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Editor's Note

On behalf of the Department of History, University of North Bengal, I am presenting this research Journal *Karatoya* to the scholars and students who are interested in the study of history and culture. A dozen of research papers covering varied aspects of Indian history stretching from the ancient to the modern times is incorporated in the journal.

It is a general practice in an academic exercise of this type to make a brief observation about the contents of the articles. The publication thus opens with an unpublished plastic image of Ganapati- Vighnesvara. The editor makes an in-depth study on this unique image of Ganesa from the district of north Dinajpur. On the basis of the iconographic traits it is believed that the elephant-headed and pot-bellied deity may be dated not before the thirteenth century A.D.

Prof. Syed Anwar Hossain of the University of Dhaka offers an interesting study on *Psychohistory: A Challenge to Conventional History*. In course of his arguments Dr. Hussain divides the phenomenon of psychohistory in three distinct sections covering almost all related aspects:

- (i) A precise definition
- (ii) Some psychohistorical works and the methodology used in constructing psychohistory.
- (iii) to include a critique of this still amorphous sub-discipline.

An idea of the nature and characteristic features of the 'Bon' religion among the tribal people of Himalayan region can be traced from Mr. Sudas Lama's paper on *Essence on Bon Religion: among the Hill Tribes*. Mr. Lama argues that the 'Bon' in original form has transformed but its spirit or essence still remains unchanged even today in the tribal ritualistic practices.

Professor Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya analyses the presentation of some rare Warrior's Stones in Eastern India. It is needless to mention that the practice of Hero-stone and Sati-stone worship was very popular in the western and southern parts of India; it was very insignificant in Eastern India. Dr. Bhattacharyya draws our attention to some sculptural representations housed in the North Bengal University Museum and the Varendra Research Museum, Bangladesh. These objects are associated with the worship of the Hero-stone.

Interpretation of *Bhakti* (devotion) with special emphasis on the *Chaitanyacharitamrita* of Krishnadas Kaviraja is the theme of investigation of Professor Pranabananda Jash. He offers an exhaustive but analytical study on the changing concept of the term *bhakti* from time to time. Shri Chaitanya's understanding of devotion (*bhakti*) portrays the rich fabrics of human life with its religio-cultural ethos of the contemporary period. Barring to the metaphysical concept of the *achintabhedabhed* the doctrinal exposition of *bhakti* accompanied by the *rasa* theory gives it a unique position in the realm of religious history of India.

In his paper on the *Regional Development Issue in Indian History throughout the ages* Professor Ananda Gopal Ghosh explains the basis pattern of development issue in Indian history which is uneven and unbalanced. To quote Dr. Ghosh – “the uneven regional development is really complex as well as sensitive one in this multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic mosaic of the Indian sub-continent.

Mr. Kaushik Bandopadhyay deals his study with the *Legacies of Indian Connection in Myanmar* and explains the historical and cultural linkage between these two countries. He is of the opinion that while the Indians played a vital and significant role in the politico-socio-economic life of colonial Burma (modern Myanmar), the Indian nationalist movement was very important in setting the pattern of direct challenge to British imperial rule in Burma.

Professor S.D.Goswami presents a vivid description of the Peasant Movements (1893-94) of Assam: Genesis and Dimensions. His study includes peasant grievances against the British rule and the movement was not confined to the geographical jurisdiction of Assam. It did not remain essentially a local or provincial issue but it gained gradual momentum through proper exposure and publicity by the Press and political personalities.

Sankar Kumar Das highlights an important episode of nationalist revolutionary activity in Midnapore (1902-1908). The path of militant nationalism or revolutionary nationalism was initially centred in Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra, and subsequently it enveloped the entire country. In Bengal revolutionary nationalism gained a forceful impetus after the partition of Bengal. The followers of this group were inspired by the extremist ideology as narrated by Mr. Das.

The Hili Mail Dacoity: a Review in Historical Outline is the theme of Mrs. Anita Bagchi's research. While dealing with the subject the author discusses the strategic importance of Hili as target of assault and role of contemporary major secret societies, viz. the *Jugantar*, *Anusilan*, etc. In this discussion Mrs. Bagchi has shown that “a large number of women became involved in the revolutionary programmes at least as sources of logistic support if not yet as full comrades.”

Professor Ratna Roy Sanyal and Swapan Kumar Pain draw our attention to the participation of the leftist students in the Mass Movements of West Bengal (1959-1966). A descriptive account of the movement and other related political activities in West Bengal is available in this paper.

An analytical study on the history of North-East India and the partition historiography is dealt in the essay of Professor Mahadev Chakravarti. With an introduction to the concept of the North-East during the pre- and post-independence period, Dr. Chakravarty critically demonstrated the partition historiography from various perspectives.

Professor Ratanlal Chakraborty in his long essay in Bengali has drawn a picture of a communal riot in historical prospective in an educational institution of East Bengal in the colonial period. This is a totally unexplored chapter unfortunately untouched by scholars like Suranjan Das and Sabyasachi Bhattacharya.

I do not like to make any comment or remark on any paper incorporated in this volume; on the contrary, I would like to mention that the responsibility for the facts stated, opinions expressed and conclusions reached is entirely that of the authors concerned and the editor of the Journal accepts no responsibility for the same.

* * * * *

It is now my solemn duty to express my gratitude to our Honourable Vice-Chancellor Professor Arunabha Basumajumdar who is always a forceful inspiration for pursuing any academic works in the Department. I am thankful to my colleagues of the Department of History, the Finance Officer, the Registrar, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Commerce and Law for their warm encouragement and necessary cooperation for publishing this journal.

I am greatly indebted to Professor Pranabananda Jash for his constant help, advice and guidance throughout the period I was engaged in editing this volume. His valuable suggestions have always been considered as an inspiration and encouragement. I have no words to express my gratitude to him.

I am also grateful to all the contributors for the enrichment of this publication by providing valuable research papers.

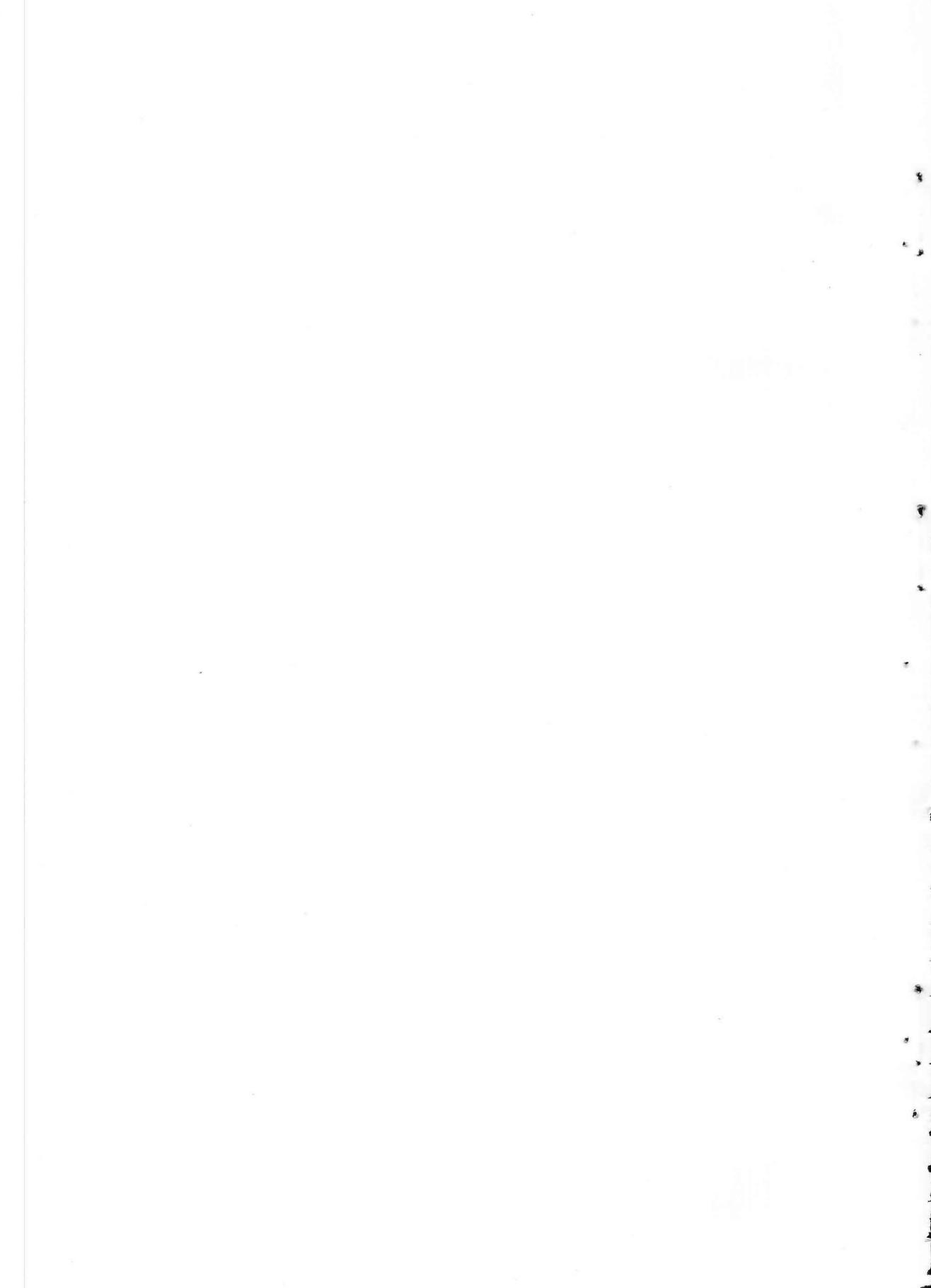
Thanks are also due to the official and the staff of North Bengal University Press for their earnest cooperation in carefully printing the journal within a very short time.

Bijay Kumar Sarkar



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ঔপনিবেশিক আমলে পূর্ববাংলার অন্যতম শিক্ষাঙ্গনে একটি সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা রতন লাল চক্রবর্তী	134-163



A Unique Image of Ganesha from North Dinajpur

Bijoy Kumar Sarkar

Among the Hindu deities, Ganesha is one of the most universally adored ones. He was the principal object of worship of the *Ganapatyas*, one of the five principal Brahmanical sects. The elephant-headed and pot-bellied god was the object of separate worship in other parts of India, but there is very little evidence that the *Ganapatyas* ever prevailed in Bengal. However, the tremendous frequency of the Ganapati images in Bengal can be explained by the fact that as he was regarded as the remover of all obstacles (*vighnavinasana*) and bestower of success (*siddhidata*), he had an assured position not only among the different Hindu sectaries, but also even among the Buddhists and Jainas to some extent.¹ Hence, he is worshipped before starting a new undertaking or a journey² or at the beginning of any religious ceremony and on special occasions without reference to any particular sect.³ In all the Ganesha-sects of Bengal, especially among the merchant-businessman class, he is worshipped and esteemed as the giver of success⁴ and this is corroborated by the inscription on the image of the deity from Narayanpur (Comilla) dated in the 4th regnal year of Pala king Mahapala II (c. 1078 A.D.), which reveals that one merchant named Buddhamitra, son of lambhalamitra; donated the sculpture.⁵ Though he is regarded as *Siddhidata* in the *puranas*, he is also *Vighnadata* or *Vighnaraja* (King of obstacles) in case of not being worshipped. In the *Manava Grihyasutra*, he is the god of obstacles. The *Yajnavalka Smriti* contains a list of almost of all kinds of obstacles, which may occur due to the anger of the god Ganesha.⁶ In Verse 53 of the Sian (Birbhum) Stone Inscription (approx. 1043 A.D.), Ganesha has been described as *Vighmanayaka*.⁷ Originally, he was probably a god of fertility, viz. of agriculture, as many of his symbols prove.⁸ He is also the god of the month *bhadrapada*.⁹

In several *puranas* and *agamas*, Ganesha is variously described as one of the sons of Siva and Parvati, or of Parvati alone before her marriage with Siva, or of Siva

alone or even having an independent origin.¹⁰ These legends seem to indicate a non-Aryan origin of the god and his later absorption into the Hinduism, associating him largely with the Saiva cult. A small black stone image of Ganesha¹¹ measuring 12.5" in height and 10.5 in width has been found from a small village of Islampur in the district of North Dinajpur .It is curious because the image of Ganesha is rare in the district where most of the images are those of Vishnu. He is seated in *padmasana*, while most of the images of Ganesha in Bengal show the god in *lalitasana* or *maharajalilasana*.¹² *Padmasana* denotes deep meditation and concentration. On the other hand, *lalitasana* symbolizes the gracious presence or serenity of a deity and *maharajalilasana* symbolizes the royal ease. According to the *Brahmavaivarta Purana*, Ganesha was fond of staying engaged in *tapasya*.¹³



The deity has four hands. Based on the number of hands, the four-armed Ganesha forms the biggest group. The texts like *Amsumadbhedagama*, *Uttarakamikagama* *Suprabhedagama*, *Vishnudharmottara Purana*,¹⁴ *Rupamandana*,¹⁵ *Agni Purana*,¹⁶

*Matsya Purana*¹⁷ etc. invariably endow the god with four hands, the attributes held by them being any four among the following: ‘Own tooth (*svadanta*), wood-apple (*kapittha*), sweet- meat (*modaka*), elephant-goad (*ankusa*), noose (*pasa*), snake (*naga*), rosary, lotus etc.¹⁸ However, the attributes held in hands by the Ganesha image in question is considerably different. Here the divinity holds a *sankha* (conch-shell), “the emblem of salvation”, in his lower right hand, which is very much unique because most of the seated four-armed Ganesha icons of Bengal depict *akshamala*, (rosary) in *varada* or *svadanta* (tusk) in the same hand.¹⁹ In the Hindu tradition, *sankha* is frequently associated with the Lord Vishnu, who overcame the demon Pancajanya, the grandson of Hiranyakasipu; hence, the name (Pancajanya) of the conch shell associated With this deity.²⁰ *Sankha*, though not found in any other sculpture of Ganesha in Bengal, does find mention as one of his attributes.²¹ The upper right hand, though not visible, might have carried *gada* (mace), “the emblem of destruction” and a symbol of strength and power. However, most of the Ganesha figures in Bengal of the seated, four-armed type are found with *mulaka* (radish) in their upper right hand, which symbolizes agricultural fertility²² in addition to being a favourite edible of the elephants. In the upper left hand, the god carries an object of the *chakra* type. *Chakra*, though not endowed in any other image of the divinity in Bengal, is also referred to as one of his attributes.²³ In almost all the images of this type, some weapon, especially *parasu*, is found in this hand. However, the attributes of *pasha* and *ankusha* usually occur in the south Indian images.²⁴ The god is represented with a full-blown lotus (*padma*), “the emblem of creation”, in his lower left hand. This attribute is, of course, found in a very few seated, four-armed images of Ganesha but in the upper right hand of the god, not in the lower left. However, majority of the images of this type hold *ladduka* or *modaka* in the lower left hand and the trunk is applied to the left to taste the sweets. The *modaka* refers to a sweetmeat that denotes fertility.²⁵

Thus, it is quite clear that the god, instead of being provided with the traditional attributes has been endowed with the *ayudhas* of Vishnu. At present also, *Sankha*,

Chakra, *Gada* and *Padma* are seen clockwise in the four hands of Ganesha.²⁶ It is said in the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* that Parvati, seeing Krishna with *Sankha*, *Chakra*, *Gada* and *Padma*, wished for a similar son and happened to obtain because of the boon given by Krishna.²⁷ In the same *purana*, Ganesha is sometimes described as one of the aspects of Krishna.²⁸ Therefore, once again we see the impact of the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* in this, icon of Ganesha.

The deity is endowed with a third eye, which is occasionally found in his images.²⁹ The third eye (in the centre of the forehead and pointing up and down) named *jnananetra* refers to the ability to see beyond the natural world, a superhuman power reserved for the gods. In addition, the same eye also stands for knowledge and wisdom.³⁰ In latter Hinduism, Ganesha is regarded as the god of wisdom and art³¹, which perhaps explains the depiction of the god with the third eye;

The Ganesha figures in Bengal are generally bedecked with various jewelleries, of which particularly remarkable is the pair of the *sankha-kundala*, present in most of the images. However, the ornamentation of the divinity in question is very simple. Except the wristlets (*valayas*) and one set of necklace (*hara*), there is no jewellery on his person, nor does he wear any *yajnopavita*, which is worn by members of the three “twice-born” (*dvija*) castes as a symbol of spiritual rebirth. He is not also endowed with the sacred thread made up of a long snake, as is the general feature of the Ganesha images. In between the chest and the belly of the divinity, there is a belt, which was probably meant to serve the purpose of an *udarabandha* to contain the *lambodara* (large, protuberant belly in which allegedly lies the whole world) of the god. Generally, the band or girdle round the belly of Ganesha is a *naga*, *nagabandha*.

The trunk is unfortunately missing. However, it seems that the trunk was bent upwards reaching the god’s mouth as it could not have been applied to the left or to the right in absence of the *modaka-purna-patra*. A remarkable feature of the Ganesha figures in Bengal is that contrary to both the ‘*karanda-* or *jata-mukutas*’ in other parts of India, the Bengal images uniformly show the *jatamukuta* for the god. However, the elephant head of the deity under discussion, is bare. The only other Ganesha image with bare

elephant-head is found at Paharpur.³² In the later texts, a mouse is very often described as his mount (*vahana*).³³ It is also represented in almost all the Ganesha images of Bengal. The image is made of black stone of inferior quality and claims no elegance from artistic point of view as well. It has neither any pedestal nor any stela. Probably it is Ganesha in a folk-style.

Thus, the image of Ganesha under consideration agrees with the description and legend of the deity found in the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* in respect of the meditative aspect and *ayudhas* of the god. It is very different in the sense that here the god is represented in deep meditation, while his other images discovered in Bengal depict him in the mood of earthly enjoyment, relishing sweetmeats with the help of his proboscis. The appearance of the god in the traditional role of a happy, well-to-do and well-fed householder or a businessperson is conspicuous by its absence. The exceptional representation of the god without any *mukuta* or with scanty ornaments points to the emphasis laid on the meditative and spiritual features of the deity. The conspicuous absence of *mulaka* (radish), a symbol of agricultural fertility as well as *modaka*, which also denotes fertility and of which Ganesha is also very fond of, as common attributes of the god clearly reveals that the image was neither made nor worshipped by its devotee out of any material objectives, rather to pay his heart-felt veneration with fullest devotion. The depiction of Ganesha with the attributes of Vishnu shows a tremendous impact of the cult of the latter over that of the former in, addition to demonstration of syncretism, which had brought the two different sects very close to each other. It is not unlikely that the worshipper of this Ganesha image in question might have been a devout Vaishnava.

It is not easy to determine the date of the image. However, as its iconography mostly agrees with his account in the *Brahmavaivarta Purana*, which came to its present form in the 15th/16th century A.D. and as it possesses the same *ayudhas* as those of the present-day Ganesha images, it may be dated in the 13th or subsequent century A.D.

Notes and References:

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12. Haque, *op. cit.*, p. 314.
13. Bandopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 450.
14. 14. III, 71.13-16; also quoted in the *Vratakhandā*, p.77.
15. *Elements of Hindu iconography*, 1(2), App. C, p. 5, 7, 8.
- 16.50.23-26; 348.21 b-22a.
17. 260.52-54.
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22. *Ibid*, p. 179.
23. *Ibid*, p. 90.
24. Haque, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
25. Bunce, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
26. Bandopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 446.
27. *Ibid*, p. 450.
28. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 355.
29. Haque, *op. cit.*, pp. 315, 319, 322.
30. Bunce, *op. cit.*, p. 312.
31. Gosta, *op. cit.*, p. 90, Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
32. cr. MASI, no. 55, plate XXXIId.
33. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p., 358.

Psychohistory: A Challenge to Conventional History

Syed Anwar Husain

History is generally considered a discipline with fixed boundaries and focal points—periods, countries, regimes, dramatic events and great leaders. In terms of procedure and methodology also, History enjoys a distinction as being defined, clear and unambiguous. But starting from the mid-twentieth century up to date History has demonstrated itself to be an amorphous discipline with its frontiers and contours in constant shift under a cross-discipline impact. Historians were once found to be followers of such mentors as Gibbon, Macaulay, Ranke and Toynbee; they now seem to demonstrate more attraction for Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Levi-Strauss. Until sometime in the past, History was more or less a concatenation of events, now it is primarily, and even entirely analytic in an interdisciplinary perspective.

Historical analysis is now based on answering a question: why did a certain event happen? Rather than, as the case in the past, what happened? Or how did it happen? One of the ways to answer the question 'why' in history is to use psychoanalysis, and the history thus produced becomes psychohistory.

This paper discusses the phenomenon of psychohistory in three sections. The opening section deals with an attempt to put across a precise definition of this sub-discipline. The second section is illustrative and draws attention to some psycho-historical works. Inherent in this section is an indication of the methodology used in constructing psychohistory. The third section is a critique of this still amorphous sub-discipline.

I

What Psychohistory is all about?

Contrary to what appears at first sight psychohistory is not merely the use of psychological explanation in historical descriptions. Indeed, there is nothing new in such an approach; historians have always used such explanations in appropriate contexts

and with sufficient evidence. As Hegel has pointed out, all historical facts are psychological facts. But this is not exactly what a psycho-historian does; he uses a kind of eclectic and pragmatic methodology. He uses a particular theory of psychology—psychoanalysis; and in doing so he may be committed to Freudianism or its variations as found in Jungian, Kleinian and Lacanian traditions. In doing so he deviates from the path of conventional historical analysis. Unlike conventional historians a psycho-historian derives his ‘facts’ not from happenings only, and deduces his theories not from this or that instance but from a view of human nature that conditions and transcends historical happenings. Psychohistory denies the basic criterion of historical evidence: that the evidence be publicly accessible to, and therefore assessable by all historians. Moreover, this kind of historical exercise violates the basic tenet of historical method: that the historian be alert to the negative instances or counter-evidence that would refute his thesis and to alternative explanations that would make his own more tenuous.

Psychohistory is thus a formalized sub-discipline, practitioners of which are committed to psychoanalysis as their principal explanatory device. Despite the dramatic growth of interest in the recent past, especially in the United States, in psychohistory, and where large history departments have had distinctively patronizing role, critics still regard this sub-discipline with suspicion. Erik H. Erikson, for example, although a pioneer in this kind of exercise, with a pronounced self-defensive gesture accepts for psychohistory a status of “an in-between field”. Moreover, he uses a hyphenated spelling for the field (psychohistory) because, as he goes on to explain, “Such a hyphenated name usually designates an area in which nobody as yet is methodologically quite at home, but which someday will be settled and incorporated without a trace of border

¹ Erik H. Erikson, On the Nature of Psycho-Historical Evidence: In Search of Gandhi”, in **Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership** (Excerpted from **Deadalus**, vol.97, No.3) (Bombay, n.d.), p.14.

² William L. Langer, The Next Assignment”, **The American Historical Review** vol. 53, No. 2, January, 1958, pp. 283-304; H. Stuart Hughes, History and Psychoanalysis: The Explanation of Motive” in his **History as Art and as Science** (New York: 1964); Bruce Mazlish (ed.), **Psychoanalysis and History** (Englewood Cliffs, 1963).

disputes and double names.”¹ But at the same time such self-confidants as William Langer, Stuart Hughes, and Bruce Mazlis have unhesitatingly called for closer cooperation between history and psychoanalysis.² An awareness or imperative for such a close cooperation has resulted in the proliferation of historical works with a marked impact of the use of psychoanalysis as a device.³

II

Examples of Psychohistory

To say that Hitler has a personal obsession with Jews and that this was an important fact in the history of Nazism is not an exercise in psychohistory, although statement such as this may have the traces of psychological input to historical exercise. A psycho-historian goes on to explain the precise psychic mechanism that caused that obsession and to make this psychic mechanism responsible for the precise nature of the historical events resulting from the obsession.

Rudolph Binion has demonstrated the use of psychoanalytic device in explaining Hitler’s anti-Jewish policies and pogroms. He traces not only the Holocaust but the specific use of gas chambers to the treatment of Hitler’s mother by a Jewish doctor.⁴ A Dr. Bloch had operated on her breast cancer, removing the breast, and then, when the cancer recurred, had vainly tried to arrest its progress by the use of the iodine compound called iodoform. Hitler, who had “loved Bloch like a kind father”, unconsciously blamed him for his mother’s untimely and tragic death, as well as for the “huge terminal bill paid on Christmas Eve”. This experience of childhood, and traumatic at that, was the

³ See, for example, E. Eriksson, *Young Man Luther. A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (London, 1959), *Gandhi’s Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (London, 1970); P. Loweberg, *Fantasy and Reality in History* (New York, 1995); and *Decoding the Past: The Psycho-historical Approach* (New York, 1980); D. Stannard, *Shrinking History: On Freud and the Failure of Psychohistory* (New York, 1980); *The Psychohistory Review: Studies of Motivation in History and Culture* (1972); L. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1994) (this work throws much light on the use of psychoanalysis in history); W. Runyan (ed.), *Psychology and Historical Interpretation* (New York, 1995).

⁴ See his *Hitler’s Concept of Lebensraum: The Psychological Basis*, *History of Childhood Quarterly* vol.1, 1973, pp.187-215.

root of his latter rage against “the Jewish cancer, the Jewish poison, the Jewish profiteer.” When Hitler was hospitalized for gas poisoning in 1918, the gas burned through his skin “just like iodoform”, and he naturally “associated” his own condition with that of his mother’s. Shortly afterward, in a hysterical relapse, he experienced the hallucination in which he was called upon to undo Germany’s defeat, the Germany he was going to avenge being “transparently his mother”. The gas chambers of World War II, similarly “associated” with the iodoform episode and his won gas poisoning, completed Hitler’s psychological continuum. As Rudolph Binion concludes: “the futile surgery performed on his mother’s cancer (the expulsion programme), yielding to representation of her death as mercy killing (the Euthanasia programme), and this in turn to his retaliation against Bloch (the Final Solution)”.

A more specific correspondence between psychic and historical phenomena may be seen in that part of this article which explains Hitler’s *Lebensraum* policy. In appealing for living space for Germany, Hitler is said to have been re-experiencing his mother’s trauma, a trauma induced by the death of three infants before Hitler was born and communicated to the infant Hitler literally at his mother’s breast.

That is, even as he spoke to Germany’s emergent need to relive a traumatic experience, his message was shaped by his oral-aggressive fixation and by the traumatic experience that his mother was reliving as she fixated him. His major premise was strictly oral-aggressive; that all history was a fight for feeding ground. His minor premise, that Germany could not feed her children adequately, expressed his mother’s maternal trauma as it had come through to him in her compensatory overfeeding of him. And his conclusion, the eastern land-grab, pointed beyond itself toward world conquest, which points back to that satiety at the breast when self and world were one.

Erik Erikson in his classic study *Young Man Luther (1958)* demonstrates psychoanalysis by tracing Luther’s rebellion against the Pope to the childhood trauma he had suffered under a domineering father and his consequent identity crisis of his youth.

III

Critique of Psychohistory

A general objection to psychohistory is that it does not observe the rules of the historical craft. But history is more than mere presentation of facts and recreation of a phenomenon; it is essentially a scientific exercise in understanding episodes and phenomena all of which are rooted in human motivations and actions. Conceived and conceptualized in such a context historical exercise ought to be an endeavour to understand the psyche of creators of episodes and phenomena. Conventional history may remain half-history without understanding or analyzing human minds.

There are two other commonly voiced objections. The first is that this is an individual-specific method unworkable in a group or societal context. An individual may be an object about which a good deal may be known; but it would be difficult to collect psychoanalytic data about a group. These criticisms may be right, but certainly not pointing to impossibility. In fact, many analysts, building on earlier psychological work, have thought about collective psychology and psycho-historians have addressed precisely this issue in studying how totalitarian leaders can command support, for example.

The second criticism is that it is wrong, if not downright impossible, to psycho-analyse the dead. If sufficient psychological data relating to dead are available there is no reason why he cannot be psycho-analysed; and this is why there is a widely held view among the sympathies of psychohistory that this kind of objection is obtuse.⁵

Concluding Observations

It is undeniable that psychohistory is still an amorphous sub-discipline awaiting confirmation by the general body of history fraternity. But it is also evidentially true that it has passed its embryonic stage, and the progress registered over the past half century has been remarkably steady, although quantitatively not phenomenal. The unique strength of psychohistory is that it seeks to get straight into human motivations that are at the root of human actions the aggregation of which is history. Psychohistory is poised to add strength, and challenge to conventional historiography.

⁵ See, for example Ludmila Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London, 2000), p.57.

Essence of Bon Religion: Among the Hill Tribe

Sudas Lama

Religious beliefs and practices have been a universal feature of human society. Religion, like other cultural elements such as family, marriage, incest prohibition, etc. is found everywhere in the world. But the concept 'religion' is not adequately defined to comprehend the large assortment of the kinds of belief and behavior which exist world over and which diverse opinions on the subject might place under it. The system of belief and practices, doctrine and behavior gradually evolved and was organized to face the unknown supernatural world and restore confidence to the mind of the community and the individual when it is shaken by crisis and dangers.

The term 'tribal religion' is used in a generic sense to include all religious traditions of known tribes world over in general and in India in particular. Each tribe has its own religion, exclusive to its members. But when religions of different tribes are compared with one another, these religions form a set of overlapping religions, each individual tribe's religion being a sub-set of it. In one religious tradition, ancestor worship could be prominent, while in others it could be magic or Shamanism. And in others it could be belief in supernatural being or supernatural power. But all of them contain rituals, beliefs and traditional experience.

II

As we know that "Bon" is the primitive native religion of Tibet and it has, in spite of the influence of Buddhism, preserved itself till the present day, but not in its original form. Bon was originally a cult of nature worship. They worshiped God in an iconic form represented by a lump of earth or made of grain. It is said to have been widespread in Inner Asia, China, East and West Turkistan, Manchuria, Mongolia and the Tibetan Plateau. Tibetans of the early days were apparently completely subject to their formidable natural surroundings. Their religious ideas, which were rooted in and

dominated by nature, revolved round the various good and evil spirits with which they peopled their wild, highland landscape. These spirits in time became gods who had to be propitiated to avert harm and worshiped to secure help. The belief in the spirits developed into a cult with its own elaborate ritual. There were Shamans or specialist priest who professed to be experts in controlling nature through their knowledge of the ways of propitiating the spirits. These practice varied from place to place and from clan to clan. The original 'Bon' rites were aimed essentially at assuring protection and assistance to the person, as well as the tribal chieftains and certain privileged families against evil in situation of crisis and in the face of danger to life.

If we go back to the history of Tibet when Buddhism made its way to the land of snow in 7th Century A.D. during the kingship of Srong-tsan-gampo who made the good relationship with the king of Nepal and China through the marriage. So when Tibet patronized the Buddhism, there was encounter with bon, and Bon lost its importance in Tibet and thus compelled to migrate to other area. Bon in its nature is very much animist and it has practice of sacrifices of animals and even human beings and such other practices were openly indulged in and they formed an important part in the religious observances of the bon. A fair idea about the original character of the Bon can be had from the ancient manuscript (9th or 10th C A.D.) where the Tibetan rites are described (R.A.Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*). "The officers are assembled once every year for the lesser oath of fealty. They sacrifice sheep, dogs, and monkeys, first breaking their legs and then killing them, afterwards exposing their intestines and cutting them into pieces. The sorcerers having summoned, they call of the gods of heaven and earth, of the mountains and rivers, of the sun, moon, stars, and planets, saying: should your hearts become changed, and your thoughts disloyal, the gods will see clearly and make you like these sheep and dogs". The victims sacrificed as men, horses, oxen and asses and prayers are offered in this form.

The form of religion practiced by the tribal people of that time is regarded as Animism. The basic premise for this cult is that the animistic belief is to communicate

with supernatural beings not about metaphysical or dogmas of moral life, but about urgent practicalities like securing food, curing illness and averting danger. Bon religion had to go through various challenges and changes because of the Buddhism. But change in the ritual and ceremonies affected its appearance- the form, the essence or spirit of the religion remaining intact.

III

Inner Asia is largely populated by the many ethnic groups, out of which Tibeto-Mongoliad form the largest group of Himalayan region. Because of their Tibetan affiliation and tribal in nature they preserved the Bon religion or its spirit till modern days but not in original form. The modern Himalayan tribes are Murmi, Limbu, Khambo, Toto, Bhutia, Lepcha, Gurung, Kiranti, and many more are ethnic group who practice the rites of bon. There is a few worship or *puja* among these groups which shows the essence of Bon till date preserved by this Mongoloid family. The animistic nature of primitive Bon is reflected by the rites of different tribe of Himalayan region:

1) Ancestral Worship:-

Among the tribal we find the system of worshipping their ancestor once in a year. For this rite they need specialized *shaman* who chants the mantra in order to please the ancestor. They do not have any idol of ancestor but this *puja* is followed by the sacrifice of hen. This was for the protection of their *Kula* from any disease and dangers. Tribal people believe that their well-being lies in the hands of their ancestor and they think that the Kula or ancestor is very sacred.

2) Worship of Rivers:

To avert the natural calamities and to please the gods of river, the Tibeto-Mongoloid group worships the river to bless the inhabitant by fertile land. This worship is followed by the sacrifice of goat. And worship is performed by the clan priest of particular tribe. This worship of nature is specially meant to enhance the fertility of land.

3) Soil Worship:

Soil or land being the integral part of nature as well as of agriculture, the followers of animism worship the soil collectively once in a year near the village. For this worship they choose the highland of the village and made the *than or stan*, where they gave the sacrifice of birds. Villagers believe that if Soil god is pleased by the *puja* and sacrifice, their production will be good. Side by side they also worship god of rain. Tribal people have the conception that if the rain-god is not pleased, there will be no rain and it can cause draught, famine and many more. So in order to get the blessing of god of rain these tribal people offer the *puja* by sacrificing lots of goat, sheep and birds collectively by all the villagers once in a year.

4) Worship of cowshed:

As Bon culture of tribal people is totally related to the animistic form of worship and is tribal in nature they also give preference to cattle. To avoid the illness of cattle, and to assure the good quantity of milk from cow they worship cowshed.

5) Worship of Manasa (the snake Goddess);

Bon religion is based on supernatural power and three divinities of the world and *Manasa* is one of them. So this culture of worshipping Manasa is totally bon culture and by this they want to have the blessings of the goddess. Besides the above-mentioned belief there are many rites and culture like worshipping of trees, Mahakala and giving sacrifice during the *puja*.

This culture of worshipping natural phenomenon and celestial body by the hilly tribal of Himalayan region especially by the Tibeto-Mongoloid group shows that Bon in original form has declined but its spirit or essence remain till today in the form of tribal ritual.

To conclude, we can say that Bon religion being the primitive native religion of Tibet and having been chased by the Buddhism has lost its original nature, but its essence or belief lies in the mind of people which passes generation to generation. The Tibeto-Mongoloid group of people being influenced by the creed of Buddhism

and Christianity are able to maintain their ancestral religion by following the rites and culture.

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The Warrior's Stones in Eastern India

Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya

Among a large number of stone Sculptures taken notice of in a recently published Catalogue of North Bengal University Museum, our attention has been drawn to a Warrior's Stone (mentioned in the Catalogue¹ as Hero-Stone) found in Eastern India.

In fact, hundreds of Hero-Stones and Sati-Stones have been discovered in Western and Southern parts of India.² In comparison, we come across a handful of Hero-Stones and a very insignificant number of Sati Stone in Eastern India. Most of the Sati Stones found in Eastern India, particularly from Bengal and Bihar are relatively of the modern period.³ Below we present the descriptions of the Hero-Stones so far recorded in the Museums of Eastern India.

A] From North Bengal University Museum

1. Hero-Stone: Sand Stone; 40 Cm. X 20 Cm. X 11 Cm. Depiction of the Hero in the act of fighting with one step forward and holding sword in one hand and the shield in the other. The figure is accompanied by small figure of a fighter with a weapon (indistinct) in one hand and an umbrella looks like a canopy over the head of the hero. The solar symbol appears on the top left. The slab with elliptical stela found from Rajshahi (Bangladesh) possibly belonging to early Christian era.⁴



Hero-Stone - North Bengal University Museum

B] The Varendra Research Museum preserves the following Hero-Stones:

2. The combatant Hero with raised sword and a shield under a cap Canopy represented in low relief on a rounded slab made of black Stone: (47 Cm. x 18.5 Cm). The Hero wears beard and moustache and ornaments on his ears, neck, arms, wrists and ankle. He is clad in a *dhoti* which is tied round the waist by a piece of cloth and his hair gathered in large bun behind the head. Above the Canopy to the left is the solar symbol. He is accompanied by another fighter wearing *kuntala* and holding spear in both hands below.

The two inscriptions, one at the top right and the other below the left foot of the combatant are *Devata* and *Thakura*, both implying 'god'. The slab was found from Deogram, Bogra District (now in Bangladesh) and is dated 9th Century A. D.⁵

3. Hero-Stone made of -black basalt (47.5 Cm. x 31.7 Cm.) found from Kashiabari, Atrai, Naogaon in Rajshahi (now Bangladesh). The Hero is standing in *alidha* pose on a pointed slab. He holds a sword in right hand (damaged) raised over his head and an indistinct object in the other hand. The figure wears a dhoti and an *uttariya*, and a pearl *upavita*, a necklace, *urujalaka* and round ear-rings. The curly hair arranged in *jatas* which are piled cap like on the head. The back slab is plain except for the double decorative borders. The figure may be dated c. 11th Century A.D.⁶



Hero-Stone: Kashiabari, Atrai, Naogaon, Rajshahi

It is possible to trace the origin of the cult of Hero-Stone to the Menhirs of the Megalithic cultures in India of the first millennium B.C. and their geographical distribution in the Indian peninsula seems to coincide with that of Megalithic settlements. The Hero-Stone is known as *kirttistambha* in Rajasthan, *paliya* (i.e. protector) in Gujrat and its transformation into a deity in the cult of *Vithoba* in Maharastra and in the Sangama literature (c300 B.C. to 200 A.D.). The counterpart of *ma-sati-k-kal* (Sati-Stone) may be found in *Vira-k-kal* (Hero-Stone).⁷ We have not come across any such terminology for eastern India indicating thereby less popularity of the cult in the region. The Hero-Stone found in Eastern India are much less elaborate in composition than those found in peninsular India. Hero is rarely shown on horse-back or seated on elephant.^{7a}

Hero-Stones are generally carved in locally available rocks like sandstone and chlorite schist in Purulia and Burdwan and laterite blocks in Midnapore but in eastern Bengal in black stone as it is a usual practice for Pala-Sena groups of sculptures. Hero-Stones preserved in the Varendra Research Society Museum bear close resemblance to Pala-Sena sculpture, similar to those found in Budhpur.

