1906 the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee submitted its report and its recommendations received the attention of government. The report encouraged the 'sardari' recruitment, the abolition of local contract and the withdrawal of the right of private arrest. Despite this recommendation and the facilities afforded by Railway Companies for the stimulation of sardari recruitment, there was a falling of in immigration. The total number of labourers and their dependants imported during the year 1906-1907 being 25,617 against 31,830 in 1905-06.<sup>45</sup>

The average rate of wage for men on the total labour force was increased from 7 s. 8 ¾ d. to 7 s. 9 ½ d. and for women from 6 s. 3 5/6 d. to 6 s. 8 ½ d. The average wage earned by the free men was 6 s. 8 5/9 d. compared with 6 s. 7 1/3 d. in 1905. The average earnings of women rose from 4 s. 9 1/6 d. to 4 s. 11 5/6 d. and children from 2 s. 11 1/12 d. to 2 s. 11 5/12 d.<sup>46</sup>

### III

#### Work and Conditions

For a tea garden labourer the day began generally at 7 a.m. At this time a whistle or a gong was sounded from the factory to announce the start of the working day. Between 7.30 a.m. and at 8 a.m. the whistle or the gong was repeated to summon the labourers to work. The day was long and usually the workers anxious to finish their task before it was hot. During the break the morning's leaf was weighed either in the field or at the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> *Report on Moral and Material Condition of India, 1906 – 1907*, p. 165.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

factory. In the evening before leaving the field till about 4 to 5 p.m. the labourers had to bring the leaf to the factory for weighing.<sup>47</sup>

The unit of rate-making in tea gardens varied from season to season, depending on location and type of work. The task of various types of work varied considerably from district to district and from estate to estate. Even in the same estate the task varied from time to time. The most important types of work on plantations were those of hoeing and plucking the tea leaves. Hoeing was of two different kinds, namely light or surface hoeing and deep or medium hoeing. The former was done from five to seven times a year and the latter only once a year. The unit of measuring hoeing was a 'Nal'. It was not possible to adopt uniform standards and it was totally depending on each manager's discretion to fix tasks for different types of work. The tasks were commonly fixed either in terms of bushes or 'Nals.' A 'Nal' was an area of 12 feet square.<sup>48</sup>

The following were some of the tasks that had been traditionally prevalent in the tea estates of Assam. 1. Deep hoeing – 8 to 16 'Nals' allocated for a man; 2. Light hoeing – 40 to 48 'Nals' allocated for a man; 3. Heavy pruning – 60 to 72 bushes for a man; 4. Light pruning – 60 to 180 bushes for a man; 5. Forking and weeding – 160 to 240 bushes for man.<sup>49</sup>

The leaf plucking was invariably done by the women in the plantation. In plucking, the day's work varied from 20 to 24 lbs. of leaves, depending upon the quality, season of the year, method of plucking and species of tea-bushes.<sup>50</sup> In some gardens the total amount of leaf brought in was divided by the number of pluckers and the result was taken to be the daily task and any weight in excess was paid for at proportional rate. This practice did not give the worker a chance to know beforehand how much he or she had to pluck per day.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> A. C. Phukan, *Personal Administration in the Tea Industry of Assam* (Assam: Achita Publication, 1979), p. 276.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>49</sup> Ranjan Misra, *Tea Industry In India* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 2986), p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Jha, *Aspects of Indentured Inland Emigration*, p. 59.

<sup>51</sup> Phukan, *Personal Administration in the Tea Industry of Assam*, p. 183.

It was significant that the workers' opportunity to earn was limited by the size of the task which hardly involved a normal day's work.<sup>52</sup> Another system also followed in Assam was the 'unit' system, under which the worker was paid one anna for performing one unit of work in one hour. This unit system was resorted to when the leaf was scarce. Irregular work, such as forking, transplanting and jungle-clearing was also performed on a time unit basis.<sup>53</sup>

#### IV

#### **Plight of Immigrant Labourers: Snaring Coolies and High Profit**

The conditions on the tea districts were so un-healthy and harsh. But contract terms were falsely conveyed to potential coolies in order to tempt them to sign.<sup>54</sup> The fee charged by contractors per recruit varied from Rs.12 to Rs.20.<sup>55</sup> The planters were, however, prepared to make advance on existing rates as might be found necessary to make organised recruiting effective. While the government waited for the entire planting community to formulate some scheme for recruiting through one central agency, no such scheme was submitted by the latter. Meanwhile the system of obtaining labour from contractors developed rapidly.<sup>56</sup> The Workman's Breach of Contract Act XII of 1859 effectively stopped all possibility of escape once the labourers signed the contract and entered the tea estates.<sup>57</sup>

The Government of Bengal appointed a Commission to enquire into the state and prospects of tea cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet. On 30 March 1868, the commission submitted its report in which it appeared that Act III of 1863 had failed in its object. The report revealed that the licensed recruiters employed a band of unlicensed sub-recruiters who constantly induced the coolies to emigrate by false promises and there was

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<sup>52</sup> *Resolution on Immigrant Labour in the Assam Districts of Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1908*, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> Phukan, *Personal Administration in the Tea Industry of Assam*, p. 182.

<sup>54</sup> Utsa Patnaik and Manjari Dingwaney, *Chains of Servitude*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>55</sup> Amalendu Guha, *Planter – Raj to Swaraj*, p. 18.

<sup>56</sup> *The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee Report, 1906*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>57</sup> Utsa Patnaik and Manjari Dingwaney, *Chains of Servitude*, pp. 115-116.

no effectual check on this kind of registration in the districts of recruitment.<sup>58</sup>

Until the passing of Act II of 1870, the *sardari* system had no legal sanction and the recruitment was organised and conducted by the contractors based in Calcutta. The contractors generally operated through the ‘*arkatis*’ or sub-contractors who conducted their recruiting operations in market places in a village. In Surmavalley the *sardars* were active even before the system was given the legal status and worked independently without any supervision. The *sardars* brought coolies from home by train till Goalundo – a port at the confluence of the Brahmaputra and the Ganges situated in the Bengal district of Faridapur and carried on their journey on the numerous unlicensed country boats playing on the river. Here the immigrants were not registered like those from Assam Valley were registered.<sup>59</sup>

In 1884 one case of improper coercion to sign a long –term contract was reported in Karimganj. 17 contractors’ coolies arrived on the garden by three year agreements, when the manager compelled them to consent to the alteration of the term to five years. The coolies objected to the term and reported to the Deputy Commissioner. When the Deputy Commissioner called the manger he left Assam. Finally the Deputy Commissioner reduced the term of contract to three years. The same officer cancelled two agreements of men who were allegedly had been forced into agreements by manager by threat. They were headmen among the newly imported labourers and they had no intention to leave their fellowmen in Assam.<sup>60</sup> In 1887 certain writer wrote in the vernacular press about the cruel ill-treatment of the coolies in Assam. This hampered a section of Christian coolies emigrating from Orissa. They were actually recruited by a Reverend. Heberlet, a Baptist Missionary.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>59</sup> Nitin Varma, “Coolie Acts and the Acting Coolies: Coolie, Planter and State in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Colonial Tea Plantation of Assam,” *Social Scientist*, 2005, p. 56.

<sup>60</sup> *Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam, 1883*, p. 28.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 6.



In 1888, in Cachar thirteen complaints were made regarding fraudulent recruitment by immigrant labourers. In Sylhet, the Deputy Commissioner was reported that as some boys were kidnapped from Hazaribagh to the labour districts of Assam. They were sent back to their homes and the *sardar* was sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment. In Lakhmipur, thirteen cases of fraudulent recruitment were brought to notice of the Deputy Commissioner, of which nine cases related to women who were abducted from their village. In the same year it was reported that two gangs of coolies on their way to gardens in Bengal were kidnapped and forcibly taken to Assam.<sup>62</sup>

The high profits of coolie recruiting lured a significant number of freelance Europeans and Indians. An example was John Henry Lawton, a dismissed soldier, who with his posse of armed peons (soldiers) set up the business of "coolie raiding." Lawton posed as a government official with his group and ordered the coolies into specially constructed temporary depots from which they were taken to Assam. He was prosecuted for five such cases of coolie raiding in 1888 alone.<sup>63</sup>

During 1888 J.H. Tucker, Assistant District Superintendent of Police was appointed on special duty to report on the subject of abuses connected with the emigration of coolies into Assam. In his report Tucker observed: 'The whole business of free emigration has become a most lucrative trade and any one can enter and share the large profits; consequently the country is overrun with *'arkatis,*' who can roam about the whole place without fear of molestation on the part even of the district officials... and the demand for labour for Assam having become so great, with every tendency to increase, and the very high prices that are paid for coolie to work in tea gardens in the province, led to very many Europeans and natives as suppliers of free emigrants, calling themselves local agents but unlicensed.'<sup>64</sup>

Tucker remarked that great slackness existed at Dhubri in carrying out the strict provisions of the Act concerning registration. The general custom was that to read out the provisions of the Act in front of the so

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid for 1888, pp. 12-13.

<sup>63</sup> Rana P.Behal and Prabhu P. Mohapatra, "Tea and Money Versus Human Life," p. 55.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 39-49.

many coolies, to which a few men would answer, while the rest would maintain silence. Then all the individuals would be handed over to some “*Baboo*”.<sup>65</sup>

Two young girls, Parbatia and Gandia were enticed away from the banks of the Ganges river, where they had gone on a pilgrimage, by a couple of *arkatis* belonged to Ram Sewak, a contractor of coolies at Benares, who sent them to Calcutta with the coolies who were to be forwarded to Assam. In Calcutta, the girls wanted the police to send them back to Mongulserai, where they wished to go. The Calcutta firm then wrote to Ram Sewak and censured him for sending such girls and debited the cost of the return journey on him. On alighting at Mongulserai, the two girls were forced to take back to the depot by two other *arkatis* of Ram Sewaks. They were confined there for two days and then under instructions from Ram Sewaks took them to Hourah to sell to a Hourah “*baboo*”, an agent, there. En route from the Hourah station to Hurroo’s place, the women made a row again and a constable rescued the girls and took the whole gang to the police station.<sup>66</sup>

Another case complained to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, H.R. Browne, of Dibrugarh, was relating to three helpless women. Their names were Ahlady, Shoshi and Deologni, whereas the last woman Deologni became insane in the course of the voyage. Ahlady alias Khawto was a daughter of a Brahmin and Shoshi, a Boistah woman of the Hooghli district. During their bath in the Ganges at the Juggurnath Ghaut in Calcutta, Ahlady told Shoshi that she had a relative in Budda Bazaar whom she would like to see if Shoshi knew the place. Hearing this, someone near them volunteered to show them the place, another one, a woman, confirmed what the man said.<sup>67</sup>

The man brought a hackney, took Ahlady and Shoshi therein and drove away. This was at about 10 a.m. After driving from place to place at last, at about 5 p.m. the two were brought into a house where they were confined for five to six hours. Then they were again put in a coach and taken to the Sealdah station. They boarded the train, which was leaving for

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

Goalundo and Dhubri. After their journey in train and then by steamer, at last they arrived at Dhubri. Ahlady and Shoshi were taken to some house where innumerable ragged men, women and children were kept. The next day they boarded a steamer which after five days arrived at Dibrugarh. It was on board Ahlady and Shoshi acquainted with the lady Deologni, who told them that she was a Rajpoot and had two children at her home. Because of a quarrel she made with someone at home, Deologni had walked out of her home in disgust. On her way Deologni acquainted with a man who pretending to console her put Deologni in a train. Deologni, always remembered and cried for her children. The second day suddenly she became mute and showed signs of insanity. For eleven days she did not eat anything. When disembarked at Dibrugarh, Deologni suddenly became as a tigress and started to beat the steamer-doctor with kicks and blows. The next day she died and it had been reported in several news papers.<sup>68</sup>

During 1890 – 1891 cases of fraudulent recruitment were reported, of which 77 persons' whereabouts could not be traced. Only 13 persons were later reported of their location. The cases were filed by the relatives of the victims before Magistrates, in spite of this in no case, any one of the offenders obtained conviction.<sup>69</sup> At the time of registration 16 coolies made complaints that they were recruited falsely. All the persons were sent back to the recruiting districts for enquiry. Nine of them deserted en-route. One woman came back. She was put on contract and sent up to Assam, while the other persons could not establish their case. The registering officer made 92 enquiries on suspicion of fraudulent recruitment on his own interest. However, in many cases, the relatives of the coolie women whose whereabouts were identified, did not take any action to get them back.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

The indentured emigration to Assam was introduced in 1859. The planters were advised to adopt the same system of recruitment that was pursued by the planters of Mauritius. The Act XII of 1859 in its preamble had provided scope for punishment to the artisans and workers who

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> *Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam, 1890*, p. 9.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

committed breach of trust by not working even after receiving the advance money. The Magistrate was authorized by this legislation to sentence a labour offender to imprisonment with hard labour for a term not exceeding three months.

Based on the reports of a committee, the Act III (B.C) of 1863 was passed which fixed the maximum indenture period as five years. Superintendents were appointed to issue license for the contractors and recruiters. The licensed recruiter had to appear with the intending emigrants before the Magistrate of the district, where labourer would be examined as to his willingness to proceed. After registration the emigrant was sent to the contractor's depot for medical examination. Though the Superintendent had power to ascertain whether the labourers had been well-treated during their journey, the Act did not contain any provision for the protection of the immigrant labourer after his arrival on the tea gardens of Assam.

The Government of Bengal therefore had to pass the Act VI of 1865. The minimum wage fixed under the Act of 1865 for a man, a woman and a child under 12 years of age a month worked out 5, 4 and 3 respectively. The maximum term of indenture contract was reduced from five years to three years and work was limited to nine hours a day and six days in a week. A labourer who abstained himself from work should, on conviction before Magistrate, forfeit his wages proportionate to days of his absence. The employer was empowered to arrest an absconding labourer without a warrant. If the labourer was in the service of another employer, he was bound to handover the arrested labourer to a police officer or Magistrate within 48 hours. The penalty for desertion was three months' rigorous imprisonment.

In the Assam Valley the indentured emigration to Assam was organised with the government initiative since 1859. Planters sent recruiting agents to targeted areas to sign a contract with potential coolies. These middlemen played a despicable role between planters and emigrants. Aggressive white planters and white overseers of Assam plantations ill-treated and killed many of their immigrant labourers in the plantation with impunity. Insanitary conditions in the first instance led to outbreak of cholera on their voyage while other waterborne diseases killed many of the

immigrant labourers in the tea gardens. The death rates on many gardens altogether were appalling. The number of gardens classified as unhealthy increased from year to year. Many employers resorted to violence to quell the resistance of immigrant labourers. This in turn led to many assaults and attacks by the labourers against their managers and the masters. Continuous hard work and poor diet in the garden incapacitated most of the Indian labourers. The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee constituted in 1906 revealed the sorry state of affairs in Assam and prompted the nationalists to fight for the abolition of the system of indentured labour from the territories of Assam.



## **Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars to Economic thought**

**MANZOOR K**

Research Scholar in Economics  
Kannur University Kerala India

### ***Abstract***

*This paper is an attempt to examine the contributions of Islamic scholars to the development of Economic thought. A number of economic concepts developed in Islamic economics long before they did in conventional economics. These cover a number of areas including interdisciplinary approach, property rights, division of labour, the importance of saving and investment for development, the role of demand and supply, the role of money, exchange and market mechanism, characteristics of money, counterfeiting, currency debasement and Gresham's law, principles of taxation etc. Generally, Western historians of ideas trace the beginnings of intellectual history from the Greco-Roman period, which ended around 300 BC, and then focus on the Renaissance (13th-16th century AD). The history of scientific, social and cultural thought during the period 300 BC-12th century AD is either glossed over or ignored altogether. Schumpeter characterizes it as the "Great Gap". When we look at the contributions made by early Muslim thinkers and scholars makes it abundantly clear that no such gap ever existed. In fact one notices a remarkable continuity in the history of ideas between the classical period, the Islamic era and the Renaissance. During the Middle Ages, when Islamic civilization was at the zenith of its intellectual and cultural development, Muslim scholars not*

*only carried forward the legacy of the ancients but also made highly original contributions to various areas of learning and scholarship, including philosophy, medicine, astronomy, history, mathematics, chemistry, logic, and the social sciences , especially to economics .These included Qadi Abu Yusuf ( 798 AD), Yahya bin Adam al Qarashi (818 AD), Abu Ubayd al Qasim bin Sallam ( 858 AD), Ibnabi al-Rabi (885 AD), Qudamah bin Jafar (932 AD), Abu Jafar Ahmad bin Nasr al Dawudi (1052 AD), Al-Mawardi (1058 AD) IbnHazm (1063 AD),Abu Ya'la (1065 AD), Abu Hamid al Ghazali ( 1112 AD), NasiruddinTusi (1274 AD), IbnTaimiyah (1328 AD), IbnKhaldun (1406 AD) and Shah WaliullahDehlawi (1762 AD).*

### **Introduction**

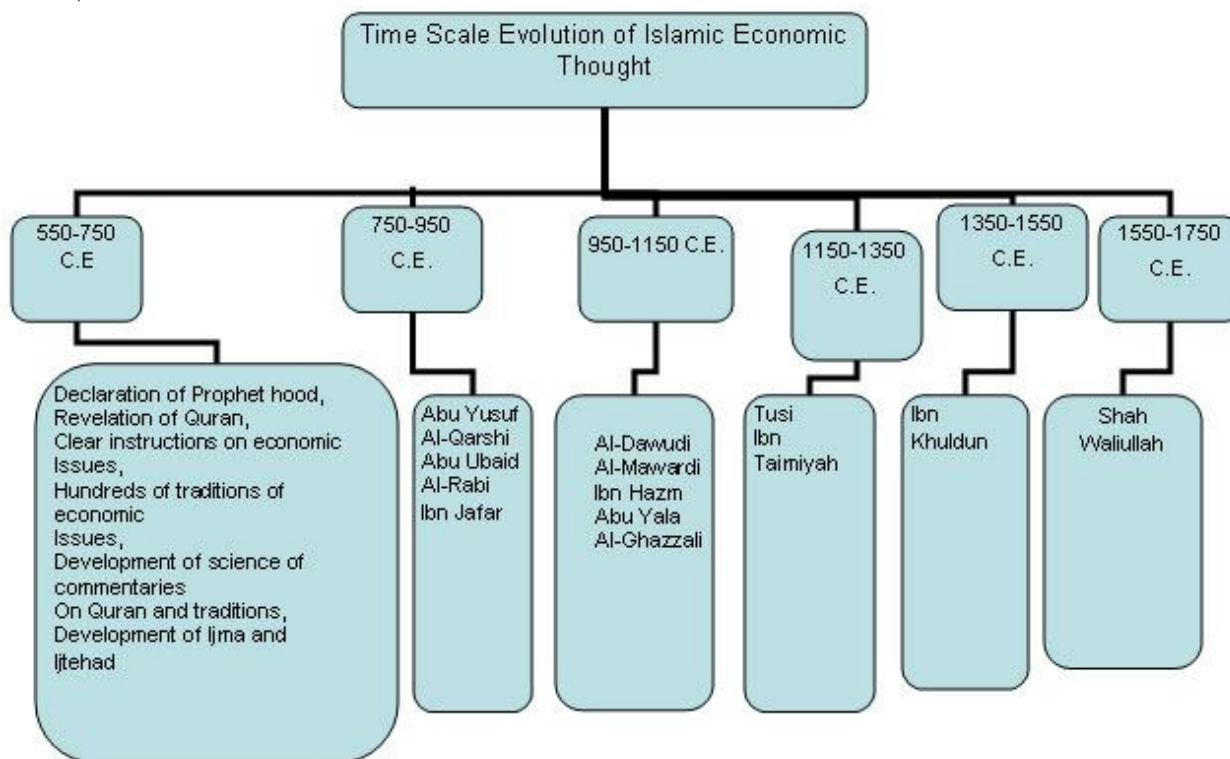
Muslim thinkers and scholars articulated and developed their economic theories long before the birth of the science of economics. As Professor M. N. Siddiqui<sup>71</sup> has rightly pointed out, "From Abu Yusuf in the second century to Tusi and Waliullah we get a continuity of serious discussions on taxation, government expenditure, home economics, money and exchange, division of labour, monopoly, price control, etc". Unfortunately, there is no mention of the contributions of any of the afore-mentioned thinkers and scholars in any standard work on the history of economic thought. The highly important and seminal contributions of these scholars need to be acknowledged and recognized. The observation of Joseph Schumpeter and others of this kind who have spoken about a "great gap" and "discontinuity" in the history of economic thought was born out of sheer ignorance and is short-sighted, to say the least. Almost all Muslim scholars have adopted a common methodology. On a particular issue, they would first quote the relevant verses from Quran. Secondly; the relevant Traditions of the Prophet are cited to further elucidate the verses. Thirdly, they profusely quote from the conduct of the four rightly guided caliphs. Fourthly, in the light of above they form their own opinions in support or rejection of other legal opinions.

### **Revealed Knowledge: The Starting Point**

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<sup>71</sup>Mohammad NejatullahSiddiqi is an Indian economist and is the winner of the King Faisal International Prize for Islamic studies.

The history of Islamic economics goes back to the Qur'an and Sunnah<sup>72</sup>. The Qur'an as the Word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and Sunnah as his practical demonstration and explanations, contain a number of economic teachings and principles applicable to various conditions. Muslim scholars accepted the economic teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah as the basis and starting point. Then they used their own reason and applied the principles derived from the basic sources of Islam to solve the emerging problems in the changing historical and economic conditions. They never hesitated to benefit from the experience of other nations. More or less this process continued throughout Islamic history. (Islahi A. A., 2004)



Source:(Sayed Afzal Peerzade, 2008)

<sup>72</sup> *Sunnah* is the verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, silent permissions (or disapprovals) of the prophet Muhammad as well as various reports about Muhammad's companions.