Memorial Stones generally dedicated to men who have met their death in an act of heroism or have died on the battle field. The soul of the hero goes out of the world of the living and enters into heaven (cf. *Hato Va prapsasi Svargam..*).⁸ A similar interesting tradition exists in Scandinavian mythology, where Odin, god of death and battle, was believed to welcome into his hall warriors who died a heroic death on the battle field.⁹

In Indian tradition, in heaven life is timeless, and the heaven is known by various nomenclatures: *Brahmaloka*, *Suryaloka*, *Indraloka*, *Kailasa*, and so on.

On occasion the divinization of the hero, it is compared to such other religious activities, like the sacrificial ritual and asceticism, which are said to be conducive to the attainment of heaven or of release from rebirth. The metaphors which like battle, sacrifice and asceticism are found in various texts.¹⁰ Great hero Arjuna is welcomed in Indra's heaven, 'the abode of heroes. Incidentally, Arjuna was, in fact, the son of Indra.¹¹

The austerities and practices of the ascetics are compared to the painful death of the hero in the battle, or the voluntary death (sometimes, of course, against her will) of the sati on the funeral pyre of her husband. All are seen as superhuman feats, and were assured of the bliss in highest heaven. The symbolic death of the as-cetic leads him,

however, to a different life from that of the hero in heaven, For example, the ascetic denies himself sexuality, whereas the hero is waited upon by damsels (*Apsaras*) in heaven and lives a life of enhanced sexuality.¹² The Sati, on the other hand, also attains heaven, after self-immolation and is destined to live a bliss-ful life in company of her beloved husband.¹³

As mentioned earlier that though the Western and Southern parts of India yielded a large number of Hero-Stones and Sati-stones, we have come across a very few of such stones in eastern India.

C] From other places of West Bengal:

In recent years, a few more Hero-Stones have been found in Purulia, Bankura, Midnapore and Burdwan districts of West Bengal. Again, it is only in the extremely western Asansol sub-division and the upland areas rather than the coastal or alluvial plains of Midnapore, Hero-Stones have been discovered.¹⁴ It appears, however, that Hero-Stones become fewer in agriculturally fertile areas.¹⁵ When agriculture became mainstay of the people, the necessity of fighting for snatching live-stocks from other hordes became unnecessary, for which the services of the heroes was very much sought after on earlier occasions.

The Hero-Stones were generally related to the exploits of the people who remain unnoticed in royal charters and Panegyrics, and the oral traditions preserve the memoirs of heroes. The Hero-Stones, it may be pointed out, show clearly 'a substratum cult',¹⁶ and the veneration of these is rooted in tribal and folk religion'. Hero-stones, perhaps, commemorate the conflict between the emergent political elite and autochthons population of the region. Sengupta¹⁷ has drawn our attention to the new geopolitical formation called *bhums* (cf. Birbhum, etc.) of the Hindu tribal chiefs in the medieval west Bengal to the conflicts mentioned above.

The presence of the Sun and the Crescent Moon usually at the top of Hero - Stones and Sati-Stones, possibly signify the indestructible time, and the land-grants usually contain a phrase indicating perpetuity i.e. 'as long as the sun and the moon exist'.¹⁸ Thapar has drawn our attention to the *Mahanirvana Tantra*, a later text, mentions that the *nada* and the *vindu*- two nerve centres of the human body - actually stand for the Sun and the Moon and their union is sought in yogic practices.¹⁹ The rituals which are being performed by the *sadhaka* also known as *vira* (hero), are the same as are

associated with the worship of the Hero-Stone, like male animal sacrificing and use of intoxicants for libations.

But in course of time some sort adjustment and assimilation between the cult of Hero-Stone and Brahmanical became inevitable as the Hero-Stones are in many cases situated close to Brahmana grantees. 'The upward mobile family of the hero and the newly settled Brahmana grantee may well have had to make major adjust-meats.²⁰ The establishment of Hero-Stones in temple court-yards was, however, considered to be concessions made by the Brahmanical system to local tradition, and this practice apparently enhanced the prestige of Hero-Stones, and the worship (*puja*) of Hero-Stones, were to be performed in accordance with the Brahmanical practices, shedding the earlier Tantrika form of worship. It is interesting to note since 9th century A.D. onwards, the perceptible changes in popular attitude towards the Hero-Stones began to be felt. Hero-Stones are now made of black stone and their ornamentation and sophisticated method of wearing cloths and above all inscribing inscriptions on them as Thakura and Devata i.e. god, tended to show that they began to come loser to the main deity for which the temple was dedicated.

In the process some elements of high culture are borrowed and some elements of folk culture are elevated and became visible. Hence, it becomes difficult to categorize Hero-Stones as belonging to either the folk or the high culture.²⁰ But definitely represents unrecorded accounts of the heroic resistances of the people who tried to save their own stocks from attacks of wild animals, also sometimes, the clutches of the more sophisticated predators who attempted to profane their soils.

Notes and References:

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3. Shyamalkanti Chakravati, 'Sati in Bengal Epigraphy' in *Journal of the Varendra*

- Research Museum, Vol. 2, Rajshahi, 1973, pp. 41 Ft.
4. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.*, p.22, pl. 24.
 5. Mukhlesur Rahaman, *A Descriptive Catalogue: Varendra Research Museum*, University of Rajshahi, 1998, p.334, pl. 319.
 6. Mukhlesur Rahaman, *op. cit.*, p.345, .pl.329.
 7. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43, fn.16.
 - 7a. In Budhpur (P.S. Pancha) of the Purulia district of West Bengal, Hero has been placed on an elephant. In some cases, Hero has been shown as fighting, while the crowning lion shown above the stela. See Gautam Sengupta, “Hero Stone of West Bengal: A Preliminary Report”, *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol. 4, Dhaka, 1999, pp. 77ff; see also his article published in *Banglapaedia*, National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2004, Vol. pp.328f. We may refer to three riders on horse-back of the Varendra Research Society Museum as belonging to this class of sculptures. See Mukhlesur Rahaman, *op. cit.*, plate no. 326, pp. 340-41.
 8. *Mahabharata, Sri-mad-Bhagvat-Gita*, Ch. II.37 Again. It has been cautioned that “if anybody flees from the battle field and meets death at the hand of the enemy, he becomes guilty not only of desertion, but a sinner taking all the burden of sin of his master; *The Manusamhita*, 7. 94-95.
 9. It is said that each night Odin used to entertain the fallen brave warriors with a feast in Valhalla. Odin wanted to collect a mighty host from among the noble dead to wage war against monsters and giants. See H.R. Davidson, *Scandinavian Mythology*, Paul Hamlyn, London, 1969, p.28.
 10. *Satapatha Brahmana*, (2.33.15) refers to heaven-bound boat for the *agnihotra* sacrifice. *Mahabharata, Santiparvan* (21.18-19; 78, 28-31) mentions that one will go to heaven for protecting, cows and Brahmanas. The *Dana-Stuti* hymns of *Rig-Veda* refer to the exploits of the persons connected with the successful raids for capturing cattle. See R. Thapar in *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 105-21.
 11. *Mahabharata, Vanaparva*, pp. 43ff.
 12. Cf. *ahave tu hatam Suram na
socheta kathanchana /*

*Asochya hi hatah surah
svargaloke Mahiyate //
varapsarah Sahasrani suram
ayodhane ham /
tvaramanani dhavanti mama
bhartta bhavediti //*

i.e. one should not lament the death of a hero who goes to heaven. In heaven thousands of celestial damsels rush after him to have him as their consort. *Mahabharata* (12/98/44-47). The same story of rushing of the *Apsaras* towards Damodaragupta who died in battle field is given in the Apsad Inscription of Adityasena. Also see Rajatarangini, 8/453. See D. C. Sircar, *Samskritik Itihaser Prasange* (Bengali), Sahitya-loka, Kolkata, 1983, pp. 105 ff.

13. The merits of immolation of *Sati* has elaborately been narrated in the *Brihaddharma-purana*, see *History of Bengal*, Vol. I (ed.) R. C. Majumdar in 'Society'. See Edward Thomson John, *Suttee – A Historical and Philosophical Enquiry into the Hindu Rite of Widow-Burning*, London, 1928.
14. See Gautam Sengupta, *Banglapaedia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 327ff.
15. See Romilla Thapar, 'As long as the Moon and the Sun Endure' in *Sontheimer Memorial Seminar*, Puna, 1993, 32, p.696.
16. Romila Thapar, 'Death of the Hero' in S. C. Humphrays and Helan king (Ed.) *Morality and Immorality, The Anthropology and Archaeology of Death*, London, 1981, pp. 293ff.
17. Gautam Sengupta, *op. cit.*, p.328.
18. Romila Thapar, 'As Long as the Moon and the Sun Endure', *op. cit.*, pp. 696 ff. She has also suggested that folk religion symbolism is being expressed at the Dhangar festival in which *Khandaba* standing for the Sun is taken out from the temple for bathing into the Karha River representing the moon. J. M. Stanley, 'Special Time, Special Power: The Fluidity of Power in a popular Hindu festival in *Journal of Asian Studies*.1977, 37, 27-43.
19. *The Mahanirvana Tantra*, 14.66; 14.89-90.
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Interpreting *Bhakti* : *Chaitanyacharitamrita*

Pranabananda Jash

The genesis of the *bhakti* (devotion) mode of religion according to the tradition is from the *Dravidadesa*, i.e. South India. It is stated:

Aham bhakti iti khyata.....

Utpanna Dravide chaham vridhim Karnataka gate kvachit

Kvachin Maharashtra Gurjare jirnatam gate.....

That is- “I am called *bhakti*.....I was born in Dravida, grew up in Karnataka after spending sometimes in Maharashtra, became old in Gujrata.....”.

However, the form of *Bhakti* underwent a great transformation in the middle age. The rich literature it produced is considered an important addition to the enrichment of Indian religion and culture. The *Bhakti* cult, with its direct contact between the devotee and divinity, overcame the myriad barriers of caste and community. The present paper is a holistic attempt to throw light on *Bhakti* (devotion) movement - its genesis, its special and egalitarian implication and also its metaphysical aspect that gave a fillip to the development and enrichment of several vernacular languages in medieval India. The *Bhakti* literature also portrays the rich fabrics of human life with its religio-cultural ethos of the contemporary period, as propounded by the great Bengali saint-philosopher - Sri Chaitanyadeva. (C. AD. 1485/6-1533 AD). It is the Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who enlightens the human soul with an optimistic message with regard to the permanent solution of the conflict between man and man, sect and sect rooted in religious dogma and fanaticism. He illuminates us with the concept of a new religion based on the twin principle of humanity of god and the divinity of man.

The concept of *Bhakti* (devotion) played an important role for making an egalitarian socio-religious order, irrespective of any caste, colour and sex, during the Mediaeval time.¹ Sri Chaitanya was one of the foremost personalities who took the cause of the common and divergent elements in the society and made them relevant to the *Bhakti* phenomenon for a sort of social resuscitation. Adoration to Krishna-Radha

and the doctrine of devotion are woven round the texture of the Chaitanya's School of Vaishnavism in Bengal, popularly known as the Gaudiya Vaishnavism. The rudimentary principle of this school centers round the spirit of sincere devotion of worshipper and the worshipping object and thereby growing into a deepening consciousness of the Infinite and Eternal. The concept of *bhakti* (devotion) during the time of Chaitanya and afterwards added a new impetus to the Vaishnava theology.² It plays an indomitable role not only in the religious life of the Vaishnavas in order to achieve Ultimate Reality, but it has also remained concerned with the task of organizing his followers through the *Samkirtana* and *Mahotsavas*.³

The followers as well as philosophers of Chaitanya, specially the six *Gosvamis* (Rupa-Sanatana-Raghunatha Bhatta-Raghunatha Dasa-Gopala Bhatta and Srijiva) of Vrindavana, have discussed *bhakti* in an exhaustive manner in their works like the *Bhaktirasamrita-Sindhu*⁴, *Ujjvalanilamani*⁵ and *Samkshepa-Bhagavatamrita* by Rupa Gosvami, *Brihad Bhagavatamrita* by Sanatana; the *Sandarbhas* (*Tattva, Bhagavat, Paramatma, Sri Krishna Bhakti* and *Priti*) by Jiva Gosvami, *Haribhaktivilasa* of Sanatana Gosvami and Gopala Bhatta⁶ and these works were followed by the writings of Vrindavan Dasa, Krishnadasa Kaviraja and others.

A close scrutiny of the contents of the *Chaitanya Charitamrita* by Krishnadasa Kaviraja will reveal that theology of the Gaudiya Vaishnava School founded by Sri-Chaitanya is characterized by certain distinctive features which distinguish it from other Vaishnava schools of thought. Besides its concept of *achinta bhedabheda* to explain the nature of Brahman, its ontology of Radha, its ideas on the values of human life of *purushartha*⁷, the doctrinal exposition of *bhakti* accompanied by the *rasa* theory gives it a unique position in the realm of religious history. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas accepted *bhakti* as doctrine and a part of theology. They thus evolved a system of partial religious emotionalism and explained to intricate classification and nomenclature. Again, the *rasa* theory in relation to *bhakti* and its various categories with special emphasis on the *madhura-rasa* not only exhibit the profound philosophical knowledge of the *Acharya*, but all these new and fresh ideas taken together amply demonstrate the exclusiveness and originality of the Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

Before coming to the point of our discussion it is a pre requisite to have an idea about the meaning of the term '*Bhakti*', and its transformation from time to time during the pre-Chaitanya period. The word *Bhakti* is derived from the root '*Bhaj Sevayam*' by adding the suffix '*ktin*', which means 'service with love for God'. *Bhagavati anurakti* ('love for God') from these two words the first and last letter, when combined gives the word - '*Bhakti*' - "an intense love for God". Thus '*Bhakti*' is a spontaneous feeling which implies a person to be devoted and faithful to another... Going a step further the root '*bha*', expresses love of the devotee for God and also of God for the devotee"; thus it is a mutual relationship of 'reverential devotion' and 'loyal love'.⁸

It is to be noted that *bhakti* in some form or other was not unknown in the Vedic and Upanishadic ideas.⁹ But it is to be noted that the idea of devotion or the doctrine of *bhakti* which form the salient feature of Vaishnavism are not very conspicuous in the Vishnu worship of the Vedas and the Brahmanas more closely associate with *yajna* than with *bhakti* or *prasada*.¹⁰ Yet from the time of the Svetasvatara Upanisad onward *bhakti* became an indispensable term for using the sense of faith and devotion.¹¹ The Ashtadhayi of Panini and Buddhist works speak of this in the sense of the love directed to God. By the time of the composition of the Bhagavata Gita (c. second century B. C.), it is established as a technical religious term. Like *Jnana-Karma-Yajna*, *Bhakti* is also considered as one of the powerful avenues for realizing the ultimate reality which reaches its acme of perfection (*parama*).¹² It is of the nature of *amrita* (nectar or immortality) or 'it also means that it is undying in nature'.¹³ Sandilya explains the term as 'absolute devotion to God' (*sa paranuraktrivare*)¹⁴ and Svapanesvara illustrates the devotion by describing it as a function of the mind with reference to the supreme being similar to what is evinced in regard to worldly objects under particular circumstances.¹⁵ In the later devotional literature a distinction is drawn between *bhakti* and *premam*. *Bhakti* is the spontaneous attachment for the desired object, God, being entirely possessed by and absorbed in him. *Premam* is the most concentrated love for God which is full of the most intense attachment, and which purifies the heart completely. Divine love (*prema*) is the completion and perfection of devotion (*bhakti*).¹⁶

In order to create popular interest of the concept of *bhakti*, the *Puranas*, especially

the *Bhagavata-Purana*, looked at the ideas of devotion with a new dimension in addition to its earlier bearings. The Puranas introduce emotional joy and ecstatic flavor into it. *Bhakti* or devotion is now loving, joyous and voluntary homage. The *jiva* by means of devotion realizes his intrinsic nature of partnership with god who is kept in obscurity by *maya* which represents the principle of illusion.

But the interpretation of devotion (*bhakti*) is further illustrated in an in-depth and subtle manner by Chaitanya and his followers in the subsequent period. According to the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, *bhakti* has broadly classified as *Sadhana-bhakti*, *Bhava-bhakti* and *Prema.-bhakti*, and each of these three is the representation of different stages of realization.

Sadhana-bhakti is attainable by the senses like hearing the Lord's name, singing His *kirtana* (name) and seeing His beauty. It can be practiced under some given circumstances when the devotee completely disregards the obligations of the *Varnasrama-dharma* (*Sammatambhaktivignanam bhatvangatvam na karmanam*)¹⁷ and does not covet sensual enjoyment and liberation.¹⁸

The Vaishnava Acharyas ordain sixty four rites and rituals for a devotee to attain *Sadhana-bhakti*, like submitting to the *guru*, accepting *mantra* or initiation and learning *bhakti* from him; serving the *guru* faithfully, performing *nama samkirtana*, etc.¹⁹ *Sadhana-bhakti* is also of two kinds- *Vaidhi-bhakti* and *Raganuga-bhakti*. When a devotee (*bhakta*) practises *Sadhana-bhakti* being inspired by the procedures of the scriptures, it is called *Vaidhi*²⁰, but it is called *Raganuga* when such a *bhakti* flows spontaneously without any scriptural injunctions or procedures.²¹ The *Raganuga-bhakti* is again of two types - *Prema* or *Karma-rupa* and *Sambandha-rupa*. The source of the former is the passionate desire to be Krishna's beloved like the *Gopis*, while the latter seeks establishing relationship with Krishna as His servant, friend or parents.

Bhava-bhakti is the direct outcome of inner emotion of Krishna, but this is something different from love. *Bhava-bhakti* which is the ultimate stage of *Sadhana-bhakti* has been described by Rupa Gosvami as follows:

“When the *bhakti* for Krishna develops in one’s mind, he becomes impatient; no one does waste his time unnecessarily. He begins to sing His name constantly and eulogies him. He then longs for union with Him and starts loving his abode. Outward calm is followed by modesty and indifference to the sensual enjoyments. Yet, he remains firm in his hope of attaining Him.”²²

On attaining *Prema-bhakti* which is considered as the final stage of devotion and the culmination point of all forms of devotion or *bhakti*, the devotee feels that Krishna is something like his own possession which he would like to keep with love. This form of devotion (*bhakti*) reveals gradually in nine distinct succeeding stages with the cultivation of the following deeds, like faith (*sraddha*), holy company (*sadhu-samgata*), spiritual practice (*bhajana kriya*), removal of constraints in the spiritual path (*anartha nivrittih*) devotedness (*syattate nishtha*), the taste for the state of devotedness (*ruchistath*), attachment to that State (*athasakti*), emotional feeling (*bhava*) and *premam*.²³

Without going through further elaborate interpretation about the various classification of *bhakti-bhava* (like *vaidhi-bhakti* or *raganuga-bhakti* or *Prem-bhakti*), we may note that the Gaudiya Vaishnavas regard Lord Krishna, the ultimate ideal, as an object of love and devotion. The devotee considers Him as the beloved. The exchange of loving reciprocation between the lover (devotee) and the beloved (Krishna) is called *bhakti-rasa* (love sentient), which according to the Vaishnava scriptures are of twelve kinds:

1. *Santa-rasa* (quiet devotion);
2. *Prita-rasa* (devotion as his faithful);
3. *Preya-rasa* (devotion as a friend);
4. *Vatsalya-rasa* (devotion as parents);
5. *Madhura-rasa* / *ujjala-rasa* (devotion with erotic);
6. *Hasya-rasa* (comic);
7. *Adbhuta-rasa* (marvelous);
8. *Vira-rasa* (heroic);
9. *Karuna-rasa* (pathetic);
10. *Raudra-rasa* (furious);

11. *Bhayanaka-rasa* (terrible) and

12. *Vibhatsa-rasa* (ghastly).

Of these the first five are *mukhya* or primary, while the remaining seven are considered as *gauna* or secondary.²⁴ According to the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, Lord Krishna can be realized by practicing these twelve kinds of *bhakti-rasa* (love sentient). However, the primary *rasas* are remaining constantly within the heart of the devotees, whereas the seven others appear and disappear. A devotee adopts a particular devotional attitude according to his inclination and leaning. But *madhura-bhava* (an attitude of conjugal love) is the best sentient (*rasa*) for realizing Lord Krishna.²⁵ The expression of *madhura-bhava* is distinctly projected in the concept of Radha and her love for Krishna. Her love for Krishna transcended all barriers of this mundane world. Sri Chaitanya introduced Radha as the idealized representative of bliss. From the philosophical perspective it may be said that it is the Gaudiya Vaishnavism which presents the concept of Radha-Krishna-tattva in its most mature and developed form. A super mundane (*Paramarthika*) is transferred semantically to empirical reality (*Vyavaharika*). Such a form of all absorbing love advocated by the Chaitanya School of Vaishnavism through *madhura-bhava* has been expressed in the following;

Yuvaker arti yatha yuvati dekhiya I

Sei rupa arti ar na dekhi bhaviya II

E karane bhaktagana bhaje Yadupati I

Patnibhava tar prati sthir kari mati II²⁶

i.e. “as a young man yearns for his sweet-heart, in the same manner the human soul may yearn for Krishna. In order to imbibe the same yearning, the Vaishnavas worship Yadupati (Krishna) with an attitude of conjugal love.” But it is very difficult to perform this kind of worship,²⁷ because the love sentient entertained by Radha towards Krishna was entirely different from the ordinary earthly passion.²⁸ *Premam* (love for god) and *Kama* (lust or earthly passion) characteristically differ from each other as iron from gold, in colour and element. Earthly passion (*kama*) denotes sensual enjoyment of one’s self while *premam* devotes to make Krishna happy.²⁹ In order to practice *madhura-rati*

(conjugal love attitude to Krishna) the devotee have to undergo a series of succeeding stages, such as, *rati*, *premam*, *sneha*, *mana*, *pranaya*, *raga*, *anuraga*, *bhava* and *mahabhava*. *Mahabhava* is regarded as the supreme form of the realization of love for Krishna. In fact, there are many other stages in between these succeeding stages, but we have hardly any scope to analyze them in an amplified form.³⁰

Thus while dealing with the evolution of the concept of devotion (*bhakti*) it may be said that earlier Vaishnava Acharya had extolled *bhakti* as a religious attitude, but it is the contribution of Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya and his disciples and / or followers to present *bhakti* not only as a path but they interpreted it also as a *rasa*. They accepted *bhakti* as a doctrine and a part of theology. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas thus evolved system of practical, religious emotionalism and explained its intricate classifications and nomenclature. So Chaitanya transformed the *bhakti* form of ritualistic procedure into a devotional (*bhakti*) movement which for a long time over flooded Bengal, its neighboring regions and even touched the far off southern soil. To him love and devotion to Krishna would lead to the illumination of the mind and to ultimate salvation. He recommended dance and music to produce a state of ecstasy in which the *bhaktas* could have a vision of god. What *bhakti* accomplished in a practical sense to unify the country culturally through music, dance, literature, painting, sculptures, temple architecture and allied activities cannot even be measured. The entire country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Gujrat to Bengal the atmosphere was surcharged with devotional flavor (*Bhakti*). No doubt, several Vaishnavite Acharyas like Madhavendra Puri, Advaitacharya, and Srivasa and others flourished before the advent of Chaitanya, “but the advent of Chaitanya” as observed by S.B. Dasgupta, “was something like a fruition of all their devotional penances, and it was an event which was really epoch-making in the religion and literature of Bengal. Chaitanya, as he is interpreted by his followers, embodies in him the quintessence of both Radha and Krishna, and is both the realizer and realized in the same personality.”³¹

Notes and References:

1. *Chaitanya Charitamrita* by Krishnadasa Kaviraj, Basumati Publication, Calcutta.
2. Jash, Pranabananda, *History and Evolution of Vaishnavism in Eastern India*, Calcutta, 1982. pp. 202
3. It is well known that Chaitanya adopted effective, though simple, methods to strengthen his movement by performing *Samkirtana* and *Mahotsavas* for propagation of his faith, and also for holding the community of his followers together. *Samkirtana* is an informal mode of group singing to accompaniment of musical instruments, reciting the name of Krishna loudly with devotion. The *Mahotsavas* (grand festivals) ceremony, also known as *macchavas* helped Chaitanya to keep in touch with the Vaishnava devotees. Such festivals were generally organized at the time of the inauguration of temples or when wealthy devotees volunteered to arrange them for purpose of community gatherings. These *Mahotsavas* were preceded and followed by *Kirtanas* and attracted large crowds.
4. It expounds systematically the theory of *bhakti-rasa* and its emotionalism. It is divided into four *vibhaga-Purva*, *Daksina*, *Paschima* and *Uttara*, and each of these *vibhagas* are subdivided into two *laharis*. Any way, the *Purva-vibhaga* explains different types of *bhakti*, the *Daksina* treats *bhakti* as a *rasa*, and the *Paschima* describes the five *mukhya* and the *Purva* to unfold the history of the seven secondary *rasas*.
5. *Madhura-rasa* or *ujjala-rasa* is explained separately because of its prime importance in the *bhakti-rasa*. The text consisting of fifteen *Prakaranas* (divisions) deals with Krishna as a hero and his eternal consort Radha (Radha-Prakarana) exhaustively. The succeeding stages of *Madhura-rasa* are also mentioned in an elaborate manner.
6. For all these textual information please consult S.K. De, *Early History of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, Calcutta, Second edition, 1961. Also see B.B. Majumdar, *Chaitanya Charitera Upadana*, where best possible details are provided regarding the literary works of the Gosvamis.
7. Chaitanya considers love for god as the fifth or *Panchama Purushartha* instead of

- the traditional four, i.e. *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*. According to the Chaitanya School, *Panchamapurushartha* or 'love for god' is the superior of all goal aspired for; and for that matter, they ignored the importance of *varnasrama-dharma* when compared to love for God. For details, see Pransbananda Jash, *Glimpses of Hindu Cults and Culture*, Chapters - IX - X, PP. 95-119
8. Dr. Matiasusai Dharamony, *Thus Spoke Krishna*, Delhi, 1998, P.43
 9. *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, VI, 23
 10. Keith A.B., *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1915, p.834; Banerjea J. N., *Development of Hindu Iconography*, pp 73-74
 11. Pranabananda Jash, *op.cit.*, pp.203-204
 12. *Narada Bhakti Sutra* (Swami Bhuteshananda) 2: *Sa tvasmin Parama-Premarupa* 0:1
 13. *Ibid*, 3; *Amrita-Svarupa ca.*
 14. *Sandilya-sutram*, 1.1.2.
 15. Svapnesvara on *Sandilya-Sutra*
 16. *Cultural Heritage of India*, Ramkrishna Mission, Calcutta, vol, IV.
 17. Rupa Gosvami, *op.cit.* Purva II, p.151
 18. *Ibid*, p.44:
Bhakti mukti sprha yavat pisacihridi vartate I
Tavat bhakti sukhasyatra kathan abhyudaya bhavet II
 19. *Ibid*, pp. 73-77
 20. *Ibid*, p.33:
Yatra raganavaptatvat Pravritrupajayata
Sasananaiva Sastrasya sa vaidhi baktirupeyate
 21. *Ibid*, pp. 162-63:
Iste svarasiki ragah Paramavistara bhavet
Tanmayi ya bhavedbhakti sastra ragatmikodita
 22. Rupa Gosvami, *op.cit.* Purva III, p. 196-197
 23. *Ibid*, Purva-IV, p.218 Acyutananda writes that the five associates (*Panchasakha* – Jagannatha, Balarama, Achyutananda, Yasovanta and Ananta) participated in the Kirtana processions of Chaitanya. The word *sakha* had a theoretical implication. In

Orissa and Bengal, these five *sakhas* of Chaitanya in the Kaliyuga were supposed to have impersonated the five companions of Krishna in Dvaparayuga who were Dama, Sudama, Srivasta, Suvala and Suvahu. It is stated that the love-fluid Of Radha-Krishna is *Prema-rupa* manifested in the eternal *rasa* exploit.

24. Rupa Gosvami, op. citDakshina-V, p.601;

*Mukhyastu Panchadhas sntah Pritah Preyanissa Vatsalah
Madhurascatyami jneya yatha Purvamanuthamah
Hasyadbhutastalah Virah KaruneRaudra ityapi
Bhayanaka savibhatsa iti gaunascha saptadha.*

25. Rupa Gosvami in his *Ujjavala Nilamani* (Navadvipa, 1st edition, 469 Gaurabda, 1955 AD, Verse-2, p.20 designed it as 'bhakti-rasa raja'

26. *Govinda Daser Kadacha*, p.10.

27. *Ibid*, p.13:

*Prem prem kare save prem Jane keva I
Premer ki tattva haya ramanira seva II
Abheda purushe nari jakhana janive I
Hridaye premer tatva apani sphurive II*

28. Krishnadasa Kaviraja in his *Chaitanya Charitamrita* (Madhya II, p. 680) mentions that love for Krishna is as the water of the Ganges and it is clearly distinguished from earthly love.

29. *Ibid*, *Adi*, Chapter-4

*Karma Prema domhakara Vibhinna Lakshmana I
Huna ar hema jaicne svarupe Vilakshna II*

30. For details, See *Ujjavala Nilamani* of Rupa Gosvami, pp. 225-291

31. Dasgupta S.B., *Obscure Religious Cults*, Calcutta, pp. XV-XVI.

Regional Development Issue in Indian History throughout the Ages

Ananda Gopal Ghosh

The primary objective of the present paper is to highlight the issue of the regional development in Indian History throughout the ages i.e. from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial phases. Needless to say, the span of the pre-colonial phase is vast and elastic. It will encompass even the Maurya-Gupta Imperial duo's times, because without these first two imperial ruling dynasties, the present discussion will remain incomplete.

The basic pattern of development issue in Indian History throughout the ages except the Maurya and Gupta imperial phases was uneven and unbalanced. This unevenness was and is very much visible even today in the different regions of the country. It is not that this uneven or unbalanced development system was confined in the frontier region or a region far away from the capital or economically barren only. The uneven regional development issue is really complex as well as sensitive one in this multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic mosaic of the Indian sub-- continent. India's experiences of the regional development are unique and unprecedented in the annals of development of the world. Because India's diversity is unparalleled and it cannot be compared with any country not even with China. It is in this historical backdrop, I would like to examine the issue in the regional perspective which is the focal point of the present write-up.

II

The unbalanced regional development is a chronic problem in most parts of India but the case of North Bengal and North East India is proverbial. A glaring example is the pre-merger and the post-merger Cooch Behar. To tackle the case of North Bengal, the West Bengal Government has set-up a separate board for development known as the *Uttar Banga Unnayan Parshad* and the Union Government of India has set-up a

separate secretariat for the North-East states. It is the hard proof of the unbalanced regional development. The examples can be multiplied. But for the convenience of the constructive discussion, I would like to confine it to North Bengal and North-East India in particular.

III

The Bengali lexicographical meaning of the English vocabulary "Region" is 'Anchal'. It comes from the earthy and colloquial Bengali word 'Aachal'. However, the connotation of the present English vocabulary 'Region' is different in many respects from the Bengali word 'Anchal'. The region may be a conglomeration of heterogeneous or homogenous areas. There is no unified or cohesive character of the region at least in North Bengal and North East India. Obviously, the sub-region issue cannot be excluded from the discussion canvas of the present discourse.

IV

Conceptually region and regional development issue is the direct product of the Merchant-Colonial-Imperial Rule. In the pre-colonial phase the centre versus region question did not arise because the central power was absolute and centralized. The emperor or the king was at the apex of the power-centre. Naturally, no body raised any question on the paradigm of the development. But what was interesting is that the first Imperial Ruling Dynasty - the Mauryan rulers were very much aware of the regional development issue. The classic example was the construction of the Sudarshan Lake at Junagadh (presently in Gujrat-Rajasthan border area) for water supply and irrigation. The *Danda Samata* and the *Danda Manyata* codes were also the illustrations of the balanced development plan. Both Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya were well acquainted with the diversity of the Empire. Subsequently, the Imperial Guptas had toed in the lines of the Mauryas with modifications. This balanced development system had been continued up to the time of Harshavardhana, the last Indian Empire builder of the Aryavarta Region. However, after the demise of Harshavardhana, we do not find

any Imperial ruling dynasty in the Indian sub-continent. This vacuum unconsciously had given the birth to regional identity question. It was very much visible in the field of language. Had India been governed by an Imperial dynasty, the multilingual environment would not have come into picture because a strong and centralized government could not promote the cause of multilingualism. Unilingualism is the creed of the centralized state or the Dynastic Rule. For example we can mention the case of China. The Manchu Dynasty, though not capable of preserving the territorial integrity of China, acted as a symbol of unity. So, despite the advent of the warlords (which were also Chinese) the Chinese people felt the necessity of a kind of unity.

The regional identity in India was further cemented by the local languages. It was acted in two-ways. First, the foreign rulers who had settled here patronized and espoused the cause of the local languages rather than the holy language (Sanskrit) or the court language of the pre-Muslim India. This promotion of the regional or local language in the long run led to the birth of the regional identity. Secondly, the Bhakti movement of the 15th and 16th centuries also promoted the cause of the regional or local language because all the preachers of the Bhakti movements preached their social and religious doctrine through the spoken language of the people. For example, Srimant Shankar Deb of Assam preached in Assamese, Sri Chaitanya Dev in Bengali, Ramdas in Marathi and Vasaveshwara in Telegu languages. This, in the long run, had given the birth to the Assamese, Marathi and Telegu identity. At the outset, it was confined to the language and culture. However, with the passage of time particularly after the introduction of the democratic elements, the regional development question was cropping up in an embryonic form. What is interesting was that the Colonial administrations of the three Presidencies - Bengal, Bombay and Madras had entered into a long-drawn conflict in regard to the regional economic development, service opportunity and other subsidiary issues. I am presenting here a specific example of such conflict.

After the introduction of the I.C.S. examination system for the recruitment of the civilian for India, it was found that among the successful candidates, the percentage

of the Bengalis was much high. The students of the other regions could not succeed much. Naturally, resentment was growing in the other regions of India. In order to meet their grievances, the government of the Madras presidency had suggested that the recruitment for the I.C.S. cadre should be based on region. A bit interesting argument because the cause of the regional voice was uttered from the mouth of the colonial-imperial administrators. Like the caste system, the regional identity i.e. regional development issue was so deep rooted that the colonial-foreign administrators were divided among themselves. They became the champion of region and regional issue of the Colonial India. This was really a matter of serious study and analysis. It was not an American type of regional rupture i.e. South versus North. It was something more than American regionalism or Chinese regionalism. Was it only a Colonial device of divide and rule? It is very difficult to get the answer straight way without proper historical evidences. The issue is so serious that any sweeping or passing comment will not help us to get the appropriate answer. Let us study the issue from other perspectives.

History suggests us that unbalanced regional development is the direct offshoot of the colonial-administrative and economic system. Accepting this dictum, we want to say that the case of India and Indonesia is unique one. We found close similarity between the unbalanced regional development of the Dutch East Indies i.e. Indonesia and the British East Indies i.e. India. Both were colonial powers. But there was a difference between the British colonialism and the Dutch colonialism in practice, though theoretically both had the same kind of background. Geographically and to some extent historically, the past of India and Indonesia is identical. Indonesia was consisted roughly of 227 islands with multi-religious profile despite the predominance of the Muslims. A serious conflict was started between the province of Aceh and the province of Java immediately after the independence. Prof. Nur-uddin, the leader of the secessionist movement of Aceh, has complained that the oil, coal and other mineral resources of Aceh was used for the industrial development of Java. The seeds of this unseen regional development were sown by the Dutch Colonial Government. It is actually a colonial legacy. And even today Indonesia has been suffering from such colonial hangover.

India on the other hand was consisted of 563 princely states and twelve British Indian provinces on the eve of the independence. It is true that the movement of the Colonial-Imperial rulers had brought the sub-continent under one political umbrella with two broad political administrative structures - the British India and the princely India. Again in British India there was no unitary system of administration. For example, we can mention the names of the multifarious administrative structures such as Non-Regulation, Scheduled District Act, Excluded Area Act, partially Excluded Area Act, Inner line Regulation etc. Such type of various administrative devices had given the birth to the unbalanced regional development issue because for each administrative unit, the Colonial-Imperial Government had introduced a special type of development model. A pertinent question has been raised by the post-colonial historians and the social scientists. The question is why the different types of administrative structures were introduced by the Merchant-Colonial-Imperial power. The stereotype answer is that the Merchant-Colonial power's ulterior motive was to implant the policy of *divide et empera* i.e. Divide and Rule. It is partially true, but not wholly. The post-colonial scholars have presented a new view on the British mindset. The early Merchant-Colonial administrators had firmly believed that India was a mere geographical expression. It is, in practice, a conglomeration of the different regions under one roof. Eminent British statesmen, Sir Winston Churchill once told - 'India is a geographical expression. It is more a united nation than the Equator'. The comment of Churchill was a reflection of his misunderstanding of the underlying unity of the Spiritual India. India may be compared with the ancient Greece, Athens, Sparta, Corinth, etc. The administration, the rituals and above all the king was different in each city state. Still, there was an undivided Greek mentality among the citizens of the city-states because the religion, gods and goddesses, language, myths and finally the culture were one. However, the much-talked, much-discussed and much-used hackneyed phrase 'Unity in Diversity' was used indiscriminately by the Merchant-Colonial think-tank. This 'Unity in Diversity'

dictum had greatly influenced merchants-colonial administrators to introduce various administrative frames and development models for Colonial India.

However, we can precisely mention the case of the introduction of the Railways in the Khashi-Garo-Jaintia Hills. In order to save the tribal identity in the form of language, religion and culture, the Colonial Government did not like migration or settlement of the non-tribals in the tribal regions. If they introduced rail, they could not check the migration of the advanced plain people. Even today, the Meghalaya tribals do not like the introduction of the Railways in their homeland. As a result the pace of the economic development of Colonial and Post-Colonial Meghalaya is very slow. At the outset the Colonial Government's policy of segregation and in the post-colonial phase the schizophrenic attitude of the tribal people of Meghalaya, in practice, has retarded the process of development. The North East as well as the part of the Northern Bengal is the classic examples of this paradigm of development.

However, the Colonial Governments policy towards the tribals was not uniform. On the contrary, we found dichotomy in the policy of the Government. For example, the Colonial Government had introduced the railway lines in the first phase in the ferocious tribal infested places of the North Western part of India such as Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Bugti, Jamrud etc. This railway line was economically not viable. Still, the British Colonial Government had patronized the cause of the railway lines whereas they did not introduce the railway lines in the Khashi-Jaintia-Garo Hills region. Apart from this, the tribal people of the North East had become the Britisher's religious brothers. The most of the tribals had embraced Christianity. The tribals of the North Western part of India, on the other hand, were the followers of Islam and did not like the British domination. As a result of different reasons, the tribals of the two regions could not come in the broader spectrum of development.

The merchant-cum-colonial adventurers had entered India through the oceanic routes. The time, when they had settled in this part of the globe, is regarded by the historians as the 'Oceanic Age'. The advent of the 'Oceanic Age' had a far-reaching

impact upon India because in the pre-oceanic age, India's development center or region or mart was concentrated in the heartland of India. It is true that the maritime region was also there. However, the land-regions received much more attention with the advent of the oceanic merchants' power in India. We found that the maritime regions were developed tremendously. In fact, the early phase of the merchant-colonial powers' expansion was confined to the coastal belt of India - a new paradigm of development. Calcutta, Bombay and Madras came to be the new nodal centers of the merchants-colonial powers' political, commercial and administrative expansion. So, a new trend was emerged in the practice of development of the coastal region. The classic example was Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Goa, Pondicherry, etc. These new centers had never been the centers of importance either as trade or politics or administration in the history of the sub-continent. However, the merchant--colonial powers of Europe had concentrated in the oceanic region. For example, in Bengal area the Hooghly-Ganga river basin was developed as the most flourishing center of trade-cum-commerce-cum-administration. It was an unprecedented event in the history of the world that all the leading-maritime-cum-commercial powers of the contemporary world - the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, the Danish, the Armenians and the English - had settled in and around the Hoogly-Ganga-Bhagirathi riverine-region. In the initial phase it was a commercial hub, but with the passage of time it became the commerce-cum--industry-cum-administration-cum-cultural hubs of the country. As a result, a new paradigm was emerged in the field of development. The inland region could not receive much attention of the merchant-colonial powers. Though it is true that the inland region was brought under their control in the later phase, it finally emerged as the immediate cause of the unbalanced regional development, a worst feature of the merchant-colonial powers' development policy. This Colonial legacy of the unbalanced regional development had given the birth to coastal versus land feud in the Colonial period and core versus periphery and center versus margin tug of war in the post-Colonial period.

The coastal versus land feud had another pernicious effect on the regional development question. The coastal belt area was selected for the growth of the modern

industries despite the non-availability of the raw materials. For example, the jute industry was developed in and around Calcutta and Howrah, but the jute-producing areas were located in the East and North Bengal region. This colonial hangover is very much visible even after the sixty years of the de-colonization of India.

The Merchant-Colonial-Imperial ruler's innovation of the 'Martial Race Theory' was another factor, which was responsible for unbalanced regional development. It was actually invented after the last Anglo-Sikh war (1849), though it was implemented in the soil after the great political upheaval of 1857-1858. Since then Punjab had enjoyed the 'Most-Favoured Province' status. Apart from the Punjab, the Western part of the United Provinces (presently Hariyana and Western Uttar Pradesh) was the largest beneficiaries of the Martial Race Theory. As because it was an agricultural zone, the Merchant-Colonial Government had extended the facilities of irrigation, farming and fertilizer to these regions. In fact, the largest irrigation network in the world was built-up in this region by the merchant-colonial rulers. This had given the birth to a prosperous Agricultural class in the Punjab and the Western Uttar Pradesh cutting across the religious lines. This prosperous Agricultural class had also formed a political party composed by the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim peasants known as the Unionist Party on the basis of agricultural development solidarity. Even in the hey-day of communal-tension in 1946, the Unionist Party of the Punjab had retained their class unity and agricultural solidarity. The communal solidarity did not succeed to break the agricultural solidarity.

The change as well as continuity of history and geography is another important factor to be reckoned to locate the cause of the unbalanced regional development. It is true that the geography is never changed. It is nature's creation. But due to the change of history, the geographical importance of the region is changed. The change may be positive or negative. For example, due to the partition of the country, nay Bengal, in 1947 Haldibari, a trade mart of the Princely state of Cooch Behar, had lost its commercial importance particularly in respect of jute trade. Before the partition special jute train was introduced between Haldibari and Calcutta. Same is the case of Kalimpong of present Darjeeling District. Since time immemorial, Kalimpong had been the important

commercial hub between Tibet and the plains of Bengal. This position of Kalimpong had been continued up to the out-break of the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962. After the Sino-Indian imbroglio, Kalimpong had lost her former glamour as an international trade center. So despite geographical location, Kalimpong had lost her former status in the sphere of trade and commerce due to the historical phenomenon. On the other hand, due to the partition and afterwards due to the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962, Siliguri, a sleepy foothills village of the pre-partition days, is turning into the most vibrant and international commercial hub of West Bengal, nay, India.

The development patterns of the Princely states and the British Indian provinces or States was also uneven. This unevenness was distinctively visible in the field of education, agriculture and other spheres. If any researcher of the post-colonial India carefully observes the centers of discontent, he will find that the most of the centers were formerly the Princely states. This is very much true in the Princely states of the North East India i.e. Cooch Behar, Tripura and Manipur. The same is the case of Vidharbha and Telengana. They are formerly a part of the Princely states. All these formerly princely states are agitating for the creation of the separate states on the pretext of the unbalanced regional development.

The lack of talent power is also an important cause of the unbalanced regional development. Despite the abundance of the natural resources, the Arab countries, the African countries and the North Eastern part of India including North Bengal, became the victims of the non-availability of the talented power. On the other hand, Israel with her constraint of natural resources has developed her economy with the help of talent power. Prof. B. D. Bhattacharjee, Vice-chancellor of the Jawharlal Nehru University, has rightly explained the rôle of talent power in the development of Israel.

In the last phase of my discussion I am coming to the question of the unbalanced regional development in the Hindu Nepal and the Islamic Pakistan. I consciously used the terminology Hindu and Islamic in the prefix of Nepal and Pakistan. The separation of the East Pakistan from the mainstream Pakistan is another classic example of unbalanced regional development. In Nepal, the same kind of problem has originated.

The unbalanced development between the Kathmandu valley and the Nepal Terai has triggered the present day violent agitation in the Terai region.

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Legacies of Indian Connection in Myanmar

Kausik Bandyopadhyay

Introduction

From time immemorial, India has had strong historical and cultural ties with Myanmar. The spread of Buddhism has been the most enduring legacy of Indian connection in Myanmar (Burma)¹. Buddhism came to Burma from India in the Asokan era, and since then has permeated every aspect of Burmese life. It was a philosophy that enabled the Burmese to meet the challenges of the outside world with supreme confidence, yet at the same time breeding a strong indifference to the outside world. The subjugation of Burma and the end of Burmese monarchy after the Third Anglo-Burmese War provided a traumatic experience for the Burmese and an unprecedented break with the past. However, under British imperialism, both the countries suffered the same pain of suppression and economic exploitation, and their sentiments also ran together to get liberated from the yoke of foreign rule. The Indians played a very significant role in the economic life of colonial Burma. They were prominent in transport, industry, labour, road construction, banking, insurance and exchange business, wholesale and retail trade. Moreover, trade was the vital aspect of Indo-Burmese economic relations in colonial period. Geographical proximity, joint administration and complementary character of the economy between India and Burma, contributed to a large extent to the development of their trading links. The Indian nationalist movement, on the other hand, was instrumental in setting the pattern of direct challenge to British imperial rule in Burma, as it not only provided the Burmese people with the basic objectives of constitutional reforms but it also gave them the message of non-violent struggle and boycott methods which they later employed in their fight for freedom from colonial exploitation. Thus on the cultural, economic and political planes, India and Burma had close ideological and methodological exchanges, which proved beneficial to both. As

Swapna Bhattacharya rightly says, “If the governments and people of India and Myanmar want to improve their relations, the fulcrum of the past would definitely provide a good foundation.”² It is on this premise that I look to revisit the legacies of Indian connection in Myanmar, emphasizing mainly the reciprocity in economic and nationalist movements between the two neighbours and outlining the prospects of a culturally viable economic relation between them.

Indians in Colonial Burma: Immigration, Economy and Politics³

The British governed Burma first from Calcutta and then from Delhi. Till 1937 it remained a province of British India. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries labour and administrative personnel were inducted from India into Burma to support British rule. Before the Second World War, Indians numbered one million out of a total population of 16 million in the country. Forty percent of Rangoon’s population was Indian. This large immigrant community played a major role in the economic, social and political life of colonial Burma. The direct domination of the rich Irrawaddy plain and delta by the British was necessary for the empire, and Rangoon, the main protected port, became the main centre of colonial Burma, relegating Mandalay to the ranks of historic city. Once the region was pacified in the early 20th century, the British controlled the entire country and its approximately 8 million inhabitants, with close to 3000 British soldiers, 4000 sepoy, 10000 military police (for the most part Indians, except for the officers) and 7000 civil police (also mostly Indians but also Karens, Kachins and Chins).⁴ Besides, in 1852 the British started organizing a massive migration of Indian labour to Burma from Assam (by road) or Madras and Calcutta (by sea) to ensure their control over the country. The knowledge of the English language as well as the colonial British legal and administrative system facilitated the influx of educated Indian migrants. Thus a class of minor Indian officials (in the colonial administration, justice system, armed forces and police, as well as educational system), attracted by higher wages than those prevailing in India, soon settled down in Burma, first around Rangoon, then in the

entire country. Small traders also began to move into Lower Burma and the Mandalay region to take advantage of the colonial-type economic organization that the British had set up there.⁵

These Indians, often of low castes, came to Burma not as conquerors, but as servants of the British Empire. Telegu Chettiars (moneylenders), Marwari bankers, Parsis as well as some Tamil and Gujarati merchant castes soon began to control the region's financial and commercial business. Furthermore, large estates grew around some Bihari zamindar families, particularly in Irrawaddy fluvial plain. In 1938, 25 percent of the country's fertile land belonged to Indian capitalist landlords. Agricultural labour, mainly seasonal (November to April), was also imported to work in Burmese rice fields, in particular from eastern India (Bihari and Andhra population), as well as a number of 'coolies' (porters) in Burmese ports. The city's rickshaws long remained the monopoly of Tamil Madrasis. The Indian population thus played an important role in the newly annexed province. In 1890, five years after Mandalay was annexed, 38 percent of the population of Bhamo, close to the Chinese province of Yunnan on the Irrawaddy River, was Indian and at the beginning of the 20th century, close to half of Rangoon's population was of Indian origin.⁶ A number of Indian migrants did marry Burmese women. Children of Hindu fathers and Burmese mothers (Buddhist), raised according to Buddhist precepts (while children of Muslim fathers and Buddhist mothers were raised according to the Muslim religion), were an important part of the urban population at the beginning of the century. The period between 1890 and 1920 was a time of massive economic growth and political stability in colonial Burma. However, its economic prosperity only benefited those who were involved in the colonial trade. Close to 80 percent of Burmese products (particularly rice) were exported to India, while the rest were sent to China. Besides, the Chinese maintained a considerable presence in Burma.⁷

As I have already mentioned, the Indians played a very significant role in the economic life of colonial Burma. They were prominent transport, industry, labour, road construction, banking, insurance and exchange business, wholesale and retail trade.

Moreover, trade was the vital aspect of Indo-Burmese economic relations in colonial period. Geographical proximity, joint administration and complementary character of the economy between India and Burma, contributed to a large extent to the development of their trading links. The presence of a large number of Indian trading community of Chettairs was an important factor in the augmentation of trade between the two countries.

Contemporary studies and documents including the riot enquiry committee reports suggest that there existed a serious apprehension in the minds of many Burmese that the Indian immigration was largely responsible for unemployment in Myanmar. This was but natural in a society where immigrants played a crucial role. It was also recommended that in the interests of both the countries some vigorous efforts should be made to ascertain the extent of conflict of interests between Indians and Burmese and to formulate policies to remove the causes of the existing conflict “without injustice to each community and recognizing the rights of both.”⁸

Despite the criticality of the issue of Indian immigration in colonial Burma and the kind of impact it had on mid-twentieth century India-Burma relations, it is important to revisit India’s contribution to the making of modern Myanmar. To the extent Indian business groups played a positive role in the country should be accorded due recognition. As Bhattacharya has shown, Indian labour and money played a crucial role in building the city of Rangoon.⁹ Many Indians, who served as public servants in Burma, “loved the country, learnt the language and came close to the Burmese people. They also enjoyed high respect in society.”¹⁰ In Bhattacharya’s words: “During the British period a large number of active Indians adapted themselves so spontaneously to their new life in Burma and worked hard to make really a melting point, a multi-ethnic multi-religious tolerant liberal city.”¹¹ More importantly, as Nihar Ranjan Ray once remarked: “Sino-Burmese relations are older than Indo-Burmese, yet when India appeared on the Burmese scene, she seemed to have made an important and abiding impression. This is not merely limited to the field of religion but goes very much deeper into the very basis of material

life.”¹² One must not therefore forget the close mental bond the Indians cultivated towards their adopted country and the identification of both the Burmese and the Indians with Burma as *their* country. This can inspire the people of the two countries to build up a solid prosperous relationship. And the complementarity between the two countries at the political level needs to be analyzed in this context.

Nationalist Movement in Colonial Burma: Revisiting the Indian Connection¹³

In the pre-British period, nationalism in Burma had always gone along with a strong devotion to Buddhism and an allegiance to the royalty. When the British came, the traditional Burmese institutions were abolished or strictly controlled, revealing an intellectual vacuum. As British rulers and their Indian servants mastered the Burmese political sphere, the Burmese intellectual and political leadership was merely non-existent. Despite this, a strong nationalist feeling began to develop from the 1920s. In this process, the Burmese were strongly influenced by the intellectual and political developments taking place in India. The rise in power of the Indian National Congress with its branch in Rangoon, the widespread distribution of its nationalist press right up to Burma, the visits of Indian national leaders like Gandhi, Tilak and Subhas Bose to the province and the participation of Burmese leaders in the central assembly in Delhi strongly influenced the initial nationalist debates in Burma. “If Burma (Myanmar) had been politically isolated from India”, Albert D. Moscotti writes, “its progress towards self-rule would have been slow and more uncertain.”¹⁴ At the initial stage of its nationalist movement Burma suffered from lack of leadership. As Aung San once remarked:

We are fully prepared to follow men who are able and willing to be leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Tilak of India; ... Let anybody appear who can be like such a leader, who dares to be like such a leader. We are waiting.¹⁵

However, while admiring and copying the Congress model, some Burmese leaders tried to define a distinct identity, different from the national one developed in India.¹⁶

At various stages the Indian nationalists set the pace for reform in Burma and demonstrated methods of political action aimed at gaining freedom from foreign rule. The boycott, the *hartal* and the legislative walk-out were the techniques of political agitations which spread to Burma from India.¹⁷ Moreover opposition to a common enemy strengthened the bond of cooperation between the nationalist movements of both the countries. The movement which the Burmese leaders launched followed more or less the lines of the non-cooperation movement started by Gandhi in the 1920s to attain complete independence from the British rule. Burma also had a branch of the Indian National Congress, the membership of which was confined mostly to Indians settled there. A number of prominent Burmese nationalists too were members of the Provincial Committee of the Indian National Congress and attended its sessions. U Ottama, a political monk and the leader of the 'Home Rule' agitation, who was also in touch with the Bengal revolutionaries, and U Chit Hlaing, the President of the General Council of Burmese Associations (GCBA), were the two most prominent figures among them.

Indian National Congress and the GCBA worked in tandem during the whole Non-cooperation Movement and even beyond that. Whenever the occasion came each of them supported the other in its course of freedom struggle against the rule. In one of its half-yearly conferences at Pakokku in 1925, the GCBA took the following resolution:

As Burma and India are both desirous of independence, and as the Indian National Congress and the Burmese General Council thinks and acts along similar principles, it is to be placed on record that the GCBA will give all support to Congress organizations in India and Burma.¹⁸

Burmese leaders never doubted the wise intention of the Indian National Congress in their course of struggle against foreign rule and whenever the occasion came both of them cooperated with each other against their common enemy – British imperialism.

Most of the Indian political, religious and even the sectional and caste organizations such as the Khilafat, Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, the Khalsas and the Akalis, Arya Samaj and the Nattukottai Chettiars had their branches in Burma which invited political leaders and religious preachers from India. Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Bose and Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta paid visits to Burma and influenced not only the Indians but also the Burmese public opinion. As in other colonized countries, Gandhi remained an icon in Burmese political life throughout its struggle for national independence. From the 1930s, as in India, national movement in Burma began to get radicalized under the impact of Thakins who formed the Dobhama Asiayone or 'We Burmese Society'. Aung San and U Nu were its noted leaders. The close links between the nationalist movements of two countries get vividly reflected in the comments of Gandhi and Ba Maw. Gandhi, during his visit to Burma in March 1929 said, "In India it is a common saying that the way to Swaraj is through Mandalay."¹⁹ Ba Maw, on the other hand, recalls in his *Memoirs of Revolution*:

It had always been like that; Burma had followed India politically from as far as the First World War, which may be said to mark the beginning of our new political consciousness. The great wave of the future, as it was hopefully called, which that war set free reached us through India. That country's example largely guided us through the inter-war years. Some of the current words and techniques of the communist and socialist wing of the Indian National Congress began to be employed by our more restless youths in the years before the Second World War, and such a phenomenon further increased due to Indian impact.²⁰

But an important feature of the nationalism of Burma was its anti-foreignism directed against the British but at times against the immigrants from India as well. Presence of a large number of Indians in Burma, their economic position, their transitory character, the appearance of the moneylenders and the growth of aggressive nationalism in Burma created bitterness against Indians in the minds of certain sections of the Burmese people. This should again be understood in terms of a global historical experience of immigrant societies.

It is also important to note that the Indian revolutionaries abroad came to forge a close nexus with the Burmese political movement in the early twentieth century. The role of Indian revolutionaries in the context of complementarity of political-nationalist movements of India and Burma is immortally personified in Sabyasachi, the hero of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's celebrated novel *Pather Dabi*. In fact, the impact of Indian revolutionaries of Burma on the Bengali youth was quite inspirational. That the Bengal-Burma contact remained a constant source of concern for the British becomes evident from the continuous proscription of *Pather Dabi* till Sarat Chandra's death.²¹

As we all know, Burma was separated from India in 1937. The relations between the two nations, however, by no means deteriorated. To promote mutual cooperation and understanding Nehru visited Burma two months after separation. In Burma, he addressed several meetings and met many important nationalist leaders of Burma. He appealed for wider cooperation and preservation of friendly spirit between Indians and Burmese.²² Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress President in 1938, appealed; "We cherish feelings of friendship, cordiality and esteem for Burma and her culture and civilization, with which so much in common. We also feel that Burma must have her freedom just as India must. (But we expect our Burmese friends to do justice to the Indian minority.)"²³ After 1938, the Indian National Congress became a great source of inspiration to the young Thakins of Burma who by now had become quite popular in their country. They started sending delegates to the annual meetings of the Indian National Congress. This gave them an opportunity to come in contact with Nehru, the Congress leader and Jayprakash Narayan, the socialist and also with many Indian communists who operated within the congress Socialist ranks. The proclamations and methods of the Indian National Congress were studied and often copied by the Thakin nationalists. In March 1940, Aung San led a Thakin delegation to the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress. The delegation met important Congress leaders as well as many politically sensitive places. At Ahmedabad, on 7 April 1940 Aung San addressed a meeting of students with the followings words: "If a struggle is started in India, it will have its

repercussions in Burma and it is just possible that the struggle may be started simultaneously in Burma and India. If Mahatma Gandhi's experiments in non-violence succeed it will give a new light to the world and we are watching it sympathetically."²⁴

A significant development during the period of Japanese occupation of Burma was the liaison between Bose and some important Burmese leaders including Ba Maw. Bose's 'Sovereign State of Azad Hind' established at Singapore in October 1943 later shifted its headquarters to Rangoon in January 1944. The cooperation between Bose, Japan and Burma had obvious impact on Indo-Burmese relations. India never forgot the interests of her Asian neighbours during the critical days of the Second World War. In 1942 when the AICC gave a call for Quite India Movement it did not confine its demands for freedom to India alone. Rather it demanded freedom to entire Asia including Burma.²⁵ Nehru too reiterated that the Congress party "want to see not only India free but also Burma, Malaya and the rest of Asia now under the Japanese."²⁶ It was this concern for Burma and other Southeast Asian countries that motivated the AICC in June 1935 to instruct the Congress participants in the Shimla conference to make it clear that upon the conclusion of the war the Indian Govt. should not "support any policy aimed at the continuation of imperialist control of any one of the countries of south East Asia", nor shall it "allow the use of Indian resources for the deprivation of freedom of any of these countries."²⁷

During the post-World War period, British policy towards Burma was influenced to a very great extent by the developments that had taken place in India. In 1942, the Indians had waged the Quite India Movement against the British. The cry of nationalism had spread throughout the country. It gradually became evident that the Indians were going to achieve independence in the near future. In such a situation the British had to keep in mind India while formulating a policy for Burma and vice versa. They knew that "Burma's post-war status would inevitably influence and be influenced by what happened in India."²⁸ The growing pressure of Burmese demands for freedom compelled the British Govt. to issue a policy statement called the White Paper on Burma on 17

May 1945. It envisaged Governor's personal rule for the country for another three years, at the end of which elections were to be held and Burma was to attain self-rule.²⁹ This White Paper was denounced not only by the people of Burma but also by the Indian leaders. The Burmese saw it as an instrument deliberately devised to withhold the independence of the country. Nehru also described this Paper to be unsatisfactory document and declared that if the British Government desired to meet the demands of the Burmese people it would have to revise its policy towards Burma.³⁰

During the last stage of India's struggle for independence, Indians expressed concern over the independence of other countries of the region including Burma, which were under colonial rule. The Indian National Congress expressed its deep anxiety over the attempts being made to "maintain the political and economic subjection of Burma, Malaya, Indo-China and Indonesia."³¹ In a resolution of 23 September 1945, the AICC declared:

To continue imperialist domination over these countries, under whatever name or guise, would be a denial and repudiation of the professions made by the United Nations during wartime and sow the seeds of future wars. ... A free India will inevitably seek the close and friendly associations with her neighbour countries, and would especially seek to develop common policies for defence, trade and economic and cultural development with China, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and Ceylon.³²

This AICC resolution on Asia's freedom had its echo abroad. At New York on 24 September 1945, Vijaylakshmi Pandit emphasized that "India's freedom can have no meaning unless Burma, Malaya and other colonial possessions are also free."³³

The developments that took place in Burma during this period always drew attention of the Indians. On the eve of the formation of the Burmese Interim Govt., Nehru sent a warm message to the people of Burma on 27 Sept. 1946 in which he said "I expect this will rapidly lead to the freedom and independence of Burma and also to close relations between our two countries."³⁴ J.B. Kripalani, the Congress President, also pleaded for close and friendly relations between India and Burma. On 23 Sept. he

said: “Indian nationals in Burma must identify themselves with the people of Burma and mix with them as sugar does with milk. Knit together in a common friendly relationship, India, Burma and Ceylon will be in a position to fulfill their historical mission in the creation of a federation of Asiatic nations that would constitute a powerful bulwark against imperialism and exploitation, whether of the Western or the Eastern type.”³⁵

It was not only that the Indians supported the Burmese struggle. The Burmese nationalists reciprocated similar sentiments of sympathy towards India’s struggle for independence. On 24 July 1946 Aung San expressed his deep concern for India in the following terms:

Our policy towards India ... in Burma is one of the broadest conception and generosity ... We have no axe to grind, we nurture no ... racial bitterness and ill will ... We stand for more than friendly relations with our neighbours. We want to be not merely good neighbours, but good brothers even ... We stand for immediate mutual understanding and joint action, wherever and whenever possible, from now for our mutual interests and for the freedom of India, Burma and indeed all Asia. We stand for these and we trust Indian national leaders in India implicitly.³⁶

U Saw, another nationalist leader and ex-premier of Burma expressed his confidence that ““An independent India as a united nation will be a source of strength to Asia strategically, politically and economically.”³⁷

Naturally, when India and Burma became independent respectively in 1947 and 1948, despite the hardening issue of immigration to be settled by the respective governments shortly, both looked towards a prospective future relation of sustainable cooperation and mutual understanding. Given Burma’s geo-strategic importance to India’s northeast frontier, a solid political and economic relation complemented by cultural exchanges became the most viable policy option for India. The international posture of the new democratic Burmese government under U Nu, particularly adopting the Nehruvian diplomatic approach of non-alignment, raised hope for such an enduring

relationship between the two countries. But the rise of military Burma under the leadership of General Ne Win in 1962 by staging a coup d'état and the continued domination of the junta till date in the backdrop of increasing Chinese influence in the country, that hope has been under serious stress for the last four and half decades. The recent political and cultural exchanges between the two nations at both official and private levels have once again raised some hope for improved relations and future cooperation on a serious and long-term note.

Postscript

While dealing with the question of building and strengthening a reciprocally viable friendly relationship between the two countries, it is important to emphasize the need to develop an open-ended approach by the academics/scholars of Myanmar. In colonial Myanmar, “the lack of an elite meant that there was little to guide and spur on the people to reach out for greater achievements.”³⁸ That is why in present Myanmar it is imperative that the intellectuals take the lead in inspiring the younger generation to become a part of global village of scholars. As Burmese society “still remains a society waiting for its true potential to be realized”³⁹, academic open-endedness accompanied by regular scholarly and cultural exchanges with countries like India, which have a strong presence in the global academic map, especially in the humanities and social sciences, might open up a new horizon for Myanmar.

In the present scenario of building up a viable relationship between the two countries, cultural exchanges should play a pivotal role. As scholarly visits, academic presentations and conferences and joint research ventures form an integral part of such fruitful exchanges, both India and Myanmar should look forward to engage more and more in such programs. And India can be gateway of scholarly/academic exchange for students, teachers and scholars of Myanmar from various branches of humanities and social sciences. Returning scholars and involved academics might be able to do wonders with the output of their visits, projects and works by helping or showing the respective governments to devise workable policies towards a road not only to reciprocally viable

cultural relationship but to sustainable political relationship and integrated economic development.

More importantly, from a Burmese as well as Asian point of view, the developing countries along with their constant effort to develop economically need to flex their academic muscle to combat cultural imperialism of the west that is still looming large over us. It is only by keeping regular scholarly interactions with global academic coterie of scholars and making quality contributions (articles, books, projects) to international academia that the developing nations could make their presence felt internationally, which should be an important step towards recognition of a country's worth and strength as a nation state. India has done this in many branches of humanities and sciences in the last three decades, not to speak of its earlier contributions and achievements. Myanmar has also had immense potential to do that in the coming future. Especially, quality research on the history and culture of Myanmar would fill up an important gap in the modern and contemporary studies on South and Southeast Asia. Regular academic exchanges and collaboration with Indian universities and institutions can be a useful platform for Myanmar academics in this regard. In face of US sanctions, Myanmar can assert its national identity by cultural means, using academic input, performing arts or sports as cultural weapons and thereby drawing attention of the global media and the world opinion to its potential in the concerned fields. I would therefore conclude by putting prime emphasis on the point of gaining recognition for Burmese scholarship in global academia because this would help the political establishment to generate economic, social and cultural development.

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Notes and References:-

- ¹ Since Myanmar was historically known as Burma during the period of colonial rule, I have mostly used the term Burma throughout the essay.
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- ⁴ Renaud Egreteau, *Wooing the Generals: India's New Burma Policy*, Delhi: Authors Press, 2003, pp. 13.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- ⁸ *Report of the Riot Enquiry Committee, (Final)*, Rangoon, 1939, n. 25, p. 295.
- ⁹ See Bhattacharya (Chakraborti), "Indian Diaspora in Myanmar", pp. 183-87.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 199.
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- ¹² Presidential address at a meeting at the Rangoon Ramakrishna Mission, 27 April 1954; cited in Bhattacharya (Chakraborti), "Indian Diaspora in Myanmar", p. 200.
- ¹³ S.K. Pradhan's work *New Dimensions in Indo-Burmese Relations* (New Delhi: Rajat Publications, 2000), especially chapter 1 (pp. 1-37) gives one a nice little background of the complementarity of nationalist movements of the two countries. This section of the article shares and resonates some of the points of that chapter.
- ¹⁴ Albert D. Moscotti, *British Policy and the Nationalist Movement in Burma: 1917-37*, Hawaii: The University Press, 1971, p. 20.
- ¹⁵ Aung San Suu Kyi, *Burma and India: Some Aspects of Intellectual Life under Colonialism*, Shimla: IAS & New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1990, p. 66.
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- ¹⁷ Moscotti, *British Policy and the Nationalist Movement in Burma*, p. 20.
- ¹⁸ U. Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity – Nationalist Movement of Burma, 1920-1940*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1980, p. 22.
- ¹⁹ D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma – Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. II (1920-29), Bornbay: Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri & D.G. Tendulkar, 1951, p. 467.
- ²⁰ Ba Maw, *Breakthrough in Burma – Memoirs of a Revolution (1939-1946)*, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1968, p. 45.
- ²¹ For an instructive discussion on how British imperialism and colonialism got represented and reflected in Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's writings, see Swapna Bhattacharya (Chakraborti), *India-Myanmar Relations: 1886-1948*, Kolkata: K P Bagchi & Co., 2007, Chapter IV, pp. 159-204.
- ²² *The Indian Review* (Madras), 38.6 (June 1937), p. 376.
- ²³ *The Indian Review*, 39.9 (Sept. 1938), p. 624.
- ²⁴ *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), 8 April 1940.
- ²⁵ *Indian Annual Register*, 2 (July-August 1942), pp. 181, 201.
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- ²⁷ *The Indian Annual Register*, 1 (January-June 1945), p. 225.
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- ²⁹ *Burma: Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government*, London: H.M.S.O., 1945, pp. 9-11, referred to in Pradhan, *New Dimensions in Indo-Burmese Relations*, p. 33.
- ³⁰ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 June 1945.
- ³¹ Pradhan, *New Dimensions in Indo-Burmese Relations*, p. 34.
- ³² *The Indian Annual Register*, 112, p. 233.
- ³³ *The Indian Annual Register*, 2 (July-December 1945), p. 17.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 288.
- ³⁶ Joseph Silverstein, *The Political Legacy of Aung San*, Ithaca & New York: Cornell University, 1972, n. 104, p. 86.
- ³⁷ Cited in Pradhan, *New Dimensions in Indo-Burmese Relations*, p. 36.
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Peasant Movements (1893-94) Of Assam: Genesis and Dimensions

Shruti Dev Goswami

With the establishment of British rule in 1826, agrarian relations assumed a new dimension in Assam. In the initial stages the British refrained from making a radical change in the revenue system of their predecessors but retained it with such minor modifications which were considered absolutely necessary. A major step in this direction was, however, taken in 1833 when in parts of central Assam (former districts of Darrang and Nowgong) the land tax was for the first time introduced in place of personal labour and produces which formed the nucleus of the former system of taxation. This system, generally called the *rayatwaree* system, enabled the Government to enter into an agreement directly with the rayat, who was expected to pay only that amount as revenue which was fixed by the Government. This change in the method of payment, however, put the Assamese peasantry under severe financial strain. Since cash was difficult to obtain, the peasants had to sell a considerable part of their output to meet the revenue demand, while their consumption-oriented mode of production remained virtually unchanged. Moreover, in assessing land no uniform principle was followed; there had been numerous instances of "lighter rates having been imposed when they should have been heavier and vice versa".¹ Bearing full testimony of this anomaly, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, the doyen of nineteenth century Assamese renaissance, rightly pointed out in his well documented memorial submitted to A.J. M. Mills, Judge of the *Sudder Dewani Adalat* on deputation to Assam in 1853, that assessments were made without any particular distinction being observed as to the quality and capacity of the soil; the low *rupit* (arable) lands, yielding fifty maunds of corn per *poora* (1.5 acres approximately) were assessed at the same rate as high *rupit* lands producing only fifteen to twenty maunds. This, according to him, made the pressure of taxation "light upon some but heavy upon others."² Again, in regard to the rates of assessment no uniformity

was maintained. For example, in 1839 while the rate of *rupit* land in Darrang was Rs. 1.8 annas, in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar it was fixed at Rs.1 per *poora*.³ Similarly, the *bari* (homestead plot) lands were assessed at Re. I in Kamrup and annas 8 in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.⁴ This discrepancy in the rates being inconvenient, Francis Jenkins, the Commissioner of the province, submitted a proposal in 1839 to raise the rate of *rupit* land in all the districts to the level of Darrang, which was then the highest in the province. Though the proposal was then summarily rejected as 'inexpedient' the same was renewed in a different form in 1865 by Henry Hopkinson, the new Commissioner of the province. It was effectively argued this time that in the absence of a uniform rate a tendency had lately developed among the rayats to migrate from the heavily assessed district to the one where the revenue was less. On this occasion the Government approved of the proposal and authorized the Commissioner to raise the rate of *rupit* and *non-rupit* lands considerably in all the districts.⁵ This periodical enhancement of land revenue was made in spite of the fact that the rayats were overburdened with numerous other taxes⁶ and any alterations in the rates would greatly unsettle their domestic economy. Already in 1853 Dhekial Phukan drew the attention of the Government to the increasing difficulties of the Assamese rayats and earnestly appealed that before any enhancement of revenue was decided upon in future the Government must ensure a corresponding improvement in the paying capacity of the people. "Unless therefore", he cautioned, "the Government provides the people with better and improved means of cultivating their lands, an increase of assessment will inevitably lead to an increase of the unhappiness of the people."⁷

That Dhekial Phukan's assessment was correct none can deny. In the prevailing situation peasant movements were inevitable and already in October, 1861, the Tiwa (previously called Lalung) community of Phulaguri, near Raha in Nowgong district was in a fierce rebellion against the district authorities.⁸ As in later times the leading part in this uprising was played by the *raij mels*, which, with the blessings of the village elders and other respectable persons of the locality, were to a great extent successful in rallying the masses against the district officers. A *mel* in Assam was a 'time-honoured

institution' and a 'recognised feature' of the Assamese social life, for, in a period when legal and constitutional safeguard was unthinkable, it was the only means through which the people could obtain protection from the oppression of the local functionaries.⁹ Thus, in the last decade of the nineteenth century when agrarian situation became serious, a number of *mels* were formed in different parts of the districts of Kamrup and Darrang and with the support of some well-to-do (including the *Dolois* and the *Gossains*, meaning spiritual guides) people a no-rent campaign was started.¹⁰ Well organised and always well attended, these *mels* provided ample opportunities to the aggrieved rayats of the two districts not only to discuss their problems and means of redress but also to develop a spirit of independence and self-reliance.¹¹ The *mels*, therefore, once again took a leading part in the peasant movements of late nineteenth century Assam and no rayat dared to disobey the decisions of the *mels* without facing social ostracism and other penalties.¹² The local authorities unfortunately remained indifferent to the problems of the peasants but often took recourse to brutal suppression of the *mels* with a view to nip the spirit of unity of the peasantry in the bud.

It was, however, not the increasing burden of taxation which alone the rayats resented. In pre-British times, land in Assam was owned collectively by a clan or community, each adult member of the clan was given two *pooras* (approximately three acres) of revenue-free land in lieu of personal service to the state. With the establishment of British rule certain administrative changes were effected, the most important of which' was, as stated already, the replacement of manual service by a money tax. This change, unfortunately, failed to produce 'either an adequate pecuniary collection to the Government or satisfaction to the people.' Moreover, no concrete step was taken to protect the rayats from the extortion of the revenue collectors, nor any accurate accounts taken of the collections actually made.¹³ "Even persons of intelligence", wrote Archibold Bogle, the Collector of Kamrup, "would be puzzled to say how much a rayot would have to pay to the Government. To the unfortunate peasantry the account must have been wholly incomprehensible."¹⁴ Similarly, keeping the experience of the Bengal system

in mind Dhēkial Phukan expressed great concern at the lack of adequate protection of the tenants when he wrote,

Often, too, the fiscal officers cause an over-assessment of the Ryots' lands by false statements in the survey papers; and cases are not of infrequent occurrence in which the Mofussil revenue officers are guilty of levying a general cess or other illegal impositions for their private use. It would be easy to say that redress of these grievances might easily be obtained by application to the courts. We have, however, to observe that none but the poor Ryots themselves can feel how many insurmountable obstacles lie in their way to redress; that a civil or summary prosecution for damages, exactions, or dispossession, is actually beyond their means; and that they are obliged to submit to loss and privation rather than leave their cultivations and sojourn half a year at the distance of eighty miles to obtain an award for damages.¹⁵

True, many of these defects were removed by the Settlement Rules of 1870 and subsequently in 1886 by the Assam Land and Revenue Regulations. But the demand of the state had increased to such an extent that whatever benefit the rayats derived from these regulations had all been neutralised. The risks of tax collection being enormous and the commission allowed being extremely meager the tax collectors were forced to exact the uttermost farthing from the ryots.¹⁶ The fact that rural poverty in Assam was increasing can also be explained by the increase in the number of tax-defaulters which grew from 3,311 in 1879-80 to nearly 13,000 in 1895-96.¹⁷ This, coupled with the high mortality owing to the devastating black fever (*kalaazar*) epidemic between 1891-1901¹⁸ and excessive consumption of opium¹⁹ made the conditions of the peasantry extremely deplorable.