## 1. Quadi Abu Yusuf (798 AD)

Abu Yusuf was the chief justice of Baghdad during the reign of Caliph<sup>73</sup> Al-Mahdi and continued in that office till the end of Caliph Harun Al-Rashid' s reign. He authored a major work on land taxation, entitled *Kitab al Kharaj*. It was written in response to the caliph's queries on religious precepts related to taxation problems, revenue administration and public expenditure. Abu Yusuf tried to analyze fiscal issues. His contribution lies in demonstrating the superiority of proportional taxation over the system of fixed levy on land. Much before Adam Smith, who is generally regarded as the father of modern economics, Abu Yusuf enunciated the principles of taxation, such as ability to pay, convenience and certainty. He also dwelt on tax administration and stressed the need for strict supervision of tax collectors in order to prevent corrupt and oppressive practices. Abu Yusuf outlined the economic responsibilities of the state. He emphasized the establishment and maintenance of public amenities such as irrigation facilities and highways. He also urged upon the state to ensure the development of agriculture. (Sayed Afzal Peerzde, Rahatun nisa, 2008)

## 2. Yahyabin Adam al Qarashi (818 AD).

Yahya bin Adam al Qarashi was a contemporary of Abu Yusuf. His work is also known as *Kitab al Kharaj*. This was done during the reign of al-Ma'mun of Abbasid Dynasty<sup>74</sup>. *Kitab al Kharaj* deals among others, with problems and laws of land taxation, land holding, cultivation, and the position of non-Muslims. The importance of this work lies in the fact that various *Hadiths* were compiled on different issues such as *al-ghanimah*, *al-fay* and the various taxes, the power of the Imam to decide of his discretion whether to distribute *alghanimah* (spoils of war) among those who captured

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<sup>73</sup>title of the civil and religious head of the Muslim state(<https://www.britannica.com/topic/caliph>)

<sup>74</sup>The Abbasid Caliphate, which ruled the Islamic world, oversaw the golden age of Islamic culture. The dynasty ruled the Islamic Caliphate from 750 to 1258 AD, making it one of the longest and most influential Islamic dynasties. For most of its early history, it was the largest empire in the world, and this meant that it had contact with distant neighbors such as the Chinese and Indians in the East, and the Byzantines in the West, allowing it to adopt and synthesize ideas from these cultures. (The Abbasid Dynasty: The Golden Age of Islamic Civilization, 2012)

it or to retain it for all Muslims, and problem on land owned by the conquered people which were left to them for the payment of *al-kharaj* and so on.(Akbar, 2009)

### **3. Abu Ubayd al Qasim bin Sallam (858 AD)**

Abu Ubayd was a *mujtahid*(jurist entitled to develop and form independent opinion)of high caliber. He authored a book entitled *Kitab al Amwal*. (The book of finance) It can be regarded as the most systematic and comprehensive work on public finance. This book is not only a treatise on fiscal system of Islam but it is also a treasure of information concerning laws, history, geography, administration and jurisprudence. The book contains ninety three chapters in total. It is a good source of authentic traditions from the Prophet Muhammad and the reports from his companions, and those who followed them, on economic matters. Overall the entire book can broadly be divided into two major parts, Part first deals with revenue that is imposed upon and received from non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic state, that is 1/5th of the spoils of *Jizya*, *Kharaj* and different forms of *Fay*. He also discusses the related problems. Part second undertakes *Zakat*, (the compulsory religious obligation upon the rich Muslims for their poor and needy brethren) and its different forms.(Salam, 2012)

### **4. Ibnabi al-Rabi (885 AD)**

Ibnabi al-Rabi wrote a brief treatise entitled *Suluk al Mamalik fi Tadbir al-Mamalik* (Conduct of the Ruler in the Management of Kingdoms). In the context of the responsibilities of the ruler, he writes that the state should arrange for water supply for personal requirements as well as for irrigation. The ruler should take appropriate action to ease the hardships of farmers in order to stop them from abandoning their farms in favour of other professions. He should collect taxes in accordance with the norms of justice and the principles of *Shariah* in order to avoid the possibility of any injustice and tyranny. Al-Rabi emphasized that the supply of necessary goods and services should be maintained and that people should feel protected.(Nabi, 2013)

### **5. Qudamah bin Jafar (932)**

Qudamah bin Ja'far al-Katib al-Baghdadi also known as **Abu'lFaraj**, was a Syrian scholar and administrator for the Abbasid Caliphate, who

converted to Islam. He was born at Basra, came from a Syriac Christian family and converted to Islam. He held various junior administrative positions in the caliphal secretariat in Baghdad, and eventually raised to a senior post the treasury department. Of his several books on philosophy, history, philology, and administration, only three survive:

- the *Kitab al-Kharaj* (the *Book of the Land Tax*), for which Qudama is chiefly known..
- the *Kitab al-Alfaz* (*Book of Words*) or *Jawahir al-Alfaz* (*Jewels of Words*),
- the *Kitab Naqd al-shi'r* (*Book on Poetic Criticism*),  
([wikipedia.org/wiki/Qudama\\_ibn\\_jafer](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Qudama_ibn_jafer), 2016)

#### **6. Abu Jafar Ahmad bin Nasar al Dawudi (1052)**

Abu Jafar Ahammed Ibn Naser Al Dawudi lived in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Hijra/ eleventh century CE in North Africa. *Kitb Al-Amwal* written by him deals with broad principles of state revenue, Military administration, International law of war and peace, and author's verdicts (fatwa) on the settlement of lands in al-Ifriqiyyah, al-Magharib, Spain and Sicily. It also deals with properties acquired unlawfully and those abandoned with no legal owners. The subject of revenue administration, the main theme of this work was dealt with considerable length in the early compilation of the prophetic tradition

Following are the important books by Dawudi

1. Al-Nami fi shah al- Mawatta
2. Al-Nasiha fi sharh al Bukhari
3. Al-Wayifi-Fiqh.
4. Al-Idah fi-I-Radd-al Qudariyyah.
5. KitbulUsul
6. Kitbul Bayan
7. KitbulAmwal. (Dawudi, 2010)

#### **7 .Al-Mawardi (1058)**

Al-Mawardi's work *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah [Rules of Governance]* is an outstanding work. Al-Mawardi enumerated the responsibilities of the ruling class and emphasized that the ruler should arrange for the collection of *kharaj* (land tax) and *zakat* in accordance with the laws of *shariah* and in the light of the interpretations of jurists without indulging in coercion or extortion. Likewise, the ruler should make available the allowances and

stipends from the state treasury to those who are entitled to them. The purpose of these functions is to ensure the requirements of social security.(Al.Islam .org)

#### **8. IbnHazzam (1063 AD)**

AbūMuḥammad ‘AlīibnAḥmadibnSa‘īdibnḤazzam was an Andalusian poet, polymath, historian, jurist, philosopher and theologian, born in Cordoba, present day Spain. He was a leading proponent and codifier of the Zahiri school of Islamic thought and produced 400 works of which only 40 still survive, covering a range of topics such as Islamic jurisprudence, history, ethics, comparative religion and theology, as well as the *the ring of the Dove*, on the art of love. The Encyclopedia of Islam refers to him as having been one of the leading thinkers of the Muslim world and he is widely acknowledged as the father of comparative studies.([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn\\_Hazzam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Hazzam))

#### **9. Abu Yahya al-Farra (1065 AD)**

Another work with the same title is by Abu Ya'la al- Farra (1065). The author discusses in detail about imposing additional taxes and the acceptability of public borrowing. The works of Al-Mawardi and al-Farra fundamentally deal with the art of governance. Yet where necessary, the two deal with taxation and public expenditure as well.

#### **10. Abu Hamid al Ghazali (1112 AD)**

The welfare-oriented role of the Islamic state is more explicit in the writings of al-Ghazzali. In his works, particularly in *Ihya'ul-mal-Din (The Revival of the Sciences of Religion)*, al-Ghazzali dwelt at length on the provision of protection by the state, long before classical economists had discussed the issue. In the opinion of al-Ghazzali, the state should protect people's faith, life, intellect, wealth and property. Thus, whatever ensures the protection of these needs serves the public interest and everything that violates public interest needs to be curbed. Al-Ghazzali is of the view that economic activities are mandated by the *Shariah* because they are linked to the very survival of human beings.

#### **11. Nasiruddin Tusi (1274 AD)**

Nasiruddin Tusi popularly known as NizamulMulk, authored one of the most valuable and interesting works in Persian, entitled *SiyastNama (The Book of Politics)*. He discussed revenue and expenditure

of household budgets and those of the states. He emphasized saving and warned against extravagance in expenditure. He opposed expenditure on assets such as jewelry and uncultivable land. He accorded prime importance to agriculture and secondary importance to trade and vocations. He disapproves certain taxes that have no sanction in Islam.

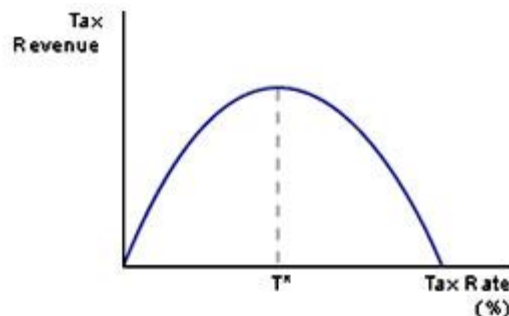
### **12. Ibn Taimiyah (1328 AD)**

He lived in the last third of 7<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century after Hijra. Ibn Taimiyah has written extensively on different aspects of Islamic Shariah. His major works include *al-Siyasah al-Shariah (The Policy of Shariah)*, *Risalah al-Halal wal-Haram* (Treatise on the Legitimate and the Illegitimate), and *al-Hisbashi Islam (Inspection of Public Morality in Islam)*. In his *fatawa (legal edicts)* he dealt with several economic issues, including price control, market regulation, fair market practices, state intervention and provision of basic needs, and private ownership and its control under certain circumstances. Ibn Taimiyah mentioned the idea which, in the west is attributed to Thomas Gresham in 1857 and known as Gresham's Law. The law simply states that where two coins have the same nominal value, but are made from metal of unequal value, the cheaper will tend to drive the other out of circulation. The good money is hoarded, melted or exported – whichever is more beneficial, Especially under the bi-metalism., (Islahi A. A., 1996)

### **13. Ibn Khaldun (1406 AD)**

Ibn Khaldun has rightly been hailed as one of the greatest philosophers, historians, sociologists and economist of all times. His brilliant work *Muqaddimah (An introduction in to History)* considered the most sublime and intellectual achievement of the middle ages, is a treasury of many sciences like history, psychology, sociology, geography, economics etc., Ibn Khaldun discussed a wide range of economic issues, including division of labour, price system, the law of supply and demand, consumption, money, capital formation, population growth, public finance, and trade cycles.. In his writings one comes across the basic idea embodied in the backward bending supply curve of labour. According to Ibn Khaldun, taxes have a point of diminishing returns and pump priming is important to keep the business running smoothly. He also warned against state intervention and believed that a free market ensured proper distribution.. He discovered

the virtue and necessity of division of labour before Smith and principle of labour value before Ricardo. He elaborated a theory of population before Malthus and insisted on the role of the state in the economy before Keynes. His name should figure among the fathers of economics. . It is not surprising to note that Ibn Khaldun has been hailed as "supply-sider". Arthur Laffer, the distinguished American economist who served as an advisor to the US President Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s, was inspired in the drawing of his famous "Laffer Curve" by IbnKhaldun. He shot to fame on account of his famous Laffer curve. The idea is rather simple: At both extremes of taxation-zero percent and one-hundred percent, the government collects no revenue. At one extreme, a 0% tax rate means the government's revenue is, of course, zero. At the other, where there is a 100% tax rate, the government collects zero revenue because (in a "Rational" economic model) taxpayers have no incentive to work or they avoid taxes, and the government collects 100% of nothing. Somewhere between 0% and 100%, therefore, lies a tax rate that will maximize revenue. This is illustrated with the help of a curve popularly known as the Laffer curve:



T\* represents the optimum tax rate where the maximum amount of tax revenue can be collected. Laffer and other right-wing economists used the curve to argue that taxes were currently too high and should therefore be reduced to encourage incentives and harder work (a supply-side policy). Others argue that we are already well to the left of T\*. It justifies tax cuts and intends to show that government can maximize revenue by setting a tax rate at the peak of this curve.. It is significant to note that Laffer did not claim to have invented the concept but attributed it to IbnKhaldun.(<http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ik/klf.htm>)

#### **14. Shah Walillah Dehlawi (1762 AD)**

Shah Walillah Dehlawi was an Islamic scholar, during the reign of Emperor Aurengzeb. He was known as Shah walli Ullah because of his piety. He memorized the Qur'an by seven. Soon thereafter, he mastered Arabic and Persian letters. By sixteen he had completed the standard curriculum of Hanafi law, theology, geometry, arithmetic and logic. He realized the importance of economics in a social and political set-up and advocated the maintenance of economic equilibrium in the society and strongly criticized the accumulation of wealth which leads to all sorts of evils in the world. He had visualized a social order based on economic equality, fraternity and brotherhood which are the principles governing Islamic socialist practices during the time of the pious Caliphs.(Jabeen). We can summarize his economic thought as follows

1. The wealth originates from labour
2. The labourers and farmers are the fountains of labour and consequently of wealth;
3. The dens of gambling and the centres of debauchery should all together be smashed, such evil practices help concentrate wealth into few hands
4. The labourers, farmers and those who render intellectual services to the society, rightly and richly deserve a pretty share from the national wealth which they produce.
5. A government which do not properly and justly manage the system of prices, wages or salaries of the working classes, should be up-rooted
6. The working classes should not be exploited; everyone should be paid on the principle of mutual cooperation
7. The production and income which is not based on mutual cooperation is not valid
8. The working hours of the working classes should be fixed
9. One of the greatest means of mutual cooperation is trade, commerce and business. No businessman is allowed to indulge in black-marketing, smuggling, hoard in and price raise, etc., similarly, the government is prohibited to tax them beyond their capacity
10. The business which helps concentrate wealth into few hands and hinders the circulation of in the society, is harmful and it would be checked.
11. The royal, aristocratic or luxurious system of life or standard of living which hinders right distribution of wealth in society should be crushed as early as possible.

Shah Wali Ullah translated the Holy Quran into Persian despite the prejudice against translations of Holy Quran. His encyclopedic knowledge and steadiness in practical life are the great models for the Muslim world. As Allamah

Muhammad Iqbal remarks he was the first Muslim to feel the urge for rethinking the whole system of Islam without any way breaking away from its past. (Ahammed Essa, 2010)

### **Conclusion:-**

It is interesting to note that the majority of scholars have titled their works as *Kitab al Amwal*(*Book of Wealth*), *Kitab al Kharaj* (Book of Land Tax) and *Al-ahkam al-sultaniyah* (*Book oGovernance*). There are at least six well-known books with the title *Kitab al-kharaj*. Similarly, there are twenty-three books with the title *Kitab al-amwal*, and two works with the title *Al-ahkam al sultaniyah*. The books entitled *Kitab al-kharaj* mainly focuses on fiscal issues related to land taxation, leaving out other sources of revenue. On the other hand, works entitled *Kitab al-amwal* cover all forms of revenue and hence are more comprehensive in their coverage and scope. Let us conclude that in the context of our present endeavour to Islamize our economics, to turn to some of the best brains of the past for inspiration and guidance.

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## **Birendra nath SaSmal aS a Political Organizer: A HistoricAl investigAtion**

RAHUL KUMAR MOHANTA

Assistant Professor of History

Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University

Cooch Behar, West Bengal India

The character of the Nationalist movement in India was drastically changed by the Non-Cooperation movement. Mahatma Gandhi's arrival on the political scene introduced various new dimensions to the nationalist politics India's freedom struggle was no longer confined to bhadraloks only, but was expanded to incorporate new social groups which so far remained marginal. For the first time common people directly participated in organized resistance against British rule and it offered them the opportunity to engage in political action in the national context and assert their self-respect. Congress workers were sent into rural areas to establish local Congress committees which became the nerve centers of the political work of the Congress at the grass-roots level. To understand the genesis and character of the national movement in Midnapur, we have to peep through the political activities of Deshapran Birendranath Sasmal. Birendranath Sasmal was called Deshapran for his devotion and sincere love for his motherland. Birendranath was very much popular among the people of Midnapur by his social welfare activities,<sup>1</sup> He took a pivotal

role during the Midnapore floods. He was a messenger of wind of non-violent principle of Gandhiji in Midnapur.<sup>2</sup> Birendranath was born at Chandibheti in the Contai sub-division of Midnapur in 1881. In this connection he remarked about his homeland in his autobiography that "*Emon Deshti Kathao Khuje Pabe Na Ko Tumi, Sakal Desher Sera Se Je Amar Janmabhumi.*"<sup>3</sup> Birendranath was a son of Biswambhar Sasmal and Anandamoyee Debi. He came from an affluent Mahisya family in which the Brahma religion had made a deep impact. He passed the Entrance examination in 1900 from the Contai High school. Birendranath was greatly influenced by his teachers Tarak Gopal Ghosh and Sashibhushan Chakraborty and then entered the Metropolitan College, Calcutta, but on the urge of being a student of Surendranath Banerjee, one of the nationalists of his time, he got admission to the Ripon College. After passing a chequered life, he jumped into the Swadeshi movement. Midnapur was indeed in need of a leadership that ultimately could be provided by Birendranath Sasmal.

Birendra Nath was very much influenced by the principles of Congress. In this connection Birendranath stated that "*Congresser Bani Sunei Amar Sikha Dikha O Adarsher Sange Amar Bastab Jibaner Tumul Sangram Upostit Hayechilo.*"<sup>4</sup> In January 1921, Birendranath was elected the treasurer of the Bengal Tilak Swarajya Fund where he proved his worth by tracing the loop-holes in the accounts. Sasmal had already joined the Swarajya party of Chitta Ranjan Das. After his return from Nagpur Session, he left his lucrative profession and plunged into the non-cooperation movement. He was elected as the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress and performed his duty with dedication. His first local issue was Anti-Union Board movement. In 1921 he successfully led the Contai anti-Union Board movement. Bengal Village Self-Government Act was passed in 1919. According to that law, 227 Union Boards were formed in the district. People were kept in the dark about the whys and wherefores of their introduction. Very few people took part in the election. Generally people regarded the new law as a plea to fleece them. Naturally resentment brewed all through the district. The Congress first consented to a movement against this law but then withdrew the consent. The Uncrowned King of Midnapore took up the cause of his people, and plunged into Boycott Movement. Birendranath declared that he would walk on bare feet

until the Union Boards were not done away with. Birendranath himself commented in his article entitled 'Beware of Union Boards'.<sup>5</sup> Sasmal was campaigning about the ill effects of this Act. The district Magistrate reported that, "The subtly of the whole campaign tax in the fact that Sasmal as a lawyer was interpreting the sections of the Act....( the people were) convinced that Sasmal was right."<sup>6</sup> The unique leadership provided by Birendranath Sasmal was unparalleled in the contemporary history of mass movement in Bengal. His strong personality and deep-seated sympathy for People's misery enabled him to active support of the rural masses and command respect from the public in general. For all these reasons he was hailed by Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray as the 'uncrowned King(Mukutheen Raja). Of Midnpore.<sup>7</sup> The anti-Union Board Movement is certainly a break with the past in the sense that it brought new actors on the political scene.<sup>8</sup> About the success of Birendranath Sasmal, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose commented that 'Under the leadership of Mr.B.N.Sasmal ,the people of Midnapore started an agitation for the withdrawal of the Bengal Self-government Act from this District and refused to pay the taxes imposed by the newly-established Union Boards. .... The success of this No-Tax Campaign gained considerable strength and self-confidence to the people of Midnapore and popularity to their leader,Mr.B.N.Sasmal.'<sup>9</sup> Some scholars have endeavored to explain the anti Union Board movement purely in terms of internal factional rivalries and personal antagonisms, a quest for mobility and status, and an appetite for power.<sup>10</sup>

Birendranath was also a champion of National Education. He felt that education should be made free and imparted to all irrespective of caste and creed. Sasmal founded a national school at Contai.<sup>11</sup> By December ,political unrest in urban Bengal reached a climax on the issue of the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. Birendranath along with great leaders like Chittaranjan Das, Abul Kalam Azad and Subhas Chandra Bose and others were arrested on 10 December on the charge of organizing the boycott. He was sentenced to six months simple imprisonment. Azad writes that "The Government retaliated by arresting leaders throughout county. In Bengal, Mr. C. R. Das and I were among the first to be arrested. Subhas Chandra Bose and Birendra Nath Sasmal also joined us in prison. We were

all placed in the European ward of the Alipur Central Jail which became a centre for political discussion.’’<sup>12</sup> In jail Birendranath came in touch with great leaders like Chittaranjan Das, Abul Kalam Azad and Subhas Chandra Bose. In jail he wrote an autobiography *Sroter Trina*. The time which Sasmal described in *Sroter Trina* that is the turbulent phase of nationalist politics. The political ideology of Sasmal and his immense love for his motherland has been reflected in *Sroter Trina*. While he was in prison, his advice was sought by the leaders of the Congress, particularly by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, when he opened up negotiations in Calcutta with Lord Reading for a round table Conference to discuss and settle the terms of the future constitution of India and the fate of the interned prisoners. <sup>13</sup> Birendra Nath had deep respect about his political guru Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. In this connection Birendranath remarked about Chittaranjan *‘Tar Atuloniya O Abutapurba Swarthy Tyager Drishtante, Dur Theke Gopone Take Namaskar Karechilam’*<sup>14</sup> Birendra Nath had also deep admiration for Subhas Chandra Bose. In this connection he remarked about Subhas *‘Murtiman Sebabrata’*<sup>15</sup>. Subhas Chandra Bose and Birendra Nath Sasmal had been made co-accused in the same case, and both had to suffer the agony of a uselessly long trial. After his release from jail, Sasmal assisted Chittaranjan Das in organizing the Bengal Provincial Swarajya party and became its Secretary. Birendranath was also elected the whip of the party in the Legislative Council. After the success of Anti-Union Board movement Birendranath was very much popular among the people of Midnapur. He had now shifted his attention towards district board. In 1923, Birendra Nath elected as chairman of Medinipur District Board. Birendranath worked for the development for Midnapore. His main concern was -a. Protection of health. b. Supply of water. c. Spreading of education. d. Development of roads. The following table shows the successful chairmanship of Birendra Nath Sasmal. <sup>16</sup>

**During The Time of Birendranath Sasmal For Water**

1923 A.D	Rs.25,000	Rs.18,458
1924 A.D	Rs.23,000	Rs.18,458

### For Road, Utilization

1923 A.D	Rs.13,500	Rs.8,854
1924 A.D	Rs.19,500	Rs.11,889

Birendra Nath Sasmal aspired to be the Chief Executive of the Calcutta Corporation. The conspiracy about Sasmal and factionalism within the congress was evident in the newspaper of Capital. In this connection we recall here a statement which is been published in 1<sup>st</sup> may,1924, “On the Command of Mr. C. R. Das , the Mayor, the Swarajists in the Calcutta Corporation at the meeting last week elected Mr.Subhas Chandra Basu, his well-behaved discipline ,as chief Executive Officer on Rs, 1,5000 Per mensem. There have been many faces played in the Hall of Calcutta Corporation, but none so droll as this. It had been originally decided by the Swarajist causes to reward the services of Mr. Sasmal with the glittering job of chief Executive Officer. Later on it was discovered that his preferment would offend the ‘Kayastha clique’, a risk Boss-Dass could not afford to run. So the strong man of Midnapore was pushed out of the way to make room for the Ex-Civil servant who boldly left the celestials to become a non-co-operator.”<sup>17</sup> The internal contradiction between Deshabandhu and Sasmal was a tragic event of Bengal politics.The factionalism within the Swarajya party was led to rift between Deshabandhu and Sasmal.In 14.1.1926, the letter of Motilal Nehru was a great evidence in this connection. Motilal Nehru remarked that,

*‘I am surprised that you who in the words of Deshabandhu,quoted by you, are expected to lead Bengal should allow yourself to be so perturbed at the threats of mischief –makers as to think of retiring from the Executive.’*<sup>18</sup>

Prafulla Chandra Roy was very much anguished about the overthrow of Sasmal from Calcutta Corporation and sadly remarked that,

*“Swarajya Daler Ki Abhisandhi Chilo Jani Na.Apnake Coolly Ignore Karla.”*<sup>19</sup>The sole point was that the crisis was the tripartite contest between Birendra Nath Sasmal, Subhas Chandra Bose and J.M.Sengupta for the domination of Calcutta Corporation. Whether caste or any other aspects as such catalytically ruined Sasmal’s chance of becoming the chief executive officer of the Corporation was an overrated subject, still a

question of mark could definitely be put before the entire episode as why Chittaranjan Das had shifted his stand when Sasmal was pushed back and why he failed to give any satisfactory answer to Sasmal when was asked for some justifications for the humiliation he passed off.<sup>20</sup>

Sasmal was elected President of the Krishnagar session of the BPCC in 1926. But his remarks about terrorism and violence in the Presidential Address led to the passing of a motion of no-confidence against him. With the censuring of Sasmal from the presidentship of the BPCC the fate of Bengal pact was sealed. Birendranath Sasmal was thrown out the political scenario from the Krishnagar Conference of the Bengal Congress. Here he voted for the Bengal pact and took an anti terrorist stand. We think that J. Gallagher's opinion on Sasmal's departure that muffed background of Sasmal was responsible for his overthrow from Bengal Congress by the upper caste bhadralok leadership of Calcutta.<sup>21</sup> An anti-Muslim group gained the dominant voice in the BPCC and in protest Sasmal, his friends and the Muslim member's resigned. During the civil disobedience movement of 1930, while serving as a member of the non-official committee appointed to enquire into the atrocities perpetrated by the Midnapore administration, he courted arrest. Magistrate ordered that "The presence of Mr. Sasmal has always been a source of excitement and encouragement to the illiterate masses who look up to him for inspiration, lead, guidance."<sup>22</sup> The statement clearly shows the fearness of British about Sasmal. During the time of Midnapore partition. Birendranath played an important role and vehemently protested against it. It has been said that in 1913, the Bengal Government decided to divide Midnapore. But it was only through the endeavours of Sasmal that the Government was compelled to withdraw the proposal of Midnapore partition by strong mass-agitation. Openly for administrative reason, but covertly for a political one, Midnapore District was proposed to be divided into two. The southern part of the district including contain was to be named Hijli District and Kharagpur was to be the administrative center. Birendranath toured from one end of the region to another and organized the protest movement. Again in 1931, the Government engineered a heinous plot to divide the revolutionary district of Midnapore. But Birendranath boldly started mass movement from one end to another. In successive issues of the advance an

English daily published from Calcutta, he wrote several articles against the partition which he published as a pamphlet 'Midnapore Partition'. However, the Bengal Government was at last compelled to withdraw the proposal. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Birendranath asserted in every meeting- 'I won't allow any Government to cut off any limb of mother Bengal. If it occur over my dead body.' Birendranath stated that "Midnapur refuses amalgamation with Orissa to a man. There is no cultural and linguistic unity between the two."<sup>23</sup> The Midnapore partition plan was withdrawn.

One aspect of the Changing political scene in Bengal can be highlighted by focusing upon the consequences of the passing of the Tenancy Act of 1928 in Contai subdivision of southwestern Bengal.<sup>24</sup> From June 1929, Birendranath Sasmal, who had earlier resigned from active Congress politics after his differences with the BPCCL leadership in Calcutta, advertised for several weeks in Nihar<sup>25</sup> his wish to hold meetings at different places in Contai in order to inform people about the implications of the Tenancy Act. This unusual method of organizing meetings itself suggested that Birendranath did not have the support of the organization on this matter. A letter from 'An Inhabitant of Patashpur' to Nihar<sup>26</sup> put the question quite bluntly: 'The ordinary tenants of Midnapore have been greatly harmed by the new Tenancy Act. In October, Birendranath held a meeting in Contai where he criticized the Swarajya Party for having sided with the government in passing the Act.

Birendra Nath was against terrorism and believed that the surreptitious activities of the terrorists would lead them astray. However, he admired the courage and sacrifice of the young revolutionaries and held a brief for those involved in Chittagong case, needless to say, without taking any fee. In connection with the attack on the Armoury, Ananta Singha, Loknath Ball, Ganesh Ghosh, Ambika Chakraborty and others were arrested. Bar-at-law Birendranath went to Chittagong and pleaded in favour of the accused. Again in 1932, Douglas murder case too, he defended the cause of the accused. Later Birendranath joined the Calcutta Conference held under the auspices of the congress Nationalist party to oppose Ramsay MacDonald's 'Communal Award'. He was totally against the communal Award and advocated the message of Hindu-Muslim Unity. By Birendranath and



Debendra Lal Khan's initiative, a Midnapore worker Association was founded in 1933. The working agenda of the Association as follows:

1. To work related with the social, political and economic at the grass root district level.
2. To build up an unity and brotherhood among the district workers.
3. To help the poor political workers of district level.
4. To abide by the ideals of Indian National Congress.<sup>27</sup>

In 1934, at the request of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Birendranath led Bengal Nationalist party.<sup>28</sup> In the election, Birendra Nath had won it by ninety-five percent majority despite strong opposition from the Congress. In November 19,1934, on his way from Midnapore to Calcutta, Birendranath was attacked with thrombosis and became senseless. He was taken to his Calcutta residence where he passed away on the 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1934. According to his direction, written in a will, his dead body was burnt with his head held up towards the blue sky at keoratala Burning Ghat on the Ganges.

Birendranath was a victim of narrow interest of politicians of Bengal. In this connection we think the statement of Rajat Kanta Ray regarding Sasmal is very much relevant. He writes that Sasmal was a fine patriot but lacked in the qualities of diplomatic fineness and urbanity.<sup>29</sup> The Big Five i.e. (Sarat Chandra Basu, Tulsicharan Goswami, Nirmal Chandra Chunder, Bidhan Chandra Roy and Nalini Ranjan Sarkar) of Bengal politics had tried to utilize the Birendra Nath for their own self interest. In this connection Birendranath sadly told Nripendra Banerjee, a nationalist of his time "politics had become a sorry pastime of the unscrupulous rich and that he would stage a comeback after amassing lakh."<sup>30</sup> His self-sacrifice, truthfulness and patriotism which are the true inspiration for the valueless society of our time. 'Sroter Trina' (A straw in the Stream) which he wrote when he was in jail in 1921, may reveal his love for and concern about people. He said,

"For whom shall I live  
If not for the people?  
I'm born of the people

Trusted by the people  
I'll die for the people.”<sup>31</sup>

He was a man of liberal views, clear vision and also dedicated to the cause of people. In the light of the above, he was called as a brightest star of India's freedom struggle.

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## The Rise of *Kashmiriyat*: A Discourse on Invoking national Ism In kashmir (1931-47)

VISHAL BALORIA  
Research Scholar  
Department of History  
University of Jammu  
Jammu , J & K India

### **Abstract**

*This paper is an attempt to study the role of Kashmiriyat in invoking nationalism in Kashmir. This study further scrutinizes political and cultural deployment of a Kashmiri regional identity, Kashmiriyat, purportedly overriding religious divisions in political discourse of Kashmir. This paper reveals how Sheikh Abdullah, considered by many as father of Kashmiri nationalism, constructed a new constitutive story, Kashmiriyat that redefined existing national identities. This study further highlights that, despite the growth of nationalist politics, the votaries of Kashmiriyat never lost the sight of their religious affiliations and how it was used only to sustain majority nationalism. Moreover this study further shows that if at all, there existed something like Kashmiriyat, it remained subservient to the dictates of the radical elements.*

Nationalist discourse is characterized by a unified and cohesive vision of the nation's past, aimed at papering over internal differences, conflicts and contradictions in not only the nation's history, but also the history of nationalist movement that brings its corollary, the nation

state, into existence. In the case of Kashmir, the Indian and Kashmiri nationalist discourse have both converged to define Kashmiri history and cultural identity in terms of a concept widely known as *Kashmiriyat*.<sup>75</sup> Erroneously identified as secular conceptualization of regional nationalism, this identity relied on building bridges, at particular historical moments, across religiously defined communities, to evoke a tradition of culturally based regional coexistence.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore *Kashmiriyat*, the celebrated symbol of Kashmiri nationalism was entirely absent in political discourse of Kashmir up to 1930's.

The concept of Kashmiri nationalism began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a response to *Dogra* rulers, who was viewed as foreigners. Sheikh Abdullah<sup>77</sup>, considered by many as father of Kashmiri nationalism, constructed a new constitutive story known as *Kashmiriyat*, which redefined existing national identities that were previously delineated along religious and ethnic boundaries. The evocation of *Kashmiriyat* was given currency in Kashmir politics precisely from bedrock of religious affiliations. It was imbued with religious notions, even if not constrained by communally rigid boundaries.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore Kashmiri nationalist emphasized both the validity of *Kashmiriyat* as political identity, and the legitimacy of the national conference led by the sheikh Abdullah as a representative of the *Kashmiriyat*.

The concept of *Kashmiriyat* and events of 1931, both have pride of place in Kashmiri nationalist narrative. However both are diametrically opposed to each other. While on one side the *Kashmiriyat* signifies the unique Kashmiri identity and nationalism, the events of 1931 blatantly contradict this. The religious harmony that *Kashmiriyat* so proudly claims as its inheritance was nowhere in evidence during the events of 1931, nor

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1 Chitralekha Zutshi, *Language of Belongings: Islam Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2003, p. 2.

2 Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2004, p. 295.

3 Abdullah's ancestors were Hindu pandit who had converted to Islam. Abdullah had done his masters in chemistry but left the job after his satisfaction in the job under government.

4 M. Rai, op. cit. p. 225.

in the discourse generated their aftermath.<sup>79</sup> The celebrated symbol of Kashmiri identity was entirely absent in political discourse of this tumultuous period. Moreover the Kashmiri nationalism memory of the past is reflected through rose tinted glasses in which Kashmir appear as unique region where religious communities lived in harmony without religious differences. Needless to say, if true, this portrayal makes it difficult to account for many instances of strained relations between Hindus and Muslims, finally taking a violent turn in 1931.

At this point Sheikh Abdullah was trying to emerge as a leader of Kashmiri Muslims, which would enable him to stake a claim to represent the whole state. But to achieve this objective he faced two challenges. On one hand he had to confront the radical elements in Muslim Conference and on the other he had to meet the challenge produced by the Hindus of Jammu region. And when the discourse on common citizenship did not produce a consensus due to the entrenched religious identity, *Kashmiriyat* was conveniently used to sustain majority nationalism. It was in this background that *Kashmiriyat* was devised by the Sheikh Abdullah.<sup>80</sup> It enabled him to achieve two objectives. In addition to taking care of political contradiction within the state, it also helped him to win support of liberal democrats within congress. Writing about the concept of *Kashmiriyat*, C. Zutshi mentions that “It didn’t emerge from the soil of Kashmir, it was a product of collusion of Kashmiri and Indian nationalism, both of which need to obscure the inner contradiction.”<sup>81</sup>

So by 1931 the valley was in the grip of a full blown political movement of resistance against the *Dogra* maharaja that invoked the notion of *Kashmiriyat*. The key aspect of the development of this constitutive story was defining the historical enemies of the community. The subjugation of Kashmiri people to the *Dogra* rule allowed the Kashmiri nationalist, an opportunity to cast the *Dogra* as foreign oppressors. However while formulating this conceptualization of the Kashmiri national identity; Sheikh Abdullah was unable to incorporate Jammu Muslims and

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5 C. Zutshi, op. cit. p. 211.

6 Colonel Tej K Tikoo, *Kashmir: its Aborigines and Their Exodus*, Lancer Publishers, New Delhi, 2013, p. 178.

7 C. Zutshi, op. cit. p. 258.

Hindus into this constitutive story as the *Kashmiriyat* emphasized only the shared bonds between Kashmiri Muslims and pandits only.<sup>82</sup>

Throughout 1932 and 1933, the Muslim conference led by Sheikh Abdullah used newly sanctioned press to conduct propaganda against the dominance of Kashmiri pandits. The language used was uncompromising in its condemnation of the pandit community. Suggestions were made that the Kashmiri pandits by nature was an enemy of the Muslims and that there was as many kinds of pandit as snakes, with the difference that the bite of snake would not prove fatal.<sup>83</sup> In another speech delivered by Sheikh Abdullah in Traspura town, he declared that "the task of the Muslims conference and the Muslims was to turn out the Hindus from the valley, who from times past had been giving trouble to Muslims, and exhorted the crowd to take revenge."<sup>84</sup> Thus in actuality the votaries of Kashmiriyat never lost the sight of their religious affiliations.

However from these early days of unconstrained criticism of the Dogra rule and its pandit allies, Sheikh Abdullah political rhetoric took a new turn roughly around mid-1930. Accordingly from late 1933, the Kashmiri Muslim leadership began the gradual articulation of the agenda and discourse of movement in clearly national terms, one that addressed the issue of Kashmiri nation as a whole. This led Sheikh Abdullah to tone down some of the anti-Hindu oratory.<sup>85</sup> Hence in an ironic reversal of roles it was the Kashmiri Muslims represented by Abdullah who were now flying the flag of regional nationalism and attempts were made to persuade non-Muslims to join their struggle so as to give it a nationalistic outlook. They painted the Muslim role in 1931 incidents, which pandits viewed with rancor, in nationalist colors.<sup>86</sup> They declared events of 1931 as a spontaneous movement by the unemployed youth.

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8 Balraj Puri, "Kashmiriyat: The Vitality of the Kashmiri Identity", *Contemporary South Asia* 4, No. 1, 1995, p. 3

9 Publication in the *Tarjuman* of articles against the Kashmiri pandits, Political Department, 1932, File no. 249/PP-10, JKA.

10 Delivery of a seditious speech delivered by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, Political Department, 1933, File no. 31, JKA.

11 M. Rai, op. cit. p. 278.

12 C. Zutshi, op. cit. p. 252.

Accordingly after 1934, the Sheikh Abdullah led Muslim conference took two key decisions. First was re-approachment with Kashmiri pandits and accordingly in 1935, sheikh Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz, the left leaning pandit, started an Urdu newspaper, Hamdard as standard bearer of unity of all Kashmiris.<sup>87</sup> . Meanwhile he reprimanded pandits that no government in Kashmir could be possible without the Muslim consent and a satisfaction of their demands. Predictably few Kashmiri pandit were willing to flock to the side of national conference. This contested identity in term of the “us” and the “them”, of the Muslims and the Hindus, had to be accepted before coexistence would be possible in Kashmir.

And second was renaming Muslim Conference as ‘All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference’ in 1939, the bearer of the majoritarian nationalist ideology.<sup>88</sup>The expansion from a Muslim conference to the National Conference necessitated the creation of constitutive story known as *Kashmiriyat*, which posited that Hindus and Muslim in the Kashmir region shared a distinct Kashmiri identity. In its early stages from 1931-1939, Kashmiri nationalism was not originally a national movement but rather a Muslim political movement designed to correct perceived inequities of the past under *Dogra* government. Kashmiri nationalist emphasized the validity of *Kashmiriyat* as a political identity and the legitimacy of the national conference as a representative of *Kashmiriyat*. Thus competing narratives emphasizing religion as the primary basis of loyalty forced Kashmiri nationalist to redefine previous conceptualization of Kashmiri identity to include non-Muslims also for political gains.

Sheikh Abdullah and the Kashmiri nationalist spread the idea of *Kashmiriyat* through a combination of newspaper, articles political rallies, etc. Selected cultural fragments were collected from an imagined pasts to lend credence to *Kashmiriyat*, so that it would draw both Muslims and pandit,<sup>89</sup> in nationalist struggle. And to achieve that, the nationalist

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13 Prem Nath Bazaz, *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir, Cultural and Political, from the Earliest Time to the Present Day*, Kashmir Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1954, p. 166.

14 F. M. Hassnain, *Freedom Struggle in Kashmir*, Rima publishing house, New Delhi, 1988, p. 103

15 M. Rai, op. cit. p.284.



movement emphasized on discovery of lost historical texts, most important being Rajatarangini, written in 1149 A.D. through which they traced the history of Kashmiri people over the past 2000 years. However a review of the accepted translation of Rajatarangini appeared in “The journal of the royal Asiatic Society of great Britain and Ireland in 1901 revealed gross chronological inaccuracies in the text, providing further evidence that the idea of Kashmiriyat was an artificial, asymmetrical construction advanced by the national elites.<sup>90</sup>

Prominent writers and historians were also important in advancing the idea of *Kashmiriyat*. Mohammad Din Fauq, a historian, reconciled ethnic differences by arguing that “even the people who came from Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan as late as 600 or 700 years ago were so mixed with Kashmiri Muslims in culture, civilization and matrimonial alliances that all non-Kashmiri traces are completely absent from their life.”<sup>91</sup> Furthermore even Nehru lend credence to the new constitutive story by declaring that, Kashmir dominated the intellectual scene of the country for almost 2000 years,<sup>92</sup> thus helping in mustering the essential Hindu support for the national conference. Thus through this propaganda Abdullah was able to secure support of Muslim leaders and some non-Muslims including the Hindu newspaper Hamdard.<sup>93</sup> Both groups acknowledged the national conference as the voice of Kashmiri identity.<sup>94</sup>

Thus by continually emphasizing on the shared history and culture of all the Kashmiri's, Sheikh Abdullah raised the pitch of this Kashmiri identity, *Kashmiriyat*, to new heights in order to subdue religious edge of the identity.<sup>95</sup> It was essentially an integrational myth that traced the

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16 E.J. Rapson, “Kalhana Rajatarangini: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir by M.A. Stein,” review of kalhana’s Rajatarangini by M. A. Stein, *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Britain and Ireland* (April 1901), p. 357.

17 G.M.D.Sufi, *Kashmir*, Light and Life Publishers, New Delhi, 1974, p. 696.

18 Balraj Puri, *op.cit.* p. 4.

19 Iffat Malik, *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict and International Dispute*, Oxford university press, Oxford, 2002, p. 51.

20 Sumit Ganguly, “Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency: Political Mobilization and Institutional Decay,” *International Security* 21, no. 2, 1996, p. 94.

21 Riyaz Punjabi, “Kashmir Imbroglia: The Socio-Political Roots,” *Contemporary South Asia* 4, No 1, 1995, p. 39.

history of Kashmiri people over 2000 years and proclaimed the shared culture and history of the Kashmiri people as an intrinsic part of their identity.

However by continuously emphasizing on *Kashmiriyat*, instead of Islam, as the basis of political loyalty, the national conference alienated some of its members particularly led by Yousuf Shah who believed that “any political organization that represented the Muslims had to reflect their religious identity.”<sup>96</sup> and hence they subscribed to ideology of Jinnah and the Muslim League. So it was also to combat the influence of Yousuf Shah and Muslim conference, earlier the parent organization of national conference, Kashmiri nationalist continuously emphasized on *Kashmiriyat*, religious syncretism and tolerance, as an essential component of the unique shared culture and history of the Kashmiri people.

Although the discourse was geared towards articulating a nationalist vision for state in terms of a specific Kashmiri identity there was a profound schism between sheikh led national conference discourse and practice, implicit since 1930, which vitiated its narrative on *Kashmiriyat*. The trend within Muslim conference to present a nationalist ideology in mid-1930 did not imply that religion as a marker of identity was relegated to background. Undoubtedly the expression of a national ideology for most of the leadership did not imply an alienation from their religious affiliation, which after all formed the basis of their political support. Local National conference leaders framed issues in term of communitarian differences. For instance the off repeated charge that people of other religions were trying to rob Muslims and Muslim stood to gain nothing from their undue friendship with Hindus.<sup>97</sup> Therefore although the national conference propounded a secular philosophy, its regime unabashedly used religion as a tool of legitimacy.

Moreover if sheikh succeeded in introducing the idea of a Kashmiri nation into the political discourse of Kashmir, he certainly failed to translate this into concrete politics in 1940's. It was because Abdullah struggled to reconcile his religious affiliations with his national stance.

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22 Iffat Malik, op. cit. p. 22.

23 Meeting of the Muslim Conference at Tajpore, February 1, 1934, Political Department 188/PS-7/1934, Jammu State Archives.

Also National Conference discourse conflated religion and nation, which struck an uneasy alliance between the religious and nationalist identities.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore the popularity of his organization dwindled as it moved from the Islamic ideals and instead began to focus on the undefined ideas of nationalism that specifically disparaged religious identities.

Therefore by 1940 several minorities at the front of the nationalist struggle separated themselves from it, accusing the leadership of following a brand of majority nationalism that did not address the demands of the minorities.<sup>99</sup> So nationalism of national conference has come under fire in 1940's from various fronts for being devoid of a revolutionary agenda and also because it became evident to the Kashmiri's that a decade of political agitation has yielded nothing but sufferings.