Thus, agriculture and market facilities being in a backward state and commerce being entirely in the hands of the Manvari (Keya) merchants, the average Assamese peasant in the late nineteenth century had very little savings even in the most normal

times. Circumstances compelled him to remain satisfied with the few maunds of paddy and some vegetables which he produced in his own garden. His mode of cultivation was primitive, the implements he used in tilling the land were of "the rudest and simplest kind", irrigation and flood control measures rarely practised and manure seldom used in agriculture. Paucity of capital and enterprise rather than land continued to be widely felt. His primary concern, under the circumstances, was for the present as scarcely was there a surplus for him and in the event of the failure of crops owing to natural calamities, he was reduced to complete "wretchedness and misery."²⁰

II

In this back drop of events let us study the nature and magnitude of the peasant movements of 1893-94. The ostensible and immediate cause of unrest was undoubtedly the steep rise in the rate of land revenue which in the settlement of 1893 was raised by about 53 per cent on the average, but in some areas it was as high as 70 to 100 per cent.²¹ A revision in the rate had become necessary for two principal reasons. Firstly, the decennial settlement effected in 1883 had expired on 31 March, 1893 and secondly, the rate then in force was fixed some twenty-five years ago, and which in the opinion of the local authorities had "failed to secure to Government its fair share of the produce of the land."²² Though in this settlement the three-fold classification of land was retained, the villages were now divided into four classes and the revenue was fixed on each of the three kinds of land on the basis of the class in which the village fell. Again, the main consideration of determination of the class of the village was the demand of land as shown by the density of population and the proportion of the settled to the total area. Moreover, no distinction was observed between the better and the inferior land of the same class in a village.²³ Assessment in such a situation was not likely to be accurate. Be that as it may, this measure of the Government created great apprehension and resentment among the masses, nearly eighty-five per cent of whom, according to the census of 1891, lived on agriculture. Almost everywhere the rayats raised a storm of protest demanding the repeal of the enhancement order. While on a tour of the

Brahmaputra valley districts in the winter of 1893, the Chief Commissioner of the province, W. E. Ward, received a number of complaints in this regard.²⁴ But nowhere the situation became so explosive as in Rangia and Lachima in the Kamrup district and Patharughat in the Mangaldoi sub-division of Darrang district, where an unprecedented scene of an impending upheaval was witnessed, and which forced the Chief Commissioner to promptly reduce the increase to an average of 37 per cent.²⁵ The infuriated rayats were not satisfied by this abatement and demanded that collections in the enhanced rate be postponed till the final orders were passed by the Government of India. Unfortunately, the Chief Commissioner remained adamant and insisted on timely payment of revenue in the rates already announced, assurance being given at the same time that in the event of a diminution of the rates being ordered by the government of India the excess payment made by the rayats would be refunded.²⁶

III

The earliest signs of disaffection of a serious nature were witnessed in Rangia and Lachirna in December, 1893. A vigorous no-rent campaign was launched in both the places and the peasants were warned that any attempt to pay revenue would be treated as a gross disrespect shown to the *mels*.²⁷ Caught in a dilemma of losing property if they failed to pay and on the other hand of being 'cursed and excommunicated' in case they did so, the poor villagers did not know what to do. Who was superior - the Government or the *mel*, was the question which they were unable to answer.²⁸

At about 9 A.M. of 24 December, 1893, an unruly crowd of about 250 men raided the Rangia *hat* (market) and destroyed property worth Rs. 300/-. It is interesting to note here that the wrath of the raiders were directed not against the Government alone but also against the Marwari traders as evidenced from the destruction and looting of the shops owned by these people on the pretext that "their presence had caused the enhancement of land revenue."²⁹ Encouraged by the inability of the small police force under Reilly, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Kamrup, to suppress the riot, the insurgents appeared again in much bigger number on the 30th December and threatened

to attack the *thana* (police outpost) and the office and residence of the *tahsildar* (officer in charge of revenue collection in a *tahsil* or revenue circle). Apprehending further trouble, R.B. McCabe, Deputy Commissioner of the district, arrived at the scene of the disturbance on the 6th January, 1894, along with a police party and succeeded in arresting some of the offenders involved in the incident of 24th December. But the crowd grew in strength and in the evening of 10th January, 1894, about 3000 rayats, representing all the *mouzas* (fiscal units) of the Rangia *tahsil* began to assemble in the premises of the *thana*, where, in addition to fifteen arrested culprits, a sum of Rs. 34,000 (being the amount collected from the Tamulpur *tahsil*) had been kept. The Deputy Commissioner first tried to dissuade the people from collecting in large number and becoming unnecessarily excited by pointing out to the order that he had passed on that day prohibiting the holding of the mels.³⁰ But in spite of his request the people refused to disperse and began to shout '*Bridhi Khajana Dibo Nawaru*' (We can not pay revenue at the enhanced rate).³¹ At about 9 P.M. the mob became restless and started moving towards the *thana* with a view to releasing the prisoners detained therein. The Deputy Commissioner, with the help of Reilly and a few police constables tried to frustrate their attack by opposing them with arms. In the melee that followed, McCabe got accidentally separated from the police party that accompanied him and it was with great difficulty that he could be finally rescued from the mob. In the process a few shots were fired though no one was injured.³² It was undoubtedly a very unfortunate incident and could have been avoided if both the parties would have maintained utmost restraint in their temperament. In the words of a modern writer: "To McCabe the demeanour of the people appeared to be extremely insolent, to the people McCabe's effrontery was the symbol of a tyrannical rule".³³

The bold defiance of the peasants at Rangia compelled McCabe to take a serious view of the situation. The incident was not an accidental one; it was planned in advance. Realising that the exasperations of the rayats were too deep-rooted to be removed by mere assurances, the Deputy Commissioner decided to meet the situation

by fortifying the *thana* with additional troops. Accordingly a message was sent to the Darranga frontier out-post to immediately send fifteen sepoy of the 13th Bengal Infantry to Rangia. Almost simultaneously a telegram was sent to the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang district to despatch twenty frontier policemen. Meanwhile it was deemed necessary to defend the Cutchery (court building) from any possible attack. Steps were also taken to prevent disaffection from spreading into the neighbouring areas and as a prohibitory measure orders were issued on the 13th January for the attachment of all licensed guns in Rangia, Nalbari, Barama and Bajali *tahsils*, all forming a compact block and where the inhabitants had already decided on a common course of action. Some local leaders, not connected with the outbreak, were sent to the disturbed areas as special constables to induce the rebels to obey the orders of the district officer and to cooperate with him in maintaining peace.³⁴ The success of these measures were questionable as though at Rangia out of an estimated amount of Rs.90, 000 a sum of nearly Rs.60, 000 was collected within a few days, in Nalbari, Barama and Bajali the people continued to resist payment. In Barama, in particular, the *mels* were held almost regularly in spite of the prohibitory order. They appointed their own *dak* (postal) peons “to carry orders from one village to another, and organised a corps of *lathials* (clubsmen) to oppose attachment of property.”³⁵

While steps were being taken at Rangia to restore law and order a serious insurrection took place on 21 January, 1894 at Lachima, about thirty miles west of Rangia. The trouble started when some people, enraged over the conduct of a *mouzadar* (officer in charge of *mouza* or fiscal unit) and a *mandal* (a surveyor of land) engaged in revenue collection duty, assaulted them so badly that the latter died of the wounds that he had sustained.³⁶ Hearing about this disturbance the Extra Assistant Commissioner of Barpeta immediately sent an Inspector of Police to the place. The officer initially succeeded in apprehending seventy-five suspected culprits; but soon he was overpowered by a mob of about 3,000 men and the captives were freed. The situation there having gone out of control, an urgent request for assistance was sent to Gauhati

the following day. With a few sepoy's McCabe arrived at Lachima in the midnight of 22nd January. There was practically no resistance from the people when fifty-nine principal offenders were taken to custody for interrogation. But in the afternoon of 25th January a huge demonstration was organised in front of the Deputy Commissioner's camp and a petition demanding the release of the arrested persons and believed to have been signed by 6,000 rayats was submitted to him. The Deputy Commissioner declined to accede to their demand and tried to satisfy them by an assurance that any remission of revenue made by the Government of India would be at once refunded. He also pointed out that the rayats by occupying land after 1st April, 1893, had indirectly accepted the new settlement rules and the authorities were duty bound to serve *bakizai* (recovery of arrears of revenue) notices to those who had defaulted with payment.³⁷ All these efforts to pacify the people proved unsuccessful, whereupon the police took upon itself the duty of dispersing the crowd with a view to preventing any possible attempt to advance upon the Deputy Commissioner's rest camp. Not a single shot was fired; the butt of the rifle was enough to break the assembly.³⁸ Unfortunately, the district authorities here resorted to inhuman suppression of public protest. In the name of 'public interest' even the *Gossains*, the *Dolois* and the village headmen were not spared. Large number of suspected criminals were yoked to the plough like bullocks and were compelled to draw it across the field.³⁹ It is strange that O'Dwyerism was practised here in its worst form without even an O'Dwyer.⁴⁰ Police atrocity finally succeeded in restoring peace at Lachima. This prompted the Deputy Commissioner to send a part of the police force to Bajali and Barama from where information regarding secret assembly of men continued to come. Meanwhile, he undertook a visit to a number of adjoining villages to explain to the people 'the futility of active resistance' and all this he could do without noticing any sign of disloyalty. He was happy to report on 22nd February, 1894.

No ill-will is (now) borne against the Government officials, and in every place I have seen the native gentlemen have called to thank me for the extreme leniency with which Government has acted towards the misguided people.⁴¹

IV

The echo of the peasant uprisings was soon heard at Patharughat, about twelve miles to the east of the Kamrup border. It was on 24th January, 1894, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, J.D. Anderson, first heard about a *mel* in the Sipajhar area which was attended by thousands of rayats coming even from distant places like Mangaldoi and Kolaigaon, and where matters relating to the recent enhancement of land revenue had been discussed. Receiving positive information of similar *mels* being convened at Patharughat where the peasants had been very much agitated over the last few days and apprehending a Rangia-type situation there, the Deputy Commissioner, accompanied by J.R. Berrington, Officiating Commandant of Military Police, and about thirty sepoy arrived at Patharughat on 27th January, 1894. While he was coming to Patharughat the Deputy Commissioner saw a number of notices, issued on behalf of the 'raj' being pasted on the trunks and branches of the trees from which he came to know that the proposed *mel* would be held on the 28th January. The purpose of this *mel* was to demonstrate the determination of the peasants to resist payment at the enhanced rate, and if possible, to present their grievances to the Deputy Commissioner with the hope that he might be able to reduce the burden at his own discretion (*Kijani khajana bridhi nakare*).⁴²

There was no apparent indication of an impending danger when Anderson reached Patharughat and possibly the situation there would have remained well under control had he been informed in advance about the dissatisfaction which was fast spreading among the rayats, and he, on his part, would have refrained from doing something which would add fuel to the fire. Strangely, without caring to have a more detailed knowledge of the sufferings of the people the Deputy Commissioner decided to enforce law on the guilty persons perhaps under the erroneous belief that no one would dare to lay violent hands on his officers. Instead of persuading the angry rayats not to be carried away by the conviction that the Government was unsympathetic to their difficulties he made things more complicated for him by foolishly sending in the

morning of 28th January the local *tahsildar* along with Berrington and a few sepoys to distraint the properties of the rayats on whom *bakizai* notices were served. This action of the officer further infuriated the villagers who had great dislike for the police. They, therefore, not only resisted attachment of property but also started collecting in large number in front of the rest-house where the Deputy Commissioner was staying. An attempt was first made to explain to the people the futility of such resistance as the matter was then under the consideration of the Government of India. The agitators were not satisfied and continued to squat on the ground insisting on an immediate cancellation of the enhancement order.⁴³ This defiant attitude of the people was too much for Anderson to bear. He asked the police to drive them from near the rest-house into the open field on the other side of the Mangaldoi road, completely forgetting that he was thereby trying to deal with an angry crowd with a small force. Hardly had the police carried out the orders of the Deputy Commissioner, sounds of a 'fresh mob' approaching the bungalow were heard. It was too late for the officer to realize that the situation had suddenly taken a new turn as many of the new comers had come armed with *lat is* (clubs) and spilt bamboos.⁴⁴ A scuffle had become inevitable. It is difficult to say who provoked whom. But the sight of the police advancing towards the 'excited crowd' with 'fixed bayonets' undoubtedly infuriated them more. At the same time the rebels, drawing strength from their 'overwhelming number', were also very confident of the success of their agitation. Be that as it may, what followed on that fateful day can be better realized than described. The people fought a pitched battle (*doli ran*) with bamboo-sticks and clods of earth. The police replied with volleys of gun-shots, killing at least fifteen and injuring not less than thirty-seven.⁴⁵ Fighting a grim battle with remarkable determination the crowd finally gave in and retired to safety. A summary trial was then arranged. Thirty-seven persons were tried; of these seven were found guilty and convicted and the rest discharged.⁴⁶ Thus, in the face of naked repression the resistance movement died down though in some parts of the district the rayats continued to 'maintain a hostile and defiant attitude' for a long time. In these places the people

Patharughat uprising, would have been enough to curb the violent and hostile attitude of the people rather than the extreme step the Deputy Commissioner chose to take.⁵⁶

Conclusion:

The wide-spread peasant struggles, 'based on the unity of the entire peasantry and a section of the non-cultivating landowners', introduced a new era of peasant awakening in Assam by effectively upholding the value and utility of organised resistance to governmental injustice. The emerging middle class made common cause with the peasants and helped them keep alive their nascent spirit, though the emphasis was gradually shifted from militant to a constitutional path of agitation. The popular *raij mels* were converted into more representative and broad-based organisations - the Rayat *Sob has* (associations), with active support of the Assamese middle class. The Tezpur Rayat *Sabha*, for example, did not fail to ventilate the growing dissatisfaction of the rayats. Among its various activities the most important was the agrarian reforms. Similarly, the Nowgong Rayat *Sabha* and the Upper Assam Association, both born in the late 1880's, had large number of members from among the rayats of the respective areas. Still later, under the influence of the Indian National Congress, a number of peasant organizations were formed in remote areas like Charduar, Naduar, Sootia and Choyduar in the Darrang district.⁵⁷ Let alone the Rayat Sobhas, an elite organization like the Jorhat Sarbojanik *Sabha*, founded in 1884, boldly took up the cause of the peasants and organised public opinion in their favour. Between October, 1892 and February, 1893, the *Sobha* held a series of meetings to "protest against the policy of the Government for an excessive increase of revenue".⁵⁸ No wonder, therefore, a number of its members were seen actively supporting the cause of the struggling rayats and its President, Jagannath Barooah, even went to the extent of hiring, at his own expense, lawyers from Calcutta for the release of the arrested leaders of upper Assam.⁵⁹ Thus, peasant movements in Assam did not remain confined to the rural areas; but with the progress of time the urban elite began to make "a united front with the proprietary peasants on all common issues against the rulers."⁶⁰ The unity of purpose and idea,

which was the fountain-head of strength of the Assamese peasantry, found a new direction thereafter.

The peasant movements of late nineteenth century Assam did not remain essentially a local or provincial issue but with the interest shown by the all-India press and more particularly by his open advocacy and sympathy that Dr. Rash Behary Ghose had shown in course of his speech at the Imperial Legislative Assembly on 29 March, 1894, the so called 'Assam Riots' gained the publicity which they rightly deserved. It is true the replies given by the Government on that occasion were mostly unsatisfactory⁶¹ and evasive in character as they did not underline any definite policy towards the Assam rayats. But still, by lifting a local issue from the regional to the national platform the cause of the toiling masses of Assam was remarkably served. The hushed voice of the peasantry began to find a new expression. It is perhaps due mainly to the increasing awareness of the Assamese rayats that at the time of the next resettlement (1905) the lessons of 1893-94 riots were not entirely lost sight of.

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3. Jenkins, F., 'Report on the Revenue Administration of the Province of Assam, 1849', in *Selection of Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. xi, Calcutta, 1853. The districts mentioned here and hereafter were the former districts of the province. The boundaries of some of these districts have been reorganised in recent times to form new districts. Accordingly old names and spellings of the districts are retained.
4. *Ibid*

5. For details see Barpujari, H.K. (ed.), *Political History of Assam, 1826-1919*, vol. I, Gauhati, 1977, p. 245, Appendix A

It is to be noted here that the incidence of land revenue per head of population in Assam was much heavier than in Bengal. Bengal Revenue Proceedings, November, 1874, Head No.7, Collection 1-176, Secretary of State for India to Governor-General of India in Council, 14 May, 1874.

6. In addition to the land revenue and the salt duty, the people of Assam were required to pay income tax (after 1860), *ahkaree* (excise), stamp duty (after 1858), *gorkhati* (tax for cutting wood in the jungle), *jalkar* (tax for the right to catch fish), tax for washing gold in the auriferous streams, tax for the privilege to catch elephants and in the hill areas the house or the hoe tax. For details see Goswami; Shrutidev, *Aspects of Revenue Administration in Assam, 1826-1874*, Delhi, 1987.

7. Dhekial Phukan, A, *op. cit.*, p. xxxviii.

8. For details of the Phulaguri Uprising see Goswami, Shrutidev, 'Raij versus the Raj: The Nowgong Outbreak (1861) in Historical Perspective', in Bhattacharjee, J.B. (ed;), *Studies in the History of North-East India*, Shillong, 1986, pp. 123-34.

9. ASR (Commissioner's Office), File No. 409, 1861-63, Hopkinson to Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 8 November, 1861.

10. ASR, Home A Proceedings, September, 1894, No. 252, McCabe to Commissioner of Assam, 12 January, 1894; also Guha, A, *Planter Raj to Swaraj, Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam, 1826-1947*, New Delhi, 1977, p. 51.

11. The popular aphorism *raijai raja* (the people alone are the sovereigns) could be understood in this context.

12. Dutt, K.N., *Landmarks of the Freedom Struggle in Assam*, Gauhati (reprint), 1969, pp.32-33.

13. Foreign Political Consultations, 30 May, 1833, No. 89, Bogle to Robertson, 10 February, 1833.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Dhekial Phukan, A., *op. cit.*, p. xxxv.

16. Quoted in Guha, A., 'Assamese Agrarian Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: Roots, Structure and Trends', in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. xvii, No.1 (January-March 1980), pp. 38-39.
17. Sarma, Manorama, 'Socio-Economic Changes in Assam, 1870-1900', in *North-East Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No.2 (November 1982), pp. 56-57. The figures given here were related to Lower Assam and Central Assam (districts of Kamrup, Nowgong and Darrang) alone and not to the whole of the province.
18. During this period the decrease of population was estimated at 7 per cent in Kamrup, 25 per cent in Nowgong and 9 per cent in the Mangaldoi sub-division of the Darrang district. Guha, A., 'Assamese Agrarian Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: Roots, Structures and Trends', in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. xvii, No.1 (January-March 1980), p. 39.
19. The consumption of *ahkaree* (excise) opium in Assam rose from 1,446 maunds in 1885-86 to 1,748 maunds in 1919-20. For other details of the opium evil see Goswami, Shrutidev, 'The Opium Evil in Nineteenth Century Assam', in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. xix, Nos. 3 & 4, 1982, pp. 365-76.
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21. ASR, Home A Proceedings, September, 1894, No. 326, see Questions put by Rash Behary Ghose at the Imperial Legislative Council and Answers given, 29 March, 1894.
22. *Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam for the year 1893-94*, Shillong, 1895, p. viii.
23. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. vi, New Delhi (reprint), year not mentioned, p.91.
24. *Royal Commission on Opium, Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. ii, Calcutta, 1894, p. 278, See evidence of I.J.S. Driberg, 27 December, 1893.

25. ASR, Home A Proceedings, September, 1894, No. 326, see Questions put by Rash Behary Ghose at the Imperial Legislative Council and Answers given, 29 March, 1894.
26. *Ibid*, No. 286, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, 12 February, 1894.
27. *Ibid*, No. 258, Diary of McCabe, 6 January, 1894.
28. *Ibid*, No. 286, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, 12 February, 1894.

R.B. McCabe, the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup believed that the majority of the rayats were eager to pay revenue at the revised rate; but they were prevented from doing that by the influential leaders of the locality. "How can we disobey the *Raijar Hukum*. (qrder of the *mel*) - was the usual expression of helplessness of the rayats. *Ibid*, No. 252, McCabe to the Commissioner of Assam, 12 January, 1894.

Similarly, in a statement made before McCabe, Bijoy Chaudhuri, a tenant of Pati Darrang *tahsil* (revenue circle), reported that on 22 December, 1893, one Monu Gaon *burah* approached him with a message that he had been summoned by the *mel* (*Raij nibo diche*). When he arrived at the place of the *mel* he saw a number of influential persons of the area who on seeing him began to reproach him for paying revenue against the wishes of the *mel* and asked him to pay Rs. 25/- as a penalty. On being informed that he did not have the money with him he was told that he must pay by Thursday next, or his house would be looted. The unfortunate villager had no power to defy the orders of the *mel* and paid the fine. *Ibid*, No. 253, Memo by McCabe, 11 January, 1894.

29. *Ibid*, No. 352, McCabe-to Commissioner of Assam, 12 January, 1894.
30. The order banning the holding of the *mels* read as follows: "Whereas the assembly of *mels* in the district of Kamrup had resulted in riot and criminal intimidation, it is hereby ordered that no *mel* shall assemble within the *tahsils* of Patidarrang, Rangia, Nalbari, Tambulpur, Hajo, Boroma and Bajali, or in the *mouza* of Shurukhetri without the permission of the Deputy Commissioner. Any person joining such assembly after the issue of the notice will be punished according to law." *Ibid*, No. 257, Notice by McCabe, 10 January, 1894.

31. *Ibid*, No. 258, Diary of McCabe, 8 January, 1894.
32. *Ibid*, No. 221, see Telegram of McCabe to Commissioner of Assam Valley Districts, 10 January, 1894; also, *The Hindu Patriot*, 5 February 1894.
33. Dutt, K.N., *op.cit.*, p. 34.
34. ASR, Home A Proceedings, September, 1894, No. 312, McCabe to the Commissioner of Assam Valley Districts, 22 February, 1894.
35. *Ibid* 36. *Ibid*
37. *Ibid*, The rules usually followed in such cases were as follows: If the revenue was not paid in time a first notice was served to the defaulter. Following this two more notices were issued and in the event of his failure to clear his dues after the third notice, his property was attached.
38. *Ibid*
39. Dutt, K.N., *op.cit.*, p. 35.
40. Michael O'Dwyer was the Lt. Governor of the Punjab at the time of World War I. His policy of repression and inhuman physical torture was the chief cause of unrest in that province, culminating in the tragic Jallianwala Bagh massacre (13 April, 1919). O'Dwyerism, therefore, had become a symbol of ruthlessness in India.
41. ASR, Home 'A Proceedings, September, 1894, No. 312, McCabe to the Commissioner of Assam Valley Districts, 22 February, 1894.
42. *Ibid*, No. 277, Anderson to the Commissioner of Assam Valley Districts, 30 January, 1894.
43. *Ibid*.
44. *Ibid*.
45. *Ibid*, No. 320, Godfrey to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, 27 March, 1894; also *The Hindu Patriot*, 5 February, 1894.

This figure was later contested in unofficial circles. Berrington who carried out the firing orders himself testified in his statement recorded on that day that it was impossible to ascertain the exact number of casualties from a distance of about 250 yards. That the number of the wounded was more was proved by the fact that special

constables were asked to persuade the destitute to take the injured persons to the Mangaldoi dispensary as there were no medical facilities available at Patharughat. ASR, Home A Proceedings, September, 1894, No. 279, Statement of Berrington, 28 January, 1894.

46. *Ibid*, No. 320, Godfrey to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, 27 March, 1894.
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48. ASR, Home A Proceedings, September, 1894, No.326, see Questions put by Rash Behary Ghose at the Imperial Legislative Council and the Answer given, 29 March, 1894.
49. Quoted in Barpujari, H.K. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 101.
50. *The Reis and Rayyet*, 10 February, 1894, p. 62, Quoted in *Ibid*, p.101.
51. It is unfortunate that notwithstanding having full knowledge of the distress of the peasants a section of the British officials was inclined to believe that there was no reasonable justification for them to oppose the financial measures of the Government and that the majority of the rayats were willing to pay their revenue but they were frightened into refusing payment by the *mels*.
52. ASR, Home A Proceedings, September, 1894, No. 320, Godfrey to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, 27 March, 1894.
53. *Ibid*.
54. Strangely, an attempt was made to whitewash the responsibilities of the Deputy Commissioner and his subordinates by throwing the entire burden on the *raij mels* or on some of the viUage headmen who were held guilty of spreading ri.Jmours and willfully misleading the poor cultivators. Even a man like Sir W.E. Ward, the Chief Commissioner of the province, supported Anderson and opined that he was "fully justified in the action he took". *Ibid*, No. 286, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, 12 February, 1894.

55. *Ibid*, No. 320, Godtley to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, 27 March, 1894.
56. It is not known if there existed a direct understanding between the peasants of Kamrup and those of the Darrang district. The bold resistance of the former might have indirectly, if not directly, inspired their brothers in Patharughat to rise against their rulers. It may also be possible that the rayats in the latter place, keeping the lessons of Rangia and Lachima in mind, were encouraged to believe, foolishly though, that the police would cause no harm to them and that even if they fired, they would use only blank cartridges.
57. Barpujari, H.K. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 159, foot note.
58. *Royal Commission on Opium. Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. ii, Calcutta, 1894, p.299, see evidence of Jagannath Barooah, 28 December, 1893.
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Revolutionary Nationalism and the Revolutionists of Midnapur (1902- 1908)

Sankar Kr. Das

At the outset I beg to offer an explanation as to the title of my essay. Historians have labelled the revolutionary activities of the early phase of the national movement of India as the activities born of revolutionary terrorism. Bipan Chandra writes, the term revolutionary terrorism is used 'without any pejorative meaning and for want of a different term'.¹ Sumit Sarkar at first hesitates to call this facet on national movement a facet of revolutionary terrorism. But on thinking that as the main activity of the impatient young men of the first decade of the twentieth century was only political assassinations i.e. the assassinations of the oppressive officials and traitors, and as they failed to rise their activity 'to the level of urban mass uprising or guerrilla basis in the countryside their mission can not be characterized as revolution'. So Dr. Sarkar concludes, "The term terrorism hence remains not in appropriate."² Ramesh Chandra Majumdar writes that there is a considerable volume of opinions as to the characterizing of the early facet of the revolutionary activities of the national movement, and that the high debate is there over whether it was terrorism or revolution". Dr. Majumdar has by-passed the debate noting that "... both terrorism and revolution were condemned useless, inasmuch as they were not likely to prove successful in driving away the British from India"³

'Revolution' generally means 'an attempt to make a radical change in the system of government'. This is what we see in the case of the French Revolution (1789) and also in that of the Russian Revolution (1917). History records lots of instances of revolutions of the same category as were organised to make a total change in the system of the government by crushing and bringing down despotic rules and regimes. This sort of revolution was/ is only possible against a native ruler in an independent country. But in any country under any over-mighty and well-structured colonial government like India, this sort of revolution for bringing about a total change by driving out the alien ruler

cannot be dreamt of. In view of this consideration, the educated youths of India particularly of Bombay and Bengal were searching out new paths that would lead them to their desired end. They found and at the same time they experienced that the repressive policies of the British government and its over-exploiting administration on the one hand and on the other hand the political mendicancy of the Moderates who were sure of reliefs from the government if they carry on their constitutional movements, went beyond the limits of their toleration. Again the Extremist ideology of passive resistance failed to give them any positive lead to come out of their despondence. It was in this situation history flashed before them; and there flashed before their eyes the history of the Carbonari movement, the methods and activities of the Irish nationalists and also of the Russian nihilists and populists. So they decided to strike terror into the hearts of the rulers by political assassinations; and they expected that thereby they would awaken the national consciousness and the patriotic instincts of the countrymen, and inspire them to stand by the revolutionaries as sympathizers and covers in their life and death fight against the violent and cruel enemy of the country. It is thus clear that the young nationalists as their last resort took to political assassinations in making of the alien ruler quit India and thus winning political freedom of the country. The nationalists found justification of political murders in one Matthew Arnold's poem where he writes that when a wretch takes a life for private gain or hatred we call it murder (i.e. crime) but when an arm is, without love or hate, austere raised against a power exempt from common checks, dangerous to all that is no crime. The Indian Epics and the *Gita* plead for '*Dharmayuddha*' which is waged against enemies as a virtuous deed. Therefore, the revolutionary activities of the nationalists sum up the idea of revolutionary nationalism and they do never hint on the idea revolutionary terrorism.

The *Swadeshi* Movement stirred the political and national consciousness of Bengal. All flowed in the upsurge of the anti-partition movement. The boycott programme was a direct hit to the authority and a challenge to the Manchester economy. Besides, Bengal expected that the partition of the province would surely be annulled.

But gradually the partition movement collapsed. The boycott movement failed to achieve the desired object. So the young nationalists took to the only remedial path of creating terror into the hearts of the government.

The birth of revolutionary nationalism in Midnapur had an earlier beginning. Long before the birth of Indian National Congress Rajnarain Bose, one veteran headmaster of the Midnapur Collegiate School, had been setting up a number of *sabhas* and *samities* for the promotion national feeling among the people of Midnapur. Bose was out and out militant nationalist. The bondage of his native land and the gradual anglicizing of the culture and civilization of the country eched his heart. This is evident from what he once said to Bipinchandra Pal, "I shall feel myself blessed enough if I could kill at least one of the enemies of my country before my death."⁴ His nephews Jnanendranath Bose and Satyendranath Bose and his two grandsons Arabinda Ghosh and Barindra Ghosh were highly inflamed and influenced by his patriotic and fiery revolutionary ideology.

Bose had a great love for Midnapur and till death he had close contacts with the people of the district town. It was likely that being inspired by this precedent of the *Sanjibani Sabha*, a secret society., Jnendranath Bose and Hemchandra Kanungo set up a secret society in the town in 1902. They urged the students in particular to join the *samiti* which was outwardly mainly a centre for physical exercise and sword fighting and so on. Inwardly the centre acquainted them with the tragic plight of the nation, and taught them their sacred duty to free mother India from the foreign domination. Meanwhile the Midnapur *samiti* came under the district supervision of the Calcutta *Anusilan samiti*. Within a year or two a good number of branches were set up in different parts of the district. All the branches were then commonly familiar as '*akhra*'s. It is known from the police reports that four *arkhas* of Midnapur viz. *Sakti Samiti*, *Swadeshi Samiti*, *Sanatan Samiti* and *Basanta Malati* were secret political centres, and these were tinged and tempered with religious nationalism.⁵

There are references to some *akhra*s like Mian Bazar *akhra*, and Katrabali *akhra* of Midnapur town, Bandemataram Ground *akhra* of Contai, and Balichak and Kantasal

akhras of Debra P.S. in the local weeklies. Those *akhras* had a high esteem among the local for their secret and open activities. In Mahishadal and Tamluk also there were *akhras* of great repute. One illustrious feature of the *akhras* is that they were given financial assistance and other helps in kind by local zamindars like Raja Narendralal Khan of Midnapur and Digambar Nanda of Mugberia (Contai). The sympathy and support of the zamindars for the *akhras* i.e. for the revolutionaries is a very prominent and peculiar feature in the revolutionary nationalism of Midnapur. These zamindars knew it well that they might be harassed by the government on any occasion.⁶

By 1907 the revolutionaries of Midnapur became fully conversant with the revolutionary ideology preached and propagated by the Calcutta *Anushilan Samiti* revolutionaries particularly by Arabinda and Barindra, the two grandsons of Rajnarayan, who styled himself the grand father of nationalism.⁷ The periodical *Yugantar* was by the time openly preaching the tenets of armed rebellion. It was breathing revolution in its every line, pointing out how revolution was to be effected. *Raja Ke* (who is the ruler/ king?), *Vartaman Rananiti* (Rules of Modern Warefare) and *Mukti Kon Pathe* (Which way lies Salvation?) and so also *Bhavani Mandir* (Temple of the Goddess Bhavani) initiated the young revolutionaries to proceed on and on thinking of nothing this and that to attain the sacred sanctuary free India. The *boycott-swadeshi* nationalists, thus got energized, participated in the Anti- partition Movement with all vigour. They started without a second thought punishing the shop-keeper selling foreign cloths and so on and chasing and assaulting the political personnels who were treating the *boycott-swadeshi* volunteers roughly.⁸ It was thus that Midnapur particularly the district town, became a stronghold of revolutionary activity. It was then - Hemchandra Kanungo returned from Paris having a thorough training in the manufacture bombs and other explosives. As a result, the *Anushilan Samiti* started bomb-manufacturing in a Muraripukur garden house in Maniktala , a suburb of Calcutta. This added a new lease of life to the gradually invigorating revolutionary nationalism of Bengal. Now the revolutionaries decided to put a stop to the brutal torturing of the nationalists by killing

Fuller and Andraw Frazer the Lieutenant- Governors of East Bengal and Bengal respectively. It is to be noted that in the bomb blast on the Special Train of Frazer at Narayangarh in Midnapur Barindra Kumar Ghosh , Ullaskar Datta, Prafulla Chaki and Kshudiram Basu took active part.⁹ The attempts proved abortive. But it made the government aware of the gradual spread of the revolutionary activities in Midnapur and Dacca. So repressive measures were let loose indiscriminately. As a reaction, Midnapur burst in revolutionism.

After Fuller and Frazer, the next target of the revolutionaries was the much coveted Chief Presidency Magistrate Kingsford under whose orders participants in the *boycott-swadeshi* movement and the suspected revolutionaries were flogged severely without any discrimination. On apprehending that the revolutionaries might make Kingsford their target for his atrocious repressive measures, the government transferred him to Muzaffarpur in Bihar. The *Anushilan Samiti* leaders this time entrusted Kshudiram and Prafulla with the task of doing away with this notorious judge. It was the good luck of Kingsford and the bad luck of Kshudiram and Prafulla that their bomb was thrown on a hackney carriage of one Kennedy which resembled the carriage of Kingsford on April 30, 1908. The bomb took away two innocent lives one of mother Kennedy and the other of daughter Kennedy, consequently Prafulla shot himself dead, and Kshudiram was tried and hanged.¹⁰

On May 2, 1908 the Muraripur garden house was searched. The police found therein a number bombs and cartridges. The principal revolutionaries like Arabinda, Barindra along with thirty two others were arrested, and they were charged with conspiracy. While the trial was going, the revolutionaries shot one public prosecutor and a Deputy Superintendent of Police dead in the High Court premises. Most of the accused including Barindra were transported for life, and the rest were sentenced to life long imprisonment.¹¹

From the Muraripukur Raid the police came to know fully well the whereabouts of the revolutionaries and that Midnapur had become so turbulent that it required a tough officer to control the situation. Accordingly Donald Weston was appointed District Collector of Midnapur. On coming Midnapur Donald studied the situation thoroughly and found that some zaminders like the Raja of Narajole and Digambar Nanda were involved in terrorist activities.¹² Weston stationed punitive police in places where the revolutionaries were active. Besides, he unleashed police repression so vigorously that Midnapur got panick-stricken. One newspaper *Bangalee* writes in this respect “. . . police rule has been substituted in place of the reign of law”.¹³ Be that as it may Donald's inhuman measures was in one sense a sort of blessing for revolutionary nationalism of Midnapur. It is may be noted that before the arrival of Donald the people of Midnapur were indifferent to the activities of the nationalists. Donald's measures now made them aware of the realities of the movement. As many persons of the upper strata of the society were directly or indirectly taking in the national movement, they viewed the activities of the revolutionaries with some sort of admiration. It was thus, revolutionary nationalism gained a solid ground among them, and they began to adore the martyrs with ballads and songs.

To the people of Midnapur their martyrs became very much like heroes and legends, and they were terrorists in no way and in no sense. It is because those heroes sacrificed themselves at the altar of their motherland for the good of the nation.

Revolutionary nationalism from 1908 onwards could not withstand the governmental attacks. After the Muzafforpur incident, the Muraripukur Raid and the transportation of the leaders, revolutionary activities became quiet. Yet it did not peter out, and this is evident in the history of national movement of India.

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The Hili Mail Dacoity: A Review in Historical Outline

Anita Bagchi

Tridib Chaudhuri, in the Introduction of the book *Freedom Struggle and Anushilan Samiti* states, 'In the five-decade long history of the anti-imperialist movement in India there never was a period when the revolutionaries failed to exercise a powerful impact upon the course of its development through their militant activities and their boldly conceived plans for mounting armed onslaughts against the seemingly unassailable might of the all powerful imperial government of Britain'¹.

The revolutionaries had to go on with their activities, burrowing underground. The *Jugantar* and *Anushilan*, the two pivotal secret societies, had spread widely in Bengal. The headquarters of the *Anushilan Samiti* was situated at Dacca with a network of subordinate *samitis* or branches in the towns and villages of eastern and northern Bengal². The revolutionary occurrences that commenced in different districts of North Bengal since 1908 reveal that the people of North Bengal mostly the student class were actively engaged in such operations as obviously designated by the British administration as crimes³. According to Charles Tegart, 'by the end of 1917 the conspiracies were under control'⁴. But in reality, the spirit of patriotism was still alive.

Reported references of whole-hearted participation in *Samiti*'s activities by the members of North Bengal have been made in Jadugopal Mukhopadhyay's memoir⁵.

The second phase of terrorist activities had started by 1930 but this time it was marked with slight wind of change which seemed to blow over terrorists in general⁶. The change was to be noticed in the occasional nullification of initiation vows and participation of women in the revolutionary network of the *Samiti*. From this time names of women activists are noticed in the report of the Intelligence Branch⁷. Tegart regards the advent of female terrorists as a sinister development at this stage and comments,

‘In the Civil Disobedience Movement women took an active part in picketing and the step in India from non-violence to violence is a very short one’⁸.

Large number of women became involved in the revolutionary programmes at least as sources of logistic support if not yet as full comrades. But the most striking development was the involvement of a few Muslim members in the terrorist activities at this point of time.

It is remarked that the Muslims were systematically excluded from the *akhras*.^{8a} But we have definite sources of information indicating a change in the views of some *Samiti* leaders. Reference may be made to an interview of Prankrishna Chakrabarti, the commander-in-chief of the ‘Hili Mail Dacoity’ where he makes an explicit statement, ‘a few persons can not liberate the country. So our organization must be well-based, covering all communities. We must give up all feelings of communalism’⁹. This change in attitude of the *Samiti* people made the *Samiti* organizations much distinctive in nature in this corner of North Bengal and we find one Muslim gentleman, Abdul Kader Chowdhury, involved directly with the operation of the sensational Hili Mail Raid. Involvement of a Muslim revolutionary as a front ranking leader is a unique instance the parallel of which is rare in the history of terrorist activities in Bengal.