Despite these critiques National Conference presented Kashmiri nationalism as an all-encompassing entity. But it was becoming clear that discourse on nationalism was not successful in eliding over the more entrenched religious affiliations. Therefore as the majority and minority dilemma threatened to bring down the foundation of Kashmiri nationalism, Sheikh Abdullah turned increasingly to the constitutive story, *Kashmiriyat*, to provide sustenance to rapidly crumbling national edifice.<sup>100</sup>

The movement of Abdullah political rhetoric, from religious affiliations to the nation, did not go uncontested. Despite his evocation of *Kashmiriyat* into the politics of Kashmir, the issue of religious affiliations continued to inform the political discourse of this period. The National Conference resorted to homogenizing the discourse of *Kashmiriyat* to paper over the widespread discontent prevalent within in the Kashmir society.<sup>101</sup> Thus the concept of *Kashmiriyat* was a neat way to propagate the idea of a peaceful coexistence of religious communities, as the more entrenched religious affiliations was much squarely located within this and hence it also allowed for an expression of Kashmiri religious aspirations.

Therefore to insist that Kashmiri identity, *Kashmiriyat*, defined as harmonious blending of religious cultures, has remain an unchanged and

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24 M. Rai, op. cit. p. 260.

25 C. Zutshi, op. cit. p. 257.

26 ibid. p. 257.

27 ibid. p. 329.

integral part of Kashmiri history over the centuries is a historical fallacy. It was a state endorsed Kashmiri nationalist identity, that was articulated in political discourse of Kashmir and Sheikh Abdullah came to be recognized as the Secular voice of this Kashmiri nationalist identity. However the votaries of Kashmiriyat never lost the sight of their religious affiliations and it was only used to sustain majority nationalism. Moreover this concept of *Kashmiriyat* has become a vague concept in modern days and has an uncertain future, particularly because the events of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have sharpened the communal identities in all the regions of the state.



## **AN OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BRITISH INDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON MODERN INDIAN EDUCATION**

DR. PREETY AGARWAL

Associate Professor of Teacher Education

D. A.V. PG College

Muzaffarnagar U.P. India

### **Abstract**

*Having assessed the utility and the efforts of the English educational system, we have now to consider its defects. The English system was introduced in India at a time when the country was under political serfdom and the relation between the English and the Indian people was that of the ruler and the ruled. It would not at all be wrong to affirm that the British never tried for the progress and advancement of Indians from that point of view which they would have adopted for their own country. The English system of education did not produce any direct or ostensible benefit; in fact, it proved beneficial only indirectly. Form the view point of quantitative development of education, we find that during the last 150 years this system could give education only to 15 per cent of the country's population this figure stands no comparison with those of other countries. The Promoters of the System had no Intention to do any Good to the Indian People. The Paper talks about various facts about education in British India followed by its impact on modern Indian education system.*

That educational system can be called suitable which helps in all-round development of the individual, the society and the nation. Some critics think that from this point of view the English system was useless, and this again, was the reason why the people did not adopt it. There was no room for the spirit of self-reliance in this system. Most of the British rulers thought that the education which inculcated the spirit of self-reliance would create in the Indians the feeling of independence and liberty and they tingled with awe at the much thought. Their object was to keep India in their clutches in order to destroy its accumulated glory, to plunder its wealth and thus to show off to other countries of the world their own glory and prosperity. Their educational system catered to this. The ideals of English education system were undoubtedly nefarious but along with this the methods adopted for its dissemination were also bad. As a result of its propagation of old schools like Vidyapith, Pathshala, Madarsas and Maktabas which catered to the needs of the Indians were destroyed root and branch. Another serious defect was the downward filtration theory which unnecessarily prolonged the period of education. Consequently, this system of education could not be widely propagated and it remained confined to a particular class. In this system English was made the medium at the cost of the Indian languages. It proved useful at the university level, but it became an unnecessary burden on the immature minds of the students of lower classes. Consequently, other languages became the scapegoat of English and the opportunities were also rare for acquiring new knowledge.

The British colonial rule in India is generally divided into three stages: first stage (1757-1813), second stage (1813-1860) and third stage (1860 onwards). The upper- and middle-class Indians soon acknowledged that in Britain's standards, their country was indeed backward economically and socially. Many of its leaders conformed to western models of economic modernity while others went for its reconciliation with eastern concepts, hence the Anglicanist-Orientalist debate. The Mahatma Gandhi however was critical of how "backwardness" was defined and contextualized because of its cultural implications and favored an Indian interpretation of the term. In view of its civilizing mission, the British introduced an education system to tame India's savage and brutish practices and eradicated superstitions and religious beliefs which were deemed barbaric.

Intellectually, the British found the native mind "dull" and "inferior", Before any literary instruction could be had, the British considered it crucial to raise the intellectual level of the Indians. While it may be acknowledged that this civilizing mission was first and foremost a self-legitimation of colonial rule, the effects of such a mission deserve to be acknowledged. Much of what India enjoys now in terms of literacy and education was a byproduct of that civilizing mission. The process of civilizing the "savage Indians" however took a long and arduous path. This paper explores the development of educational policy under British rule, the experiences of British colonial educators, as well as the impact of British colonial education. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What educational policies were introduced in India during British occupation?
2. What were the experiences of British colonial educators during this time?
3. What was the impact of British education on India?

### **INFLUENCE OF BRITISH EDUCATION**

It Created a Gulf between the Educated and Uneducated and between the Old and the new education system. Another serious defect of the system was that it had the same ideals for its 'implementation in India as it had for England irrespective of the fact that there was a world of difference between the social, economic, floral and cultural conditions of the two countries. Hence this system of education could not prove beneficial to India. The main reason behind the indifference of the British towards Indian condition was their intense dislike or hatred for India and they were undoubtedly wrong, yet they were after all the land. This very feeling proved later on the cause of their own going away from India, but even before the awakening of India, it produced a class of Anglo-Indians who were English in ways of living but were Indians to all intents and purposes. Thus this system, instead of bringing about synthesis of Eastern and Western culture, created a wide gulf between the education and the uneducated, and the old and the new. If, on the contrary, Eastern spiritualism and Western materialism could have been synthesized with the

practical sense of England and the spirit of detachment of the East, respectively, ways of a new knowledge would have retired in the world.

### **THE ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM DID NOT INSPIRE ANY RECONSTRUCTION**

Being Government-centered, English education was adopted by the wealthy classes only. It was overridden by the administrative machinery and as such the commonality could not adopt it. This educational system also worked on the principle of 'divide and rule' so much so that it ostensibly aimed at the splitting up of the Indian nation. Hence this system was totally devoid of the feelings of reform and reconstruction and it remained incapable of turning out good citizens for the country and the society as a whole. In this way, it simply helped in the consolidation of the British rule and had no concern for the reconstruction of the country. It was difficult to draw from this system any inspiration for reconstruction, nevertheless some sparks were ignited by this very system and these later on flared up into a conflagration.

### **NEGLECT OF EDUCATION BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTERS**

Education department was not given much regard and attention during the British rule and the emoluments of the officers of this department were lesser than those of other departments. It was due to this that Englishmen of low caliber were appointed on these posts from whom no help in the progress of education could be expected. This department was put under the control of a minister who did the work of his department during his leisure hours in a very careless and casual manner thus the education of the Indians continued to be overlooked and neglected during the British regime. There were also some competent and capable persons like Grant, Michael, and Sadler but apart from these there was no other officer in the department who could manage the work efficiently. This was the reason why the education department could not get the co-operation of others.

### **DIFFERENT POLICIES WERE FOLLOWED BY DIFFERENT OFFICERS**

The British Government did not give necessary attention to organizing Indian education in a good manner and no well planned scheme could be formulated for its implementation and dissemination. Different policies were adopted and followed according to the whims of the different officers. After the transfer of one officer the other one adopted his own methods. Due to these recurring changes in the policies and methods of the



department the education of India could not make any progress, nay it declined day by day.

### **EDUCATION POLICY UNDER BRITISH RULE**

The British took a keen interest in introducing the English language in India. They had many reasons for doing so. Educating Indians in the English language was a part of their strategy. The Indians would be ready to work as clerks on low wages while for the same work the British would demand much higher wages. This would reduce the expenditure on administration. It was also expected to create a class of Indians who were loyal to the British and were not able to relate to other Indians. This class of Indians would be taught to appreciate the culture and opinion of the British. In addition, they would also help to increase the market for British goods. They wanted to use education as a means to strengthen their political authority in the country. They assumed that a few educated Indians would spread English culture to the masses and that they would be able to rule through this class of educated Indians. The British gave jobs to only those Indians who knew English thereby compelling many Indians to go in for English education. Education soon became a monopoly of the rich and the city dwellers.

The British Parliament issued the Charter Act of 1813 by which a sum of Rupees One lakh was sanctioned for promoting western sciences in India. But a controversy soon arose. Some wanted the money to be spent on advocating western ideas only. There were others who placed more emphasis on traditional Indian learning. Some recommended use of vernaculars (regional languages) as the medium of instruction, others were for English. In this confusion people failed to notice the difference between English as a medium and English as a subject for study. The British, of course, decided in favor of teaching western ideas and literature through the medium of English language alone. Another step in this direction was the Woods Despatch of 1854. It asked the Government of India to assume responsibility for the education of the masses. As part of the directive given by the Woods Despatch, Departments of Education were instituted in all provinces and Affiliated Universities were opened in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857. A few English schools and colleges were opened instead of many elementary schools. They ignored the education of the masses. But

in reality, it was not sufficient to cater to the needs of the Indian people. Though the British followed a half-hearted education policy in India, English language and western ideas also had some positive impact on the society. Many reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Swami Vivekananda absorbed western ideas of liberalism and democracy and used it to reform some of the non-humanitarian social and religious practices of the time. Though education did not reach the masses but some ideas of anti-imperialism, nationalism, social and economic equality took root through political parties, discussions and debates on public platform and the press. The spread of English language and western education helped Indians to adopt modern, rational, democratic, liberal and patriotic outlook. New fields of knowledge in science, humanities and literature open to them. English became the lingua franca of the educated people in India. It united them and gradually made them politically conscious of their rights. It also gave opportunity to the Indians to study in England and learn about the working of democratic institutions there.

#### **EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN INDIA UNDER THE BRITISH RULE**

The development of education system during the British period was determined by the needs of the colonial powers. However the attitude of the British to education when they came to Bengal was one of the differences, and this was naturally so since India was yet to be a British colony and they were not yet the representatives of the British Crown. They were the employees of a great commercial concern called the East India Company. The Head quarter of the Company were located at London and consisted of twenty four Directors, who used to manage the affairs of the Company abroad. For each of the British establishments in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, they appointed a Governor. After Regulating Act of 1773, the Governor of Calcutta was called the Governor- General and was given supervisory power over the Governors at Bombay and Madrassa. The East India Company became a ruling power in Bengal in 1765. Following the example of the contemporary English Government, the Court of Directors refused to take on itself the responsibility for the education of the people of India and decided to leave education to private effort. However, the Indian officers of the East India Company urged the

Court of Directors to do something for the oriental learning. Some half-hearted efforts were made by the Company's Government to foster oriental learning. Warren Hastings, himself an intellectual, set up the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781 for the study and learning of Persian and Arabic. In 1791 the efforts of Jonathan Duncan, the British resident at Benares, bore fruit and a Sanskrit College was opened at Banaras for the cultivation of laws, literature and religion of the Hindus. These early attempts for the education of the people in oriental languages met with little success. The development of modern system of education in India may be said to have begun with the Charter Act of 1813 which provided through the Section 43 that "a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature.

The Charter Act of 1813, therefore, forms a turning point in the history of Indian education. With it the education of the Indian people was definitely included within the duties of the Company; comparatively large amount was annually secured for educational activities; ... thereby laying the foundation of the modern educational system" (Narullah & Naik, 1943, p. 67).

Consequently, the direction of education remained uncertain during the next 22 years on the following issues:

1. The Medium of Instruction: It could not be decided whether the medium of instruction should be English or Indian Languages.
2. Aim of Education of the British Policy: Whether education should be available to all or should be given to only a selected few.
3. Type of Knowledge: Whether to preserve and promote Oriental learning or to introduce Western knowledge, culture and science.
4. Agency of Education: Whether the Government should assume direct responsibility of educating the Indians or the Indigenous system of education of the country to continue.
5. Role of Missionaries: Whether the missionaries should be given a free hand in their educational practices or should the Company itself shoulder the total responsibility.

The vagueness of the clause 43 of the Charter Act of 1813 intensified the Oriental and Occidental educational controversy in India. One group was of the Orientalists who wanted the promotion of Indian education through

the medium of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian whereas the other group was of Anglicists who were in favour of developing western education in India through the medium of English. This fund was kept unspent till 1823 due to the controversy. As a result of the Orientalist-Anglicist controversy, the spread of education in India was halted until 1835, when Macaulay's Resolution provided a somewhat clear picture of the British education policy. In the words of Kochhar (1982), the General Committee of Public Instruction was guided by two principles:

- a) It wanted to win the confidence of the educated and influential classes, by encouraging the learning and literature that they respected.
- b) As the funds at the disposal of the Committee were quite inadequate, it would be best to apply the funds to the higher education of the upper classes as distinguished from the general elementary education of the masses. These people were of the opinion that if leaders were educated, their education would naturally 'filter down' to the masses (pp. 67).

Ultimately Macaulay in his Minutes of 1835 instituted an education policy in support of the British Raj which denigrated Indian languages and knowledge, established the hegemonic influence of English as medium of colonial 'instruction' (not education) and used the ploy of limitation of resources to "form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect ..." (Chennai Declaration, 2012).

Lord William Bentinck (1828-1838) endorsed the Minute by writing one line beneath it, "I give entire concurrence to the sentiments expressed in the Minute" He passed the Resolution of March 1835 which was the first declaration of the British Government in the sphere of education in India. The Resolution of March 1835 eventually determined the aim, content and medium of instruction in India. Promotion of Western science and arts was acknowledged as the avowed object of the British Government in India. (Chand, 2007:8 and Sharma & Sharma, 2012:84).

Ultimately Bentinck was greatly influenced by the views of Macaulay. Bentinck's proclamation gave birth to the following results in Indian education:

- The aims of education in India were determined by the British.
- The promotion of Western arts and sciences was acknowledged as the avowed object.
- The printing of oriental works was to be stopped.
- New grants or stipends to students of oriental institutions were to be stopped in future.
- The medium of education would be English.

This proclamation promised to supply Government with English educated Indian servants cheap but capable at the same time. In the beginning of 19th century the British rulers' thoughts that in order to run the British rule in India peacefully, it is essential to make higher classes blind followers of the Government. Woods Despatch, 1854 The Charter Act of the East India Company was to be reviewed in 1853 by the British Parliament. Before doing so, the Court of Directors in England decided to lay down a definite policy in regard to educational matters of India.

#### **THE INDIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION (1882)**

The educational policies during the period of 1854 and 1902 were formulated by two main documents only the Despatch of 1854 and the Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1882. There were reasons that prompted the appointment of the Commission. The Commission recommended the complete withdrawal Government from enterprise and the transfer of all primary schools to the control of local self-government bodies such as municipalities and local boards. Thus it made the Government free from responsibility. With regard to secondary schools and colleges, the Commission was of opinion that the Government should withdraw as early as possible from the direct management of secondary and collegiate education.

The Major Recommendations of the Commission included:

- Encouragement and support to indigenous schools for extending elementary education by declaring elementary education of the masses as the most important priority area in education to which strenuous government efforts should be directed;

- Freedom to the management committees for choosing vernacular language as a medium of instruction depending on the local needs;
- Establishment of secondary schools by the state, for instruction in English based on the system of grant-in aid, and setting up of primary schools with the support of local people;
- Gradual transfer of all government secondary schools to local native Management committees with due consideration of maintenance of standards

And quality of education;

- Bifurcation of secondary education into two streams one leading to the entrance examination of the universities and the other of a more practical character preparing the students for commercial jobs; If we minutely scrutinize the recommendations, we have found the policy of organizing a system based on the happy blending of private and public efforts right from the primary to the university stage. However the Report encouraged Indian private enterprise and awakened public enthusiasm for the cause of education for the first time in India. The Imperial Government accepted all the recommendations except those in connection with religious education as it was considered difficult to take any step in this direction. The main results were

- 1) The transfer of complete control of primary education to Local Boards and Municipalities;
- 2) The state policy of not to open more colleges and secondary schools, though the then existing state institutions of higher education were not actually transferred to private bodies; and
- 3) The recognition of the principle that the missionary enterprise can occupy only a subordinate position in a national system of education.

In pursuance of the recommendation of Indian Education Commission (1882-83), the government considered seriously the ways and means to develop primary education, and technical education at high school stage. The progress of education during the period from 1882-83 to 1901-02 was reviewed during the period of Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India.

## **LORD CURZON'S EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

In 1899 Lord Curzon was appointed Governor General of India. In 1901, Lord Curzon convened at Simla an educational conference attended by a few selected educationists and the Provincial Directors of Public Instruction. The Conference adopted 150 resolutions which touched almost every conceivable branch of education. In pursuance of the Educational Conference at Simla in 1901 and with a view to giving a clear cut direction to Government's activities as well as to private enterprise, the Government passed a Resolution on Indian Educational Policy in 1904, popularly known as Lord Curzon's Educational Policy. The resolution proposed to strengthen secondary education by laying down certain conditions for recognition, funding, and affiliation to the examining universities. The introduction of diversified courses to meet the demands of industrial development was also proposed. The resolution said: As a general rule, a child should not be allowed to learn English language until he has made some progress in the primary stage of education and has received a thorough grounding in his mother tongue. It is equally important that when the teaching of English has begun, it should not be prematurely employed as the medium of instruction in other subjects....The line of division between the use of vernaculars and of English as the medium of instruction should, broadly speaking, be drawn at a minimum age of 13. The Resolution also detailed the chief characteristics of the System of Education in British India:

- 1) Getting government job was the aim of education;
- 2) English was encouraged at the cost of vernacular languages;
- 3) Technical education was neglected;
- 4) Method of instruction encouraged memorization and not developing intellect.

However, this Resolution acknowledged the negligence of the government in providing adequate share of funds for elementary education and agreed with the views of the Report of the Education Commission of 1882 that the active expansion of primary education is one of the active duties of the State.

### **GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION ON EDUCATION POLICY, 1913**

British Government rejected the Gopal Krishna Gokhale's Bill and refused to recognise the principle of compulsory education for paucity of funds;

they promised to extend grants for the widest extension of primary education on a voluntary basis and passed the Resolution on Education Policy on February 21, 1913.

The Resolution advocated three cardinal principles of educational policy:

- The curricula of primary and secondary schools should be made more practical and useful;
- Facilities of higher education should be provided in India so that Indian students may not have to go abroad;
- Instead of increasing the number of existing institutions their standard should be raised (Jain, 2007:7, Biswas & Agarwal, 1994: 41).

#### **CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY COMMISSION (1917-19)**

Calcutta University Commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1917 to inquire into the condition and prospects of Calcutta University under the chairmanship of Dr. Michael Sadler, the Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University. The terms and reference included all aspects of secondary, collegiate and university education.

The major recommendations were-

- Intermediate Classes of the university were to be transferred to Secondary Institutions;
- The duration of under-graduate courses for the first degree should be increased to three years with a provision of Honors courses;
- A Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education should be established for the purpose of reorganizing High School and Intermediate education on the lines recommended by it and for holding the Matriculation and Intermediate examinations;
- The universities should, thus, be left to their proper sphere, namely, the provision of under-graduate and postgraduate education and holding of examination for the first, second and research degrees;
- The universities should have Departments of Education with provision of teaching "Education" as a subject at B.A. level;
- An Inter-University Board (IUB) should be established to coordinate the work of different Indian universities.

It is universally acknowledged that the Commission has widened the greatest influence on Indian university education for thirty years following



its appointment. If we look at present educational scenario in India, we find some of the important features which Sadler Commission already mentioned in its Report. The beginning of introduction of the New Pattern of Education 10+2+3 in 1975 has been hailed as landmark in the reforms of education in India. It may be recalled that the 12 years of schooling and three years of degree course were recommended by the Sadler Commission (1917-1919). In this sense the Sadler Commission may be said to be forerunner of the present national educational structure.

### **EDUCATION UNDER DYARCHY (1921 -1937)**

In 1918 Mr. Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, made thorough inquiries into political problems. In the year 1919, the Government of India passed a resolution known as Government of India Act, 1919, which is otherwise known as Montague-Chelmsford Reform. It was the first time that the British India government had introduced democratic form of government. As a result of the Montague -Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, the Department of Education was transferred to the control of popular ministries in the various provinces. The Central Government ceased to take direct interest in educational matters and the Department of Education in the Government of India was amalgamated with other departments. Above all, the Central special grants for education liberally sanctioned since 1902 was discontinued. Financial difficulties prevented the provincial governments from taking up ambitious schemes of educational expansion or improvement. During this period expansion of education was mostly made by philanthropic effort. Thus Mont-ford Reforms introduced the first step towards provincial autonomy in the Indian Constitution and Education was made a Transferred Subject. But European education was maintained as a Reserved Subject (Mukherji, 1074: 206). The most important thing that happened under Dyarchy System was the rapid development of mass education and the passing of Compulsory Education Acts in most of the provinces. Changes introduced by the 1919 Montague-Chelmsford reforms mark the end of direct colonial responsibility for education.

### **CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD OF EDUCATION (CABE), 1921**

The need for a co-coordinating agency in the matter of education was immediately felt by the Central and Provincial Governments.

Consequently, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was established at the Centre in 1921. The chief function of the Board was to offer expert advice on important education matters referred to it. The Board was a body which might have been of real assistance to Ministers in framing a policy suited to advancing India, and to whom complex problems could be submitted for advice (Government of India, 1929:227). But, in 1923, in a time of financial stress, the Board was abolished without even a reference to provincial Governments as to the advisability of its continuance, and the Bureau of Education was closed CABE was revived in 1935 according to the suggestions of the Hartog Committee, 1929. The first meeting of the reconstituted Board was held in New Delhi on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of December of 1935. The Bureau of Education was also revived in 1937 on the recommendations of the CABE. It was again reconstituted and strengthened in 1945 (Mukherji, 1974:207).

#### **THE HARTOG COMMITTEE, 1929**

According the Report, “Primary education is ineffective, unless it at least produces literacy. On the average, no child who has not completed a primary course of at least four years will be permanently literate”(Hartog Report, 1919: 48). The main conclusion of the report was that the quantitative increase of education inevitably led to deterioration of quality and lowering of standard. Quantity had been gained at the cost of quality and therefore the immediate need was to improve the quality rather than increase the numbers still further. The Committee regarded that the transfer of power from the Central to Provincial Governments had been too sudden. It pointed out the need of establishing a centralizing educational agency at Delhi. In its opinion the transfer of control over primary education to local bodies was not desirable (Mukherji, 1974:213). The Report of the Hartog Committee more or less shaped the educational policy of British Government during the last decades of its existence in India. Words like Wastage and stagnation have become key words in educational terminology, and a policy of expansion initiated since the beginning of the present period was changed into one for consolidation. The Committee highlighted that a policy of expansion resulted in Wastage and Retention and thus weakened the need for a rapid expansion of primary education

irrespective of quality. Briefly speaking, the Report like Macaulay's filtration theory stopped the progress of the growth of primary education.

### **EDUCATION UNDER PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY**

The Provincial Government undertook certain bold experiment such as Wardha Scheme. The main principle of the scheme was 'Learning through Activity'. The Zakir Hussain Committee worked out the details of the scheme and prepared detailed syllabi for a number of crafts. However, the outbreak of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in 1939 and the resignation of Congress ministers in 1940 due to differences that arose between the Congress and the British Government of India over the question of war and peace aims of the Allies led to the postponement of the scheme. During this period, several committees were set up by the Central and Provincial Governments for the purpose of discussing various problems of education in India. The Abbot-Wood Report (1936-1937) pointed out that general education and vocational education were not essentially different branches and that vocational students should have an adequate general education.

### **POST-WAR PLAN OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (1944)**

After the end of Second World War, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in India published a comprehensive report on the "Post-War Educational Development in India" in the country. This was the first systematic and national level attempt to review the problems of education as a whole. It is also known as Sargent Plan after John Sargent, the then Educational Advisor to the Government of India. Surprisingly, the report is not known after its **chairman (Sir Jogindra Singh)**, but it's one of the members of the Committee – John Sargent (the educational advisor to the Government of India). The object of the Plan was to create in India, in a period of not less than forty years, the same standard of educational attainments as had already been admitted in England. It is worth mentioning here that this plan was proposed by the British Government in order to counter the attempts made by leaders of the freedom movement to evolve a National System of Education (such as Wardha Scheme) (Chauhan,2004:37). It recommended:

- pre-primary education for 3-6 years age group; free, universal and compulsory elementary education for 6-11 years age group; high school education for 11-17 years age group for selected children, and

a university course of 3 years after higher secondary; high schools to be of two types (i) academic and (ii) technical and vocational.

- Adequate technical, commercial and arts education with different curricula.
- Abolition of intermediate course.
- Development of adult education and Liquidation of adult illiteracy in 20 years.
- Stress on teachers' training, physical education, education for the physically and mentally handicapped.

Sargent Plan was one of the most comprehensive schemes of education ever proposed by the British Government after the Despatch of 1854. Through this, the government had proposed a detailed outline of the educational programmes to be undertaken by the government during the following 40 years from 1944 to 1984. As the freedom movement was at its full swing those days, this plan could not be implemented because of political turmoil in the country. With India achieving freedom in 1947, this Plan became only a matter of historical significance (Chauhan, 2004:38). The objective was to create within 40 years, the same level of educational attainment as prevailed in England. Although a bold and comprehensive scheme, it proposed no methodology for implementation. Also, the ideal of England's achievements may not have suited Indian conditions. However, hardly had the first steps been taken when the British period in the history of Indian education came to an end on 15th August, 1947. The Sargent Scheme envisaged a 40 – year educational reconstruction plan for the country which was reduced to 16 years by the Kher Committee. In higher education, the Sargent education scheme suggested degree courses that can be completed within three years. The Committee implied that intermediate classes may be done away, with the 11th class added to basic secondary school education and 12th class to tertiary education. Admission rules for students wanting to pursue tertiary education should be strictly imposed. Of the 15 secondary school graduates, only one should be permitted to continue on with university education. To upgrade the standards of university education, the scheme recommended appointing competent and proficient teachers, improving teacher salary grades, and reforming service conditions. The Committee also recommended a closer teacher-student

relationship. Likewise, the scheme suggested appointing University Grants Commission, introducing a tutorial system and improving teaching methods (Sharma and Sharma 2004). Like Hartog, Sargent also stressed the importance of vocational and industrial education. The Committee suggested full- and part-time instructions in fulfilling the requirements of different classes of skilled workers. Those belonging in the higher category for instance research workers, chief executives and the like should pursue education along these fields at the Technological Department of universities or technological institutes, after graduating from a technical high school. Because admission rules are strict, very few shall be admitted to these programs. For lower category workers, for example change-hands, ordinary administrative and executive officers, or foremen, they should be adequately trained in a technical high school and be provided facilities for training in the higher classes. Because skilled craftsmen are necessary workforce in the execution of occupation and industrial schemes, applicants should be at least a graduate of a technical high school. To be eligible for further training in these fields, senior basic school graduates may receive training from a junior technical education. For the semi- and unskilled workers, students who completed their education at senior basic middle schools possessing skills in basic craft are eligible for admission (Sharma and Sharma 2004).

## **CONCLUSION**

On a perusal of these we find that the aim of education adumbrated in these was to produce competent and loyal clerks for the Company and the propagation of western knowledge to expect any good to the individual, society and nation from an educational system with such a narrow outlook is hoping against hope. We can, therefore, say that the English system simply nourished British imperialism and it was not introduced with any idea of the good for the people. All the benefit that accrued there from was the indirect result of the weakness inherent in the system. It was due to these facts that this education did not prove advantageous to the Indians from the point of view of quantitative or qualitative development or even the prosperity of the country.

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## **Historiography of MithiLA Painting**

DR. UMESH KUMAR SINGH  
Assistant Professor  
History of Art Department  
College of Arts and Crafts  
Patna University  
Patna, Bihar India

### **Introduction**

Indian art history has given a rich storage of traditional painting in Indian sub-continent from pre-history to present time. The style of painting differs from region to region and period to period. There is a living tradition in the art field of Bihar that is called Mithilā or Madhubani painting which enlightened about the social structure as well as cultural identity of Bihar and the styles of painting has been changing from generation to generation. Mithilā<sup>1</sup>, also known as Videha or Tirhut, refers to a broader cultural region than a distinct geographic entity. However, in the present times, it includes the districts of Darbhanga, Madhubani, Bhagalpur, Saharsa and Purnea in North Bihar and some districts in the Terai region of Nepal (Map 1).



**Map 1: Mithilā Region**

Painting is an important medium of expression of moods and sentiments. It is the spirit of a people and environment that determines the dominant trend in painting. Painting as an art form was prevalent in Mithilā. Besides the more known and prevalent forms, in the fields of painting Mithilā had two special contributions to her credit:

- (i) Aipana (Alpanā or Aripaṇa)<sup>16</sup> and
- (ii) Kohabara.

Broadly speaking, the art of painting can be divided into two groups' –

- (1) *Bhittī citra* (wall-painting)
- (2) *Bhūmi citra* (floor-painting).

The Aripana belongs to this second group of painting. It is an important folk-art. On almost all auspicious occasions, the women of Mithilā sketch auspicious drawings in the court yard, door front and other places. They draw circular patterns of designs with a white liquid paste of ground rice. In various Aripana designs, painted in various colors Śiva-Pārvaṭī, Viṣṇ-Lakṣmī and various other gods and goddesses are produced with great originality and imagination. It represents the traditional folk art of Mithilā.

The second important aspect of the folk art in Mithilā is known as Kohabara so frequently referred to in the poems of Vidyāpati<sup>2</sup>. Kohabara indicates painting on the wall of a house where newly married couples enter after marriage for their first meeting. This house is specially made at the time of the marriage or a separate room in the house is set apart for the purpose and the walls of that particular room are painted with stories and legends, from folklore and mythology. This painting is done with Gairika, a mineral pigment, i.e., red colour which is taken as auspicious. W.G. Archer<sup>3</sup> styled the wall-paintings of Mithilā as the “Maithila Paintings.” It was W.G. Archer<sup>4</sup> with his perspective curiosity that first drew attention to the mural paintings of the village communities of Mithilā. The outside world has come to know about this painting from the villages of Rāntī and Jitvārapura in the district of Madhubani, and hence these murals have, of late, come to be popularly known as ‘Madhubani Painting’. In fact, the more appropriate name of this school of painting would be Maithila Painting, as suggested by Archer<sup>5</sup>. As regards the origin and antiquity of the Mithilā Paintings it's very difficult to say when this wall-painting (*Bhitti-citra*) actually began. Upendra Thākur<sup>6</sup> writes that the symbolic representations are very much similar to the designs of the Harappan potteries and motifs on punch-marked coins. The story goes that even the Ladies of King Janaka's house hold used to paint on walls. It is said, when Lakṣmaṇa went to the forest along with Rāma and Sītā, his consort Urmilā painted his image on the wall and worshipped it daily.<sup>7</sup>

### **Antiquity of Mithilā Painting**

This art is said to date back to the times of the Ramayana when it is believed Janaka who ruled Mithilā, commissioned artist make painting on the occasion of his daughter Sita to Rama. Origin of this continuity may be traced to the continuous spell of Hindu role in Mithilā from 1097 AD to c1550AD under the *Karnatas* and the *Oinavaras* which continued uninterruptedly under the *Khandavala* dynasty (Darbhanga Raj) till the present day<sup>8</sup>. About the history of Mithilā painting, a famous artist of Mithilā painting associated with Upendra Maharathi Shilpa Sansthan (Patna) Rajkumar Lal\* describes that in around 1934 the place Madhubani

attacked by a big earthquake. In 1960, few members of the All India Handicrafts Board, Delhi came to Madhubani for survey. At that time they attracted by the wall painting of Madhubani. They gave suggestions to some local artisans to paint on cloth and paper in their traditional way. They also encouraged the women of Madhubani for commercial sale. Since then the painting medium has diversified. Wall paintings were transferred to handmade paper of poster size and gradually it praised for other mediums and motifs like greeting cards, dress materials, etc. It is assumed that this was the revolutionary point of Mithilā folk painting. He also said that his grandmother Jagadamba devi was first artist of Mithilā painting who got national award in 1970 and Padma Shree award in 1975 from India Government.

### **Centers of Mithila Painting**

Madhubani is a district of North Bihar situated at a distance of 190 kilometers from Patna city. The village Jitwarpur is around two/three kilometers away from Madhubani Railway station. A big cultural activity of Bihar is traditionally practiced by different community artist like *Bramhan*, *Kayastha* and schedule caste in this village. Jitwarpur village is surrounded by lush green fields, long palm trees and mango gardens of North Bihar. It is completely flat and free from rock or stone. The inner landscape is characterized small brick huts where maximum walls are decorated with ritual design, well natured date trees and mango trees the village is unique one with exquisite natural and artistic beauty which captures viewer's imagination and an ideal atmosphere for research purpose of a researcher in the field of art history in this region. The artisans of Jitwarpur have eagerness to develop and express their own cultural activities in front of the world. Anybody will be surprise to see their skill full ritual decorations and paintings. Madhubani artists are very simple house wives who do not go to any school to learn this painting. Their tradition is going on from generation to generation. In Mithilā the women of all communities are working on these paintings, but the paintings of the women of the *Brahmana* and *Kayastha* communities are unique. Their subject matter and technique is different from schedule caste painters because they are educated then the other caste people. Now a day's about ninety nine percent people of Madhubani district are working on this field.

### **Artist of Mithilā Painting**

Artist of Mithilā painting are Siban Paswan, Shanti Devi, Rajkumar Lal, Kamollesh Korn, Mahasundari Devi, Biva Lal Das, Rekha Das, Satya Narayan Korn, Joy Narayayn Lal Das. They already have made their position on the market field in India and abroad. They have been participated so many workshops in Denmark, Dubai, and German. Among them some artists are national awardees and state awardees. Some non living women artists of Madhubani are Jagadamba Devi, Ganga Devi, Sita Devi, Yoshoda Devi, Bua Devi who has made their contribution in Madhubani art history. After visiting the Jitwarpur village and observing their paintings we can sum up that the villages itself is a Madhubani artist camp. These developments have taken place in a span of forty seven years starting from 1970 to 2017 chiefly due to the efforts of a few artists such as Jamuna Devi, Shanti Devi, Chano Devi, Urmila Devi and Rampari Devi.

### **Contents of Mithilā paintings**

1. Use of bold natural and artificial colours.
2. A double line border with simple geometric designs or with ornate floral patterns on it.
3. Symbols, lines and patterns supporting the main theme.
4. Abstract-like figures, of deities or human.
5. The faces of the figures have large bulging eyes and a jolting nose emerging out of the forehead.

Mithilā painting is an emblematic expression of day-to-day experiences and beliefs. As such, symbolism, simplicity and beauty hold them together in a single school of traditional art. The symbols that these Maithili painters use have their specific meanings as, for instance, fish symbolize fertility, procreation and good luck, peacocks are associated with romantic love and religion, and serpents are the divine protectors. Characterized by vibrant use of colour, underlying symbolism and traditional geometric patterns supporting the main theme, the Indian folk art form of Madhubani succeeded in creating a place for itself in the international house of fame and is now recognized worldwide. The Government of India and Ministry of Youth and Culture Department,

Bihar, Upendra Maharathi Shilpa, Patna is also paying its tribute by starting training programs educating people on Mithilā paintings.

### **Techniques of Mithilā Painting**

Though there are numerous ways in which these paintings are made today, there are primarily two styles in which Mithilā paintings in Madhubani are made today. These are the *Gobar* and *Godana* styles evolved by Jamuna Devi and Chano Devi of village Jitwarpur, Madhubani<sup>9</sup>.

Painting is generally done by folk artists or classical artists in three ways: wall-painting (*bhitti chitra*), canvas-painting (*pata chitra*) and floor-painting (*aripana*) as mentioned above. Among these the wall-painting and the floor-painting are very popular in Mithilā region. The Wall-paintings or Mural paintings, popularly known as Mithilā painting or Madhubani painting<sup>10</sup>. The famous book by Yves Vequaud<sup>11</sup>, which brought worldwide popularity to Mithilā paintings did not have any painting by Chamars and Dusadhs. It might be suggested that Raymond Lee Owens perhaps inspired Shanti Devi and other artists to experiment on their caste legends<sup>12</sup>. Till date the artisan of Mithilā paintings are used colours directly from nature. Lamp soot served as a source of black, White from powdered rice, green was made from the leaves of the apple tree and *Tilcoat* blue from the seeds of *Sikkot and indigo*, yellow was drawn from the parts of *singar* flower or Jasmine flower, bark of *pipal* was to be boiled to make a part of saffron colour, red was made from *kusum* flower and red sandal wood. To make the painting last long as well as to take brightness they mixed gum with colour<sup>13</sup>. Artist Shanti Devi says that the use of synthetic colour and modern round brushes are replacing the cotton tipped bamboo sticks and stiff twigs that used to serve as brushes still a few years back. An artist Gouri Shankar interpreted that, at first he made rough sketch then detail drawing of subject matter is completed with bold straight and curve lines. Finally, the drawing is filled with different colours whenever it is required. The colours in the paintings are applied flat and the figures are rendered with double outlines with the space in between filled with thin cross hatchings or slanting lines. Over a period of time distinct style evolved with practitioners from different social background bringing their own word view and aesthetics understanding into their paintings. These

styles can broadly be categorized as *geru, bharhi, kachni, gobar* and *godna*<sup>14</sup>.

### **Themes of Mithila Painting**

Thematically, Mithilā paintings are mostly based on religion and mythology. In the paintings of little tradition, Gods like Raja Salesh, Buddheshwar, Jutki Malini, Reshma, and the likes occurs in abundance. Great tradition is a tribute to the Hindu Gods like Krishna-Radha, Shiva-Parvati, Ganesha, Maa Durga. Nevertheless, natural scenes of villages, everyday life, flora and fauna which are so much a part of life of this school of painters also entered the domain of *Godhna* paintings. The effort of the artists makes one realize about the time they give for their painting and how their lives are completely involved around their painting as this is the any source while fetches then bread and butter. It is well known knows that Mithilā is the birthplace of Sita and that is why the artisan visualized several scene of Ramayana. According to them fish is symbol of good luck and holiness. Fish also symbolize water with which it is associated. Besides abstract human figure the motifs and design are seen in Mithilā painting such as flora and fauna, curve linear devices, circle in series, series of short lines ,peacock, fish, flower, birds, animal and other natural life. The central theme the Mithilā paintings is the Hindu Gods and Goddesses<sup>15</sup>. The outline is usually left uncolored, in order to create a visual depth and aesthetical taste. while religious painting include various god and goddesses, secular and decorative paintings contain various symbol and prosperity and fertility such as elephant horse, lion parrot, turtle, bamboo, lotus, flower, *purania* leaves, *pana* flower, creepers, swastika, *samka* etc. forms on the background. The human figures are mostly abstract and linear in forms and the animals are usually naturalistic and are invariably depicted in profile. Border of Mithilā painting has equal important as like as theme and style. To make border attractive the artists are applied strong linear design of geometrical symbols and other flora and fauna. Mithilā painting has become major part of their daily life and it is easily understood when anybody visits their house then he/she will be found somebody is working on this painting like *saree*, bad cover, mural painting, paper painting etc. Artist Raj Kumar Lal express his view, at first he made line drawing of different image with water proof ink on handmade paper where these two

products are available in the market. And this way they made several line drawing painting near about 100/150 of different size (small size). Many foreigners come to the village of Madhubani for research purpose and they purchase these painting and also give commercial order to the artisans and then they apply colours on these black and white linear paintings on the spot and sale. All the artists of Madhubani are used natural and synthetic colours and no doubt they are enjoying their tradition but now days they make painting according to customers demand. Some artists are expert in free hand drawing. *Kohaber* is one of the important type of Mithilā painting which made at the time of marriage. Marriage of *Bihari* people and *kohaber* painting is synonymous to each other. *Kohaber* indicates a specially decorated room with elaborate paintings on the walls where married couple enters for their first meeting after marriage. These particular wall paintings are done only by some expert women artist. They used only red colour on *kohabar* painting, no other colour is allowed to be used except red which is traditionally supposed to be very auspicious<sup>16</sup>.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The tradition of Mithilā painting of Bihar has continued unbroken to the present day and has yet evolved with the times and changing more. These paintings are practiced by the women folk, which is an exclusively feminine school of folk painting. The lovely canvas paintings seen at every house in Madhubani are very much attractive, whether painted with colours or black ink. The Vaisnism, Shaivism and Sakti Cult was popular in Mithilā which is evident from Mithilā painting. Mithilā paintings are practiced till date in the village of Jitwarpur, Ranti, Rasidpur, Bacchi, Rajangarh, etc. Mithilā painting is a rich traditional style, rooted in region of Mithilā in Bihar. It is not only limited to the artist of the villages of Madhubani but also in the whole country as a research in the field of painting as well as abroad.

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## **An Introduction to the Eunuchs of the Zanana Deodi of Marwar Dynasty**

MOHD. ASIF  
Centre Of Advanced Study in History  
Aligarh Muslim University  
Aligarh, U.P. India

### **Abstract**

The text books of history are flooded by the two genders, male and female although latter one is far behind in enjoying the space as former. Beside these two sections in the history we have third section too i.e. of Eunuch (innate and castrated). Eunuchs had played significant role in the history of numerous dynasties be it Oriental, Chinese, Japanese or Indian. They were in the dominant position in the harem and were well equipped with power, prestige, wealth and education as well. We have countless no. of eunuchs who had enjoyed a vast sphere of influence over the court politics, harem and participated in public work from time to time. Here in this paper I'll try to explore the light over the eunuchs in the Zanana Deodi of Marwar dynasty; Jodhpur, where they were commonly known as Nazar. For which I'll be using the available contemporary sources like Bahis and Khyats along with some modern works.

**Key Words:** Eunuch, Harem, Zanana Deodi, Nazar, Castration.

The term Eunuch is of ambiguous nature and requires a great attention; in terms of its meaning and kind. Before moving to our main topic, we should know who eunuchs are. According to online Merriam-Webster dictionary there are three definitions of Eunuchs in which they refer to a castrated man placed in charge of a harem or

employed as a chamberlain in a palace, a man or a boy deprived of the testis or external genitals, and one that lacks virility or power. Eunuchs are of two kinds one is innate i.e. who are born as eunuch and second are those who turns into eunuchs after castration although reasons may vary. Here in this paper we will deal with latter one who were castrated and thereafter mainly employed in the royal harem. As we know that the practice of keeping the eunuchs in the harem was not new in this particular period which we are dealing but widespread across the dynasties and globe for a very long time. The origin of this practice of castration is widely and deeply rooted in the history so it would be difficult to discuss it here in this paper. Here our concern would be the Eunuchs in the Zanana Deodi of Marwar Dynasty. Both kind of eunuchs have their different professions for example innate eunuchs were engaged in dancing, singing and begging which in the present day also continues while the castrated eunuch had a secure place as guards in royal harems<sup>1</sup>.

The Marwar dynasty of Jodhpur ruled from an impregnable fort i.e. Mehrangarh fort which is also known as citadel of sun; constructed on a hilltop. Project of this fort were laid down by Rao Jodha who moved from Mandore to this place where he founded a new city Jodhpur, successor of Rao Jodha with time to time added many other parts in it. This fort has many palaces inside it and the inner most section is known as Zanana Deodi (female compartment), named in native language or we commonly know it as Harem. Architecture of Zanana Deodi is really fascinating and one can observe the influence of Mughal Architecture over the Rajput architecture in it and other parts of the fort. Zanana Deodi is constructed in such a manner that from outside no one could see inside the harem, while the resident of Zanana Deodi could see the outside clearly through beautiful Jaalis (intricate ornamental openwork in wood, metal, stone etc).Such type of building style of female compartment or Zanana Deodi shows that the concept of paraphernalia was firmly established in the Jodhpur dynasty too.