Strategic Importance of Hili as Target of Assault

The town of Hili in the district of Bogra and under the jurisdiction of Panchbibi P.S. had some economic importance. There were 16 or 17 rice mills at that time at Hili. Besides the importance as a trading post, Hili Railway Station was the centre for distribution of mails. All the mails for the entire Balurghat Sub-division were handed over to Mail peons. The Darjeeling Mail Train towards Calcutta would arrive at Hili at 00.25 hours and from Calcutta northwards at 02.15 hours (Standard time).¹⁰ The postal bags delivered by the Mail trains remained in the station unprotected until the distribution of the same in the next morning. The revolutionaries decided to make an assault upon the Hili Railway Station with a view to securing the valuable contents of the postal mail chest.

It came to be revealed that the dacoity was intended to be carried out for the purchase of arms and ammunitions and for subscribing towards the cost of the defence of Inter-provincial Conspiracy Case.

The society of the revolutionaries at Dinajpur was then known as the Anushilan Revolutionary party and its headquarter was at Calcutta (not at Dacca as in earlier phase). Profulla Narayan Sanyal was the District-in-Charge of Dinajpur district and Saroj or Ketu Basu was the Town-in-Charge of Dinajpur town.

The operation was carried on the night of 28th October, 1933. In the command of the action was Prankrishna Chakrabarti with Hrishikesh Bhattacharji as second-in-command. The other members of the action party were: Satyabrata Chakrabortti, Saroj Kumar Basu, Haripada Basu, Profulla Narayan Sanyal, Kalipada Sarkar, Abdul Kader Chowdhury, Kiron Chandra De, Ramkrishna Sarkar, Asoke Ranjan Ghosh, Sasadhar Sarkar, Lalu Pande, Bijay Krishna Chakrabarti and Anil. Kiron and Abdul Kader did not take part directly in the operation. The distribution of responsibilities among the members of the action party was as follows:

Sasadhar and Asoke were deputed to open the mail chest and cut open the mail bags and remove there from the registered and insured covers, parcels and other articles, Profulla and Kalipada were attached to them as extra men.

Bijoy, Lalu and Anil were deputed to enter the station rooms to break open all the boxes and to take possession of the railway cash. Saroj and Satyabrata were deputed to act as gunners. To assist them as 'lightmen' Haripada was attached to Satyabrata and Ramkrishna to Saroj.

The uniforms worn by the gunners consisted of short trousers and shirts with short sleeves. All the others were supplied with Khaki shirts. According to the police record Kalicharan Mahali, the Mail Chest peon tried his best to save the public property. But he received bullets from the raider's guns which ultimately led him to succumb to death at Calcutta where he had been transferred for treatment.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* flashed the news in some details¹². The *Dinajpur Patrika*, a local news paper, also circulated in news. According to the police record the total booty in cash and property amounted to Rs. 4624/-. The party, after the operation had been over, was split up into three groups, one consisting of Lalu, Bijoy, Ramkrishna and Sasadhar; another of Kalipada and Anil and the third of Prankrishna, Satyabrata, Saroj, Prafulla, Haripada, Hrishikesh and Asoke.

This third group proceeded to Birampur ferry *ghat* and crossing the river Atreyi before the sunrise of the next day morning, they passed Chintaman cutchery on their way to Samjia (now in South Dinajpur). Ramsinghasan Singh, a constable, under the guise of a dealer in jute was following the party. Ramsinghasan rapidly arrived at Samjia and went to the cutchery of Babu Kshitish Chandra Roy, the local Zaminder. With the help of the Zamindar, Ramsinghasan chalked out a plan to entrap the whole group by announcing that a group of seven dacoits was approaching with guns. Prankrishna's party arrived at Kutubpur where they met a cart man. But the cart man beforehand was apprised of the party and also instructed to go direct down on to the sands on the bank of the river so that they could not escape. The boats of the ferry were sent to the opposite bank of the river. The Zamindar Kshitish Chandra collected a large number of villagers in the cutchery. When the boats came across, the seven persons of the party were about to board, but instantaneously they were encircled. Fighting ensued but ultimately they all were captured and brought to the cutchery and handed over to police custody. They were all suffering from heavy injuries. All these happened at the sunset of 29th Oct, 1933. Manmatha Kumar Roy, a pleader of Bulurghat Bar (later the famous dramatist), went from Balurghat with the police officers. He went there as a correspondent of Associated Press¹³. The accused were sent to Dinajpur town in the police custody.

A special Tribunal court was formed at Dinajpur. The president of the commission was Mr. E.S. Simpson, the president, the other two members being Mr. Bipin Behari Mukherji and Moulavi Emdad Ali. Charge sheet was submitted against the 13 arrested persons and also 2 absconders.

On 27 February, 1934, the special tribunal convicted and sentenced the accused persons, who were as follows¹⁴.

1. Prankrishna Chakrabortti – sentenced to death.
2. Saroj Kumar Basu – sentenced to death.
3. Saryabrata Chakrabortti – sentenced to death.
4. Hrishikesh Bhattacharji – sentenced to death.
5. Prafulla Narayan Sanyal - sentenced to life transportation.
6. Haripada Basu – sentenced to 10 years' R.I. (Rigorous Imprisonment)
7. Kalipada Sarkar – sentenced to 10 years. R.I.
8. Kiron Chandra De – sentenced to transportation for life.
9. Abdul Kadir Chaudhuri - sentenced to transportation for life.
10. Ram Krishna Mandal - sentenced to 10 years. R.I.
11. Asoke, Sasadhar and Lalu pleaded guilty and got R.I. for comparatively shorter tenure of 5 years each.

The Tribunal allowed them only seven days for filing appeal to the Honourable High Court. The High Court reduced the sentences and exempted the four convicts from capital punishment¹⁵.

The Special Bench was formed consisting of three judges of the High court to hear the appeal of the convicts. The judges were Manmatha N. Mukherjee (Honourable Chief Justice, H.C.), Justice Patterson, H.C. and Justice Surendra N. Guha, H.C. After a thorough examination of the whole case proceedings of each individual accused the Bench gave the following verdict¹⁶:

- Satyabrata - R.I. for 10 years (Rigorous Imprisonment) and transportation.
- Saroj – R.I. for 10 years and transportation.
- Hrishikesh – R.I. and Transportation for life.
- Prankrishna – R.I. and Transportation for life.
- Haripada – R.I. for 7 years and transportation.
- Profulla – R.I. for 10 years transportation.

Abdul Kader – R.I. for 7 years and transportation.

Kiron – R.I. for 5 years and transportation.

Kalipada – Acquitted.

A petition was filed before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council for permission to appeal against the judgment of the Honourable High Court, on behalf of the Government, but it was refused on 16th April, 1935 (File 1290-33)¹⁷. In the closing part of 1934, all the convicts except the four against whom the petition was pending before the Privy Council were transferred to Andaman. The remaining four also were transported after the refusal by the Judicial Committee, to the island by the 'Maharaja' vessel¹⁸.

Besides the main accused terrorists as mentioned above, many people were arrested under the BCLA (Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act) as there was no proof of direct link with the raid¹⁹. They were : Amiya Krishna Bhattacharya, Satya Ranjan Raichaudhuri, Barada Bhusan Chakraborty, Rabindra Chandra Mitra (Falguni), Sushil Kr. Acharji, Gour Mohan Pal and Bidyut Kr. Ray. Bijoy Krishna Chakrabarti, an absconder, was arrested in June, 1934 and was convicted and sentenced to 10 year R.I. Subodh Datta Chaudhuri, another absconder, was arrested in February 1935 and was identified as Anil who took active part in the operation. One Charubabu identified as Kshirode Banerji and a Jugantar absconder wanted in the Chittagong Armoury Raid case had connection with Hili and Balurghat. He was arrested in 1935 and was sentenced to 6 year R.I.

As defence counsels Jogindra Chandra Chakrabarti and Nishith Nath Kundu, the two renowned Advocates of Dinajpur, played very commendable role²⁰. Both of them were well known congress leaders. The other lawyers were²¹. J.C. Dutta, D.C. Bhattacharji, K.K. Saraswati, N.C. Dasgupta, D.D. Kundu, S.K. Sen, S.C. Guha Khasnabis, S.C. Roy, A.C. Banerji, S.K. Sen, R.C. Mukherji, and Mr. T.P. Das (Bar-at-law). It is told by Mehrab Ali that the Barrister who stood in favour of the arrested boys

was Prabhat Mukhopadhyay²². But in the list given in the judgment no where is mentioned the name of P. Mukhopadhyay.

Social Base of the Anushilan Group in the Locality

Like every organization, the *Anushilan Samiti* also often suffered from internal crisis. In the earlier phase it is found that at some stage in the second decade of 20th century, the Anushilan boys unknown to the society moved from village to village and town to town being hounded out by the police. They had to carry on activities in extreme secrecy. Slowly the *Samiti* youths came to understand the utility of maintaining social link and started to work as school teachers, doctors and other professionals under the guise of which they could consolidate their organization and make a social base.

Beside, the revolutionaries gradually began to implement the policy of utilizing the Congress platform for the progress of their plan. The resolution of Congress on *Purna Swaraj*, adopted at the Lahore Session in 1929, gave a fresh incentive to the revolutionary activities in India in general and Bengal in particular.^{22a} Thus by and by the militant politics came to make a deep root in the political as well as social life in the country. The Chittagong Armoury Raid on 18th April, 1930 practically created a great sensation through out the country. The public sympathy which the heroic sacrifice of the revolutionaries aroused became an instance before the revolutionary youths of the country. Thus it is felt that the revolutionaries who designed the plan of the Hili Mail Raid had in their mind that until and unless, there was a social base, any kind of revolutionary scheme would not be materialized.

Pran Krishna Chakraborty in his interview with H.D. Sharma gave a vivid description of how much the *Anushilan* members were serious in the task of preparing a social base of the *Samiti* in the locality of Hili and in its surroundings. He made a clear confession that there was psychological distance between the Hindu activists and the Muslims. Still he could realize the importance of Muslim co-operation and contacted some Muslim people with a view to broadening their base among the Muslims. Abdul Kader Chowdhury who played a very important role in the commission of the Hili Mail

Raid, became member of the *Anushilan Samiti*²³. He was a medical practitioner. That the *Samiti* had tried to develop their contact at the grass root level is evident from a reference to one Rahimuddin of Antasimul village within Tapan P.S. in Dinajpur²⁴ district. He was a poor elephant rider. He, under the inspiration of Dr. D.N. Banerjee, acted as custodian of arms of the Anushilan revolutionaries. Dr. D. N. Banerjee was an *Anushilan* leader, working at Manahali village under Tapan P.S. The revolutionary members of the *Samiti* made occasional visits to the village of Birampur in order to develop good contact with the villagers. It is clearly stated in the judgement that Hrishikesh, Prankrishna, Profulla, Saroj, Satyabrata, Kiron, Sasadhar and Anil used to visit frequently the families of the pals. Often the young boys stayed there and used to take meal in their house. They had also contact with another house — the family of the Sahas at Birampur. Of the two bases which were selected for undertaking the operation, one was Birampur and the other was Panchbibi to the South of Hili. At Panchabibi, a house was rented by Abdul Kader Chowdhury. Prankrishna stated in his interview that they all assembled at the residence of Abdul Kader Chowdhury and from there they moved towards the station and did the action. As Chowdhury developed dysentery on that particular day, he could not take active part. But he was all along with the planning of the action. In spite of inherent weakness and ultimate disaster, the Hili Mail Dacoity was a very important case in the revolutionary history of India. Prankrishna who was the leader of this action likes to designate the case as important next to the Chittagong Armoury Raid Case²⁵.

Nevertheless, it seems that the revolutionary boys could not develop reliable net work of social connections and their action plan was not well-thought out. A sensational incident like an assault on a railway station naturally induced the government and its loyal officials to take all possible steps for the capture of the attackers. In fact, with minimum effort a constable like Ramsinghasan could arrest them with the help of a local Zamindar and some common village people. The Zamindar could easily make the villagers convinced that the party approaching was of the dacoits. Consequently on

their arrival the crowd assaulted them mercilessly. The heroes of the action had to surrender helplessly beset by an angry mob. This happening points to the inherent weakness of *Samiti*'s organization. The youths, no doubt, were great patriots but emotion; in this case, it seems, won pragmatism.

The special Tribunal court did not fail to make mention of the 'magnificent' service rendered to the crown by Ramsinghasan, Kshitish Chandra Roy and other loyal officers.²⁶ The Committee of the British Indian Association took a resolution appreciating the loyal and gallant services rendered to the crown and to the public by Kshitish Chandra Roy, the Zamindar of Samjia²⁷. Thus it appears that the revolutionary members of the Anushilan Samiti were not much prepared to accomplish such a large scale operation against the British Imperial Government at that point of time. But their patriotic fervour could never be dampened.

They sailed for Andaman with same courage and spirit. They again started protest by taking part in the hunger strike there in the cellular jail against the authority in 1937 but that is a separate chapter of history.

Brief Life Sketch of Some of the Revolutionaries

Prankrishna Chakrabartti: Prankrishna, son of Smt. Giribala Devi and Janakinath Chakrabortti was born in 1910 in the village named Rudrakar under the P.S. Palong in the district of Faridpur (now in Bangladesh)²⁸. He was educated at Rudrakar High School. Prankrishna came into contact with Brahmachari Sitanath De in his boyhood and he himself acknowledges that Sitanath De was his first preceptor²⁹. Slowly he came into contact with the leaders like Niranjana Ghosal, Asutosh Chatterjee and others. When he was a boy of class VI/VII in the school, he began to organize club, library or student organization in order to get more and more boys into close contact for the fulfillment of Anushilan aims — i.e. the liberation of the country. After completion of Matriculation he took admission in the Dacca Mitford Medical School. But when he was a student of 3rd year, he had to give up his studies to avoid arrest by the police.

Once when he went to Jalpaiguri for organizing revolutionary works, he was caught at the railway station with arms. While being shifted from Jalpaiguri jail to Calcutta Presidency Jail after having been sentenced for 7 years' imprisonment, he escaped from a running train near Hili station. It happened in 1932³⁰. He went underground. He had a good link with Anushilan members of Balurghat and the organization of Prabhat Chakrabortti of Faridpur.

He was rearrested on the bank of the river Atreyi at Samjiaghat on 29th Oct, 1933, afternoon, the day following the commission of the Hili Mail Dacoity under his leadership. It is already known that he was transported to Andaman. He took part in hunger strike in 1937. He was released at last on 31st August 1946.

After independence as a believer of Marxist philosophy he initially associated himself with the R.S.P. but later he joined the CPI and ultimately became a member of the CPI (M) after the division of the Communist Party³¹. He was the father figure in the refugee Rehabilitation Movement. He became the Chairman of the UCRC in 1978³². He died on 21st October, 2002. He left his wife and three daughters at his death.

Hrishikesh Bhattacharji: Hrishikesh Bhattacharji was born in 1915 at Barabandar in the town of Dinajpur. His father was Rameshchandra Bhattacharya, a local Zamindar³³. He took his school education in the Girijanath High School and later was admitted to the Rajshahi College in I.Sc. course. He became involved with the revolutionary activities of the Anushilan Party³⁴.

Hrishikesh was the second-in-command in the operation of the Hili Mail Dacoity and remained in the Cellular Jail from 1935 to 1946 and was released on the 31st August 1946. He took part in the Hunger Strike there. He was inspired in Communist ideology and took part in the Tebhaga movement in 1946-1947³⁵. From 1959-1967, he was the Secretary of the CPI, West Dinajpur District Committee and a member of the State Committee³⁶. He died on 30th January 1967 due to a motor accident. He was a bachelor³⁷.

Saroj Kumar Basu: Saroj Kumar Basu was born at Balubari Village in the district of Dinajpur. His father Anandamohan Basu was a legal practitioner. But Saroj lost both his father and mother (Kadambini Devi) at the age of 3 or 4 within a short interval.³⁸ Consequently he had to take shelter in his maternal uncle's house in Raiganj. His primary education was completed in the Gopal Bandhab Primary School of the locality. He passed the Matriculation Examination in First Division from the Raiganj Coronation High School. Then he took admission in K.N. College, Berhampore, Murshidabad District, under the instruction of the Anushilan Samiti³⁹. It is to be mentioned here that Saroj Kumar came to be involved with the revolutionary works of the Secret society when he was a student of class VII in the school. He got his inspiration from Bibhuti Guha and Barada Bhusan Chakraborty⁴⁰. He took part in the hunger strike in the cellular jail for 37 days in 1937. Again he fasted for 36 days in the Alipur jail after his repatriation, in 1938 from the island.

After the release from long imprisonment, he initially associated himself with the Railway workers' Union which was guided by the Communist Party. After the division of the Communist Party, he ceased to participate in any direct political activities⁴¹.

He married Gitadevi at the age of 31. He joined a Primary School at Dhamardangi in Itahar in 1965 and led a life of a recluse till the day of his final departure on 27th May, 2005. A firm believer in the ideology of Armed Revolution, he never deviated from his spirit till he breathed his last⁴².

Satyabrata Chakravartti: Satyabrata was born in 1916 at Dinajpur town (now in Bangladesh). His father Kalikumar Chakravartti was a service holder⁴³. He at the age of twelve came in contact of the Anushilan Party. From different sources it is evident that there was an air of revolutionary political culture in his family environment. Barada Bhusan, his wife Ashalata, Kulada Prasad all were linked with revolutionary political activities in Dinajpur⁴⁴. Satyabrata got his school education at the Zilla School of Dinajpur⁴⁵. He was a student of I.A. in Rajshahi College. He was wanted in the Luke Shooting case (1932) but evaded arrest for about a year⁴⁶. After transportation, he took

part in the hunger strike in the cellular jail in 1937, and was repatriated in 1938. He participated in another hunger strike in 1939. He took active part in peasant movements in 1946 and 1947.

Abdul Kader Chowdhury: Abdul Kader Khan was born in 1901 at Samshiba village under Khethlal P.S. in the District of Bogra⁴⁷. By Profession he was a medical practitioner. He took his medical education from a Dacca Medical School. His father's name was Moulavi Abdul Latif Chowdhury. He joined the Non-cooperation Movement of 1921 and the Civil-Disobedience Movement of 1930-31 and suffered prison terms in both the cases⁴⁸. He was one of the principal convicts of the Hili Mail Dacoity Case. In the judgment of the Special Tribunal, it is clearly mentioned 'there cannot be the slightest doubt that we are convinced that he was not only a party to it but he filled a prominent role, furnishing a base of operations and acting in concert with Prankrishna'. He was sentenced to transportation for life and the Honourable High Court reduced it to seven years' prison term and was deported to Andaman where he joined the hunger strike for 37 days. After release he devoted himself in organizing people's movement in Bogura. Mansurul Aziz published one article on the basis of an interview with Abdul Kader Chowdhury in the '*Shaili Patrika* (16th June, 1995) published from Dacca⁴⁹. He was then at the age of 95. No more information is known about his last days.

Kiron Chandra De: Kiron Chandra De was born in Coochbehar in 1908⁵⁰. His father Nabadwip Chandra De was Naib in the Coochbehar State. He read in the Jenkins High School upto class VIII. Later his father, under the royal order, came to Dinajpur as the King of Coochbehar had estate in the locality of Dinajpur and settled in Birampur. But sudden death of Nabadwip Chandra compelled Kiron to discontinue his formal education⁵¹.

Under the inspiration of his teacher, Kiron Chandra became involved with *Anushilan Samiti's* activities. He played a very important role in the commission of the Hili Mail Dacoity. The Special Tribunal court in its judgment had to comment that people of his type are often more dangerous to society than criminal themselves. Such

a comment was made because of Kiron De's dauntless co-operation in each and every step of the operation of the Hili Mail Raid plan. He was punished with transportation for life which later was reduced to 5 year imprisonment and transportation. He also took part in the hunger strike in the island. After his release he began to organize communist movement at Birampur. Later he had to shift to India where he also associated himself with the political activities of the Communist Party⁵². He died in 1993 at Balurghat⁵³.

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Participation of the Leftist Students in the Mass Movements of West Bengal (1959-1966): An Overview

Ratna Roy Sanyal & Swapan Kumar Pain

Students are the essential part of the society. They are considered as the pillar of nation of any country. From the earliest times, we came across the various movements organized by the students of the different parts of Colonial India. In Colonial India, the movement of the students was against the British imperialism. But in Post-Colonial era, the movements of the students remain unabated and in many cases the movements have assumed an alarming aspect. The goals of the different movements of the students, fighting in different political banners are not only political, but also social, humanistic and cultural. The students of all countries have always swooped down upon with constructive mind for the development of their countries. They have embarked upon the reconstruction like un-retarded waves and have rocked seriously upon the existing political, social, economic and cultural structures. The students swooped down upon the movements irrespective of caste, colour and creed. The movements of the students of West Bengal are no exceptions to that. The character of the movement of the students of West Bengal began to change since the 1960s. Starting as nationalists they gradually assumed Left and Extreme ideology. In the present paper an attempt has been made to highlight the movement of the students in West Bengal during the tumultuous period of 1959-1966. Post-Independent India nay West Bengal has to face a series of problems as a newly born state political instability, economic problem, problems of immigration and migration created an untoward situation throughout West Bengal.

After independence, till the 60s, student movement did not come anywhere in India so comprehensively as was apprehended. But after the 60s the embryo of the students' disaffection matured into a decisive shape. The main reasons were the internal political and social ferment and very shocking economic crisis¹.

In 1948 the Radhakrishnan Commission was constituted for the upliftment and betterment of University education. The commission submitted its Report in 1949 and in it the weakness of the socio-economic fabric of the then India became distinctly clear. The Report at the Page 374 reads like this: "The boarding arrangements tie up closely with discipline. Poor and unwholesome food not only breeds malnutrition and disease but can become a centre of seething discontent. No single factor has a more vital effect upon the atmosphere and morale of a College or a University than the prevalent conditions under which students live. Convenient and comfortable quarters for study and sleep, sufficient and whole some food at low cost, are essential component to good spirit and the best progress in University work. Unfortunately most Universities and Colleges in India do not have adequate residential and dinning facilities for students. As a general rule only a small fraction of the students finds accommodation in hostels"².

Before the outset of the 60s, on 31st August in 1959, the historic Food Movement in Calcutta along with the whole state of West Bengal shocked the Bengalees. This Food Movements took a serious turn in 1959 and 1966. On August 31, 1959, food marchers came to Calcutta from the adjoining Districts of Howrah, Hooghly, 24 Parganas, Nadia, Burdwan and Medinipur and gathered in the Esplanade area to protest against soaring prices of food grains and other essential commodities. The demonstrators were all along peaceful but the police suddenly surrounded them and without giving any warning took recourse to severe lathi charges. Calcutta went wild over this incident, tram cars and buses were burnt and the police had to fire 447 rounds in Calcutta and Howrah. Strike calls were given by the left parties. According to their estimate, 80 persons were killed as a result of police firing.³ Sudhir Roy Chowdhury, a PSP, MLA said on the floor of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, *"It is no wonder if there is any sporadic eruption of the volcano that the Government has spread throughout the country. They should know that a volcanic eruption can not be suppressed by firing rifles. Have the ministers any right to govern the country by rifles. The Government could not manage the show, because it was incompetent, because it was callous,*

characterless and corrupt."⁴ The death of 80 agitators in the police firing shook the entire nation. In this historic movement the revolutionary role of the students became obvious with their involvement to the movement.

Before the sad memories of 1959 tapered of, came the year of 1960. Students of Calcutta University, Jadavpur University, Visva Bharati University, North Bengal University and almost all the Colleges of West Bengal began launching blockbuster movements on the issues which were related to their institutes and the prevailing educational system. As a matter of fact they combated against the situation. Students of school, too, came forward from different districts of west Bengal with a view to getting redress for their various problems through organizing movements and leading them to success. The crystallization of the grievances among the students began as per their assessment of the political condition of their state diverse activities on the basis of different political calculations started to gain militancy. And West Bengal came into limelight as a first class nursing home of indomitable student upheaval⁵.

A quest for adding an international dimension to the thinking of the students of West Bengal in the background of Indo-Chinese confrontation started from this point. But unfortunately at this time the student movements got a stumbling block in course of its procession towards an expected goal. Deplorably as a consequence of this shock ultra nationalism in a frenzied attempt got the better of the progressive student force and side by side with it the Students Federation was declared anti-national and an illegal organization. The student community stood up with their full strength against this blind ultra nationalism. In support of it in different dailies of that time information and news on war were published to enlighten the students of that time about the excesses that were committed by the ultra nationalists. For example:

- a) "To sit in a discussion with China India is always ready"- Nehru⁶
- b) "China agrees to discuss frontier Problems"⁷
- c) "India refuses the unconditional proposal of China"-⁸
- d) "Order has been given to drive away the infiltrators"- Nehru⁹

Students analyzed a bit deeply the main news in the 'Ananda Bazar Patrika' of 1962 and as a result they became doubtful about the truth of this news. They believed that this war was not being fought for saving the country from external aggression, but it was something else which seemed to them confusing. Supposedly students were conscious the truth underlined the mystery enshrouding the war reports. The National Council of the Communist Party of India branded China as aggressor and appealed to liberate farmers and ordinary people to stand by Nehru for the cause of their motherland. The rank and file of the Students Federation decided to go against the leadership of the students Federation. In true sense of the term they rebelled against the leaders of the students Federation on this issue. The leaders in return called the rebels 'China Roaders'. Emergency was declared by the administration of the country for the whole national boundary. The leaders of the Congress Party like Nepal Roy, Atulya Ghosh and many others in different public gatherings commented, "Communists are antinational, cut asunder their hands and legs"¹⁰. Some reports in 1962 of November and December published in Ananda Bazar Patrika increased the respect among the students about China.

"The slogan of the Chinese soldiers in the snows of the Himalayas of
brotherhood of the Indians and the Chinese"¹¹

This information about China made the students more enthusiastic to know more about this country and beside this some reports again about the patriotism of the ruling class made them apprehensive of the veracity of its patriotic devotion. To quote Ananda Bazar Patrika —

"Refusal of the students of schools to buy Red Pencil"¹²

The anti-Chinese sentiment increased and with it the College authorities became more inimical and they declared the Student Federation as illegal. Students who fought out peaceful resolution of all academic problems were out rightly expelled from their colleges. On the allegation of burning a picture of Nehru the students Union of Calcutta University was banned.¹³

The Indo-Chinese war influenced very deeply the sensibility of the students and their positive attitude. A storm of debate arose on such subject like war expansionism, imperialist economics and politics. Many conscious students began to be vociferous in saying that a socialist state can not attack another country. They emphasized that aggression and imperialist designs on the territories of other countries are the inevitable result of imperialist economic exploitation. A sort of rift in the lute appeared in the movement of the two students' organization. One of these declared that the China was the aggressor country and another assured that the truth was exactly the opposite of it. At this time the apolitical students started slogan voicing that they wanted peace and not war, thus avoiding the debate over the role of China in the controversial Indo-Chinese showdown¹⁴. Posters began to show up in different Colleges and Universities of West Bengal containing such rhymes:

*“Jakhani prashna othei juddha na shanti
Amader beche nite hainako bhranti
Amara jabab dei, shanti, shanti, shanti”*¹⁵
(“Whenever question arise
If we wanted peace or strife
We reply we want peace well nigh”).

The Indo-Chinese war ended on the 20th November 1962 with the unilateral declaration of truce by China. As a result of this the force of the student movements suffered a setback.

After July, 1965 Students agitation started over the issue of hike of Tram and Bus fare. They picketed in the streets of Calcutta day after day and it acted as an inducement to the Tram Company employee strike for one single day against the said hike. This enthused the students to go forward tremendously. Students, as a token of their sincerity as protestors, boarded the Buses of different routes and requested passengers to refrain from paying escalated fares. A sort of stronghold unity developed among the passengers against the price hike. The passengers even began to resist the

Tram and Bus Company to extort the increased rates of fare. Being faced with this reluctance from the side of the passengers the conductors too refrained from taking the increased fare. On the 3rd day of the movements i.e. 29th July 1965 order under the section 144 was promulgated in Calcutta. The police pounced upon the students with batons and teargas. Due to this repressive nature of the police action the student movement gradually became violent. Many students were wounded and many other arrested. Those who arrested were Azijul Hoque, Shyamal Chakraborty, Subhas Chakraborty, Asit Sinha, Shipra Bhowmik and so on. As a protest against these arrests the Left Parties called a bandh in Calcutta on 31st August 1965. The public unanimously responded to this call. The Calcutta University was declared for 3 days closure¹⁶.

Indo-Pak war began with a bang at a time when the resistance movement against their escalation of fare gathered momentum. Taking the opportunity of India's being engaged in an international confrontation, the self seeking evil forces tried to foment communal riots in Calcutta and its adjoining areas. Being circumstanced thus political parties and students found it impossible to carry on with their programme of resisting any more fare hike. Now the principal duty of the student organization was to try hard to save communal harmony. Side by side with it anti war movement was also launched by the students. Both these seemingly were very tough tasks. In spite of this hassle the students Community of West Bengal came forward to help the Leftist student organizations to work together for keeping harmony among the various religious communities. On the other part of West Bengal, in the erstwhile East Pakistan, students started a pioneering movement against war and for establishing peace in their country on the basis of the principle of peaceful co-existence. In Calcutta too an impact of this movement was felt. The Leftist student organizations of Calcutta made their demand to end war even in the war time fluster through amicable settlement as much loud as possible for them. In the mean time public opinion of both the countries rose high and through a friendly intervention of the then Soviet Union, the Indo-Pak war ended at last. This military clash between the two countries triggered off a sort of a terrific

economic crisis in this country¹⁷ especially in West Bengal the tremendous food and fuel crisis. It was at this time students began pamphleting like this:

“Whenever people want job and food
In the frontier the bugle of begins to hoot”¹⁸

In the history of the Indian politics of the 60s, the Food Movement of West Bengal of 1966 was a historic event. This historic Food Movement had socio-economic perspective. By utilizing different loopholes in the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, feudal lords began to keep their holding intact by way of deluding the government. The Land which was redundant remained fallow for longtime affecting total harvest. This meant that they had not to pay a huge amount of tax against the quantity of lands that they owned. Along with this the rate of agricultural growth also began to go down. The Government used to levy a quantity of tax on the husking mills. But the owners of these mills did not pay this taxes¹⁹. According to Saibal Mitra, the student leader, the Food Movement took a tremendously violent turn because of the feudalistic agricultural politics of the congress led Government under the leadership of Prafulla Sen.²⁰ Apart from this, a huge quantity of rice continued to be illegally passed over to the erstwhile East Pakistan in collusion with the police. Apart from this subsequent to the Indo-Pak War the prices of the essential commodity shot up to go beyond the reach of ordinary buyers. For food and Kerosin Communist Party on the 30th January of 1966 called a massive gathering at the foot of the ‘Sahid Minar’. A good number of students participated in this gathering to express their solidarity with the cause of the movement.²¹

In 1966, on 16th February thousand of school student boys and girls alike expressed their grief over the dearth of rice and kerosene while standing before the office of the S. D. O. of the Basirhat sub-division of North 24Parganas. Here they demanded continuous immediate supply of rice and kerosene oil at a cheap rate regularly without interruption. At first it was a spontaneous outburst of the people against inflation, price rise and curtailment of Civil Liberties. The police lathicharged on the aggrieved demonstrators and in this police action six students were wounded and 40 of them were

arrested. After this incident the Food Movement spread throughout the district. It requires to be mentioned that the students demonstrated their protests against the police atrocities and the police in response fired upon them. In this firing Nurul Islam, a teenage student of the Tetulia Multipurpose School was gunned down. Nurul Islam became the first student martyr of the Food Movement of 1966.²² Close on the heels of this incident Food Movement spread from South to the Northern part of West Bengal.

In the North especially in the North Bengal University and its surroundings the students in great number took part in this Food Movement. In this movement participants were Kisan Chatterjee, Dilip Bagchi, Pabitra Pani Saha, Harisadhan Ghosh, Probodh Sarkar, Ranjit Chattopadhyay, Ashok Nanda, Amit Sen, Kumkum Bhattacharyya and such others. In the view of Kisan Chatterjee, "The Food Movement was a student movement irrespective of their party and ideology and with the passage of days this student movement was gaining momentum". The agitators participating in this movement took out processions, arranged street meeting, sent deputations and etc. They ventilated their grief in this manner. Many teachers and students supported them and marched out in an apolitical line with them.²³

As the news of the death of Nurul Islam reached at Naxalbari, a student demonstration took place at the Nanda Prasad High School premises under the leadership of Nathuram Biswas. Being astounded at seeing the spontaneous strike of the students the school authority expelled 6 students forthwith. This was definitely an undemocratic decision on the part of the school authority and to protest against it the students' community burst out in anger. A continuous strike was declared and began to be observed by the courageous students. Some of the residents of Naxalbari whole heartedly supported the student. To ensure uninterrupted study of the students who struck against, the authority arranged for them a makeshift school for their study. There were some educated persons of Naxalbari and scholar student of North Bengal University who used to teach the students. The name of Kisan Chatterjee, Dilip Bagchi, Pabitra Pani Saha are deserved

to be mentioned. All of them played an indispensable role in the historic agrarian movement of Naxalbari²⁴

Large waves of countrywide demonstrations splashed upon such a premier seat of learning like Presidency College. Some courageous students came forward to give an integrated shape of an organization to the ill assorted student Front. One of the closely knit units of this student Front was made by one of the eminent leader like Asim Chatterjee of the Presidency College. Among his known associates and aides he was popularly known as 'Kaka'. A movement brewed in the Eden Hostel against various difficulties and autocratic attitude of the ruling class. After this, in 1966 in the Students' Union election, the organized Student Front came out with the thumping victory and won leadership. This consternated the education department of the Government. The authority of the Presidency College expelled 7 students of the undergraduate level and ordered not to admit another two demonstrators into the Post Graduate class. It is worth mentioning that those, against whom the punitive action was taken of, all active workers of the movement of the Hindu Hostel and members of the student union representing the Student Federation of the College²⁵ In protest against this hostile attitude of the College authority a continuous sit-in strike started. This strike deadlocked the day to day functioning of the collage and administrative set up. Day and night at the gate of the Presidency College a confluence of students coming from different colleges to express their whole hearted empathy with the demonstrating Presidency Collegians gave a new dimension to the militant demonstration. They chanted slogans and the slogans did not merely limit themselves to the demands of the demonstrating student of the Presidency College. Watch-words began to sound the demand of over all democratization of all the educational institutions. These demonstrating students even manifested their wish of uniting with the labour class in posters and in Party cries. A student of that time commented on this movement thus: "The movement has become an issue involving the entire student community and no longer one of establishing only their democratic rights."²⁶

If it can not be claimed that 100% support of the students of the Presidency College was in favour of this movement. At that time there was another student organization named P.C.S.O. in this college. It was always against this movement right from its inception. Skirmishes between this two student organizations broke out frequently in course of demonstration. The P.C.S.O was never in favour of an indefinite closure of the college which was otherwise whole heartedly demanded and supported by the opponents. Any way the P.C.S.O did not want to be troubled by raising of the different demand by the Student Federation. The Statesman reported that, the students, loyal to the P.C.S.O started a signature campaign in which out of 1450 students of the Presidency College not less than 275 students put their signature.²⁷ The Statesman at this time published an article from which an extract is given here —

“Its members are described today, in derision as, opportunist and Pro-American. Rightly Perhaps. The organization is seen to mirror what is loosely termed the establishment. Its members, particularly the boys of Presidency’s 400 girls, are better off than the resteven the protest over the bombing of Hanoy and Haighphong was seen by many in the P.C.S.O as an ominous sign at the shape of things to come. They too join in the chorus of denunciation of unwarranted intrusions of politics into the sanctum of education”.²⁸

At the end of 1966 when the Food Movement of West Bengal became tremendously powerful, the state govt. sent a requisition to the Central Govt. for giving an immediate and effective check to it with repressive measures. The then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi began parlance with the leftist leader detained in jail through emissary and then increased the per head allotment of food grains by 100 grams. In this way with the intervention of the Central Govt. the food movement came to an end. But the main problems, the crux of the issues, did not get any satisfactory solution. Almost all the demands remained unfulfilled. But curiously enough, hundreds of prisoner put behind the bars on political ground in connection with this movement, were released by the govt. and this the govt. did being compelled by the leaders of this protest movement.

Students told that although the economic struggle did not evolved into a political struggle on the higher level, the govt. being impelled by the economic struggle might accept some of the political demands as legitimate. The proof of it was the freedom of the political prisoners. Here one thing should be made clear that during the Food Movement of 1966 among the 50 martyrs 28 were the students.²⁹ Although Food Movement of West Bengal came to a temporary end, student movement was then widely seen all over India as a tremendously continuous process for reaching apparently to a definite goal.

Students participation and leadership in various protest movements during the period 1959-1966 not only strengthened that movement but also placed the students in a very important position in the Political arena of West Bengal. It also inspired the other political parties to gain momentum. The students' participation and movements gradually extended its area of activities from urban areas to villages and thus occupies a very significant position in the political platform of West Bengal.