In this inner most section of the fort i.e. Zanana Deodi, queens and other women of royal family with their cohorts used to live. A complete

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<sup>1</sup>Marwar Census Report, 1891, p.383, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Sri Jagdish Singh Gahlaut Research Centre.

procedure of administration used to follow inside it and to look after its administration four main officials; Daroga, Deodidar, Nazar & Urda-Beganiya were appointed. Eunuchs are not only appointed on the post of Nazar but also preferred on other post also like Daroga. Daroga was the chief officer in the Zanana Deodi; during the reign of Maharaja Ajit Singh Ji, Nazar Nathu & Nazar Kiran and similarly Maharaja Man Singh Ji appointed Nazar Chaina Ram as Daroga. They were responsible to arrange food, clothes, medical facilities in case anyone fell ill in the Deodi and so on. In Marwar Ri Khyat we find that Daroga had the authority to assign the Deodidar after consulting with the queen of the palace. Deodidar or gatekeeper was second in command and had the responsibility to provide security. The post of the Deodidar was hereditary and they were given salary some times in cash while some times they were assigned Jagir in lieu of salary<sup>2</sup>. Here we will be dealing with only Nazar as on this post only eunuchs were appointed. Although the post of Nazar came on third position after Daroga and Deodidar (Gatekeeper) but played a role of great influence. On the fourth position, there comes Urda-Beganiya these were the Nigger women whose duty were to guard the queen and to stay with them while going somewhere, had a dress code and were at home in sword fighting. During any journey, on the way when king used to rest in the royal camp along with his queens, then these Urda-Beganiya used to guard the camp whole night<sup>3</sup>. To keep the females in the paraphernalia and out of reach of other men considered to be a work of great dignity and respect. In medical science, we found that if we removed the testis of a man in his childhood it would end the production of sexual hormones in a man and it would lead to developing feminine characteristics. While on the other hand innate eunuchs might have both the masculine or the feminine character and chances to make physical relations with them more possible as they have sexual hormones in them. So, in this way the castrated eunuchs were the obvious choice for harem.

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<sup>2</sup> Singh Brijesh Kumar, 1997. Maharaja Sri Vijay Singh Ri Khyat, p. 1-11, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute.

<sup>3</sup>Bhati Sukh Singh, 2004. Dera Rau Khato, p.8, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash Research Centre.

The practice to keep the eunuchs in the Zanana Deodi in Jodhpur dynasty most probably came from Mughal influence as geographically and traditionally, closely linked principality of Udaipur and Bundi have no concept of keeping Eunuchs in Zanana Deodi as they believed that “Eunuchs are not man but they appear like them”<sup>4</sup>. In day to day life they were known as Najar Ji because of their dominance over the post Nazar, from security to the management in Zanana Deodi & other such assignments were done by the Nazars. They used to act as the medium in between Zanana Deodi and the outer world. They were in trust of queen and the king; they use to carry the news of confidential nature. Besides unmarried women and Eunuchs no one was allowed to go inside while they could walk barely in every inner part of harem or in the private chambers of queen, queen mother, and of others<sup>5</sup>. Not only news of confidential nature but the work “to bring expensive items such as clothes, jewelry, ornaments and items for decoration were done under their supervision<sup>6</sup>. These Zanana Deodi contains Eunuch in large numbers but in addition to it there were the further personalization of them as every woman of royal house used to keep with them their personal eunuchs who always stayed along with them all the time and accompanied them too during their sawari (ride) to pilgrimage and holy shrines. Nazars were the checkers and doers in the Zanana Deodi, when workers came to the Deodi they were surveillanced by Nazars all the time, not only here the duty of Nazars finished but it continued as Nazars had to look after the management of salary for workers. A number of Nazars in the queen’s palace were of significant importance and were in confidence of queen and king. From the following lines, “In the marriage procession or Baraat they had their separate group with sizeable numbers and if any of them becomes angry or remained unsatisfied due to any reason then the host had to seek

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<sup>4</sup>Marwar Census Report-1891, Vol-3 p.386, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Sri Jagdish Singh Gehlaut Research Centre.

<sup>5</sup> Chundawat Laxmi Kumari, Khanda Vyah Ri Bahi, Preface, p. 7, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Mansingh Pustak Prakash Research Centre.

<sup>6</sup>Marwar Census Report, 1891, Vol-3, p.385,386,387, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Sri Jagdish Singh Gahlaut Research Centre.

their pardon and need to convince them”<sup>7</sup> we could observe that how important they were. For example, in the marriage of Maharaja Takhat Singh with the princess Jadochi Partap Kanwar of Jamnagar, at the time of adieu of procession (Baraat) every member who came in the procession were given presents by the Jamnagar side according to their status and in which Nazar Harkaran refused to accept the presents and became angry as he was not satisfied by it and demanded more. So, he was personally visited by the Jamnagar king to convince and there after given more gifts according to his status<sup>8</sup>. They were considered in each & every program due to their work and importance, they were the people who linked the Zanana Deodi with the outer world, nature of news might be varied but carrier was always the same i.e. Nazars, for instance, when king returned after being victorious from the war, news conveyed to the Zanana Deodi by the Nazar and in the same way news of emperor’s death also conveyed by them in the Deodi<sup>9</sup> after which crying would start. They had strong working attitude and never let the emotions and relations to overcome their duty. For example, if the king died they were the soul person responsible to collect all the jewelries and other luxurious items from the wives of the dead king as it belonged to the imperial treasury. Their dedication to work and no family ties raised their importance as it made them more loyal to the rulers. When doing their duty, they didn’t care about the surrounding environment but about the royal command. We have sizable number of prominent eunuchs like Nazar Kusaliram, Nazar Anandram, Nazar Ilmas, Nazar Harkaran, Nazar Daulat Ram and so on. These were not only confined to the Zanana Deodi while enjoyed an influence over a large area and enjoyed a reputation. Many public work, constructions had been undertaken by them like Nazar Harkaran built ponds and a mosque, Maharaja Takhat Singh himself inaugurated the pond<sup>10</sup>. In modern day

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<sup>7</sup>Singh Brijesh Kumar, 1997. Maharaja Sri Vijay Singh Ri Khyat, p.94, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute.

<sup>8</sup>Bhati Sukh Singh, 2004. Dera Rau Khato p.15, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash Research Centre.

<sup>9</sup>Jodhpur Hakikat Bahi, Vide Letter, p.434, (1913-17).

<sup>10</sup>Bhati Narayana Singh, 1993. Maharaja Takhat Singh Ri Khyat p.105,120,128,212,267,310,355, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute.

Jodhpur city, there is a place known as “Nazaron Ki Haweli” or “Mansion of Eunuchs” near to Clock Tower Market, it was built during the time of Nazar Harkaran. Now the Haweli is inhabited by the innate eunuchs and the Guru (an influential teacher or popular expert) is Meena Bua<sup>11</sup>, When I visited her, she told me about Nazar Harkaran that he built many wells, even a mosque which is currently present in Ghass Mandi and known as “Mochioan Ki Masjid” or “Mosque of tanners” although they don’t have written records to testify this. The record of expenditure of queens and their cohorts was maintained by the Nazars and by this we can conclude that they were not illiterate unlike innate eunuchs. As these present days, innate eunuchs keep themselves at arm length away from education. Their profession is begging, dancing and singing mainly. In this area of Jodhpur these innate eunuchs have a sphere of influence over politics. When I met Meena Bua who took the charge of Guru during the life time of her Guru Kamla Bua, She (Meena Bua) shared valuable information with me, she told me that eunuchs too have divisions in them as some came from so called lower castes and have different faith and living style, for example, Fatda in Gujrat State considered as the eunuchs of lower status. While on other hand they are well connected with eunuchs of India and its neighboring countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh. They have great respect for their Gurus and considered them more than their real mother and father. Meena Bua shared with me the names of previous gurus in chronological order, and here is the list of gurus shared by Meena Bua- Kamla Bua, Akhtar Bua, Jayethi Bhai, Rahim Bhagat Ji, Shakina Bua, Shyaam Bhagat Ji, Maula Bhagat Ji, Nabi Bhagat Ji, Peer Bhagat Ji, Chhel Kanwar Ji, Bharat Singh Ji and so on. In the list of important and powerful eunuchs Nazar Harkaran was not the only one in the queue; others too were powerful. In the place of their work or duty no one could take anything without their permission for instances, Vabha Lal Singh got a mattress used by eunuchs usually, only after the permission of Nazar Ilmas<sup>12</sup>. Not only for big things but for minor things too, everyone had to seek their

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<sup>11</sup> Meena Bua at the present time is the Guru of Eunuchs in the Mansion of Eunuchs in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

<sup>12</sup> Bhati Sukh Singh, 2007. Deran Rau Khato, Preface, p.15, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash Research Centre.

permission for example, in summer no one could take the fan without Nazar Ilmas's permission. And about Nazar Anand Ram and Nazar Harkaran we can find the details in Anand Vyav Ri Bahi. Almost in every ceremony and functions eunuchs had a secure place, be it was marriage ceremony or cremation ceremony. In the marriage ceremony before circumambulation daughter's parents stay outside and there after the circumambulation, a Nazar used to ask them to come inside to perform the tradition of giving money to the newly wed couples after the circumambulation<sup>13</sup>. Not only in this happy ceremony that they participated but secured their place in the cremation ceremony also, for example, when Maharaja Ajit Singh Ji was murdered by his son Bakhat Singh then his funeral took place in Mandore, where 66 people set themselves on the funeral pyre along with the corpse of Maharaja Ajit Singh and out of 66 two were the eunuchs<sup>14</sup>. The names of those two eunuchs were Nazar Nathuram and Nazar Kiran both were the Daroga of the Deodi during the time of Maharaja Ajit Singh<sup>15</sup>.

No doubt that they were castrated eunuchs who were given importance but innate eunuchs also enjoyed a considerable position in the society and were included in the state service also. Their condition was not deprived like today's innate eunuchs who are obliged by our social structure to beg and dance some times to enter in the profession of prostitution just for earning their livelihood. Not only in Jodhpur but in Jaipur too we notice eunuchs of great importance for example, Maharaja Sawain Jai Singh Ji ordered that name of Nazar Panna Mian be engraved on the top of coins followed by Maharaja's name<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, in Jodhpur Nazar Harkaran and Khwaja Farasat were the personality of great trust to Maharaja Jashwant Singh Ji and Maharaja Takhat Sing Ji. On moving towards their appearance they looked like man and we found that they used to dress themselves in the

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<sup>13</sup>Nagar Mahendra Singh, 2011. Marwar Ke Rajvansh Ki Sanskritik Paramparaen, Vol-II, p.342, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja MansinghPuustak Prakash Reseach Centre.

<sup>14</sup>Bhati Sukh Singh, 2007. Deran Ro Khato, p.11, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Mansingh Puustak Prakash Reseach Centre.

<sup>15</sup> Bhati Singh Hukum, 2007, Rathora Ri Khyat, p. 425, Chaupasni, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: History Research Centre.

<sup>16</sup>Marwar Census Report 1891, p.386,Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Sri Jagdish Singh Gahlaut Research Centre.



traditional attire known as KirkiraPaag/KhidgiaPaag which were usually been wore by the males.

On the last point, I want to opine that eunuchs were not only present in Zanana Deodi of Jodhpur and in its surrounding principalities but were popular across the globe. To keep eunuch in the harem just to protect the male counterparts from other men is the reflection of well-established patriarchal mind set. Right from this point we can see that this patriarchal mindset, which suppressed women from their rights and deprived them to live a life of their own, on the other side it enhance the inhumane practice of castration because of more demands of eunuchs in the royal harem to guard the women and on other place too. After castration eunuchs lost the bonding with their family and obviously have no option for new relations in the future; so there no one left in their life to whom they need to do favor. So, in this case they devoted themselves to the ruler and that's why they earned too much promotion in a very short time. Some people castrated as a punishment while some did it voluntary to make a better carrier in the royal court. To underprivileged it seems to be good to face the severe pain for a short time period instead of facing hunger for life. So, to change our premeditated perception towards them like they were cruel and rude we should go through the text of that time when this practice of castration used to exist.



## **Dipankar Srijnana atisa'S original Birth place Located inside Bhagalpur district: suggests corroborate evidences**

SHIV SHANKAR SINGH PARIJAT  
Deputy Director (Rtd.) PRD  
Government of Bihar, Bhagalpur  
DR. RAMAN SINHA  
Professor of History  
S. M. College, Bhagalpur  
GAUTAM SARKAR  
Senior Journalist  
Bhagalpur, Bihar India

Dipankar Srijnana Atisa was a renowned Buddhist scholar of 10<sup>th</sup> century and was a prominent Acharya (Professor) of Vikramshila Buddha Mahavihara. He was declared “Minister of religion of Buddha” by the great Buddhist Acharya Naro-pa. ‘Lamaism’ as a sect of Buddhism originated from his philosophy, the followers of Lamaism worshiped him as their sacred deity. During his tenure at Vikramshila, he had the privilege to take eighteen keys in his position, which shows his seniority as per the than custom among the Buddhist monks. Atisa’s fame encompassed all quarters of the world. He has been described as a second Sarvajna. He was the High-Priest and enjoyed his enviable status on account of his learning,

unbounded knowledge and his ability to expound the intricacies of Buddhism with all its branches and ramifications. Once at the end of a religious assembly in Vikramshila, in course of a conversation Naropanta (Naropa) said, “Prabhu Dipankara, now you should be the minister of religion of Buddha.”<sup>1</sup> He was in fact a landmark in both, being about the last great Buddhist ‘acarya’s in India and though not the first, he is remembered in Tibetan tradition itself all as by for the greatest of the teacher-reformers of Tibet. From this follows also his stature in the world-history of Buddhism.<sup>2</sup>

Atisa was invited by them Tibetan monarch and went to Tibet. During his 13 years stay he was instrumental in refining and reforming Buddhism as well as Lamaism. He was said to have played key role in the resurgence of Buddhism when he was invited Tibet to tackle the issues concerning to the decline of Buddhism there. Prof. Radhakrishna Chaudhary mentions, “Atisa revised the practice of Mahayana doctrine, cleared Tibetan Buddhism from the clutches of foreign and heretical elements and started a movement which may be called Lamaist reformation. He set in motion the wheel of Law in Tibet and his arrival was a land-mark event in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. The true rebirth of Buddhism took place there in the second half of the eleventh century A.D. and the reformed sect, known as ‘Kadam-pa, later the established church of Tibet under the name of (‘Ge-lug-pa’) (Gelug-pa)”.<sup>3</sup> Giuseppe Tucei also says that Rin chen bzang po and Atisa brought the powerful stimulus to the revival of Buddhism in western Tibet is an indisputable fact.<sup>4</sup> The most remarkable event in the history of Buddhism in Tibet and India as well, is the advent of Atisa Dipankara Srijnana, the abbot of Vikramshila Vihara, who left India for Tibet in 1040 A.D.<sup>5</sup> Waddell in his book ‘Buddhism & Lamaism of Tibet’ says that Atisa was the only profound reformer of Lamaism. He further says, “The first of the reformed sects and one with which Atisa most intimately identified himself was called the Kah-dam-pa (bkah-gdam-pa), or “Those bound by the orders (commandments)”’; and it ultimately, there and a half centuries later, in Tson K’apa’s hand, became less ascetic and more highly ritualistic under the title of “The Virtuous Style” Ge-lug-pa, now the dominant sect in Tibet, and the Established Church of Lamaism.”<sup>6</sup>

This write-up is mooted for pointing out the birth place of Acharaya Dipankar Srijnana Atisa, the legendary figure in today's Buddhism in the world on the basis of our research. Not a single historian till now didn't bother to find the actual birthplace of Atisa rather all of them remained more eager on the works related to his preaching, his philosophy and his contribution to Buddhism which were more important before the world rather than to go for his birth-place. Helmut Eimer considering the biographical tradition about Dipankar Srijnana on the first millennium since the birth of Atisa in his article entitled "The Development of the Biographical Tradition Concerning Atisa (Dipankar Srijnana)" published in 'The Journal of the Tibet Society' says, "In India no literary sources relating to the life of this monk from Bengal have survived; we have only Tibetan source material on which to depend".<sup>7</sup>

The concept once established by the previous writers and authors in global language mostly in English, have wide acceptance almost in the world and hence Bangladesh is being established as the birth-place of Atisa. As they were eminent scholars, we simply could not raise any question on the integrity of the writers since we know they must have evidences to corroborate their claims that Atisa was born at Bangladesh. The authors came to an easy conclusion while going through different Tibetan old scriptures and documents, but to our utter surprise when crosschecked, we somehow managed to read the in between lines. We want to explain the simple logic with substantial facts before the world. Besides many old books scriptures/manuscripts and books like George N. Roerich's "The Blue Annals" (The Annals of 'Gos-lo-tsa-ba) proved to be very useful and informative.

We have so far been acquainted that the birth-place of Atisa was claimed to be at Vajrayogini village of Vikrampur, Dacca (Bangladesh).<sup>8</sup> But our initial research work suggests that Bhagalpur district (Bihar, India) was the original birthplace of Atisa with the basis of substantial evidences from the ancient Tibetan texts. Atisa was invited by the then Tibetan Monarch and went to Tibet.<sup>9</sup> During his 13 years stay there<sup>10</sup> It is no wonder, therefore, that in the history of Tibet as told by its own historians, Dipankara's stature should have been so great.<sup>11</sup>

We, on the basis of our research, came to a conclusion that the original birthplace of Dipankar should be at 'Kalyanpur' (Kalyanpur) presently known as Olpura, east of Bhagalpur (Bihar). The old Tibetan texts frequently refer that Dipankar's father was Kalyan Sri of the great kingdom called Sa-hor by Indians, and Za-hor by the Tibetans and his mother was queen Sriprabha. He was the second son of his parents and was named Chandragarbha, and the palace where Atisa living, was a palace named Kanchandhwaza (Golden Banner).<sup>12</sup>

Though the name of the place is Olpura, but in the old 'Khatians' (Government land records) it was mentioned as Kalyanpur Mouza (revenue village) till now and even in the survey report of 1905 and 1971-72. Prior to that a map which was made and published by the authority of government, A.W. Smart, extra assistant superintendent in-charge no. 4, on 1847-48 and mentioned as Kalyanpur. Secondly, many old structures, sculptures, stone idols from Gupta and Pala periods are still found from the soil of Olpura Kalyanpur and nearby Tarar village by local villagers. A visit to the place, one could easily find such idols local villagers like 86 year old Raghuvir Pathak also echoed the same. One could find an old Buddha statue in "Bhumi Sparsh Mudra" with old inscription and idols of Vishnu, Surya and a deity with "Veena" which are presently kept in the Shiva Temple in the village. According to villagers version many of them found such old historical and other concerned evidences during digging of earth in the village mainly for construction.

Many old timers in the village recall there was a big construction of a broken basement which they claim as the part of the "Mahal" (King's Palace) besides a deep but narrow well till late eighties. We have also seen some structures resembling old Buddhist Vihara or Palace in the field in front of the village Shiva temple.<sup>13</sup> Village Kalyanpur is located some 35 K.M. east of Bhagalpur. Vikramshila Mahavihar is just 20-25 K.M. north from here. Most of the Tibetan scriptures mention that the birthplace of Dipankar was within a few distances from Vikramshila.

Early Buddhist scholars like Sarat Chandra Das in his famous book "Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow" depicting the "Life of Dipankara Sri Jnana-ATISA" says, "Dipankara was born A.D. 980 in the royal family of Gaur at Vikramanipur in Bangala, a country lying to the east of

Vajrasana”.<sup>14</sup> Now Vikramanipur is in Bangladesh. The book of Das was published in 1893 when the excavation of Vikramsila was not done and no one had idea of the original location of Vikramshila at that time. It's to be mentioned that Das's book has till been used as reference book for the study of the Biography of Dipankar and Tiben Buddhism. The Biography of Dipankar is closely associated with Vikramshila. Not only Das, another on such great scholar also gave a total misconception and even shown the location of Vikramshila inside geographical territory of Bangladesh.<sup>15</sup>

Alaka Chattopadhyaya in her book 'Atisa and Tibet' writes, "Apart perhaps from a mound in the Vajrayogini village, Vikramapura, Dacca, to which people conventionally bow down as the residence of Atisa (atiser bhita in Bengali), nothing concrete survives in the country of his birth to commemorate him. The archaeologists are yet to identify the site of the Vikramshila Vihara, which we know from the Tibetan sources, was the principal center of his later activities as a Buddhist monk in India".<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, Alaka Chattopadhyaya came to an easy conclusion about Bangladesh as the birth-place of Atisa even knowing the fact that the birth-place was near Vikramsila. The time when she composed her book, Vikramshila was not excavated so one could easily come to an easy conclusion on the entire episode.