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The Concept of North-East India and the Partition Historiography

Mahadev Chakravarti

It is necessary to have a clear picture of the pre-independence days to understand the trends of development in North-East India in the post- independence period. Many of the seeds of postcolonial disorder in North-East India were sown in the colonial period and the most devastating tale of woes actually began with the partition of the country in 1947. The historiography of partition has gone through a sea change during recent years, particularly after the golden jubilee year of India's Independence, as the researchers are now more interested in reconstructing the aftermath of Partition, which has brought the high cost associated with the process and radical changes in the societies of Eastern and North-Eastern India, rather than the causes of the landmark event and the 'high politics' behind it. Today it is largely related to the process of evaluating the achievements and failures of the nation-state after six decades of Independence.[1]

The Concept of North-East

True, the British colonists were to evolve the idea of a "north-eastern frontier" agency after they colonized the Brahmaputra valley and surrounding hill areas on the Indo-Burma frontier and Alexander Mackenzie perhaps first articulated the concept of a "northeast" frontier.[2] Initially, the concept remained a geographical one. For much of the British period, undivided Assam was thought of as the "north-east frontier of Bengal", and its economy and politics were largely dictated from and linked to this westerly direction. [3] In fact, the concept of North-East India was virtually a creation of the 1947 Partition itself. While East Pakistan (and now Bangladesh) was "India-locked," similarly North-East India was "Pakistan (and now Bangladesh)-locked." Ninety-nine per cent of North-east India's borders is with foreign countries, making it impossible to separate domestic and foreign policy. However, according to Sanjib Baruah, the phrase 'North-east India' practically entered the Indian lexicon only in

1971 with the culmination of the North Eastern Council and also the dramatic changes in the region's political geography with the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation when Pakistan was split in 1971 and that the category 'North-east' had its roots in the set of national security considerations. The entire North-Eastern region was looked through security prism rather than development prism

North-East was practically cut off from the rest of the country since 1947 and the memory of the Partition triggered further fragmentation and conflict in the society. The Partition resulted in the abrupt severance of inland water, road and railway communications, as well as the loss of access to the Chittagong port, crippling crucial economic linkages and driving up costs of all commodities. Though the Northeast region has critical strategic significance, it remains tenuously connected with the rest of India through a thin umbilical cord, the so-called 'chicken's neck', or the 'Siliguri Corridor' in North Bengal, with an approximate width of 33 kilometres on the eastern side and 21 kilometres on the western side.[4] This constitutes barely one per cent of the boundaries of the region, while the remaining over 99 per cent of its borders are international – with China to the North; Bangladesh to the South West; Bhutan to the North West; and Myanmar to the East. In fact the Northeast India is a frontier region in the true sense of the term. Due to its geographical location, and great distance from New Delhi, the people of this region often suffer from a feeling of neglect and feel that the central government does not have much time or concern for their security, priorities and needs. This feeling has, at times, been exacerbated by responses from New Delhi which did not take into account the feelings and sensitivities of the people inhabiting this area.[5]

In the post-independence period, New Delhi, according to Haimendorf, was unable to sensitively respond to the intricate realities of the North East.[6] Rather, it seemed to follow the colonial policy of isolation and alienation, treating the North East differently from the other Indian states. The northeastern states with just 25 out of a total of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha were so long politically insignificant in Delhi. In the North East, a sense of incompatibility grew into one of resentment against being made

a part of India, and in the post-partition period an anti-India sentiment ultimately emerged amongst a section of the region's people, especially when the Indian government cold shouldered local aspirations. Given the region's historical background, antagonism could be easily instigated by external forces.

Verrier Elwin, the distinguished British anthropologist and missionary, who was Jawaharlal Nehru's trusted adviser on all tribal matters, proposed to keep tribals of the North-East as tribals without disturbing them with so-called modern developmental programmes.[7]. But not many in the wider political community and the academics were comfortable with that approach. The Nehru- Elwin model virtually came down crashing in the harsher world that began in the mid-1960s. It was widely felt that the time had come to take a new look at Elwin formula that had lost the meaning and served only the vested interests. The hill societies have also witnessed great change over the past six decades.[8] More and more people have gained access to some form of education and to basic allopathic medicine and health care. Christianity is rapidly replacing indigenous religions. Swidden cultivation [9] is losing prominence to sedentary forms of hill farming. New sources of wealth, including commercial forestry and craze for 'white collar' or government jobs by the emerging middle class people etc., are creating sharp social stratification in North-Eastern societies; and because of these social changes new and newer challenges to the Nation-State are coming from the 'periphery', i.e. the North-East.[10] Large-scale population movements and migrations in the post-partition decades have caused dramatic changes in the demographic ratios and social and cultural mixes of people in some states, and caused the local population to feel endangered and beleaguered. The roots of ethnicity or revivalism or social distance in North-East India are to be searched in that background as the present situation of unrest has its vital root in the partition of India. For example, the distance between Kolkata and Agartala before Partition was about 300 kms.(via Bengal). It became 1,700 kms, through NH 48, after the partition. Even the best roads in the world cannot make up for this difference. Six of the eight state capitals of North-East are still not connected by

rail. Only Guwahati and Agartala today (metre gauge) are connected by rail. Three of the capital cities (Itanagar, Kohima, and Shillong) do not have modern airport facilities. This isolation, since the days of partition, affects the economic prospects for the region (by affecting the costs of imports and exports) as well as the responsiveness of the rest of India to catastrophes in the region.

B.G. Verghese sums up in the following way the cumulative impact of the chain that commenced in the North-East with the cataclysmic events of 1947 partition:

The physical and psychological severity of the blow was not fully appreciated in the country and the disruption of communications and markets was not repaired soon enough, nor infrastructure developed to match the new needs completed as expeditiously as necessary. Isolated and traumatised, the Northeast turned inward. A succession of insurgencies and movements to seek separation or autonomy, assert identity or exclude foreigners and outsiders aggravated the hiatus, with the rest of the country coming to think of the Northeast with disinterest as a far-away place, perpetually troubled. Beset with its own internal problems and complexes, the Northeast fell behind economically and despite its inherent wealth remains at the bottom of the heap as a conglomeration of seemingly impecunious special category States. [11]

Take for example, the case of Assam in a synoptic form :

Before Partition : – Assam's per capita income was 5th from the top – Industrialisation in 1834 with Tea companies – Coal industries in 1850's – Timber export started in 1850's – Railway tracks were laid in 1860's – Asia's first Oil refinery, Digboi (1901) – Agricultural productivity higher than national average –impressive handloom & handicraft products

But what was the scenario after Partition (1947)? — Other than elimination of North-Eastern Region's traditional trade and commercial linkages that

existed in pre-partition days – Assam was truncated and creation of separate states — illegal migration, — and from the economic angle : – huge infrastructure gap - power, road, communication, education – lack of industrialization : unemployment – Liberalization policy did not have much impact and Assam has the lowest per capita income at Rs 7513 currently among the eight NE states, including Sikkim.

At the very beginning of the post-independence period, North-East essentially meant Assam and the two erstwhile princely states, Manipur and Tripura. Assam was later on truncated and four tribal states were created: Nagaland (1963), Meghalaya (1972), Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram (1987). This was done to protect the distinct cultural and linguistic identity and interests of the people of the region. In spite of this division, the maximum number of Scheduled Tribes in North-Eastern region reside in Assam (according to 2001 census, out of Assam's total population of 26,655,528, the number of S. T. was 3,308,570 constituting 12.4% of the population). Previously the North-East was known as the land of the so-called "seven sisters", [12] but with the joining of Sikkim the number is now eight; although the "sisters" in the past rarely met with each other. The North-East at present comprises of the eight States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim which collectively account for about 8 per cent of the country's geographical area and roughly 4 per cent of its population with about 200 ethnic groups, languages and dialects. J.B Fuller in his Introduction to Alan Playfair's book on the Garos [13] wrote in 1909 that the province of Assam at the far northeastern corner of India is a 'museum of nationalities'. Over the years, the geographical entity, the social setting, economy, politics and aspirations of the ethnic groups of this region were bunched together into one unit and the term 'northeast' is used and the *eight sisters* are identified as a single geographic unit and socio-economic entity and identity. Jairam Ramesh, the Central Minister, himself admits that the word 'Northeast' is particularly unfortunate because it tends to evoke images of a homogeneous, undifferentiated mass, which it certainly is not. In fact, the repeated use of the phrase 'Northeast' creates more problems

than it actually solves. The concept of North-East was politically formalized in 1971 when the North East Council (NEC) was formed (and functioned from 1972) and Sikkim was included in the North East Council in 2002.

Though little known and relatively little studied both within and outside the country, the North East is a region as colourful and varied as India itself. Some indologists and intellectuals have seized upon caste divisions, untouchability, religious obscurantism, and practices of dowry, *sati* etc. as distinctive evidence of India's social relations and to them, these social ills have literally come to define India and her perennial backwardness. But in North-East India most of these social ills were not so glaring; although slavery, though not of European parlance, was there in the society. The Chinese scholar and pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited the plains of Assam in the first half of the seventh century, described the region as covered with beautiful mountains, lush forests and wild life, and depicted a fairly advanced civilization and rich cultural heritage in his narrative.

The North-East represents the richest ethnic region of the world, and meeting point of four major races (Austic, Mongoloid, Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan) who came from different directions at different historical times. The Australoids came to this region before the coming of the Mongoloids who partially or fully absorbed the Australoid strains. The physical features of different tribes of North-East India suggest that the Australoid elements are present in some of the tribes even today. India's North-East has been catchments for many communities and ethnic groups. From South-East Asia have come the Khasis (part of the Austic, Mon-Khmer group) originally from Kampuchea; the Bodos, descendants of the Tibeto-Burman race; and the Tai-Ahoms, who ruled Assam for 600 years, migrating to the Brahmaputra Valley in the thirteenth century from the Shan province, bordering Burma (Myanmar) and Thailand. Various Naga communities are on both sides of the India-Myanmar border, and, other than Nagaland, are settled in Arunachal Pradesh (Noctes and Wanchos), Manipur (the Tangkhuls, among others), and Assam. In a word, the North-East is a 'mini-India': 200

of India's 635 tribal communities live there and 175 of 325 Indian languages are spoken in the region.[14]

Partition Historiography

The history of Partition is well documented from different perspectives. From *the colonial perspective*, we have books on official and semi-official documents by: Mansergh and others,[15] Alan Campbell-Johnson, [16] Penderel Moon,[17] C. H. Philips and M. D Wainwright, [18] and others. From *The Indian Perspective*, we have, other than the invaluable volumes like *Towards Freedom : Documents on the Movement for Independence in India*, there are the works of authoritative persons such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, [19] V.P.Menon,[20] P.N. Chopra,[21] Subimal Dutt, [22] Ajit Bhattacharjea,[23] and many others, and it is not necessary to recount the same except to the extent germane to the theme of the present paper. From *The Pakistani Perspective*, we have documents as published by the Government of Pakistan [24] and Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, [25]

The historiography of Partition is enriched from various angles by Leonard Mosley,[26] Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre,[27] Patrick French, [28] Mushirul Hasan, [29] Ayesha Jalal, [30] Ravinder Kumar, [31] Yong and Kudaisya, [32] and many others.

The socioeconomic impact of Partition on different localities and individuals has drawn the attention of researchers, as the human dimension of the experience of Partition has become the major content of the new Partition historiography.[33] The Partition resulted in extreme violence and one of the largest migrations in history. Partition deaths throughout India and Pakistan numbered between 500,000 and one million, while some ten to twelve million migrants moved across the new borders in Punjab and Bengal. [34] In the words of Lucy Chester :

Although estimates of partition casualties remain controversial, it is clear that great suffering, on a scale rarely seen in human history, accompanied the partition. Violence,

and the memory of violence, is therefore one of partition's legacies to the South Asian region.... partition's scars remain in the minds, if no longer on the bodies, of many South Asians. It is not only the actual survivors of partition who exhibit this damage; their descendents are also marked. [35]

Regarding Tripura, the 1947 partition was a disaster. It opened the floodgates of an influx from East Bengal that forever changed the demography of the erstwhile princely state. This demographic change paved the way for a fierce ethnic conflict that has ravaged the tiny state for the last three decades.

A very few people in the entire North-Eastern region had ever heard the name Radcliffe, although their day-to-day life since the post-partition days were regulated and influenced by the 'Radcliffe Line'.

Joya Chatterjee, over and above her celebrated work *Bengal Divided*, [36] has developed a standard criticism against the 'Radcliffe Line' drawn between the two parts of Bengal and North-East India. In her words it was 'a hastily and ignorantly drawn line' by a man who had 'no background in Indian administration, nor did he have any prior experience of adjudicating disputes of this sort'. [37] Before his appointment, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a reputed barrister, had never visited India and knew no-one in India. Paradoxically, to the British and feuding politicians alike, this liability was looked upon as an asset; on the theory that ignorance of India would equal impartiality, and he was considered to be unbiased toward any of the parties, except of course Britain. Britain's action in 1947- condemned as a "shameful flight" by Winston Churchill (who predicted that India would break up in just ten years, though his forecast proved wrong)—had a catastrophic effect particularly on the North-East. *Stanley Wolpert's new book — Shameful Flight*, published in 2006, is an account of the Partition story which *lays the blame for one of the most horrific episodes of the 20th century squarely* on Mountbatten, the flamboyant cousin of the king, who rushed the process of nationhood along at an absurd pace. Radcliffe Award was the outcome of an official plan announced by Lord Mountbatten. The partition, according to the Radcliff Award, was followed by a massive

influx of Bengali Hindu refugees from East Pakistan to different parts of the country. The migration virtually started before the partition, particularly after the Noakhali riot in 1946. Partition brought with it unceasing waves of migration that disrupted, and continue to disturb, existing demographic equations in different parts of North-Eastern region, particularly the present Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Wolpert's main contention is that the United Kingdom abandoned India in a reckless and headlong retreat - a retreat that left India and Pakistan in a chaotic bloodbath that left perhaps a million dead and 12 million refugees.[38] Wolpert points out, *He(Radcliff) was to accomplish, in a month, work that should have taken at least a year....He was so afraid of what he had done — worried that Sikhs, Hindus or Muslims would kill him — (that) he left India hastily.* [39]

The Indo-Pak international border on the eastern sector was drawn right through thickly populated areas instead of between them. Not only were the new borders artificial, but also no one knew for sure where they began, because the border had not been physically demarcated on the ground. It not only divided a nation but also cut through the middle of several villages.[40] There were even instances (particularly in Tripura) where the dividing line passed through a single house with some rooms in India and others in Pakistan. No society can develop without peaceful borders with its neighbours. The present situation of border unrest in Tripura either over the Muhari river basin issue of Belonia (South Tripura) or over the ongoing border fencing issue (inspite of Indo-Bangla Treaty of 1974, popularly known as the Indira-Mujib Treaty), has vital root in the Radcliffe Award.

More importantly, it disrupted the traditional way of life and people were cut off from their traditional markets, sources of livelihood, medical facilities, etc. [41] In fact, it created a "cartographical monstrosity, a deep ulcer on the right flank of India". Radcliffe justified such casual division with the truism that no matter what he did, people would suffer. The thinking behind this justification may never be known since Radcliffe "destroyed all his papers before he left India"[42] on 15 August 1947, before

even the boundary awards were distributed. On August 16, 1947 at 5:00pm, the Indians and Pakistanis were given two hours to study copies, before the Radcliffe award was published on 17 August.[43] . True, Cyril Radcliffe was assisted by four other members of the Boundary Commission : Bijon Mukherjee, C.C.Biswas, M.A.Rahman and M.M.Akram, all of them lawyers belonging to two different religious communities.[44] But there was practically nothing that they agreed upon, with the result that the award, eventually published on August 17, i.e. two days after independence, was entirely the handiwork of Radcliffe alone. Here then is the dramatic story of a truly pivotal moment in history, an event that ignited fires of continuing political unrest that still burn in South Asia.

Some observers felt Radcliffe gave too much weight to economic considerations, neglecting his mandate to determine the “contiguous majority areas” of religious groups. For example, the Chittagong Hill Tracts— densely forested hills contiguous to the Lushai Hills (now Mizoram) of India and the Arakan hills of Burma (now Myanmar) and inhabited by largely Buddhist Chakma tribesmen — were awarded to Pakistan despite the fact that the Muslim population amounted to only three per cent. It is not yet known how Radcliffe was persuaded to award the Chittagong Hill Tracts to Pakistan as there was no official discussion on the matter, and many on the Indian side assumed the CHT would be awarded to India and the Indian tricolour was hoisted at the headquarters of the tracts at Rangamati on 15 August, 1947. Two days later however, the Radcliffe award was announced, and the tricolour was replaced by the crescent-and-star Pakistani flag. In the post-partition period large scale human rights violation became a part of the life of the Chakmas and other tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Sanjoy Hazarika in his “Refugees Within, Refugees Without” has painted a telling picture how being hounded out by the growing incidents of communal violence and the displacement caused by the Kaptai Hydel Power Project, the innocent victims of partition like the Chakmas and Hajongs of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Mymensingh districts respectively of Pakistan, were forced to migrate and take refuge in Arunachal Pradesh,

Tripura and Mizoram in a number of waves since 1964 and how this created lots of tension in Arunachal Pradesh between the people who claim themselves indigenous and the refugees.[45] The Chakma and Hajong refugees' problem is till today one of the most critical but contemporary problem in the region which has vitiated the society. Partition and its outcome are bound to be multi-angular, particularly from the point of view of the so-called 'indigenous' and 'settlers'. In fact, the refugee problem in the present world is one of the most painful sites which we are to observe particularly after the Second World War. Nobody wants to recognize him or her as refugee or synonym to this. The Partition of India in 1947 resulted in one of the largest and most rapid migrations in human history and, in the words of A.G. Noorani, the Partition ranked, beyond a doubt, "as one of the 10 greatest tragedies in human history". [46]

Not that the attempt was made first by Radcliffe. The story of the first Partition of Bengal in 1905 is well-known. At the outset, British strategy toward Northeast India was:

**** to make sure that the tribals remained separated from the plains people, and the economic interests of the British in the plains were not disturbed;*

**** to ensure that all tribal aspirations were ruthlessly curbed by keeping the bogey of the plains people dangling in their faces; and,*

**** to ensure that the tribal feudal order remained intact, with the paraphernalia of tribal chiefs" etc.[47]*

During the colonial period, Northeast Frontier District, Naga Hills District, Lushai Hills District and North Cachar Hills Subdivision were considered as the excluded areas. The partially excluded areas were the Garo Hills District, Khasi and Jaintia Hills district except Shillong and Mikir Hills district. J.P. Mills served in Assam from 1913, and became Secretary to Sir Robert Reid when he was Governor of Assam. During the

Second World War period, J.P.Mills, Advisor to the Governor of Assam for Tribal Affairs, suggested, three alternatives for the hill areas of the North-East:

- i. the inclusion of all the hills in Assam;
- ii. the exclusion of all the hills from Assam;
- iii. the inclusion of some of the hills in Assam.

Robert Reid, the Governor of Assam (1937-1942), was personally in favour of the second alternative and wanted the formation of an Union of States in the hills of the North-East India and Upper Burma. Robert Reid also stated that

'they (tribals of Northeast India) are not Indians in any sense of the word, neither in origin nor in appearance, nor in habits, nor in outlook and it is by historical accident that they are tagged to Indian province.'

Therefore, the inclusion of the region into Indian Territory can be termed, according to him, as a 'series of historical accident'. [48] In fact, Reid wrote in his memoirs:

"We had thought of setting up some sort of agency to embrace the whole North-East Frontier fringe, and to exclude it from the general run of Indian politics with which it had no affinity" [49]

Known as the Reid Plan, the proposal for a North-Eastern Hills Province fired the imagination of a number of British Administrators [50]

On the eve of Partition, Prof. Reginald Coupland of Cambridge University came out with a suggestion to trifurcate India with a Christian Dominion in NE India. Perhaps, Coupland had a point, because if partition of India was to be done on religious lines, then, he thought that Christians must also assert. Coupland fine-tuned the proposal that developed into what we know as the Coupland's Plan for a 'Crown Colony' under the British Government. [51] His idea did not fructify because the Khasis, Garos and others could not be provoked into rebellion. The late Sir Winston Churchill, then a Prime

Minister of Britain, had approved Sir Robert Reid's plan in principle. But the Labour party, headed by Attlee which came to power after World War II, did not act on it due to multifarious reasons.

The three major irritants at present in Indo-Bangladesh relations are: (i) Insurgents from Northeast India using Bangladesh territory as a sanctuary to launch terrorist campaigns against India. (ii) Cross-border migration from Bangladesh to the bordering states of India. (iii) Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan engaged in Bangladesh in anti-India activities. And all these had its root in the 'Radcliffe Line'

Narratives of the 1947 Partition and its outcome are bound to be multi-angular.

But despite the passage of 60 odd years after the partition, the positive contributions of the 'Partition refugees' to Tripura's over-all economic growth and development have not yet been systematically described or assessed. If the better-off and middle class people from East Pakistan could reconstruct their lives with relative ease in West Bengal, for those belonging to the lower middle class and degraded castes, it was almost impossible and most of them opted for Tripura and the like. 'Partition refugees' in India met much better treatment in the western part of the country, where they became part of the mainstream, while in the east, particularly in Tripura, they languished, struggled hard and radicalized the margins.

From another point of view also, the 'Partition refugees' acted as growth-booster. The hardy peasantry of eastern Bengal reclaimed the undulating terrain in Tripura for wet-rice cultivation that would boost revenues and the State's GNP. The settlement of 'Partition refugees' into this backward region, where large areas of land were lying unexploited, helped as a growth-booster in the short-run. To take only one example from Tripura : In 1945- 46, the total revenue receipts of Tripura were Rs. 40,63,782 only; [52] but in the year 1972- 73, it went up to 217.38 lakhs, which is 5 times [53] the amount of 1945- 46. The 'Partition refugees' were the main suppliers of labour input which is essential for development. The 'Partition refugees' not simply broke the

monotony of the age-old *jhum* economy, but ultimately strengthened the monetization of economic transactions which in itself was a great economic advance. Regarding 'Partition refugees' we have lots of memoirs in Bengali, voices of the victims, fictions, pictures, literary and cultural studies in West Bengal and a powerful writer like Prafulla Chakrabarti on the subject.[54] Unfortunately, in North-East India, this is yet to be done.

By underscoring women-related issues as central to the Partition-narrative, Jasodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta in their edited book offer a social and cultural complement to extant studies on colonial politics and communal violence in Bengal which also altered both the demographic composition and economic profiles of Assam and Tripura.[55] The Partition also wrought other important changes in women's lives so that formerly home-bound non-tribal women frequently emerged as wage earners to support their dispossessed migrant families. Thus the entire problem may be thoroughly surveyed from multi-angular perspectives, so to understand the present trends of social history in North-East India.

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ঔপনিবেশিক আমলে পূর্ববাংলার অন্যতম শিক্ষাঙ্গনে একটি সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা

রতন লাল চক্রবর্তী

এই প্রবন্ধটিতে যে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার ঘটনাটি আনুপূর্বিক আলোচনার প্রয়াস গ্রহণ করা হলো সেটি প্রকৃতপক্ষে একটি অজানা অধ্যায়। বিষয়টি প্রফেসর সুরঞ্জন দাশ তাঁর *Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905-1947* এবং প্রফেসর সব্যসাচী ভট্টাচার্য তাঁর *Vande Mataram: The Biography of a Song* শীর্ষক গ্রন্থদ্বয়ে উল্লেখ করতে সক্ষম হন নি, যদিও তাঁদের উভয়ের গ্রন্থই এই ঘটনাটি সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা ছিলো খুবই প্রাসঙ্গিক। ঘটনার সময়কালের বিবেচনায় এই বিষয়টি প্রফেসর সুরঞ্জন দাশের গ্রন্থে অন্তর্ভুক্ত হওয়া প্রয়োজন ছিলো।^১ অন্যদিকে বন্দে মাতরমকে কেন্দ্র করে ঘটনাটির উদ্ভব হয় বিধায় বিষয়টি প্রফেসর সব্যসাচী ভট্টাচার্যের গ্রন্থে আলোচনা ছিলো খুবই প্রাসঙ্গিক।^২ প্রকৃতপক্ষে এই ঘটনাটির তথ্যাদি ছিলো বিদগ্ধ গবেষকদ্বয়ের অজানা ও হাতের নাগালের বাইরে। ১৯৪৩ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অভ্যন্তরে সংঘটিত এই নারকীয় দাঙ্গার সকল তথ্য পাওয়া যায় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কেন্দ্রীয় রেকর্ড রুমে, যা সম্ভবত ছিলো তাঁদের অজানা এবং সঙ্গত কারণেই তাঁরা এই তথ্য ভান্ডার ব্যবহার করতে সক্ষম হননি। সাম্প্রদায়িকতা ও সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার মতো অমানবিক এবং ঘৃণিত ব্যাধির মূলোৎপাটনের জন্যই বিষয়টি বিস্তারিতভাবে আলোচনা করা প্রয়োজন, যাতে সকলেই সচেতন হয়ে সাম্প্রদায়িকতা ও সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গাকে সব সময় পরিহার করতে পারে।

১৯০৫ সালের বঙ্গ বিভাগ ছিল বৃটিশ ঔপনিবেশিক শাসনের বিভেদ ও শাসন নীতির (Divide and Rule) প্রত্যক্ষ প্রয়োগ। বঙ্গ বিভাগ অতি জরুরী হলেও ১৯১১ সালে বঙ্গ বিভাগ রদ করা হয়, কিন্তু থেকে যায় কলঙ্কিত ইতিহাসের ইঙ্গিত। ১৯০৫ থেকে ১৯১১ সালের মধ্যে রোপিত হয় সাম্প্রদায়িকতার অবিনাশী রক্তবীজ, যা পরবর্তীকালে সহস্র বাছ বিস্তার করে কলঙ্কিত ইতিহাস সৃষ্টির সহায়ক হয়। পরিচয়ে বাঙ্গালী হলেও আত্মপরিচয়ে কালক্রমে প্রাধান্য লাভ করে ধর্মীয় সম্প্রদায়, যার ফল ছিলো বিষময়। ১৯৪০ সালের লাহোর প্রস্তাবে উত্থাপিত দ্বি-জাতি তত্ত্ব ভ্রমাত্মক যুক্তির উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত হলেও বিষয়টি তৎকালিন পূর্ব বাংলার মুসলিম জনসাধারণের কল্পনা ও আশা-আকাঙ্ক্ষাকে উদ্দীপিত করে।^৩ মূলত লাহোর প্রস্তাবের পরপরই বাংলায় মুসলমানদের জাতীয় চেতনা এক নতুন মাত্রা লাভ করে এবং বাংলার বিশেষভাবে পূর্ব বাংলার শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে এর শক্তিশালী প্রভাব লক্ষ্য করা যায়।^৪ তবে এক্ষেত্রে একটি বিষয় লক্ষ্যনীয় যে হিন্দু সম্প্রদায় ও সাম্প্রদায়িক রাজনীতির প্রভাব মুসলমানদের প্রতিপক্ষ হিসেবে বিবেচনা করে। হিন্দুদের এই দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী এক অর্থে অবশ্য সাম্প্রদায়িক।

১৯২১ সালে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়। একথা সত্য যে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠার প্রাথমিক উদ্দেশ্য ছিল পূর্ব বাংলার অবহেলিত ও দরিদ্র মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়ণ। প্রথম হতেই বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে (বিভাগ প্রতিষ্ঠা ও শিক্ষক নিয়োগ) মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়কে অগ্রাধিকার দানের চেষ্টাও করা হয়েছিল। কিন্তু লক্ষ্যনীয় যে প্রতিভার স্বীকৃতির প্রশ্নে খুব কম ক্ষেত্রেই সম্প্রদায়কে প্রাধান্য দেয়া হয়। বস্তুত দেশ বিভাগের প্রায় পূর্ব পর্যন্ত শিক্ষক ও শিক্ষার্থী উভয় ক্ষেত্রেই হিন্দু সম্প্রদায় ছিল সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ। এই অবস্থায় প্রতিষ্ঠালগ্ন হতেই ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ধর্ম নিরপেক্ষতাকে লালন-পালনের

চেষ্টা করা হয়েছে, কিন্তু সামগ্রিক ভাবে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় সম্পূর্ণভাবে সাম্প্রদায়িকতা মুক্ত হতে সফল হয়নি। বিশ শতকের প্রথম দিক থেকেই ঢাকা পরিণত হয় এক সাম্প্রদায়িক নগরীতে। বিভিন্ন সময়ে বিভিন্ন কারণে ঢাকায় বহুবার সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা হয়েছে এবং এই দাঙ্গায় হিন্দু-মুসলমান সম্প্রদায় সমানভাবে দায়ী ছিল। ঢাকায় সংঘটিত সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার প্রভাব হতে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খুব কম সময়েই মুক্ত থাকতে সক্ষম হয়েছিল। এক্ষেত্রে একমাত্র ব্যতিক্রম ছিলো ১৯৪৩ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অভ্যন্তরে সংঘটিত সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা আর এই সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গাটি ঘটে সমকালীন সাম্প্রদায়িক রাজনৈতিক পরিমন্ডলে।

১৯৩০ দশকের মাঝামাঝি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ছাত্রী সংখ্যা উল্লেখযোগ্য হারে বৃদ্ধি পায়। নারী শিক্ষার্থীদের সংখ্যা লক্ষ্যনীয়ভাবে বৃদ্ধি পেলে তাঁদের মধ্যে জীবনের উপলব্ধি বোধ পরিবর্তিত হয় এবং তাঁরা ঐক্যবদ্ধভাবে নিজস্ব সংগঠন গড়ে তোলার চেষ্টা করেন। ১৯৩৫ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রথম শিক্ষিকা করুণাকণা গুপ্তা ইতিহাস বিভাগে যোগদান করেন এবং ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ছাত্রী সমিতি গড়ে তোলার চেষ্টা করেন। কিন্তু এক বছর পরই করুণাকণা গুপ্তা বঙ্গীয় শিক্ষা সার্ভিসে যোগদান করলে ছাত্রী সমিতি গঠন প্রচেষ্টা সাময়িকভাবে ব্যাহত হয়। কিন্তু ১৯৩৭ সালে চারুপমা বসু ইংরেজী বিভাগে প্রভাষক ও ছাত্রী নিবাসের সুপারিনটেনডেন্ট হিসেবে যোগ দেন এবং তিনি সতর্কতা ও দৃঢ়তার সাথে উপরোক্ত দায়িত্ব পালন করেন। ১৯৩৭ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ছাত্রী সমিতি নামে নারী শিক্ষার্থীদের সংগঠন জন্মলাভ করে। তার কার্যাবলী সঙ্গত কারণেই অন্যান্য ছাত্রদের আবাসিক হল ইউনিয়নের অনুরূপ ছিলনা। ১৯৩৭ সালে ছাত্রী ইউনিয়নের একটি কমিটি সর্বপ্রথম গঠিত হয়। এই কমিটিতে ছিলেন সভানেত্রী হিসেবে ছাত্রী নিবাসের সুপারিনটেনডেন্ট ও ইংরেজী বিভাগের শিক্ষয়ত্রী চারুপমা বসু, সহ-সভানেত্রী অনুভা সেন এবং সাধারণ সম্পাদিকা সরমা দত্ত মজুমদার। প্রকৃতপক্ষে এটি একটি পূর্ণাঙ্গ কমিটি ছিলনা। ছাত্রী সমিতির পূর্ণাঙ্গ কমিটি গঠিত হয় আরো অনেক পরে যখন এই সংগঠনের গঠনতন্ত্র প্রণীত হয় এবং আইনানুগভাবে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের স্বীকৃতি লাভ করে। তবে ছাত্রী সমিতি গড়ে তোলার প্রক্রিয়া ১৯৩৬ সাল হতেই শুরু হয়েছিল এবং নারী শিক্ষার্থীদের মধ্যে বেশ কয়েকজন এক্ষেত্রে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেছেন।

পরবর্তীকালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রী নিবাসকে কেন্দ্র করে যে ছাত্রী সমিতি গঠিত হলো তার সভাপতি হলেন চারুপমা বসু কোষাধ্যক্ষ ইংরেজী বিভাগের শিক্ষিকা মিস্ জে. জে. ম্যাকে এবং নীলিমা দাশ সাধারণ সম্পাদিকা। বিভিন্ন বিভাগের জন্য সম্পাদিকাগণও মনোনীত করা হলো। সর্ব ভারতীয় মহিলা পরিষদের (All-india Women's Council) সংবিধান অনুযায়ী ছাত্রী সমিতির সংবিধান তৈরী করা হলো। কিন্তু ছাত্রী সমিতি ছাত্রদের মতো আবাসিক হল ইউনিয়নের নাম ধারণ করতে পারলো না। এর কারণ ছিল আইনগত বাধা। ছাত্রী সমিতির দুর্বল আইনানুগ অবস্থান ছাত্রী নিবাসের সুপারিনটেনডেন্ট বিদ্যুষী চারুপমা বসুকে পীড়িত করে। এই সমস্যার সমাধানের জন্য তিনি তৎকালীন উপাচার্য রমেশচন্দ্র মজুমদারের শরণাপন্ন হন। উপাচার্য রমেশচন্দ্র মজুমদার বিষয়টির গুরুত্ব উপলব্ধি করে চারুপমা বসুকে প্রস্তাবিত ছাত্রী ইউনিয়নের গঠনতন্ত্র তৈরী করার নির্দেশ প্রদান করেন। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বিভিন্ন আবাসিক হল ইউনিয়নের ও কেন্দ্রীয় ছাত্র ইউনিয়নের গঠনতন্ত্রের আলোকে প্রস্তাবিত ছাত্রী ইউনিয়নের গঠনতন্ত্র প্রণয়ন করেন চারুপমা বসু। উল্লেখ্য যে এই গঠনতন্ত্রের

বেশ কয়েকটি ধারা উপাচার্য রমেশচন্দ্র মজুমদার নিজ হাতে সংশোধন করেন। ১৯৪২ সালে ছাত্রী ইউনিয়নের এই গঠনতন্ত্র 'The Constitution of Dacca University Women Students' Union 1942' শিরোনামে প্রণীত হয় এবং এই গঠনতন্ত্র ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক যথাযথভাবে অনুমোদিত হয়। ছাত্রী ইউনিয়নের আইনানুগ ভিত্তি প্রদান ও গঠনতন্ত্র প্রনয়নে উপাচার্য রমেশচন্দ্র মজুমদারের উলেখযোগ্য অবদান ছিল।^৬ একইভাবে এ প্রসঙ্গে চারুপমা বসুর অক্লান্ত পরিশ্রম অবশ্যই স্মরণীয়।

ছাত্রী ইউনিয়নের গঠনতন্ত্র ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদন লাভ করে ১৯৪২ সালের জুন মাসে। এর পর নির্বাচনের বিধি অনুযায়ী নির্বাচন অনুষ্ঠিত হয় এবং গঠিত হয় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অনুমোদিত ছাত্রী ইউনিয়নের প্রথম কার্যকরী পরিষদ। কিন্তু ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে নারী স্বাধীনতার উষালগ্নে সংঘটিত হলো কলঙ্কিত সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা। ১৯২১-২২ শিক্ষাবর্ষ হতে শুরু করে ১৯৪৬-৪৭ শিক্ষাবর্ষ পর্যন্ত ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় নারী শিক্ষার্থীদের মধ্যে হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়ের একক প্রাধান্য বিদ্যমান ছিল, তবে নারী শিক্ষার্থীদের মধ্যে সম্প্রদায়গত কোন বিদ্বেষ ছিল না। এই নারী শিক্ষার্থীদের মধ্যে হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়ের নারী শিক্ষার্থীগণের অধিকাংশই সর্ব-ভারতীয় কংগ্রেসের নীতি ও আদর্শের সমর্থক ছিলেন। ফলে ছাত্রীদের সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানে জাতীয়তাবাদী চেতনার প্রতিফলন ঘটে অনিবার্যভাবে। ছাত্রীবৃন্দ তাঁদের আবাসিক ভবনে বিভিন্ন সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করতো। বন্যা দুর্গতদের সাহায্যার্থে অর্থ সংগ্রহের জন্য নাটক পর্যন্ত মঞ্চস্থ করেছে তাঁদের ছাত্রী নিবাসে। এ সকল অনুষ্ঠানে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষকবৃন্দ এবং ঢাকা শহরের গণ্যমান্য ব্যক্তিবর্গ আমন্ত্রিত হতেন এবং উপস্থিত থাকতেন। তৎকালীন সামাজিক পরিস্থিতি ও পরিবেশে ছাত্রবৃন্দকে ছাত্রী নিবাসের কোন অনুষ্ঠানে যোগদানের সুযোগ দেয়া সম্ভব ছিল না। তবে ১৯৪০ সাল থেকে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রীদের কোন কোন অনুষ্ঠানে দর্শক হিসেবে ছাত্রদের উপস্থিত থাকতে দেখা যায়। নির্বাচিত ছাত্রী ইউনিয়নের অভিষেক অনুষ্ঠানে মঙ্গল ঘট প্রদর্শন ও বন্দে মাতরম সঙ্গীত পরিবেশনকে কেন্দ্র করে ১৯৪৩ সালের ২১ জানুয়ারী যে অপ্রীতিকর ঘটনার সূচনা হয়, তা শেষ পর্যন্ত ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রদের মধ্যে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার রূপ পরিগ্রহ করে ২ ফেব্রুয়ারী যেদিন সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার নির্মম শিকার হন নজীর আহমদ ও নিতীন বসু।

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠার সময় ঢাকা হল, মুসলিম হল ও জগন্নাথ হল- এই ব্যবস্থা করা হয়। ১৯২৯ সালে বিশাল ও সুন্দর স্থাপত্য নিয়ে নির্মিত হয় মুসলিম হল যা বর্তমানে সলিমুল্লাহ হল নামে পরিচিত। ১৯৪১ সালে ফজলুল হক হল নির্মাণ করা হয় কার্জন হল এলাকায়। দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধের সময় ১৯৪৩ সালে সামরিক বাহিনীর প্রয়োজনে বাংলা সরকার সাময়িকভাবে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিকট হতে জগন্নাথ হল ও সলিমুল্লাহ হল নিয়ে নেয়া। এ হল দুটি সামরিক বাহিনীর হাসপাতাল হিসেবে ব্যবহার করা হয়। জগন্নাথ হলের ছাত্রদের ঢাকা হলে স্থানান্তর করার প্রয়াস গ্রহণ করা হলে জগন্নাথ হলের ছাত্রবৃন্দ প্রথমে তাঁদের অনীহা প্রকাশ করলেও শেষ পর্যন্ত অনন্যোপায় হয়ে ঢাকা হলে থাকতে বাধ্য হয়।^৭ উল্লেখ্য, সামরিক বাহিনীর জরুরী প্রয়োজনে ১৯৪২ সালে চট্টগ্রাম কলেজ অধিগ্রহণ করা হয় এবং তথাকার ছাত্রদের ঢাকায় স্থানান্তর করে ঢাকা কলেজে পাঠ দানের ব্যবস্থা করা হয়। ঢাকা ইন্টারমেডিয়েট কলেজের ছাত্রাবাসে চট্টগ্রাম কলেজের মুসলমান ছাত্রদের আবাসিক সুবিধা দেয়া