The most interesting part of the controversy is that what Nirmal Chandra Sinha, fellow: Royal Geographic Society and member Royal Central Asian Society, London and Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim who also wrote the introductory notes in the reprinted book of Sarat Chandra Das's 'Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow' (reprinted in 1965), mentioned his doubt clearly on the authenticity of Das's claim over the birth-place of Atisa at Bangladesh, "The term Bengali used for Atisa and many other scholars from eastern India had varying connotation would not be the same for the years 1893 (when 'Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow' was published), and 1911 (when the provinces of Bihar and Bengal was separated). The Tibetan description of the relevant parts of Eastern India has been consistently Vangala and this perhaps gives a better perspective of Indian history than the modern words Bihar and Bengal. Das believed that Dipankara Srigyana Atisa was a Bengali and a native of Vikrampur (Decca; East Pakistan). In the later days

this was contested by Rahul Sankritrayana (d. 1963), the other great Tibetan scholar from India. Sankritrayana held that Atisa was a native of Bhagalpur (Bihar).”<sup>17</sup>

Nirmal Chandra Sinha further mentions, “Atisa spent three rainy seasons at Trag-yerpa and expounded the Kalachakra there. From my visit to this famous monastery and my talks with Lamas there and the elsewhere in Tibet I can only confirm that Atisa was a native Vangala and his birthplace was towards the east of Vajrasana. Vangala, as a distinct cultural entity in Tibetan mind, roughly stretched from confluence of Ganga and Brahmaputra.”<sup>18</sup>

“Sarat Chandra Das obviously planned his lectures in answer to the specific requirement of his audience the presentation was much in an anecdotal pattern and no modification were made in the time of publication. Tibetan words and names were rendered phonetically though not uniformly and sometimes Mongol or Manchu form of Tibetan designation were used.”<sup>19</sup>

Rahul Sankrityayana, who also visited Tibet like Das, very vividly persecuted about Atisa’s birthplace in chapter titled ‘Sahor Aur Vikramshila’ (Sahor and Vikramsila) in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of his noted book ‘Puratatawa Nibandhawali’ (Archaeological Essays). Sankrityayana’s original works were in Hindi, but hereby translated parts are given below:

“Sarat Chandra Das was the first Indian in modern period who tried much in the research works of literature of Tibet. He claimed that the first Indian preacher to Tibet ‘Tatwa sangrahar’ great philosopher and the then Acharya of Nalanda University, Shantrakshit (8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.) was a Bengali. Dr. Binaytosh Bhattacharaya while following Das, in the introduction in ‘Tatwasangraha’, mentioned Sahor as Sabhar village of Vikrampur Pargana in Dacca District. How Bhattacharya could not be blamed for his such claim because he never had seen the Tibetan scriptures. But it is matter of surprise scholars like Late Shri Sarat Chandra Das and Mahamahopadhyaya Satish Chandra Vidyabhushan came to such an easy conclusion while ignoring many confirmed and clear evidences. There might be two reasons for such happenings, neither of them had the privilege to go through the concerning original texts or they like many other Bengali authors just tried to put most of the Indian intellectuals in the

Bengali race. The places Sahor and Bhagal (Bhangal) for which such confusion was created was also the birthplace of Acharya Shantarakshit along with Acharya Dipankar Srijna Atisa also.”<sup>20</sup>

Sankrityayana who mentioned the life history of Atisa from an old Tibetan Buddhist text named ‘Yang’ from an old Buddhist monastery called ‘Chhun-j-ling-Gum-ba Vihar’ near Lhasa, writes follows:

“(In the pages 152-92): In Sanskrit Dipankara Srijnana, in the language of Tibetan ‘e’d Pal MAR-me-mdzad ye-ses,’ the Tibetans also called Dipankara ‘Jo-bo’ (Lord, Master, Noble, Venerable) and Atisa....The place he born (i) Sahor in the east direction of India. There (ii) is a big ‘Pur’ (Town) called Bhangal....in which the palace named ‘Kanchandhwaj’ (Golden Flag) (gser-gyi rgyal-mtshan)..... is located. Father was Raja (King) Kalyanasri (dGe-ba’I dpal).....mother Sriprabha (dPal-gyi ‘od-zer)....The couple had one son, Water-Male-Horse year (Jal-Purush-Ashwa Varsha)-(Chhu-Fo-Tar-Lo Manmatha Samvatsar 1309 Vikrmbd 982....(page 153)....at a few distance) from that palace (Golden Banner) a Vihara was located named Vikmalpuri- (? Vikramshila).....with five hundred chariots the king went to that vihara.....(p. 155) The residence of Jetari (first Guru of Atisa) was located at a short distance from that palace, as heard.”<sup>21</sup>

According to Rahul Sankrityayana De-pung is the biggest monastery at Lhasa and also in entire Tibet. The fifth Dalai Lama (Sumati Sagar 1618-84) was the head monk there. And his incarnation-cum-successor was the thirteen Dalai Lama-Muni Shashan Sagar. In the old religious manuscript named “Jhau” (tkS’), published from that monastery, a biography of Atisa called “Guna Gun Dharmakara”- (BI-Mai-You-Tan-Chos-Kyi-Abyung-Ganas) says as follows:

“(Page-1) there is a town called Bhangal in the state of Sahor, in east direction in the country of India. The master of it was Kalyanasri....Palace Kanchandwaja....One lakh households. Queen was Sriprabha.....(6) Vikrampuri (? Vikramshila) is located north of the palace.....with his parents, Chandragrabha (name of infant Atisa) went to that monastery.....with five hundred chariots.....to conduct ritual”<sup>22</sup>

In this old manuscript it was mentioned how Dipankar, when went to Nalanda for becoming a monk, he disclosed his identity before the king



there as.... “(in page 9)” I am the son of the king of Bhangal and come from Kanchandhwaja palace.”<sup>23</sup>

In the fourth part of that ‘Jhau’ (‘tks’), manuscript which is known as (Jo-Vo-Dpal-Ldan-Mang-Mzad-Mey-Shesh-Kyi-Nram-Thar-Gryas-Po), had described the greater biography of Atisa and mentioned:

“(page 21) (8) The Bhangal country is located on the east direction of Sri Vajrasan (Bodh Gaya). Vikramapuri is a big town in that Bhangal country. The country is also known as Sahor.....under which a town called named Vikramapuri is situated.....” (Agin on page 22) a country named Sahor is located in the east direction where there is a big town called Vikramapuri.....”<sup>24</sup>

Lama Kun-Mkhyen-Pad-Madkar-Po also writes:

“(p. 140) (Dipankar was born in the same clan of Bodhisattva Shantarakshit who hailed from Kanchandhwaja palace at Bhangal located eastern part of India.....)”<sup>25</sup>

The conclusion drawn by Rahul Sankrityayana after going through all such old Buddhist religious manuscripts and text as follows:

“(1) Sahor is in India which was located on the eastern direction, (2) its another name was Bhangal or Bhagal, (3) Vikramapuri was its capital which was also called as Bhangal or Bhagalpur, (4) the capital was (Bhangalpur or Vikramapuri) which was at a few distance from the king’s palace and on north direction there was Vikramapuri or Vikramshila, (5) this Vikramshila was near the monestary of Dipankar’s birth place.....”<sup>26</sup>

Another eminent Indian writer on Buddhist affairs, Alaka Chattopadhyaya, however contradicted Rahul Sankrityayana in her noted book ‘Atisa and Tibet (1967)’. She virtually attacked on Sankrityayana: “Nevertheless, since Rahul himself does not mention any Tibetan source on which this statement is based and since moreover, such a statement goes against the unanimous view of practically all over the reputed scholars, it is necessary for us, before subscribing too readily to this statement, to review the actual information we have about Dipankar’s birth-place in the authoritative Tibetan sources”<sup>27</sup>

Alaka Chattopadhyaya who strongly advocated Bangladesh’s Vikrampur as the original birth-place, however also didn’t give any reference from where she derived her conclusion. She too avoided to give

the source from where it could be established that Bangladesh is the birthplace of Atisa. Interestingly, she tried to put emphasis on some writers who tried to establish 'Sahor' as the part of Bangladesh or somewhere in the north-western part of India.

Eminent historian and the then important figure in the faculty of history at Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University, Prof. Radhakrishna Chaudhary in his famous book 'The University of Vikramsila' strongly condemned such misconceptions on the birthplace of Atisa by the early writers and authors. Prof. Chaudhary raised the question over the point mentioned by Nirmal Chandra Sinha while writing the introduction in the book (second edition) of Sarat Chandra Das's "Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow."

Prof. Chaudhary also rejected the plea taken by Alaka Chattopadhyaya and supported Rahul Sankrityayana and his claim that Atisa was a native of Bhagalpur areas. He also alleged the authors (who were not from Bihar) to repeat the wrong information about the birthplace of Atisa.

"Alaka Chattopadhyaya's 'Atisa and Tibet', is one of the most authoritative work published in recent years. It is not possible to accept all her views and inferences which are colored by regional loyalties." Prof. Chaudhary mentioned in the foot note of his book.<sup>28</sup>

Even Sarat Chandra Das in the first edition of his book 'Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow' highlighting Bengali people says in the chapter 'Origin of Bengalis', "Not to speak of the age of Ramayana and the Mahabharatas, history would tell us in unmistakable terms that our ancestors, in the palmy days of Greek civilization, were a highly enlightened people. The close resemblance which the modern Bengalis bears to the 'Magadhi' and the comparison of the customs of the ancient Magadhi people with those of the modern Bengalis show that the latter have descended from the former."<sup>29</sup> But Nirmal Chandra Sinha differing the views of S.C. Das, wrote in the introductory note in the reprinted book of Sarat Chandra Das's "Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow", "The Buddhist centers of learning were located in Vangala and Vajrayana was the dominant cult all over Vangala, one should not abet the Pala Empire as

Bengali and Bihari; and one should not look for (Modern) Bengali or Hindi in the Dohas composed by the Siddhas of Vajrayana.”<sup>30</sup>

Alaka Chattopadhyaya refutes claims of Rahul Sankrityayan that Dipankar was born in Bhagalpur, saying ‘Rahul himself does not mention any Tibetan source on which this statement is based’.<sup>31</sup> After this she quotes some ‘Authoritative Tibetan Sources’ to prove her claim that Dipankar was born in Bangladesh. But it seems that she has omitted some words from the original quotes indicating question mark on the birth place of Dipankar to be located in Bengal, to mislead the facts. Quoting Gos Lotsa-ba from “The Blue Annals” (p.241) she writes, “This great teacher: King Kalya-nasri of the great kingdom called Sa-hor by the Indians and Za-hor by the Tibetans”<sup>32</sup> But in the original text question mark has been raised at Sa-hor ~ Za-hor to be located in Bengal, which reads like this, “This great Teacher: King dGe-ba’I dpal (Kalyanasri) of the great kingdom called Sa-hor by the Indians and Za-hor by the Tibetans (Sa-hor ~ Za-hor, Sabhar, Bengal ?).....”<sup>33</sup>

In Tibetan Buddhism the name of Shantarakshita is remarkable. “The most important phase in the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet before Dipankara was initiated by Santriksita. It is therefore, interesting to note that according to the Tibetan tradition, Dipankara had the same line of descent to which Santaraksita belonged.”<sup>34</sup> Noted Buddhist Scholar Havaldaar Tripathi ‘Sahriday’ in his famous book ‘Bauddh Dharma Aur Bihar’ (Buddhism and Bihar) mentions that earlier It-sing, a Chinese pilgrim and a student at Nalanda, used to call Shantarakshit there as ‘Bhagal’ Shantarakshit was from the same clan of Dipankar and he was called ‘Bhagal’ just because he hailed from a place near Bhagalpur.<sup>35</sup> So we could easily assume the originality of the birthplace of Dipankar.

Describing the splendor of the country named Sahor ruled by the king Kalyana Shri and qualities of his consort Shri Pravavati, Gurugana Dharmakarnama in ‘The Biography of Atisha’ says that after the birth of Chandra Garbha (infant Dipankar), the King visited Vikramshila. “To the north of the palace there was a sacred place called Vikramshila Vihara. To make offerings (to give thanks for the Prince’s birth) at that place, the King, Queen and their ministry, escorted by 500 chariots full of lovely girls elegantly adorned with ornaments and surrounded by hundreds upon

hundreds of musicians, carried the innumerable jeweled articles necessary for the votive rite and all went to that place singing.”<sup>36</sup> Now the question arises that if the palace of King Kalayan Sri was situated in Bangladesh, was it possible for the parents of infant Dipankar to travel Vikramshila at that time when modern transportation services were not available.

More or less even we go to linguistic analysis, we should remember first that all the authors like S.C. Das had taken help of all such Tibetan documents/scriptures/manuscripts etc. which were first translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan and then Tibetan to Sanskrit or other languages. As the original Sanskrit texts were lost or destroyed, all such ancient works were finally preserved in the Tibetan translations. Since there is a vast difference in Tibetan language, the phonetic and even in the pronunciation with other old Indian languages, there must be some factual error with the words and its pronunciation by the connected scholars during preparation of such documents/scriptures/manuscripts etc. which might be one major cause of such confusion before us about the places in its names mainly like ‘Sahor’ or ‘Jahor’ etc. Detailing Tibetan Alphabet and phonetics ‘The Blue Annals’ describes, “In the reign of Sron-btsan sgam-po ‘Thon-mi Sambhota was sent to India. He thoroughly studied the alphabet and the (Sanskrit) language with the Acarya Devavitsimha (Lha’irig-pa sen-ge). On his return to Tibet, he created the thirty letters of the Tibetan alphabet from the fifty letters of the Indian (alphabet). He selected the signs for a,i,e,o,u from the sixteen vowels sounds of the (Indian alphabet), and omitted the rest. He added the sound “a” to the consonants, but omitted the Ta-class among the consonants. On finding that the fourth sounds of the four remaining classes, and the letter “s” were unnecessary in (Tibetan), he omitted them. The sounds “tsa”, “tsha” and “dza” are pronounced as “ca”, “cha” and “Ja” by some East Indians. He kept them. He also added the sounds of “Ža”, “Za” and “,”, which he thought necessary in Tibetan, though absent in the Indian alphabet. Of these three were the sound “Ža” has the same sound as “śa” of the Indian alphabet, because of this (similarity) a certain pandita from Nepal, when addressing a letter to the Dharmaswamin Buston called him; “Sa-lu pandita” (instead of za-lu pandita. Because of the sound “za” is similar to “sa”, the Indians pronounce Sa-hor, while the Tibetans call (this country) Za-hor. (The sound)’ (’a-čhun) agrees with “a”.”<sup>37</sup>

The 'bs Tan-gyur' containing the Tibetan translation of mainly Indian works or the works of 'Bron-ston-pa' the foremost disciple of Atisa and another one Jayasila of Nag-tsho (which the Tibetan historians considered the best source to know Atisa) put more emphasis on 'Jahor' a place claimed to be in Bengal. Indian writers like H.P. Sastri and S.K. Dey, claimed 'Jahor' a place inside Bangladesh on the basis of Tibetan sources.<sup>38</sup> But as we know Tibetan pronounces 'S' as 'J', the logic of Indian authors are in question. More interestingly the 'bs Tan-gyur' didn't mentioned Atisa as a Bengali but only said "a pandit came from Bengal" Bu-ston says that he 'was the son of Kalyanacri the king of Bengal'.<sup>39</sup> In the translation of 'Bodhi pathapradipah' translated by Losang Norbu Shastri and published by Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi in the chapter 'A short Biography of Acarya Dipankara Srijnana' it is said that "Atisa Dipankara Srijnana was born in the wood Horse year (982 A.D) in Sahor (Bengal), to the clam of Acarya Santarakshita."<sup>40</sup> In "The Nava-Nalanda-Mahavihara research publication (Volume II)" it is mentioned that Dipankar Srijnana was born as a son of king Kalyana Sri and Queen Parabhavati in Jahor of Vikramsila.<sup>41</sup> Gurugana Dharmakarnama mentions his birthplace "In the eastern part of India, in the country named Bengal (Sahor)"<sup>42</sup>

Secondly, Vikarmshila (Pala Period) as we know evolved different languages like 'Proto-Bengali'. It was during Vikramshila's time period, Bengali evolved out of the late Mag-dhi-Prakrit or Magadhi-Apabhraṅsa. R.C. Majumdar accepted that the Bengali language was not born before 900 A.D.<sup>43</sup> The Vernacular of Bengal, although still in the middle Indo-Aryan stage, took a definite form, which may be described as 'Proto-Bengali' by 800 A.D. when Dharampala reigned. The foundation of the Pala empire synchronized with the birth of the Bengali people as a distinct and important group in the comity of the people of mediaeval and modern India. The final welding of the Magadhi-Prakrit and Apabhraṅsa dialects current in Bengal into a uniform 'Proto-Bengali' type giving the basis of national language to the province and thus providing a strong bond of union among its various and diversely derived people already culturally unified by Buddhism and Brahmanism, was completed by the time that the Pala dynasty was established.<sup>44</sup>

Local dialects like Angika also born later on in this region certainly not anywhere in Bangladesh. Many Siddhas at Vikramshila had composed many important items in the local dialects. Secondly, the local dialects merged with Devnagri, and made the language more strong with direct connection with common people of this region. Atisa, who was an eminent scholar, mostly use Sanskrit but we don't bound any reference that he used Bengali. Bhagalpur District Gazetteer says about the 'Language' of the district, "In the south of the district there is a dialect prevalent called 'chhikka-chhikki boli', the most striking peculiarity of which is that those who speak it add a vowel sound (like 'O' in 'Not') at the end of the words. The Magahi dialect of Bihari Hindi has had some enhance on the grammar and vocabulary of that part of the district lying south of the Ganges, but it has not ousted the Maithili dialect. The 'chhikka-chhikki' is so called from the frequent use of the syllable 'Chhik' in the conjugation of the verb substantive."<sup>45</sup> The Gazetteers further informs, "Chhikka-Chhikki' boli" is the popular local dialect and has a large mixture of Hindi. The Bengali inhabitants of the district who have been here for generations use this dialect in their houses and this dialect is well understood by Hindi-speaking people. A large number of Hindi Speaking local inhabitants speak fluently the Bengali language."<sup>46</sup>

We could apprehend, though some learned scholars could rise objection, since Atisa was in a very responsible post in the varsity, he might had conversation with local people too and he used Bengali or Angika (Chhika-Chhikki). In his book 'Ancient Indian Education Brahmanical and Buddhist' Radha Kumud Mookerji describes about 'Atisa's Liberality' mentioned in 'A Tibetan Account', "In the following morning, the Tibetan messenger saw Atisa at his Vihara (Vikramsila). Next day, he saw Atisa distributing alms and food to the poor, and how a beggar boy, failing to get his share, ran after Atisa, exclaiming: 'O, Nath Atisa Bhat ona, Bhat ona,' 'Blest be thou, O patron Atisa, give me rice." In local dialect of this region people call rice as 'Bhat'.<sup>47</sup>

Alaka Chattopadhyaya quoting 'The life of Atisa' by S.C. Das mentioned that "at the end of a sentence, he (Atisa) often said, "Ati bhala! Ati Mangala.....!"<sup>48</sup> Chattopadhyaya assumed this language to be 'old Bengali'. Now the question arises: the pronunciation 'Ati Bhala' is similar

with Hindi (refer say the Sanskrit mixed Hindi at that time) while for pronouncing the words in Bengali is always sounds 'Oti Bhalo' not 'Ati Bhala'.<sup>47</sup>

Even some places in this region still have the influence of Bengali language (many words are similar with Angika dialect) and this is because of Bengali's long dominance over this region. But how this could connect the relation of Bangladesh with the people of Vikramshila and its surrounding areas?<sup>50</sup>

Paradoxes, myths, rumors and half truths seem to be the part and parcel of Vikramshila Buddha Vihara the ancient world university and its renowned Acharya Dipankar Srijnana Atisa. Unlike its contemporary Nalanda or Taxila, Vikramshila yet not properly introduced before the world. Century old Tibetan scriptures/manuscripts/documents still used as sources to know the authenticity of it. As of eighties, the ruins of this Mahavihara had yet not been fully excavated. Consequently, much of the Mahavihara's history remains unknown. Iconographic analysis indicates many new findings could be done to know more about this oldest Buddhist establishment in the world. However, unlike Taxila and Nalanda, the ruins of Vikramshila were not discovered until seventies. Very unfortunately, no appropriate research or other related works are done yet to reveal many hidden facts related to it. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the structures of the Vikramshila Mahavihara which was situated on the way from Delhi to Bengal, were razed to the ground by the (Muslim) invaders, who out of wrath were said to have uprooted even the foundations and threw them into the Ganga.<sup>51</sup> While the resurrection of Vikramshila, after its destruction in thirteenth century and subsequently thereafter for hundreds of years of its prolong silence, is likely could promote not only Buddhism in a greater magnitude but also could expose many facts before the world.

Situated on the river bank of Ganga, between ninth-thirteenth century, the ancient Vikramshila Buddha Mahavihara was almost lost forever to the world.<sup>52</sup> The existence of the world varity was present only in the Tibetan scriptures and manuscripts. Experts concerned of Buddhists affairs and the contemporary historians up to mid sixties didn't had any idea about the original location of the varsity which was under the earth

somewhere in the country but many conclusions were drawn by then about this world university.<sup>53</sup>

Fortunately with the excavation initiated by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), many myths and the misconceptions by early authors of contemporary Buddhists study came to an end.<sup>54</sup> But since study and research works related to this unique treasure trove of the world is so far confined only on the base of Tibetan sources or on the works of ancient writers who once also utilized Tibetan sources, nothing could yet been done with scientific accuracy to establish the facts.

Old Tibetan manuscripts always emphasized Vikramshila (but this part of Bihar was the part of greater Bengal at that time), Oddantpuri (near Biharsarif in Bihar) and Somapuri (now in Bangladesh), but they pointed out Vikramshila was most important and biggest Buddhist Mahavihara. Simultaneously, Tibetan scriptures also emphasized that the birthplace of Atisa was located near Vikramshila.

Unfortunately, some earlier writers and authors with the contemporary evidences (also may be influenced by other factors) blindly supported some facts related to Vikramshila and birthplace of Acharya Dipankar Atisa which are far away from the truth. Though most of their such versions were contradicted with resurfacing of it again after the excavation, but their works in English version had a wide impact globally. So it's now a herculean task for Vikramshila and birthplace of Atisa to raze the incorrect claims over its 400 hundred year glorified history. And for such damage control exercise, collective and systematic measures would be required for projecting Vikramshila and birthplace of Atisa before the world with a new dimension.

On the basis of substantial evidence from ancient Tibetan texts, archaeological evidences and confirmation of the location of Vikramshila in Antichak, Kahalgaon, Bhagalpur District after the excavation taken by ASI, we claim that the birthplace of Dipankar was at Kalyanpur now known as Olpura 35 K.M. east of Bhagalpur.<sup>55</sup> Amidst controversies B.S. Verma identified the location of Vikramsila on the basis of Tibetan scriptures. He says, "The archaeological finds so far discovered from the excavations of Antichak are none other the remains of the famous Vikramshila Mahavihara which according to the Tibetans, was situated on



the bank of the River Ganges in Magadha. This fact is further corroborated by the statement of Bromton (a contemporary of Sri Dipankar Srijnana) who has stated that Nag-Tsho after crossing the Ganges at night reached the monastery immediately by and took shelter in the guest room meant for Tibetans. This is the most authentic evidence to establish the location of the Mahavihara on the bank of the River Ganges. Even at present time, the River Ganges is hardly at a distance of about 2 KM from the actual remains of the Mahavihara.<sup>56</sup> The same Tibetan scriptures, on basis of which Mr. Verma confirmed the location of Vikramshila, say that the birthplace of Dipankar was located near it. Gurugana Dharmakarnama has vividly described the grandeur of Dipankar's father Kalyana Shri's Golden Banner palace, where he was born and Sahor Kindom, "In the eastern part of India, the country named Bengal (Sahor), the ruler was a religious King named Kalyana Shri. King Kalyana Shri brought the prosperity of his Kingdom to the zenith. His palace had a golden victory banner encircled by countless houses and there were great numbers of bathing-pools encircled by 720 magnificent gardens, forests of Tala trees, seven concentric walls, 363 connecting bridges, innumerable golden victory banners, thirteen roofs to the central palace and thousands of noblemen in the palace."<sup>57</sup>

Gurugana further says, "All this splendour matched the King of Tankun's (one of the Chinese Kings), the dignity of the monarch's royal bearing and his air of great authority were like those of the great god Indra. His subjects were numerous as the inhabitants of a city of Gandhara and their religious attainments could be compared to those of Aryadharma."<sup>58</sup> One can easily find the remains of several ponds, old wells, Tal trees and orchards even today in Kalyanpur (Olpura). We have also seen during our visit to Kalyanpur village some structures resembling old Vihara or Palace in the field in front of the village Shiva temple before 10 years, which has now gone under earth during passage of time. We have requested the Director, Department of Archaeology, Govt. of Bihar for extensive archaeological study and excavation in Kalyanpur, the claimed birthplace of Dipankar, to unearth the truth. Buddhist tourists visiting the ancient seat of learning at Vikramshila now usually making demands to know more about birthplace of Acharya Dipankar Srijnana Atisa. Foreign visitors, especially Tibetan, after conducting rituals at Vikramshila also

started visiting 'Sahor' (presently known as Sabour) area of Bhagalpur District.