সম্ভব হলেও ১২ জন হিন্দু ছাত্রের ঢাকায় পৃথক আবাসিক ব্যবস্থা প্রদান তৎকালীন পরিস্থিতিতে সম্ভব ছিল না। অধিকন্তু সে সময় হিন্দু মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে সৃষ্ট পরিস্থিতিতে ঢাকা কলেজের হোস্টেলে হিন্দু ও মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের সহাবস্থান ঢাকা কলেজের অধ্যক্ষ ড. এম. আহমেদ যুক্তিযুক্ত মনে করেননি। তিনি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় উপচার্য ড. রমেশচন্দ্র মজুমদারকে হিন্দু ছাত্রবৃন্দকে ঢাকা হলে বসবাসের সুবিধা দানের জন্য অনুরোধ জানান।^৯ উপাচার্য বিষয়টি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কার্যকরী পরিষদে উত্থাপন করবেন বলে আশ্বাস প্রদান করলেও এর অগ্রগতি সম্পর্কে তেমন কিছু জানা যায় না।^{১০} অসুবিধার সৃষ্টি হয় সলিমুল্লাহ হলের ছাত্রদের আবাসিক সুবিধা দানের প্রশ্নে। শেষ পর্যন্ত মুসলিম হলের ছাত্রদের স্থান দেয়া হয় ফজলুল হক মুসলিম হলের পূর্বাংশ, কমিশনার ভবনে (বর্তমান পররাষ্ট্র ভবন) ও সেগুনবাগিচার খান ম্যানশনে (বর্তমান মিউজিক কলেজ)।^{১১} এই ব্যবস্থার ফলে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পূর্বতন জনমিতির লক্ষ্যনীয় পরিবর্তন হয়, যার প্রভাব ১৯৪৩ সালে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অভ্যন্তরে সংঘটিত সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গায় দেখা যায়।

১৯৪৩ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অভ্যন্তরে হিন্দু-মুসলমান ছাত্রদের মধ্যে সংঘটিত সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা সম্পর্কে আলোচনার পূর্বে এ সম্পর্কে অধ্যাপক রঙ্গলাল সেন ও অধ্যাপক রফিকুল ইসলাম প্রদত্ত তথ্য নিয়ে কিছু আলোচনার প্রয়োজন। উভয়ের প্রদত্ত তথ্যে রয়েছে ভ্রান্তি ও সামঞ্জস্যহীনতা। সমাজবিজ্ঞানী ড. রঙ্গলাল সেনের গবেষণায় মৌলিকত্ব আছে; বিভিন্ন শৃংখলার গবেষণা ও রচনায় তাঁর দক্ষতাও লক্ষ্যনীয়। তবে ইতিহাস রচনার ক্ষেত্রে সাল তারিখ অবশ্যই অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ, তা সঠিকভাবে উল্লেখিত না হলে ঘটনার কার্যকারণ অনুধাবন করা কষ্টকর হয়ে পড়বে। ড. রঙ্গলাল সেন ঢাকায় সংঘটিত যে দুটি সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গায় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সম্পৃক্ততা ও পরিস্থিতি ব্যাখ্যা করার চেষ্টা করেছেন সে ঘটনার সময়কাল ১৯৪০ ও ১৯৪২ নয়। এ ঘটনা দুটির সময়কাল ১৯৮১ ও ১৯৪৩। ড. রমেশচন্দ্র মজুমদার যখন ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উপচার্য ছিলেন তখন নাজির আহমদ সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার শিকার হননি, হয়েছেন মোতাহার উদ্দীন আহমদ। ড. রঙ্গলাল সেন রচিত ঢাকার সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি ও দাঙ্গা-হাঙ্গামা শীর্ষক প্রবন্ধ প্রদত্ত তথ্যে এ সকল বিষয়ে ভ্রান্তি ও সামঞ্জস্যহীনতা লক্ষ্য করা যায়।^{১২} অন্যদিকে রফিকুল ইসলাম, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় আশী বছর, শীর্ষক গ্রন্থে যে সকল উৎস হতে ১৯৪৩ সালের সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার তথ্য উপস্থাপন করেছেন, সমকালীন পত্র-পত্রিকা ও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় রেকর্ডরুমে প্রাপ্ত নথিপত্র এর সম্পূর্ণ বিরোধী তথ্য প্রদান করে।^{১৩} প্রথমত, ছাত্রী হলের সংসদের অভিষেক অনুষ্ঠানের দিন ছিল ৩১ জানুয়ারী (১৯৪৩) এবং ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা ঘটে ২ ফেব্রুয়ারী। সেক্ষেত্রে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় করেকদিনের জন্য বন্ধ ছিল না, বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মাত্র ১ দিন তথা ১ ফেব্রুয়ারী বন্ধ ছিল। দ্বিতীয়ত, ঘটনার স্থান বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণে দক্ষিণ গেট বা টেনিস মাঠ নয়, ঘটনাটি ঘটে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ভবনের অভ্যন্তরে ইংরেজীর প্রভাষক জে. এন. চৌধুরীর শ্রেণী কক্ষে। সৈয়দ আলী আহসান বর্নিত আছিয়া খাতুন নামে কোন ছাত্রী এ সময় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যয়নতা ছিলেন না।^{১৪} প্রকৃতপক্ষে তথ্য পরিবেশনের পূর্বে তথ্য যাচাই করা ইতিহাস লেখকের দায়িত্ব এবং সে সুযোগও ইতিহাস লেখকের থাকে যদি তিনি মৌলিক নথিপত্র দেখার পরিশ্রম ও প্রয়াসকে আন্তরিকভাবে গ্রহণ করেন। অন্যদিকে স্মৃতিকথার উপর নির্ভর করা কঠিন, বিশেষভাবে সময়কাল নির্ণয়ের ক্ষেত্রে। ১৯৪৩ সালের এই সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা সম্পর্কে অধ্যাপক সরদার ফজলুল

করিম তথ্য প্রদান করেছেন যে:

৪২ সনের শেষের দিকে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের হিন্দু ও মুসলমান ছাত্রদের মধ্যে একটা সংঘাত ঘটেছিলো। এর সূত্রপাত হয়েছিলো কার্জন হলে ছাত্রীদের একটা সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানে সলিমুল্লাহ হলের কিছু ছাত্রের আচরণ নিয়ে, হিন্দু ছাত্রদের সঙ্গে বাদ-প্রতিবাদের ফলে। পরের দিন এর বিস্তার ঘটে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আর্টস এবং অফিস বিল্ডিং অর্থাৎ এখনকার বর্তমান মেডিক্যাল কলেজ হাসপাতাল বিল্ডিং-এ। এ ভবনের দোতলার একদিক ছিল ফজলুল হক হল অর্থাৎ মুসলিম ছাত্রদের বাসস্থান। ভবনের পূর্বদিকে ছিল ক্লাস ঘর, ছাত্রীদের কমনরুম আর শিক্ষকদের বসার ঘর। নিচে ছিল লাইব্রেরি। এই দিনের সংঘাতের সময়টাতেই নাজির আহমদ নামের একজন মুসলমান ছাত্র আকস্মিকভাবে ছুরিকাহত হন এবং ঐদিনই বিকেলে মিটফোর্ড হাসপাতালে তিনি মারা যান। আমি তখন মাত্র আই. এ. পরীক্ষা শেষে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের দর্শন বিভাগে অনার্স নিয়ে ভর্তি হয়েছি। নাজির আহমদের স্মরণে পরবর্তীকালে নাজিরবাজার এলাকায় একটা পাঠাগার প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছিল মুসলিম ছাত্রবৃন্দ, যার নাম দেয়া হয়েছিলো শহীদ নাজির লাইব্রেরি।

১৯৪৩ সালের ৩১ জানুয়ারী ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রী ইউনিয়ন বা ছাত্রী পরিষদের বার্ষিক সভার আয়োজন করা হয় কার্জন হলে। প্রকৃতপক্ষে এটি ছিল ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রীদের নবগঠিত ইউনিয়নের অভিষেক অনুষ্ঠান। এই অনুষ্ঠানে পূর্বে প্রচলিত নিয়মানুসারে মঞ্চের উপর স্থাপন করা হয় একটি মঙ্গল ঘটা। অনুষ্ঠানের সূচনা করা হয় সাহিত্য সম্রাট বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় রচিত বিখ্যাত সঙ্গীত বন্দে মাতরম্ এর মাধ্যমে। বিপত্তির সৃষ্টি এখানেই। সুতরাং যে বিষয়টিকে কেন্দ্র করে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে এই জঘন্য সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা সংঘটিত হলো, সে সম্পর্কে তথা বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত ও শ্লোগান এবং এ সম্পর্কে মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের প্রতিক্রিয়ার ইতিহাস আলোচনা একান্ত প্রয়োজন। বন্দে মাতরম্ ছিল সাহিত্য সম্রাট বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় (১৮৩৮-১৮৯৪) রচিত একটি কবিতা। এই কবিতাটির রচনা কাল সম্পর্কে মতানৈক্য থাকলেও একথা বলা চলে যে ১৮৭০-এর দশকের প্রথম দিকে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় এই কবিতাটি রচনা করেছিলেন। ১৮৮১ সালে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় তাঁর আনন্দ মঠ শীর্ষক ঐতিহাসিক উপন্যাসে বন্দে মাতরম্ কবিতাটিকে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করেন, ফলে এই কবিতাটি লাভ করে নতুন মাত্রা। ১৮৮৪ সালে সাবিত্রী লাইব্রেরীর পঞ্চম বার্ষিক অধিবেশনের শুরুতে অক্ষয়চন্দ্র মজুমদার ও শেষে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত পরিবেশন করেন। ১৮৮৫ সালে জোড়াসাঁকোর ঠাকুরবাড়ী হতে প্রকাশিত প্রথম ভারতীয় সিভিলিয়ান সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের (১৮৪২-১৯২৩) স্ত্রী জ্ঞানদানন্দিনী দেবী (১২৫৮-১৩৪৮) সম্পাদিত বালক পত্রিকায় বন্দে মাতরম্-এর স্বরলিপি প্রকাশিত হয়। হেমেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের (১৯৪৪-১৮৮৪) কন্যা প্রতিভা দেবী (?-১৩২৮) গান অভ্যাস পর্যায় বন্দে মাতরম্ গানটির প্রথম স্তবকটি দেশ-কাওয়ালী সুর-তালে নিবন্ধ স্বরলিপি প্রকাশ করেন। এরপর রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীতের প্রথমাংশ নিজে সুর সংযোগ করে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়কে শুনিয়েছিলেন। স্বর্ণকুমারী দেবী (১৮৫৫-১৯৩২) সম্পাদিত ভারতী পত্রিকায় ১৩০০ বঙ্গাব্দের কার্তিক সংখ্যায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর বন্দে মাতরম্-এর স্বরলিপি প্রকাশিত হয়। সরলা দেবী (১৯৭২-১৯৪৫) স্বরলিপি তৈরী করেন। ১৮৯৬ সালে কোলকাতা কংগ্রেসে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত পরিবেশন করেন। বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত ভারতের বিভিন্ন ভাষায় অনুবাদ হতে আরম্ভ

করে উনিশ শতকের শেষ দশক হতো। ১৮৯৭ সালে মারাঠী ও কানাড়া ভাষায়, ১৯০১ সালে গুজরাটী ভাষায়, ১৯০৬ সালে হিন্দী ভাষায়, ১৯০৭ সালে তেলেগু ভাষায়, ১৯০৮ সালে তামিল ভাষায় এবং ১৯০৯ সালে মালায়াম ভাষায় বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত অনুবাদিত হয়। বিখ্যাত তামিল কবি সুব্রামনিয়া ভারতী (১৮৮২-১৯২১) বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত অনুবাদ করেন ১৯০৫ সালে। দার্শনিক শ্রী অরবিন্দ ঘোষ (১৮৭২-১৯৫০) তাঁর সম্পাদিত ইংরেজী সাপ্তাহিক পত্রিকা কর্মযোগিন্-এ বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীতের ইংরেজী অনুবাদ প্রকাশ করেন। ১৯০৬ সালে বিপিনচন্দ্র পালের (১৮৫৮-১৯৩২) সম্পাদনায় প্রথম প্রকাশিত হয় দৈনিক বন্দে মাতরম্ পত্রিকা। পরে রাজা সুবোধচন্দ্র বসুমল্লিকের (১৮৭৯-১৯২০) অনুরোধে বন্দে মাতরম্ পত্রিকার সম্পাদনার দায়িত্ব গ্রহণ করেন শ্রী অরবিন্দ। ১৯০৮ সালে বন্দে মাতরম্ পত্রিকা রাজরোষে পড়ে এবং শ্রী অরবিন্দ আদালতে অভিযুক্ত হন। দেশবন্ধু চিত্তরঞ্জন দাশ (১৮৭০-১৯২৫) এই মামলা পরিচালনা করেন এবং শ্রী অরবিন্দের মুক্তিলাভ হয়।

১৯০৫ সালের বঙ্গভঙ্গের পর পরই বন্দে মাতরম্ লাভ করে সম্পূর্ণ নতুন মাত্রা। স্বদেশী ও বৈপ্লবিক আন্দোলনে বন্দে মাতরম্ একটি রাজনৈতিক শ্লোগানে রূপান্তরিত হয়। বন্দে মাতরম্ রাজরোষের কারণ হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। বন্দে মাতরম্ ধ্বনি দেয়ার জন্য পুলিশের লাঠিচার্জ ছিল অবশ্যস্বত্বী। বন্দে মাতরম্ হয়ে যায় রণধ্বনি। সকল বিপ্লবী বীরেরা ফাঁসী দেয়ার পূর্বে বন্দে মাতরম্ ধ্বনি দিয়েছেন। ক্রমশঃ বন্দে মাতরম্ জাতীয় সঙ্গীতের মর্যাদা লাভ করে। সরকার বন্দে মাতরম্ ধ্বনির উপর নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারী করে। ১৯০৫ সালের কার্লাইলের গোপন সার্কুলারে বন্দে মাতরম্ ধ্বনি ও সঙ্গীত নিষিদ্ধ করা হয়। বন্দে মাতরম্ নিয়ে ব্রিটিশ পুলিশের জঘন্য অত্যাচার চলে পূর্ব বাংলার বরিশাল জেলায়। সাংবাদিক প্রিয়নাথ গুহের যজ্ঞ-ভঙ্গ বা বরিশাল প্রাদেশিক সমিতির ইতিহাসে এ ঘটনার বিস্তারিত বিবরণ রয়েছে।

বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত নিয়ে রাজনৈতিক মতবৈধতা আরম্ভ হয় ত্রিশের দশকের শেষের দিকে। বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীতের মধ্যে পৌত্তলিকতা রয়েছে বিধায় মুসলমান সম্প্রদায় বিশেষভাবে মুসলিম লীগ বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীতের বিরুদ্ধে আপত্তি উত্থাপন করে। মুসলিম লীগের বিরোধীতার প্রত্যুত্তরে ১৯৩৭ সালের ২৬ অক্টোবর পুনা ও বোম্বে শহরে হিন্দু মহাসভা ও গণতান্ত্রিক স্বরাজ পার্টি বন্দে মাতরম্ দিবস পালন করে। ১৯৩৮ সালের ডিসেম্বর মাসে নাগপুরে হিন্দু মহাসভার দ্বিদেশতম অধিবেশনে সভাপতির ভাষণে বিনায়ক দামোদার সভারকর (১৮৮৩-১৯৬৬) বক্তব্য রাখেন যে হিন্দু ধর্মের রক্ষার্থে বন্দে মাতরম্ই একমাত্র শ্লোগান। এ সময় মোহম্মদ আলী জিন্নাহ (১৮৭৬-১৯৪৮) বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীতের বিরোধীতা করেন। ১৯৩৯ সালের জানুয়ারী মাসে নাগপুরে অনুষ্ঠিত মুসলিম লীগের অধিবেশন বন্দে মাতরম্ জাতীয় সঙ্গীত প্রসঙ্গে হিন্দু মহাসভার অধিবেশনে গৃহীত প্রস্তাবের বিরোধীতা করা হয়। বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত সম্পর্কে মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের শিক্ষিতদের একাংশ ভিন্নমত পোষণ করেন। বাংলার রেজাউল করিম (১৯০২-১৯৯৩) তাঁর বন্ধিমচন্দ্র ও মুসলমান সমাজ (১৯৪৪) শীর্ষক গ্রন্থে বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীতকে পৌত্তলিকতার দোষে দুষ্ট বলে মানতে রাজী হননি। উল্লেখ্য যে রেজাউল করিম ছিলেন পাকিস্তান বিরোধী। বিহারের কংগ্রেস মন্ত্রীসভার শিক্ষামন্ত্রী ড. সৈয়দ মাহমুদ, তথাকার আইন সভায় কংগ্রেস সদস্য খান মোহম্মদ ইসমাইল, প্রখ্যাত ঐতিহাসিক ও কংগ্রেস সদস্য কুনোয়ার মোহাম্মদ আশরাফ (১৯০৩-১৯৬২) ও কংগ্রেসের শীর্ষনেতা রফি আহমদ কিদয়াই (১৮৯৫-১৯৪৭) বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীতকে সমর্থন করেন।

১৯৩৭ সাল হতে ১৯৩৯ সালের মধ্যে বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত নিয়ে রাজনৈতিক মতদ্বৈধতার তীব্রতা বৃদ্ধি পায় সাম্প্রদায়িক উত্তেজনার সাথে সমান্তরালভাবে। এ প্রসঙ্গে মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের বিরোধিতা কেবলমাত্র মোহাম্মদ আলী জিন্নাহর কারণেই নয়, তবে তিনি বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীতের রাজনৈতিক উপযোজকের ক্ষেত্রে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেছেন। বৃটিশ সরকারও ঔপনিবেশিক শাসনের স্বার্থে বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত নিয়ে একে হিন্দু-মুসলমানের রাজনৈতিক ও ধর্মীয় মতদ্বৈধতা হিসেবে আখ্যায়িত করে বিভেদ ও শাসন দীর্ঘায়িত করার প্রয়াস পায়। কিছু সংখ্যক শিক্ষিত মুসলমান বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত সমর্থন করলে ১৯৩৮ সালের ১৭ এপ্রিল কোলকাতায় অনুষ্ঠিত নিখিল ভারত মুসলিম লীগের অধিবেশনে আবুল কাশেম ফজলুল হক (১৮৭৩-১৯৬২) তাঁদের সমালোচনা করেন।^{৪৪} যাই হোক ১৯৪২ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ছাত্রীদের অনুষ্ঠানে বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত পরিবেশন করা হলে মুসলিম ছাত্রবৃন্দের একাংশ প্রতিবাদ জানায়। ১৯৪৩ সালের ঘটনা সম্পর্কে ঢাকা হতে প্রকাশিত সমসাময়িক সাপ্তাহিক পত্রিকায় এ বিষয়ে বন্দে মাতরম্ গানে বিপত্তি শিরোনামে নিম্নোক্ত তথ্য পরিবেশিত হয়: গত ৩১ শে জানুয়ারী রবিবার অপরাহ্নে কাজ্জর্ন হলে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রী সমিতির কার্য নির্বাহক কমিটির প্রতিষ্ঠা উপলক্ষে এক অনুষ্ঠানের ব্যবস্থা হয়। এই অনুষ্ঠানের পারশ্বে বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত গীত হয়। প্রায় ১০ মিনিট কাল পরে একজন মুসলমান ছাত্র ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলার ড. হাসানকে জিজ্ঞাসা করেন তিনি কেন বন্দে মাতরম্ গান করিবার অনুমতি দিলেন? মঞ্চপরি উপবিষ্ট ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলার মহোদয় ছাত্রটিকে নিরস্ত হইতে অনুরোধ করিয়া বলেন, এটি ছাত্রীদের অনুষ্ঠান, সুতরাং আগে ইহার কার্য শেষ ইউক, পরে এই প্রশ্নটি সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা করা যাইবে। কিন্তু বাধাদানকারী ছাত্রটি জিদ করিতেই লাগিলেন। তখন সমবেত ছাত্রগণ দুই দলে বিভক্ত হইয়া ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলারের উপস্থিতিতেই বচসা আরম্ভ করে এবং পরস্পর পরস্পরকে চেয়ার ছুড়িয়া মারিতে থাকে। ক্রমে হলের বাহিরেও হাঙ্গামা বিস্তৃত হয় এবং হক স্টিক ও সোডার বোতল বেপরোয়া চলিতে থাকে। ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলার দাঙ্গা থামাইবার জন্য চেষ্টার কোন ভ্রুটি করেন নাই, কিন্তু শেষ পর্যন্ত তিনি অকৃতকার্য হন। পরে সশস্ত্র পুলিশ আসিয়া শান্তি স্থাপন করে। আহত ছাত্রদের হাসপাতালে পাঠাইতে হয়। ঐ দিন সশস্ত্র পুলিশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অঞ্চলে পাহারা দেয়।^{৪৫}

উল্লেখ্য যে ঢাকা প্রকাশ সাপ্তাহিকীতে প্রকাশিত এ বিষয় গঠিত তদন্ত কমিটির বিবরণীতে এ সম্পর্কে আরো কিছু নতুন তথ্য পাওয়া যায়। তদন্ত কমিটির বিবরণী ও ঢাকা প্রকাশ পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত হয় যেখানে ঘটনা সম্পর্কে বলা হয়: ৩১শে জানুয়ারী তারিখে কাজ্জর্ন হলে উইমেন্স ইউনিয়নের বার্ষিক অধিবেশন হয়। ভাইস চ্যান্সেলার সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ করেন। বন্দেমাতরম্ সঙ্গীতের পর সভার কার্য আরম্ভ হয়। ইহাতে কোন প্রকার আপত্তি করা হয় নাই। কিন্তু পরে একজন মুসলমান (সম্ভবতঃ ছাত্র) দাঁড়াইয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করে যে পূর্ববর্তী বৎসরের অধিবেশন ডা. মজুমদার বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত গীত হইবে না বলিয়া প্রতিশ্রুতি দেওয়া সত্ত্বেও কেন এই বৎসর এইরূপ করা হইল। ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলার বলেন যে, তাঁহার পূর্ববর্তী ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলার এইরূপ কোন প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছিলেন বলিয়া তিনি জানেন না এবং এই বিষয়ে তিনি অনুসন্ধান করিবেন বলিয়া প্রতিশ্রুতি দেন। প্রশ্নকর্তা এই উত্তর অসন্তোষজনক বলিয়া বিবেচনা করে এবং বিশৃঙ্খলার মধ্যে সভা ভাঙ্গিয়া যায়।^{৪৬}

উদ্ধৃত পরিস্থিতির বিপজ্জনক দিক পর্যালোচনা করে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ ১ ফেব্রুয়ারী

বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ক্লাশসমূহ বন্ধ রাখেন। একই সাথে পরিস্থিতি পর্যালোচনার জন্য উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসান বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কার্যকরী পরিষদের এক সভা আহ্বান করেন। এই সভার সুপারিশ অনুযায়ী সকল আবাসিক হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষগণ ও ছাত্র প্রতিনিধিদের সাথে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সাধারণ অনুষ্ঠানের জন্য প্রয়োজ্য শর্তবালী নিয়ে আলোচনার জন্য পরদিন তথা ২ ফেব্রুয়ারী একটি বিশেষ সভা আহ্বান করা হয়। এখানে বক্তব্য রাখা হয় যে পরিস্থিতির গুরুত্ব যথাযথভাবে অনুধাবনের মাধ্যমে যে কোনো প্রকারে সংঘর্ষ এড়ানোর জন্য সম্ভাব্য সকল ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের প্রয়োজন রয়েছে। কিন্তু বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কতৃপক্ষ এই জটিল পরিস্থিতির মারাত্মক পরিণতি যথাযথভাবে অনুধাবন করতে ব্যর্থ হন। ২ ফেব্রুয়ারী প্রত্যুষে সলিমুল্লাহ মুসলিম হলের তদানীন্তন প্রাধ্যক্ষ সৈয়দ মোয়াজ্জেম হোসেন উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসানকে জানান যে তিনি ছাত্র ফেডারেশনের পক্ষ হতে এই মর্মে টেলিফোন পেয়েছেন যে উভয় সম্প্রদায়ের ছাত্রবৃন্দ উত্তেজিত এবং যে কোন অনভিপ্রেত ঘটনা ঘটতে পারে। প্রাধ্যক্ষ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কিছুদিন বন্ধ রাখার পক্ষে মত প্রকাশ করেন। কিন্তু উপাচার্য মাহমুদ হাসান ঘটনার গুরুত্ব যথাযথভাবে অনুধাবন করে প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা নিতে ব্যর্থ হন এবং এর ফলে ছাত্রদের মধ্যে রক্তক্ষয়ী দাঙ্গা বাধে। এ সম্পর্কে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নথিপত্রে তথ্য পাওয়া যায় যে:

The Vice-Chancellor came to the University at about 11:30 A.M. and he went round the library, the class rooms, the women students' common room &c. He found that the work was going on in the ordinary way and there was no sign of excitement anywhere. He discussed the situation with Mr. H.D.Bhattacharyya, the Dean of Arts and the Proctor and all told him that the situation was quite normal. The Proctor also told him that he had talked to numerous students - Hindus and Muslims and they had all expressed their disapproval of the incident on Sunday evening last and said that there would be no further trouble.

The Vice-Chancellor returned to his room at about 12:30 when Dr. Shahidullah came in, and he was discussing these and other matters with him when he heard a great commotion in the University buildings. When he rushed out, he found a number of students downstairs and upstairs with *lathies* in their hands and stones were being thrown in some places. The Vice-Chancellor felt that the situation was beyond the control of University authorities; so he at once telephoned to the Police. He then went out and found the women students in the Verandah of their room, and a large number of excited students upstairs and downstairis. The Police then arrived and, at the same time, the District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police and the City S.P. arrived; and after some time the situation was brought under control.^{১৭}

এই ঘটনায় ১৬ জন ছাত্র আহত হয়, যাদের মধ্যে ৮ জন হিন্দু ও ৮ জন মুসলমান।^{১৮} আহতদের মধ্যে সলিমুল্লাহ মুসলিম হলের ছাত্র নাজির আহমদ হাসপাতালে মৃত্যু বরণ করেন।^{১৯} অন্যদিকে একই দিনে মুসলিম হলের নিকট নিতীন বসু নিহত হয়। নিতীন বসু ছিলেন সমাজবিজ্ঞান বিভাগের নাজমুল করিম ও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র রবীন্দ্রনাথ গুহ, অমূল্যচন্দ, অজিত রায়, মদন বসাক, দেবপ্রসাদ মুখার্জী, সুনিল রায় প্রমুখ বিপ্লবীদের বন্ধু।^{২০} ঘটনাসমূহ নিঃসন্দেহে অতীব মর্মান্তিক।

পাঠকবর্গ অবশ্যই লক্ষ্য করবেন যে ১৯৩০ সালের আইন অমান্য আন্দোলনের বৃটিশ বিরোধী ভূমিকার জন্য অজিতনাথ ভট্টাচার্য প্রাণ বিসর্জন দেন, আর ১৯৪৩ সালে ঔপনিবেশিক শক্তি সৃষ্ট-রাজনৈতিক কৌশল হিসেবে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গায় প্রাণ বিসর্জন দেন নজীর আহমদ। উভয় ঘটনার উৎস স্থল একই। যাই হোক, এই ঘটনার সময় অর্থাৎ ছাত্রদের মধ্যে সংঘর্ষের সময় কিছু সংখ্যক ছাত্রী লাঞ্চিত হন। উর্দু রোডের বাসিন্দা ব্রজেন্দ্র কৃষ্ণ সেনগুপ্তের কন্যা ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রথম বর্ষ বি.এ. ক্লাসের ছাত্রী তৃপ্তি সেনগুপ্তের গলা থেকে সোনার হার এই ঘটনার সময় ছিনিয়ে নেয়া হয়। ঘটনাটির সত্যতা সম্পর্কে ঢাকা প্রকাশ পত্রিকায় ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় নথিপত্রে তথ্য পাওয়া যায়।^{২১} এই ঘটনার সময় কলা ভবনের ডীন ও প্রক্টরের কক্ষ ভাঙচুর করা হয় এবং দুঃখজনক হলেও সত্য যে এই কক্ষ দুটি হতে বেশ কিছু দ্রব্য লুণ্ঠ করাও হয়।^{২২}

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অভ্যন্তরে এটিই ছিল ছাত্রদের মধ্যে সংঘটিত প্রথম সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা এবং ১৯৪৩ সালের এই সাম্প্রদায়িক সংঘাতের পর অদ্যাবধি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অভ্যন্তরে এরূপ ঘটনা ঘটেনি। এই ঘটনা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষকে মারাত্মকভাবে চিন্তিত করে তোলে। জরুরী ভিত্তিতে ৩ ফেব্রুয়ারী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কার্যকারী পরিষদের সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। সভার সিদ্ধান্ত অনুযায়ী ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ১৪ মার্চ পর্যন্ত বন্ধ ঘোষণা করা হয় এবং ৬ ফেব্রুয়ারীর মধ্যে সকল আবাসিক ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের হল ত্যাগের নির্দেশ দেয়া হয়। একই সাথে ঢাকা বিভাগের কমিশনার এ.এস. লারকিন, ঢাকার আইনজীবী পঞ্চজ কুমার ঘোষ ও মুহম্মদ ইব্রাহিম সমন্বয়ে তিন সদস্যের একটি তদন্ত কমিটি গঠন করা হয়। এ.এস.লারকিনের সভাপতিত্বে গঠিত এই তদন্ত কমিটির প্রধান দায়িত্ব ছিল ১৯৪৩ সালের ৩১ জানুয়ারী ও ২ ফেব্রুয়ারী এক সংঘটিত ঘটনার বিবরণ প্রণয়ন ও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আইন ও শৃংখলা পরিস্থিতি উন্নয়নের জন্য সুপারিশ প্রদান।^{২৩}

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের এই সাম্প্রদায়িক সংঘাত নতুন মাত্রা লাভ করে এবং কতকটা রাজনৈতিক চরিত্র অর্জন করে যখন এই প্রতিষ্ঠানের মুসলিম ছাত্রবৃন্দ ৩ ফেব্রুয়ারী এক সভায় মিলিত হয়ে বেশ কয়েকটি দাবী উত্থাপন করে। এই দাবী সমূহের মধ্যে দুটি দাবী ছিল খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ-প্রথমত, নজীর আহমদের মরদেহের পারলৌকিক ক্রিয়া-কর্মের জন্য ছাত্রদের নিকট প্রত্যর্পণ ও দ্বিতীয়ত, নজীর আহমদের মরদেহ সলিমুল্লাহ মুসলিম হল বা ফজলুল হক হলের নিকটে কবর দেবার অনুমতি প্রদান যাতে ছাত্রবৃন্দ তাঁর আত্মার প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা জানাতে পারে।

Resolved that this meeting requests the University authorities to take every step to receive and hand over the dead body of our beloved Nazir Ahmed to the students for performing funeral rites. Resolved that this meeting of the Muslim students of the Dacca University requests the University authorities to permit the burial at a place near one of the two Muslim Halls so that they may pay their homage to their deceased friend who was a great social worker.^{২৪}

মনে হয় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ উল্লেখিত দাবীসমূহ মেনে নেবার ভবিষ্যৎ পরিণাম সম্পর্কে দ্রুত সতর্ক হন এবং কতকটা তড়িঘড়ি করে ৪ ফেব্রুয়ারী আজিমপুর কবরস্থানে হতভাগ্য নজীর আহমদকে সমাহিত করার ব্যবস্থা করেন। এদিনই কলিকাতা হতে প্রকাশিত দৈনিক আজাদ পত্রিকার সম্পাদকীয়তে মন্তব্য করা হয়:

ঢাকার ব্যাপার চরম শোচনীয় হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মতো নিছক শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে গুন্ডামী এমন উগ্র হইয়া উঠিতে পারে তাহা ভাবিতেও খারাপ লাগে। চেয়ার ছোড়াছুড়ি বা হকি ষ্টিক সঞ্চালনেই অপ্রীতিকর ব্যাপারের অবসান হয় নাই, অবশেষে উচ্চ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানেও নীচ গুন্ডার হাতের ছুরি চলিল, ইহা অপেক্ষা দুঃখের বিষয় আর কি হইতে পারে? ^{২৫}

১৯৪৩ সালের ১৪ ফেব্রুয়ারী কলিকাতায় মুসলিম ইনষ্টিটিউট হলে নিখিলবঙ্গ মুসলিম ছাত্র সমিতির পক্ষ হতে শহীদ নজীর আহমদ দিবস পালিত হয়। এই সভায় তৎকালীন মুসলিম নেতৃবৃন্দের অগ্রণী ব্যক্তিবর্গ উপস্থিত ছিলেন। ^{২৬}

১৯৪৩ সালের ৩ ফেব্রুয়ারী ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কার্যকরী পরিষদের এক সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। এই সভায় উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসান সফটকালে স্থানীয় প্রশাসনের দূত, যথাযথ ও ফলপ্রসূ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের উপর এক বিবৃতি প্রদান করেন। এ সময় বিভিন্ন প্রশাসনিক কর্মকর্তা ও ঢাকা জেলার ম্যাজিস্ট্রেটকে পরিস্থিতি নিয়ন্ত্রণ ও আহত ছাত্রদের চিকিৎসার ব্যবস্থা করার জন্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পক্ষ হতে ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপনপূর্বক একটি প্রস্তাব গৃহীত হয়। ^{২৭} এখানে একটা বিষয় উল্লেখ্য যে ছাত্রদের ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আবাসিক হলসমূহ ছেড়ে দিতে বাধ্য করা হলেও কর্তৃপক্ষ অবশিষ্ট পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের কর্মসূচী অব্যাহত রাখেন। কিন্তু পরীক্ষার হলে যে কোন প্রকার অনভিপ্রেত ঘটনা সম্পর্কে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ পূর্বেই পুলিশের সাহায্য গ্রহণ করতে গোপনে উদ্যোগী হন। অবশ্য সামগ্রিকভাবে পরিস্থিতি যেভাবে অগ্নিগর্ভ ছিল তাতে দাঙ্গার মত অনাকাঙ্ক্ষিত ঘটনার পুনরাবৃত্তির আশঙ্কা একেবারে অমূলক ছিল না। ইতোপূর্বে সংঘটিত সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা ও আইন অমান্য আন্দোলনে ঢাকার পুলিশের ভূমিকা যথাযথ ছিল না। ১৯৪১ সালের দাঙ্গা অনুসন্ধান কমিটির রিপোর্টে এই বিষয়ের প্রতি স্পষ্ট ইঙ্গিত রয়েছে। ছাত্রসমাজ পুলিশের প্রতি এতই বীতশ্রদ্ধ ও রাগান্বিত ছিল যে তাঁরা পুলিশ কর্মকর্তা লোম্যানকে হত্যা এবং হডসনকে আহত করেছিল। তাছাড়া বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এলাকায় পুলিশের প্রবেশ নিয়ে আইনগত প্রশ্ন ও সমস্যা ছিল। এজন্য উপরোক্ত পরিস্থিতিতে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষের সাহায্যের আহ্বানে পুলিশ রাজী হলেও এবিষয়ে সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করে। কেননা অস্ত্রধারী শান্তিরক্ষা বাহিনী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে মোতায়েন করা সম্ভব হলেও পুলিশ কর্তৃপক্ষের বক্তব্য ছিল কার্জন হলের সন্নিকটে সশস্ত্র সেনাবাহিনীর দৃশ্যমান উপস্থিতি আদৌ কাম্য নয়। ঢাকার অতিরিক্ত পুলিশ সুপারিনটেনডেন্ট এ প্রসঙ্গে জানান :

...would you please the appropriate authority to ring No. 43 (Lalbag Lines) in the event of any trouble occurring during the examination. An armed force will be standing by there. I do not consider it desirable to have any armed force visible in the vicinity of the Curzon Hall. I would request you to take steps to see that one but authorised persons, and candidates, have access to the Hall, and to assist you in this I am posting City constables at the gates of the Hall (that is, on the iron gates bordering on the public road). ^{২৮}

কার্জন হলে ছাত্র ইউনিয়নের অভিষেক অনুষ্ঠানে মঙ্গলঘট প্রদর্শন ও বন্দে মাতরম সঙ্গীত পরিবেশনকে কেন্দ্র করে যে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা শুরু হয় তা খুব দ্রুত প্রশমিত করে শান্তি স্থাপন ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্বাভাবিক পরিবেশ সৃষ্টি করা সম্ভব হয় নি। অধিকন্তু এ সমস্যার সাথে যুক্ত হয় নতুন

মাত্রা। ১৯৪৩ সালের ২৫ জানুয়ারী ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ৬৪জন হিন্দু শিক্ষক উপাচার্যের নিকট লিখিত এক স্মারকলিপিতে হিন্দু ও মুসলমান শিক্ষার্থীদের সম্ভাব্য নিরাপদ দূরত্বে বসবাসের ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের দাবী উত্থাপন করেন। একই সাথে শিক্ষকবৃন্দ নজীর আহমদের হত্যাকাণ্ডে গভীর দুঃখ প্রকাশ করে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে সকলের জন্য নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করার দাবী তোলেন।

We express our profound sorrow at the tragic loss of a valuable life of a student of this University. In our view, the recent events that have led to this catastrophe and brought about the present deadlock, are no accidental happenings, but are the culmination of a spirit of communalism that has been growing steadily and insidiously in this University. It found expression on previous occasions too, and has now assumed terrific proportions, We should be prepared for similar outbursts of this spirit till by well through out measures this root cause of the trouble is eradicated. But this will take time, and meanwhile our work cannot be resumed unless elementary safeguard against invasions of our seats of study and instruction be provided by setting up the physical barrier of distance between these and the Halls of residence which unfortunately have turned into breeding grounds of communal polities. We would, therefore, urge upon you with all the emphasis and earnestness at our command, to decide upon this segregation as the most vital and urgent measure in the present situation.^{২৯}