It is really very unfortunate that even Vikramshila (excavation) is the latest gift before the world, nothing has happened so far in the term of systematic modern research works. Even major part of the structure of the varsity is still below the earth. Tagging of this famous monastery into Buddha circuit along with including in the list of World. Heritage of UNESCO is very much essential for completing such major tasks. Besides, historians, Buddhist scholars and concerned governmental agencies should come forward to search out truth about the original birthplace of Atisa. 59. Another most important aspect of this 'controversy' related to Dipankar is the much concern of China and their much proximity with Bangladesh particularly establishing Vikrampur as the original birth place of the great Buddhist monk. China has been continuously promoting Bangladesh for the so called birthplace of Dipankar while on the other hand it even starts speaking against India for Dalai Lama. It's to be mentioned here that today's Lamaism headed by Dalai Lama is also associated with Dipankar and vis-a-vis Vikramshila, the birthplace of Lamaism. So the intension of China is very clear, they have started imposing a misconception (birth place of Dipankar at Bangladesh) before the world so that they could be succeeded in their long desire to capture Tibet. So our research proved to be important not only to establish the truth but also countering such ill desires against the century old epicenter of Buddhism.

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## DayananDa Swami anD hiS aShramS: a brief study of anti-British activities in the surma Valley of assam (1908-1912)

FAKRUL ISLAM LASKAR

Research Scholar  
Centre for Advance Study in History  
Aligarh Muslim University  
Aligarh U.P. India

Abhay Charan Chaudhuri (1882-1937), popularly known as Dayanda Swami or Guru Das Chaudhuri was a native of Bamoi, a village under Lakhai police station in Sylhet district. His father Guru Charan Chaudhuri was a *Mukhtear*<sup>1</sup> of Habiganj. He studied in Habiganj School which he left about 1905-1906 and after leaving the School he came in touch with the Nationalist Party and served the party in various capacities but finally he succeeded to get an appointment as second clerk in the Local Board Office at Silchar.<sup>2</sup> Guru Das Chaudhuri first came into light at the end of 1908 when he

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<sup>1</sup> *Mukhtear* was a spokesman authorized to act or plead for someone else.

<sup>2</sup> History Sheet (No. 39) of Guru Das Chaudhuri alias Dayananda Swami alias Abay Charan Chaudhuri, p. 1, Assam State Archives, Guwahati.

started the idea of the *Arunachal Ashram* (shrine) at Tillain Tilla near Silchar of which he became the leader.<sup>3</sup> When he circulated a printed appeal mentioning the establishment of a *Kalibari*<sup>4</sup> at Tillain Tilla besides having a charitable dispensary and rest-houses for the sick and the needy people, he had very less gathering although his philanthropic works was able to attract the local planters who became the subscribers of the institution.<sup>5</sup> He also approached to the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar for financial help for an *ashram* which he proposed to establish at Tillain Tilla and which was later on styled as *Arunachal Ashram*.<sup>6</sup> In 1909, however, something different was noticed as Guru Das changed his name and styled himself as Dayananda Swami while his coterie at the *Ashram* also took the similar names.<sup>7</sup>

Very few studies have so far been made on Dayananda Swami and his activities. Amalendu Guha in his book *Planter-Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral politics in Assam 1826-1947*, (1977) and H. K. Barpujari in his edited work *Political History of Assam*, Vol. I (2008) tried to depict a picture of Dayananda Swami and his activities. But the details are inadequate in these works. So an attempt has been made to give a complete picture of Dayananda Swami and his activities making *Arunachal Ashram* as his base. In the proposed paper focus will also be to study the role played by Dayananda Swami and the *Arunachal Ashram* in the revolutionary activities in the Surma Valley besides maintaining its religious and charitable character. It will also discuss about the activities of the branches of *Arunachal Ashram*.

The information of this paper has been collected from the rich profusion of data available at Assam State Archives, Guwahati and National Archives of India, New Delhi.

The ostensible objects of the *Ashram* were teaching religious knowledge, giving medicine and shelter to the needy people and providing general help to humanity. But that had been disproved by information

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Kalibari* is a temple of Goddess Kali.

<sup>5</sup> History Sheet (No. 39) of Guru Das Chaudhuri, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

received to the Government and it was said that the *Ashram* was largely composed of nationalists whose aim was 'to make money by invoking charity' using the religion. The Superintendent of Police of Cachar was also not ready to accept the *Ashram* as a religious institution as it had started to enlist the nationalists. It is also clear from the letter of Chief Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, dated the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1910 that the Government started considering the *Arunachal Ashram* as 'a haunt of sedition mongers masquerading as Sadhus' though it was established for charitable purposes.<sup>8</sup> The *Ashram* had a mouth-piece of its own, the *Prajasakti*, a newspaper published from Habiganj under the editorship of Mahendra Nath De (d. 1912) and it remained under political surveillance because of its 'scurrilous tone'. The *Prajasakti* expressed its sympathy with the depressed classes and also supported their agitation for the removal of social disabilities under which they labored. Attributing the agitation to the influence of a general awakening all over Asia, it declared, "We are on the eve of a social revolution..... Talk of caste distinctions when India is a free country, and not now. Irresistible as the ocean tide the Sudras come on. They appeal to the greatest social force of our times...the conscience of the civilized man."<sup>9</sup>

The saints of the *Ashram* tried to use the religious occasion to preach anti-British sentiments among the people. On 15<sup>th</sup> January 1910, a large gathering was held at the *Arunachal Ashram* on the occasion of a religious festival where Nokul Sadhu from Brahmanbaria, Tippera, gave an inflammable speech denouncing the British Government. Threatening the Government with divine vengeance, he forecasted the speedy destruction of the British Government because of its alleged hostility to the development of India.<sup>10</sup> He also delivered a violently seditious speech at the gathering

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<sup>8</sup> Government of India, Home Department, Political-A, Proceedings, May 1910, Nos. 136-137, p. 8, National Archives of India, New Delhi; See also, History Sheet (No. 39) of Guru Das Chaudhuri, pp. 2, 17.

<sup>9</sup> Home Department, Political, 1911, *Report on the native-owned English and vernacular newspapers published in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1910*, pp. 1, 10, N.A.I ; History Sheet (No. 39) of Guru Das Chaudhuri, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Government of India, Home Department, Political-A, Proceedings, May 1910, Nos. 136-137, p. 8, N.A.I.



which was assembled on the occasion of *Uttarayan Sankranti* (religious festival) under the presidency of Dayananda Swami:<sup>11</sup>

God willing, the British Government will, some day or other, pay dearly for their oppression on the Bengalis, for attempting to crush the boycott movement. Notice, how many Bengalis have been deprived of their employment for holding to *swadeshi* principles, how many of our leaders have been imprisoned, and how many stringent Acts have been passed by the British, which is sucking the very marrow of our bones. Does not God see all this? Verily the day must dawn when a power will spring up from this temple of Kali and overthrow British rule. We Bengalis have no unity. Policemen, our brothers-in-law (a term of abuse), spy on our movements and communicate them to Government.

Nokul Sadhu then turned and said to the head constable who was sent to the gathering to take a note of the proceedings but whose identity was revealed:<sup>12</sup>

Go, and tell your father (the Government) that God will punish their acts of oppression, and that the *swadeshi* movement is not criminal, but merely a laudable effort on the part of the Bengalis to improve the country. Were Government properly to carry on the work of administration, there would be no agitation. It will be no wonder if God destroys the Government for partiality in administration and oppression out of malice on the Bengalis.

The activities of the *Ashram* and its saints created some kind of dissatisfaction in the locality and the parents also got disturbed because of the attempt of the saints to enlist youth to the *Ashram* activities. The Superintendent of Police, Cachar, reported about a rumor on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1910 that the Civil *Sheristadar*, an ex-clerk and the Headmaster of the Silchar H. E. School would be pressurized to join the *Arunachal Ashram* though it was not clear that whether Dayananda had approached them to join the *Ashram* either by visit or by letter.<sup>13</sup> It is known from the Superintendent of Police that guardians and parents of Silchar approached

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<sup>11</sup> History Sheet (No. 39) of Guru Das Chaudhuri, pp. 15-16.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> History Sheet (No. 39) of Guru Das Chaudhuri, p. 20.

the Government praying for taking action against Dayananda Swami and his disciples for inducing the youths to join the *Ashram* from.<sup>14</sup>

During the year 1911-12 the number of followers of Dayananda Swami increased considerably and two branches of *Arunachal Ashram* was also opened, one was *Jagatsi Ashram* in Maulvi Bazar and the other one was at Dinajpur.<sup>15</sup> His disciples also started worshipping him and regarded him as an avatar or joint incarnation of *Krishna* and *Kali* with sword in one hand and a flute in the other. It was believed that the sword indicated the driving of the British out of India.<sup>16</sup> Although it was outwardly appear that the *Ashram* had at all events at first no direct involvement with political agitation but one of its members was found involved in the abortive murder attempt of the Sub-divisional Officer of Maulvi Bazar besides numbering certain political suspects among its members.<sup>17</sup> Efforts had also been made to publish the declaration of independence in the newspaper *The Surma* but when the publisher refused to publish anything having objectionable tone, Dayananda Swami tried to make it publish in the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and it was published.<sup>18</sup>

So, the activities of Dayananda Swami and his disciples started becoming the source of danger to the Government. But the filing of case against Dayananda Swami and ten other members of *Jagatsi Ashram* by Suresh Chandra Dev for kidnapping his brother Sachindra Chandra Dev prepared the ground for direct battle between the Government and Dayananda Swami.<sup>19</sup> The Sub-divisional Officer of Maulvi Bazar issued a search warrant under section 100, Criminal Procedure Code for the arrest and production of Sachindra who was alleged to have been kidnapped and detained in the *Dolgobinda Ashram* at Jagatsi and accordingly on July 1, 1912, the Head Constable Kailash Palit went to the *Ashram* to execute the search warrant. But Dayananda Swami refused to hand over Sachindra Chandra Dev and instead warned him- "I will not allow you to take away

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

Sachindra; if anybody tries to take him away, that person will have to leave his head here. If you still persist in taking Sachindra, you will have to leave your head behind, because we are willing to give up our lives.”<sup>20</sup>

The Head Constable anticipating bloodshed in executing the warrant returned back to Maulvi Bazar. He reported the authority and requested for sending armed constables with necessary officers for the execution of the search warrant.<sup>21</sup> A fresh warrant under sections 342 and 363, Indian Penal Code was issued for the production of Sachindra Chandra Dev before the Magistrate by 11<sup>th</sup> July 1912. To execute that warrant a team was formed with Deputy Superintendent of Police, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Head Constable, *Subedar* and twenty armed police.<sup>22</sup> A bloody confrontation took place between the police and the *sadhus* (saints) of the *Ashram* in which the Assistant Superintendent of Police was struck by trident. The police in counter attack fired on the attacking *sadhus* and wounded about six of them. Mahendra Nath De, a disciple of Dayananda Swami, who got wounded in the police firing, succumbed to death.<sup>23</sup> The police finally succeeded in searching the *Ashram* and also arrested the inmates. The police also recovered several documents from the *Ashram* such as a draft notice which confirmed the denial of allegiance to the British Government, a note book containing a description of the ‘Arunachal war’ with the police etc. After the trial in court, twelve were found guilty under sections 147 and 148, Indian Penal Code and sentenced to imprisonment for different terms.<sup>24</sup>

The violent confrontation and the subsequent arrest and imprisonment of Dayananda and his disciples were condemned and that created a great excitement throughout the valley as well as in Bengal. There were strong protests over the issue raised in the press and platform alike.<sup>25</sup> The *Bengalee* and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* raised question over

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<sup>20</sup> History Sheet (No. 39) of Guru Das Chaudhuri, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>25</sup> H. K. Barpujari (ed.), *Political History of Assam*, Vol. I, Guwahati: Publication Board Assam, 2008, p. 194.

the police firing that resulted the death of Mahendra Nath De and demanded the enquiry of police atrocities.<sup>26</sup> During the trial, the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, the postmaster and sub-Register of Maulvi Bazar got anonymous threatening letters and it was believed that the disciples of Dayananda might be involved in it.<sup>27</sup> A bomb exploded in the compound of the Sub-divisional Officer of Maulvi Bazar, G. Gordon on 27 March 1913 at 7:10 p.m., caused the death of a person carrying bomb and two revolvers. Before the incident the Sylhet District Commissioner had received a letter on 15 February 1913 with post mark of 8 February 1913 from Kishorganj threatening retaliation with bombs protesting against the arrest of Dayananda Swami and others at Jagatshi *Ashrams*. The person killed could not be identified. It was believed to be the action of a religious revolutionary gang.<sup>28</sup>

It is clear from the above discussion that the anti-British activities that were current in Bengal during the time of *Swadeshi* Movement were also prevalent in the Surma Valley. When Dayananda swami was arrested along with six others, one of his disciples at Silchar telegraphed Arabinda Ghosh and the leading Bengali newspapers informing about their arrest and the subsequent sensation prevailed there. It was not surprising that the revolutionaries of Surma Valley got influenced by Bengal because the Surma Valley consisting of Sylhet and the plains of Cachar is geographically, historically and ethnically an extension of greater Gangetic Bengal.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> History Sheet (No. 39) of Guru Das Chaudhuri, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Home Political, Part B., Proceedings, August 1913, Nos. 7-11, A.S.A.



BOOK REVIEW

**India's Wars: A Military History, 1947-1971**

**by Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam**

Harper Collins Publishers, 576 pages, Price: INR 799

Review by Manimugdha Sharma

Last year, the Government of India organised a series of events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1965 War. These were accompanied by the usual tom-tomming of India's achievements by members of the government, the military and the press. A few hagiographies were also penned to coincide with the "celebrations" (a bad word when used for war commemoration). The people had very little idea of what was happening, but could get the sense that this was an opportunity for some chest-thumping and Pakistan-bashing. Many soldiers, serving and retired also had an exaggerated take on the events that had unfolded in 1965.

This sense of disconnect was even greater earlier that year at the centenary commemoration of the First World War. Many people, until then, had either hadn't heard about it or didn't know that 1.3 million Indians had fought in that 'war to end all wars'. Things haven't changed much since those events. Enter India's Wars: A Military History, 1947-1971 by Air vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam, a book that promises to fill the gaps in public consciousness about the wars Independent India has fought up to 1971. The book is impressive on two counts: the research has been pretty detailed, killing the scope of jingoism to colour the narrative; and it tries to make military history more readable and acceptable to a layman.

In India, for long, military history writing has remained an exclusive domain of serving or retired soldiers (not all of them scholars). And overt nationalism, or jingoism if you will, has been the bane of some of these authors who have produced hagiographies that are at times quite laddish in tone and tenor. But even the more serious works were rarely accepted by the academia who until not too long ago used to dismiss accounts penned by soldiers as ‘drum and piper’ history. That view has now changed with many soldier-scholars showing remarkable academic rigour in their works and professional historians also liberally quoting from works considered very military. Subramaniam doesn’t disappoint with the treatment of the topics at hand. In fact, he impresses with the myth-busting around the first India-Pakistan war over Kashmir and the 1962 debacle. He brings out the less-acknowledged role of the Indian Air Force in both conflicts. For instance, the first troops were air-lifted to Srinagar in 1947. The first Stuart tanks of 7 Cavalry were also air-lifted, which fought a decisive action at Joji La leading to an Indian victory. He also talks about the IAF struggling to keep the supply lines open in 1962 when airdrops were the only means to keep the small Indian pockets of resistance going against the Chinese onslaught.

Subramaniam may have well written the first comprehensive history of the tri-services in India’s wars since 1947 and that by itself has been a mammoth task. But it’s highly possible that he would hear from different regiments, squadrons or units about their contribution getting left out—an unavoidable consequence given the sheer size of the Indian military and the different yet exclusive worlds it contains within it. But on the political front, he might face some opposition from certain political parties and groups that deify Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The first PM of India is the favourite punching bag of many people in uniform and is often singularly blamed for the troubles in Kashmir and with China. Subramaniam hasn’t bucked this trend and has been very critical of Nehru for ignoring the Army’s needs, trying to wrest Goa from the Portuguese with diplomacy for too long, and provoking China without the wherewithal to resist an aggression. However, he has balanced it out with his appreciation of Nehru for the many rights he did, which included taking some strategic calls, such as overruling his British commanders and

involving the IAF in 1947-48, or diverting troops to defend Poonch against the advice of his British and Indian commanders. Yet Subramaniam hasn't raised or tried to address some key questions: was there anybody else in India at that time who could have done things differently than Nehru; is it fair to place the blame for everything that didn't go right at Nehru's doorstep when he was leading a nascent nation with its myriad problems; has any other leader after Nehru right down to modern times shown a greater understanding of matters military or care for the troops or is better-suited to lead India in times of war? Apart from this, the book has other pitfalls too, starting with some annoying factual errors (photos of WWI Indian fighter pilots Indralal Roy and S G Welinkar wrongly identified) to some amazing generalisations about India's past. Subramaniam traces the DNA of Indian military to the Marathas, especially the "purely home-bred guerrilla force of Shivaji", and the Sikhs. He dismisses the Mughals completely. His sole ground for that, by his own admission, is Philip Mason's dismissive account of the Mughal military which Subramaniam quotes ad verbatim. He also says that the Mughals were foreigners even though Akbar tried to engage with the Indians. On these two fronts, Subramaniam's book stands at variance with established academic history and might not stand very serious academic scrutiny. The good news is these are only minor points in the book and don't take away much from the book. Loaded with trivia (including juicy titbits that make hardcore military history books so delightful) that one might not come across in a general history, the book actually makes a very strong case for teaching military history outside the military. The soldier-scholar also wants non-military people to read his book. And there are valid reasons for that. For, unless the civilians are more aware of the military—its glorious past and present, its stellar role in upholding the vibrant Indian democracy, and its silent gallantry in putting lives on the line for naam, namak and nishaan—the military would continue to have a nebulous existence in the civilian mind space, remembered only in times of calamity or disaster and flogged for the ineptitude of the political leadership at other times.



AN EXTRACT FROM 'PATHAN RISING: JIHAD ON THE NORTH  
WEST FRONTIER OF INDIA 1897-1898' BY MARK SIMNER

By Atul Kumar Shukla

"At about 14:00 hours, the officers finished their lunch and Gee asked Browne if he would accompany him later in the day to scout the surrounding area for a suitable site to build the levy post. The maliks then asked if the pipers of the 1st Sikhs would play for the villagers, to which Bunny agreed and ordered the musicians to comply with the request. After finishing one tune the pipers began a second, but as they did so a hubbub began and the villagers, who had been listening so intently to the music, suddenly made off in the direction of a little nearby village called Drepilari—inhabited by a sub-section of the Madda Khel—where a man could be seen waving a drawn sword from one of its towers. It was clear that something was wrong so the order was given for the sepoy to fall-in, but as they did so two shots rang out from the direction of the village. Quickly following these shots came an irregular volley of fire aimed at the British officers sitting under the trees, the fire appearing to come from the direction of some other villages located to the south and east. More fire also came from Drepilari itself to the north. "Seton-Browne was hit in the thigh and, upon witnessing this, Cassidy ran across to the lieutenant in an attempt to drag him away to safety. At that moment Gee and Bunny also ran over towards where the officers had been sitting, but the lieutenant-colonel took a bullet to his stomach and collapsed to the ground. Moments later, Higginson was shot in his left arm, after which the firing become increasingly more intense. The fire now appeared to be coming from



village towers and walls located on all sides, and later it was estimated around 500 tribesmen were involved in this first stage of the fast developing attack. "The Indian gunners had been quick to react, the guns having been unlimbered and a fire opened up at a range of 100 yards against a body of tribesmen at the entrance to Drepilari. These tribesmen were attempting to charge the guns, but many were cut down by the artillery fire. However, the artillerymen were in the open with little in the way of cover, and Browne would be hit in the upper arm from a rifleman situated in a nearby tower. Cruickshank was hit next, receiving a bullet in his right arm, but he managed to continue to direct the gunners until a second round hit his chest. (Both officers had run over from their place under the trees to the guns as soon as the first shots had rung out.) Seeing this, Cassidy tried to make his way over to the two officers to offer medical assistance, only to be shot in the knee and fall to the ground. Browne had suffered a severed artery and would not survive and, although still alive, Bunny's wound would also later prove fatal. When the case shot ran out the gunners changed to shrapnel, but when the limited amount of this ammunition also ran out the lieutenant-colonel gave the order for the guns to be limbered up. He also ordered a general retirement to be made, since Bunny's force was occupying a position rather unsuitable for defence, a fact that he was acutely aware of. During the limbering up process, a transport mule, designated to carry the wheels of the gun of No. 4 Sub-division, was shot and killed. At that moment, Havildar Umar Din ran under fire to pick up the gun's wheels, each weighing 72 lbs, and began staggering his way towards another mule. For this conspicuous act of valour the havildar would be shot dead. Unable to recover the wheels, Cruickshank's orderly picked up the 200 lb gun and single-handedly carried it over to the gun mule, only for that mule to also be shot, after which the wounded and frightened animal bolted. Undeterred, the plucky orderly carried the gun to a relief mule and, after fastening it to the animal, went back to recover Cruickshank's body, all the time dodging the intense fire of the tribesmen."

## THE AUTHOR

Mark Simner has been interested in British military history since childhood, having widely read and researched the period of 1700 to 1945. In 2007, he setup the incredibly successful Victorian Wars Forum, which was followed by the equally popular Napoleonic Wars Forum in 2011. His first book, *An Illustrated Introduction to the Battle of Waterloo*, was published in May 2015 and he has since written a number of other titles and articles. *Pathan Rising: Jihad on the North West Frontier of India 1897-1898* is his first book for Fonthill Media.

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