এই স্মারকলিপিতে অধ্যাপকবৃন্দ অভিন্ন মতামত প্রকাশ করেন যে কর্তৃপক্ষ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে সম্পূর্ণ নিরাপত্তার নিশ্চয়তা প্রদান না করে তাঁদের পাঠদান ও অন্যান্য কর্মে নিয়োজিত হতে অনুরোধ জানাতে পারেন না। অর্থাৎ পূর্ণ নিরাপত্তার নিশ্চয়তা ব্যতীত অধ্যাপকবৃন্দ কাজে যোগদান করবেন না। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে সংঘটিত এই সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার কারণ হিসেবে সমকালীন হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়ের অনেকেই মনে করেন যে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কেন্দ্রীয় ভবনে মুসলমান ছাত্রদের অবস্থান। এক্ষেত্রে তাঁদের প্রধান দাবী ছিল ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কেন্দ্রীয় ভবন (অর্থাৎ কার্জন হল) হতে মুসলিম ছাত্রদের স্থানান্তর। প্রথম বর্ষ বি. এ. শ্রেণীর ছাত্রী ও তেজগাঁওএ অবস্থানরতা সুনীতি সেনগুপ্তের স্থানীয় অভিভাবক দুর্গামোহন সেনগুপ্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উপাচার্য ও তদন্ত কমিশনের নিকট এক পত্রে দাবী উত্থাপন করেন যে:

Due to recent unrest and hooliganism on the 2nd february, 1943 I, the guardian of Miss Suniti Sen Gupta a student of Ist Year B.A. Class of your University, beg to bring to your notice that unless the students' boarding is shifted from the Central building I am not prepared to send my daughter there. Moreover, I may demand an assurance of her safety from you prior to my sending her back to your University.^{৩০}

২৫ ফেব্রুয়ারী উপাচার্য চারটি হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষ ও দুজন ডীনকে নিয়ে এক অনানুষ্ঠানিক সভায় মিলিত হয়ে বিদ্যমান পরিস্থিতি ও ২৫ মার্চ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খেলার বিষয়ে আলোচনা করেন। এখানে গৃহীত হয় যে প্রথমে হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষগণ, আবাসিক শিক্ষকবৃন্দ, প্রক্টর ও সহকারী প্রক্টরগণ যত বেশী সম্ভব ছাত্রবৃন্দের অভিভাবকবৃন্দ এবং বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় সম্পর্কে উৎসাহী বিদ্বৎজনের সাথে এক সভায় মিলিত হবেন। এখানে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খুলে দেবার ব্যাপারে তাঁদের মতামত, পরামর্শ ও প্রতিক্রিয়া জানার

চেষ্টা করা হবে। পরবর্তী পর্যায়ে উপাচার্য নিজেই এরূপ আরো একটি সভায় সকলের সাথে মিলিত হবেন এবং বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খুলে দেয়া সম্পর্কে এই সভার মতামত ও পরামর্শ কার্যকরী পরিষদকে জানাবেন। ২৮ ফেব্রুয়ারী জগন্নাথ হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষ ড. হরিদাস ভট্টাচার্যের আমন্ত্রণে জগন্নাথ ইন্টারমেডিয়েট কলেজের হলে আবাসিক শিক্ষকবৃন্দ ও ছাত্রবৃন্দের স্থানীয় অভিভাবকবৃন্দের এক সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। সভার প্রারম্ভেই সভাপতি ড. হরিদাস ভট্টাচার্য বক্তব্য রাখেন যে আইননুযায়ী ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় আবাসিক মর্যাদা সম্পন্ন এবং কর্তৃপক্ষ শিক্ষার্থীদের আবাসিক মর্যাদা ক্ষুণ্ণ করা সম্ভব নয়। সুতরাং বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এলাকায় ছাত্রদের আবাসিক অবস্থান অব্যাহত থাকবে-এবিষয়টি মনে রেখে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খোলার বিষয়ে ড. হরিদাস ভট্টাচার্য সম্মিলিতভাবে মতামত জ্ঞাপনের অনুরোধ জানান। এই সভায় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে বিদ্যমান পরিস্থিতি নিয়ে খোলামেলা আলোচনা হয় এবং সবশেষে সর্বসম্মত সিদ্ধান্ত গৃহীত হয় যে:

১. সভায় উপস্থিত অভিভাবকবৃন্দ সকলেই মনে করেন: ২ ফেব্রুয়ারীর মত ঘটনার যে পুনরাবৃত্তি হবে না এমন নিশ্চয়তা প্রাধ্যক্ষ বাস্তব অবস্থায় দিতে পারেন না। সুতরাং দাঙ্গা অনুসন্ধান কমিটির সুপারিশ অনুযায়ী ছাত্রদের জন্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃক গৃহীতব্য প্রয়োজনীয় নিরাপত্তামূলক ব্যবস্থা সম্পর্কে অভিভাবকবৃন্দ সন্তুষ্ট না হওয়া পর্যন্ত সাম্প্রদায়িক উত্তেজনাকর পরিস্থিতিতে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় পঠন-পাঠনের জন্য খুলে দেয়া যায় না।

২. অভিভাবকবৃন্দ এরূপ ঘটনার পুনরাবৃত্তি রোধের জন্য কয়েকটি ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের সুপারিশ করেন :

- ক) কোন ধর্মীয় সম্প্রদায়ের ছাত্রদের এমন কোন ভবনে আবাসিক সুবিধা দেয়া যাবে না যেখানে শ্রেণীকক্ষ, অফিস, ল্যাবরেটরী ও লাইব্রেরী রয়েছে।
- খ) বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কোন এলাকায় বা আবাসিক হলে কোন ধর্মীয় অনুষ্ঠান হতে পারবে না।
- গ) বি. এ. পাশ কোর্সের ছাত্রীদের স্বতন্ত্রভাবে পাঠদান করা উচিত; কেননা তাঁদের সংখ্যা বেশী।
- ঘ) ২ ফেব্রুয়ারীর ঘটনায় যে সকল ছাত্রদের জড়িত থাকার অভিযোগ প্রমাণিত হবে তাদের দৃষ্টান্তমূলক শাস্তিদানের ব্যবস্থা করা উচিত।
- ঙ) বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কোন শিক্ষক, ছাত্র বা কর্মচারী এই প্রতিষ্ঠানের অভ্যন্তরে সাম্প্রদায়িক বিদ্বেষ প্রকাশ ও প্রচার করলে তাকে অতি শীঘ্রই বরখাস্ত করা উচিত।
- চ) যদি প্রমাণিত হয় যে কোন হলে ২ ফেব্রুয়ারী মতো ঘটনা সংঘটনের প্রস্তুতি নেয়া হচ্ছে তা হলে সেই হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষ, আবাসিক শিক্ষক ও সহকারী আবাসিক শিক্ষকবৃন্দ এরূপ ঘটনার জন্য দায়ী থাকবেন এবং তাঁদের বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ ব্যবস্থা করা হবে।
- ছ) হিন্দু-মুসলমান শিক্ষক ও সাধারণ জনগণের প্রতিনিধিদের নিয়ে শান্তিকমিটি গঠন করা হবে যার প্রধান দায়িত্ব হবে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যয়নরত দুটি সম্প্রদায়ের ছাত্রদের মধ্যে বন্ধুত্ব ও সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠা করা। ৩

মার্চ মাসের প্রথম সপ্তাহে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রক্টর ধীরেন্দ্রনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় উপাচার্য ড. মহম্মদ হাসানকে জানান যে তিনি বেশ কিছু সংখ্যক ছাত্র ও তাঁদের অভিভাবকবৃন্দের সাথে পূর্বে

নির্ধারিত তারিখে তথা ১৫ মার্চ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খোলার বিষয় নিয়ে আলোচনা করেছেন। হিন্দু সম্প্রদায় অনুভব করে যে ঠিক এই মুহুর্তেই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কেন্দ্রীয় ভবন হতে সলিমুল্লাহ মুসলিম হলের ছাত্রদের অন্যত্র স্থানান্তর করা অসম্ভব। তবে ছাত্রদের নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা নিশ্চিত না করে বিদ্যমান পরিস্থিতিতে মে মাসের দ্বিতীয় সপ্তাহের পূর্বে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খোলার সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করা সমীচীন হবে না।^{৩২}

ফজলুল হক মুসলিম হলের আবাসিক শিক্ষক কাজী মোতাহার হোসেন (১৮৯৭-১৯৮১) এই হলের ছাত্রদের অভিভাবকবৃন্দের সাথে একই বিষয়ে আলোচনা করেন। চারজন অভিভাবক মনে করেন যে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ১৫ মার্চ খুলে দেয়া উচিত, কেননা পরিস্থিতি যথেষ্ট শান্ত, অন্যথায় একটি মন্দ দৃষ্টান্ত স্থাপন করা হবে। অবশ্য একজন অভিভাবক সুনির্দিষ্টভাবে বক্তব্য রাখেন যে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অন্তত আরো দুমাস বন্ধ রাখা উচিত। অন্যদিকে ২৫জন ছাত্রের অভিভাবকবৃন্দ মত প্রকাশ করেন যে খুব দ্রুত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খুলে দেয়া অবশ্যই কাঙ্ক্ষিত, তবে ইতোপূর্বে কয়েকটি ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের প্রয়োজনীয়তা রয়েছে। যেমন -

১. সকল মোকদ্দমা তুলে নেয়া।
২. বন্দে মাতরম সংগীত পরিবেশন সম্পর্কে সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ।
৩. সকল ছাত্রদের অভিভাবকবৃন্দের প্রতি অনুরোধ জানান দরকার যে তাঁরা যেন তাঁদের সন্তানদের বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে সুন্দর পরিবেশ সৃষ্টিতে প্রভাবিত করেন।
৪. বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কেন্দ্রীয় ছাত্র সংসদের সাধারণ কার্যাবলী এই শিক্ষাবর্ষে স্বাভাবিকভাবেই চলবে, তবে যে কোন আবাসিক হলের কার্যাবলী পরিচালনা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষের যথাযথ তত্ত্বাবধানে হতে হবে।^{৩৩}

১৯৪৩ সালের ১১ মার্চ ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসান বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ১০৮ জন শিক্ষকবৃন্দের সাথে পরিস্থিতি নিয়ে আলোচনা করেন। আলোচনার প্রারম্ভেই উপাচার্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের হিন্দু শিক্ষকদের প্রদত্ত স্মারকলিপির প্রসঙ্গ উত্থাপন করে বক্তব্য রাখেন যে শিক্ষকদের নিকট হতে এমন বিবৃতি কোনমতেই কাম্য নয় যে নিশ্চিত নিরাপত্তা বিধানের পূর্বে কর্তৃপক্ষ তাঁদের পাঠদান কার্যে যোগদানের আহ্বান জানাতে পারেন না। কেননা বিষয়টি তখন ছিল তদন্তাধীন। উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসানের বক্তব্যে প্রথমে এই স্মারকলিপিতে স্বাক্ষরদানকারী শিক্ষকদের বিরুদ্ধে ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ পেলেও বিষয়টির বাস্তবতা অনুধাবন করে উপাচার্য পন্ডিত বন্দনা কার্যে প্রবৃত্ত হন। উপাচার্য বলেন যে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সুনাম নির্ভর করে শিক্ষকদের উপর এবং তাঁরা এই ক্রান্তিলগ্নে সহযোগিতা না করলে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্থায়ীভাবে বন্ধ করা ব্যতীত গত্যন্তর নেই। এ প্রসঙ্গে উপাচার্যের বক্তব্যের সারমর্ম হল:

The Vice-Chancellor further pointed out that, in his opinion, the teachers were the most important part of the University, because in their hands lay the formation of the character of students and they alone could inculcate noble and high ideals in the students' minds and set an example of proper conduct and behaviour. According to the Vice-Chancellor the reputation of the University depended upon the teachers more than upon any one else and he appealed to them to go forward and do their duty in the

present great crisis which might end in the closing of the University permanently, unless students and their friends realised their duties and responsibilities towards the University.⁹⁸

এই সভায় কয়েকজন শিক্ষক মূল্যবান বক্তব্য রাখেন। ঐদের মধ্যে অর্থনীতি ও রাজনীতি বিভাগের ধীরেন্দ্রনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, পরিমল রায়, একে. ঘোষাল, অবনীভূষণ রুদ্র, গণিত বিভাগের নলিনীমোহন বসু, বাংলা ও সংস্কৃত বিভাগের ড. মুহাম্মদ শহীদুল্লাহ ও কবি জসীম উদ্দিন আহমেদ, ফার্সী বিভাগের ড. এম. আই. বোরা ও পদার্থ বিজ্ঞান বিভাগের কাজী মোতাহার হোসেন উল্লেখযোগ্য। সভায় আলোচনার সময় শিক্ষকদের দল ও রাজনীতিতে অংশগ্রহণের প্রশ্ন হঠাৎ উত্থাপিত হয় এবং কিছুটা বিতর্কের সৃষ্টি করে। অধ্যাপক রফিকুল ইসলাম তাঁর গ্রন্থে এক প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা লেখকের রচনা হতে উদ্ধৃতি প্রদান পূর্বক তথ্য পরিবেশন করেছেন যে হিন্দু ছাত্রদের করণীয় পরামর্শ দিয়েছেন ইংরেজী বিভাগের অধ্যাপক পি. কে. গুহ এবং মুসলমান ছাত্রদের পরামর্শ দিয়েছেন বাংলা ও সংস্কৃত বিভাগের অধ্যাপক কবি জসীম উদ্দিন আহমেদ।⁹⁹ এসকল তথ্য কতটুকু সত্য তা না জেনে গ্রন্থে উল্লেখ করা পণ্ডিতজনের অনুচিত কর্ম। যাই হোক, শিক্ষকদের বক্তব্যে ছাত্রদের উপর তাঁদের নিয়ন্ত্রণের অভাব ও অসুবিধায় তথ্য বিভিন্নভাবে প্রকাশ পেয়েছে। উপাচার্য সবশেষে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষার পরিস্থিতি সৃষ্টি করতে শিক্ষক সমাজের সাহায্য কামনা করেন।

ঢাকার কমিশনার এ. এস. লারকিন পরিচালিত দাঙ্গা তদন্ত কমিশনের একটা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ প্রশ্ন ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষকে করে তোলে বিব্রত। প্রশ্নটি ছিল যে এই সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গায় কারা প্রত্যক্ষভাবে জড়িত ছিল? ১১ মার্চ ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সকল হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষ ও আবাসিক শিক্ষকদের নিয়ে উপাচার্য এক সভা করেন যেখানে তিনি সকলকে জানান যে তদন্ত কমিশন, সরকার ও জনগণকে কোনভাবেই বুঝান যাচ্ছে না যে প্রাধ্যক্ষ এবং আবাসিক শিক্ষকগণ দাঙ্গায় জড়িত ব্যক্তিবর্গ বা ছাত্রদের নাম জানেন না। এই ঘটনার প্রত্যক্ষদর্শী ছিলেন ইংরেজ বিভাগের দুগুজন শিক্ষক- জে. এন. চৌধুরী ও পি. কে. গুহ। কিন্তু এই ঘটনার সময় তাঁরা ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের নিরাপত্তা ও আহতদের পরিচর্যার কাজে ব্যস্ত ছিলেন বিধায় তাঁদের পক্ষে কাউকে নির্দিষ্টভাবে সনাক্ত করা সম্ভব হয়নি। সভায় আগত শিক্ষকবৃন্দ উপাচার্যকে জানান যে কোন ছাত্রদের আড়াল করার কোন অভিপ্রায় তাঁদের নেই। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ শেষ পর্যন্ত এই দাঙ্গায় আহত ছাত্রদের নাম তদন্ত কমিশনের নিকট প্রেরণ করেন এবং তদন্ত কমিশন তাঁদের সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহণ করে।

ইতোপূর্বে ৭ মার্চ উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসান ঢাকার কয়েকজন সম্ভ্রান্ত ব্যক্তিদের নিয়ে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খোলার বিষয়ে আলোচনা করেন। এই ব্যক্তিবর্গ হলেন ড. এস. কে. গুপ্তা, এস. এন. মিত্র, জি. সি. দাশ, হাকিম হাবিবুর রহমান, এস. কে. মুখার্জী, রজনীকান্ত দাশ, খান বাহাদুর এফ. এ. সিদ্দিকী, এস. কে. বসু, বি. এ. রফিক, ড. এম. আহমেদ, এইচ. এম. ঘোষ, ড. সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ সেন এবং মোহাম্মদ তৈফুর। এই সভায় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ১৫ মার্চ খোলার পক্ষে ও বিপক্ষের অভিমত প্রকাশ করা হয়। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খুলে একজন অধ্যাপকের নেতৃত্বে একদল স্বেচ্ছাসেবক নিয়ে 'Pacifist Squad' গঠন এবং এই সংগঠনের সদস্যগণ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের যে কোন স্থানে প্রবেশ করে যে কোন ছাত্রকে তল্লাশী করতে পারবে- এমন প্রস্তাব উত্থাপিত হয়। কিন্তু এই প্রস্তাব বিতর্কের সৃষ্টি করে। ড. সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ সেন

এই প্রস্তাবের বিরোধীতা করে অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বক্তব্য উপস্থাপন করেন। ড. সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ সেনের বক্তব্যের সারমর্ম হল:

Dr. S.N. Sen was of the opinion that the appointment of a batch of volunteers as suggested by Mr. Rafique would not help much. In his opinion the students now a days were quite different from what they had been before and that they were most unwilling to submit to discipline. We suggested that every effort should be made to cultivate a feeling of peace and amity among the students of the different communities and the University must feel assured that the tension among the students have subsided to such an extent that there is no possibility of a recurrence of the disturbances, before it should reopen. The University should, in his opinion, wait for the suggestions of the Enquiry Committee set up by the Executive Council, and then decide what actions should be taken and when to reopen.^{৩৬}

উপস্থিত সুধীবৃন্দের মধ্যে রজনীকান্ত দাশ ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় আইনের পরিবর্তন সাধন করে উপাচার্য ও হল প্রশাসনের হাতে অধিক ক্ষমতা প্রদানের দাবী তোলেন। তিনি সকল মামলা প্রত্যাহার করে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে শান্তি ও সৌহার্দ্যমূলক পরিবেশ সৃষ্টির উপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করেন। উল্লেখ্য যে এই সভা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খোলা সম্পর্কে কোন সুনির্দিষ্ট সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করতে অসমর্থ হয়। তবে এখানে যে সুপারিশসমূহ গ্রহণ করা হয় তা হলো :

১. বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খোলার পর এরূপ অনাকাঙ্ক্ষিত পরিস্থিতি সৃষ্টির বিরুদ্ধে পূর্ব সতর্কতামূলক ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা প্রয়োজন।
২. সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গাকে কেন্দ্র করে রজুকৃত সকল মামলা ও অভিযোগ প্রত্যাহার করা শান্তি প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য অতীব জরুরী।
৩. বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে সম্প্রীতি আনার জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সকল ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করতে হবে।
৪. সর্বসাধারণের জন্য উন্মুক্ত সকল অনুষ্ঠানে বন্দে মাতরম সঙ্গীত পরিবেশন ও মঞ্জল ঘট প্রদর্শন করা যাবে না।

এপ্রিল মাসের শেষের দিকে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা তদন্ত কমিটি চূড়ান্ত রিপোর্ট পেশ করে, যা প্রকারান্তরে জটিলতা বৃদ্ধি করতে সহায়ক হয়। ১৯৪৩ সালের ২৯ এপ্রিল ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বোর্ড অব রেসিডেন্স, স্বাস্থ্য ও শৃঙ্খলা কমিটির সভায় দাঙ্গা তদন্ত কমিটির সুপারিশসমূহ বিস্তারিতভাবে আলোচনা করা হয় এবং বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় প্রশাসনের ক্ষেত্রে পরিবর্তিত বিভিন্ন ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের সুপারিশ করা হয়। ১ মে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় প্রশাসনের সর্বোচ্চ কর্তৃপক্ষ তথা কার্যকরী কমিটির সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয় যেখানে পূর্বেক্ত কমিটির সকল সুপারিশ পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খভাবে আলোচনাপূর্বক যে সকল সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করা হয় তার সারাংশ হলো :

১. শারদীয় পুজার সময় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আবাসিক হলসমূহ ও সকল লাইব্রেরীসমূহ তিন সপ্তাহের জন্য বন্ধ থাকবে।
২. প্রতি বছর ছাত্রদের আবাসনের জন্য নতুন করে হল, কক্ষ ও আসন বন্টন করা হবে।

৩. প্রতি বছর ৩০ জুন ছাত্রবৃন্দ বাধ্যতামূলকভাবে তাঁদের জন্য নির্ধারিত হল ত্যাগ করবে; কেবলমাত্র স্নাতকোত্তর শ্রেণীর শিক্ষার্থী বা পরিষ্কারীগণ প্রাধ্যক্ষের ব্যক্তিগত অনুমতি সাপেক্ষে অতিথি হিসেবে ১৬ জুলাই পর্যন্ত আবাসিক হলে অবস্থান করতে পারবে।
৪. কোন ছাত্রকে অযাচিত মনে করে কোন হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষ আবাসিক ছাত্র হিসেবে গ্রহণ না করলে সেই ছাত্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অন্য কোন হলে আবাসিক ছাত্র হতে পারবে না।
৫. ছাত্রদের অশিষ্ট আচরণের জন্য অর্থ-জরিমানা, ক্লাসের উপস্থিতি কেটে দেয়া ইত্যাদি বেশ কিছু ক্ষমতা সকল শিক্ষকদের থাকবে।
৬. বি. এ. পাশ কোর্সের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের আলাদাভাবে ক্লাস নেয়া হবে।
৭. বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে প্রহরীর সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি করা হবে এবং তাদের শান্তি-শৃংখলা রক্ষার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ দায়িত্ব প্রদান করা হবে।
৮. কোন জরুরী অবস্থা মোকাবিলা করার জন্য প্রক্টর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের যে কোন কর্মচারীর সাহায্য প্রার্থনা করলে ঐ ব্যক্তি অবশ্যই প্রক্টরকে সাহায্য করতে বাধ্য থাকবেন।
৯. কোন আন্তঃহল ক্রীড়া অনুষ্ঠান বা প্রতিযোগিতার আয়োজন করা যাবে না।
১০. ছাত্র সংসদ ও ছাত্রী সংসদের সকল কার্যকলাপ বন্ধ থাকবে।
১১. শিক্ষা কমিশনারের অনুরোধ অনুযায়ী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে সকল প্রকাশনা সাময়িকভাবে বন্ধ থাকবে।
১২. ছাত্রদের আবাসিক হলে দর্শনাধীর জন্য রেজিস্টার থাকবে যেখানে দর্শনাধীর ঠিকানা ও সাক্ষাৎকারী ছাত্রের নাম রেকর্ড করা হবে।^{৩৭}

শেষ পর্যন্ত ১০ মে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খুলে দেয়া হয়, কিন্তু হিন্দু শিক্ষার্থীবৃন্দ ক্লাশে যোগদান হতে বিরত থাকে। ঢাকা হল, জগন্নাথ হল ও ছাত্রী নিবাসের আবাসিক ও অনাবাসিক ১৮ ১ জন শিক্ষার্থীবৃন্দ ১৯৪৩ সালের ১৩ মে উপাচার্যের নিকট লিখিত আবেদন পত্রে দাবী জানায় যে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মূল ভবন হতে সলিমুল্লাহ মুসলিম হলের ছাত্রদের স্থানান্তর করতে হবে এবং দাঙ্গা তদন্ত কমিটির রিপোর্টে অভিযুক্ত ছাত্রদের শাস্তি প্রদান করতে হবে।^{৩৮} অন্যথায় হিন্দু শিক্ষার্থীবৃন্দ ক্লাশে যোগদান হতে বিরত থাকবে। উল্লেখ্য, ঢাকা বিভাগের কমিশনার এ. এস. লারকিনের নেতৃত্বে প্রণীত এই দাঙ্গার রিপোর্ট ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় রেকর্ডরুমে খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় নি, ফলে দাঙ্গায় অভিযুক্ত ব্যক্তিদের নামোল্লেখ সম্ভব হল না। যাই হোক, হিন্দু শিক্ষার্থীদের আবেদন পত্র জমা দিতে আগত ছাত্রের সাথে উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসান ব্যক্তিগতভাবে কথা বলে হিন্দু শিক্ষার্থীদের বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে যোগদান করতে অনুরোধ জানান। এরই ফলে ঐদিন ঢাকা হল ও জগন্নাথ হলের ১৪ জন ছাত্র প্রতিনিধি উপাচার্যের সাথে সাক্ষাৎ করে। এই সভায় কলা ও বিজ্ঞান অনুষদের ডীনদ্বয়, দুটি হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষ ও প্রক্টর উপস্থিত ছিলেন, এখানে হিন্দু ছাত্রদের সাথে প্রশাসনিক কর্তৃপক্ষের খোলামেলা আলোচনা হয়। উপাচার্য ছাত্রদের নিকট বিদ্যমান আবাসন অবস্থা বর্ণনা করে জানান যে বর্তমান পরিস্থিতিতে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মূল ভবন হতে মুসলিম হলের ছাত্রদের স্থানান্তর করা সম্ভব নয়। তবে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষের গৃহীত ব্যবস্থায় ছাত্রদের প্রয়োজনীয় নিরাপত্তা থাকবে। হিন্দু ছাত্রবৃন্দ নিরাপত্তা সম্পর্কে তাঁদের আস্থা বৃদ্ধির জন্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ভবনে অধিক সংখ্যক প্রহরী মোতায়েনের দাবী করলে উপাচার্য তা মেনে নেন। তবে

এই সম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গায় অভিযুক্তদের শাস্তি দানের বিষয়ে উপাচার্য বিস্তৃত আলোচনা করতে রাজী ছিলেন না, তবে এই বিষয়ে তিনি নিরপেক্ষভাবে যথাযথ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের আশ্বাস প্রদান করেন।^{৩৯} এই আলোচনার ফলে জগন্নাথ ও ঢাকা হলের ছাত্র প্রতিনিধিবৃন্দ উপাচার্যের নিকট লিখিত এক চিঠিতে জানায় যে তৎকালীন আবাসন সঙ্কটের পরিস্থিতিতে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কেন্দ্রীয় ভবন হতে মুসলিম হলের ছাত্রদের অন্যত্র স্থানান্তর যে সম্ভব নয় তা ছাত্রবৃন্দ অনুধাবন করেছে। তবে ছাত্রদের সার্বিকভাবে নিরাপত্তা দানের প্রতিশ্রুতি দান ও যথাযথ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হলে হিন্দু শিক্ষার্থীবৃন্দ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে যোগদান করবে। ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের পৃথকভাবে পাঠদানের সিদ্ধান্তকে ছাত্রবৃন্দ স্বাগত জানায়। এবং আশা প্রকাশ করে যে যত দ্রুত সম্ভব শ্রেণীকক্ষ মুসলিম হলের ছাত্রদের আবাসিক এলাকায় বাইরে আনার ব্যবস্থা করা হবে। এই আবেদনপত্রে হিন্দু ছাত্রবৃন্দ কয়েকটি দাবী উত্থাপন করে।

১. ক্লাশ শুরু করার পূর্বে ঐ ক্লাশে তল্লাশী চালাতে হবে।
২. বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কেন্দ্রীয় ভবনের দ্বিতীয় তলায় যেখানে মুসলিম হলের ছাত্রদের আবাসনে ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে, সেখানে তল্লাশী অব্যাহত রাখতে হবে যেন কোনক্রমেই সেখানে ইট বা লাঠি জড়ো করে রাখা না হয়।
৩. প্রয়োজনীয় সকল স্থানে গুর্খা প্রহরী মোতায়েন করতে হবে।
৪. যতদূর সম্ভব বহিরাগতদের বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এলাকায় প্রবেশ করা হতে বিরত রাখতে হবে।
৫. দাঙ্গায় অভিযোগে অভিযুক্তদের বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ তদন্ত সহকারে শাস্তি দানের দাবী হিন্দু ছাত্রবৃন্দ পুনর্ব্যক্ত করে এবং একাজে তাঁরা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষকে সম্পূর্ণ সহযোগিতা আশ্বাস প্রদান করে।^{৪০}

১৯৪৩ সালের এপ্রিল মাসে এ.এস. লারকিনের নেতৃত্বে পরিচালিত তদন্ত কমিটি চূড়ান্ত প্রতিবেদন পেশ করে। এই তদন্ত কমিটি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যয়নরত শিক্ষার্থীদের সম্পর্কে প্রচলিত আইন সংশোধনের সুপারিশ করে। তদন্ত কমিটি প্রদত্ত রিপোর্টের একটি উল্লেখযোগ্য বিষয় হল সহ-শিক্ষার নিন্দা এবং সহ-শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা পরিহারের পরামর্শ। এই তদন্ত কমিটির বিবরণীতে বলা হয় যে : বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সহ-শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা না থাকাই বাঞ্ছনীয়। ইডেন গার্লস কলেজটিকে (গ্রাজুয়েট ও পোস্ট গ্রাজুয়েট ক্লাসের পড়ায়) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের একটি শাখা বলিয়া গণ্য করা উচিত। ছাত্রীরা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে পরীক্ষা দিতে পারিবে। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে পড়াশুনা সম্বন্ধে ছাত্রীদের অভিভাবকদের বিশেষ অমত আছে। সুতরাং ইডেন কলেজের জন্য নুতন বাড়ী না পাওয়া পর্যন্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পক্ষে পৃথকভাবে পড়াশুনার ব্যবস্থা করা উচিত।^{৪১}

১৯৪৩ সালের ৫ জুন ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কার্যকরী পরিষদ মঙ্গলঘাট প্রদর্শন ও বন্দে মাতরম্ সম্পর্কে এইচ. ডি. নর্থফিল্ড ও অধ্যাপক জে. কে. চৌধুরী যুগ্মভাবে প্রস্তাব করেন যে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কোন অনুষ্ঠানে এমন কোন কিছু প্রদর্শন বা পরিবেশন করা যাবেনা যা কোন সম্প্রদায়ের ধর্মীয় ও রাজনৈতিক চেতনার পরিপন্থী। কিন্তু প্রস্তাবটি খুব স্পষ্ট না হওয়ায় ঢাকা বিভাগের কমিশনার এ. এস. লারকিন ও এ. এফ. রহমান নতুন ভাবে প্রস্তাব পেশ করেন। কিন্তু এই প্রস্তাবে কিছু সংশোধন ও সংযোজনের সুপারিশ করেন প্রখ্যাত পদার্থ বিজ্ঞানী অধ্যাপক সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ বসু ও অধ্যাপক পি. সি. ঘোষ। এই সুপারিশ সমূহ গ্রহণ করা হয় এবং সর্বসম্মতিক্রমে প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করা হয় যে :

As the report of the Enquiry Committee shows that objection was taken in the singing of Bandematarm and the display of a picture of Mangal Ghat on the 31st January, 1943 in the Women Students' Function in the Curzon Hall and disturbances followed; in order to avoid the future disturbances, the Executive Council resolve in view of the above and other matters referred to that in all University functions or inter-hall functions other than separate Hall functions, no object or symbol or recitation or song or demonstration should be allowed which is calculated to wound the religious or political feelings of any community.⁸²

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কার্যকরী পরিষদের এই সিদ্ধান্তের প্রকৃত ও সরল অর্থ হল যে ভবিষ্যতে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ও আন্তঃহলের অনুষ্ঠানে এমন কোন প্রতীক প্রদর্শন, কোন কিছু হতে পাঠ বা সঙ্গীত গীত হবেনা যা কোন সম্প্রদায়ের ধর্মীয় বা রাজনৈতিক অনুভূতিকে আহত করতে পারে। তবে পৃথকভাবে কোন হলের নিজস্ব অনুষ্ঠান এই সিদ্ধান্তের অন্তর্ভুক্ত হবেনা। প্রকৃতপক্ষে ছাত্রী হলের অনুষ্ঠান সম্পূর্ণভাবে নিজস্ব অনুষ্ঠান হলেও এখানে অন্যান্য হল ও সম্প্রদায়ের ছাত্রদের উপস্থিত ছিল যাদের পরিচয় লাহোর প্রস্তাব দ্বারা প্রভাবিত সেখানে এরূপ ঘটনা সমকালীন রাজনৈতিক চেতনা দ্বারা পরিচালিত।

১৯৪৩ সালের ৭ জুন দাঙ্গা কমিটির কতিপয় সুপারিশ বিবেচনার জন্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কার্যকরী পরিষদের এক সভায় আবাসিক হল এলাকায় রাজনৈতিক তৎপরতা, সভা ও অনুষ্ঠান নিষিদ্ধ ও নিয়ন্ত্রণ সম্পর্কে প্রস্তাব গৃহীত হয়। আবাসিক হলের অনুষ্ঠান নিয়ন্ত্রনের সম্পূর্ণ দায়িত্ব প্রদান করা হয় প্রাধ্যক্ষকে। আবাসিক হলের এবং বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মুখপত্র বা সাময়িকীতে কোন কিছু প্রকাশের পূর্বে যথাক্রমে প্রাধ্যক্ষ ও উপাচার্যের পূর্বানুমতি গ্রহণ বাধ্যতামূলক করা হয়। এই সভায় ঢাকা ব্যাপটিষ্ট মিশনের প্রধান রেভারেন্ড এইচ. ডি. নর্থফিল্ডকে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রক্টর নিয়োগ কমিটির সদস্য করে নেয়া হয়। ইতোপূর্বে তথা ১৯৪২ সালের ৮ সেপ্টেম্বর এইচ. ডি. নর্থফিল্ড উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসানকে বিশেষ পরামর্শ দিয়েছিলেন আইন অমান্য আন্দোলনে ছাত্রদের যোগদান হতে বিরত রাখার জন্য। ১৯৪৩ সালের ৩০ জুন ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কার্যকরী পরিষদের বিশেষ সভা আহ্বান করা হয়। এই সভা অনুষ্ঠানের পূর্বেই তথা ২৮ জুন এইচ. ডি. নর্থফিল্ড কার্যকরী পরিষদে আলোচনা ও সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের জন্য আটটি প্রস্তাব পেশ করেন। যাই হোক, নর্থফিল্ডের প্রস্তাবসমূহের জন্য মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য ছিল ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অর্ডিন্যান্সের বিভিন্ন ধারা সংশোধন ও পরিবর্তন করে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ছাত্রদের আবাসন ব্যবস্থা অসাম্প্রদায়িক করা, উপাচার্য, প্রক্টর, প্রাধ্যক্ষ ও আবাসিক শিক্ষকদের ক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি করা, চাপরাশী ও চৌকিদারদের নিয়ে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিজস্ব নিয়মিত বাহিনী গড়ে তোলা, সকল কর্মচারীদের সার্ভিস বই প্রথার ব্যবস্থা করা এবং সর্বোপরি শাস্তি শৃংখলা ভঙ্গকারী ছাত্রদের বিরুদ্ধে কঠিন শাস্তি বিধান সম্পর্কে উপাচার্যের বিবৃতি প্রদান। উল্লেখ্য যে নর্থফিল্ডের এসকল প্রস্তাব ছিল দাঙ্গা তদন্ত কমিশনের সুপারিশসমূহের উপর ভিত্তি করে উত্থাপিত।⁸³ ৩০ জুন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কার্যকরী পরিষদের সভায় নর্থফিল্ডের অধিকাংশ প্রস্তাব গৃহীত হলেও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রদের আবাসন ব্যবস্থা অসাম্প্রদায়িক করা সম্পর্কে কোন সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করা হয় নি। এরপর ১৯৪৩ সালের ১৩ জুলাই ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য নতুন আচরণ বিধি প্রণয়ন করেন যা বিজ্ঞপ্তি আকারে সকলকে

উত্তমরূপে জানানোর ব্যবস্থা করা হয়। এ সকল আচরণ বিধি পূর্বে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে, তবে এসময় আইন-শৃঙ্খলা ভঙ্গকরণের জন্য কঠিন শাস্তি দানের বিষয়টি অত্যন্ত গুরুত্ব লাভ করে। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অর্ডিন্যান্সের প্রথম ভাগের দশম অধ্যায় ৫টি অনুচ্ছেদ সংযোজনের জন্য ১৯৪৪ সালের ১৭ জুন কার্যকরী পরিষদের এক সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয় এবং যে অনুচ্ছেদগুলো এখানে সংযোজন করা হয় তা হল :

- ১ (২৪) বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এলাকায় অরাজনৈতিক সভা অনুষ্ঠান বা প্রদর্শনী কেবলমাত্র হতে পারবে যখনই যখন সেখানে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ক্ষেত্রে উপাচার্যের এবং আবাসিক হলের ক্ষেত্রে প্রাধ্যক্ষের পূর্বানুমতি নেয়া হবে।
- ২ (২৫) অনুরূপভাবে রাজনৈতিক সভা, অনুষ্ঠান বা প্রদর্শনীর ক্ষেত্রে শর্ত প্রযোজ্য হবে যে হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষের পূর্বানুমতি নিয়ে এই অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করতে হবে এবং এই অনুষ্ঠানে অন্য কোন আবাসিক হলের কোন ছাত্র বা সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষক যোগদান করতে পারবেন না।
- ৩ (২৬) আন্তঃহল সভা, অনুষ্ঠান বা প্রদর্শনী ইত্যাদির জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রাধ্যক্ষগণের প্রকাশ্য পূর্বানুমতির প্রয়োজন হবে। এসকল অনুষ্ঠানে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যতীত অন্য কোন ব্যক্তি যোগদান করতে পারবেন না।
- ৪ (২৭) আবাসিক হলের যে কোন সভা বা অনুষ্ঠানের ক্ষেত্রে যে কোন শর্ত আরোপ ও কর্মসূচী নিয়ন্ত্রণের অধিকার প্রাধ্যক্ষের থাকবে। অনুরূপভাবে আন্তঃহলের সভা ও অনুষ্ঠানের কর্মসূচী ধার্য করার ক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রাধ্যক্ষগণের অধিকার থাকবে।
- ৫ (২৮) হলের বার্ষিক মুখপত্র বা যে কোন প্রকাশনা প্রাধ্যক্ষের অনুমতি ব্যতীত সম্পাদন করা যাবে না। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ক্ষেত্রে এরূপ প্রকাশনা নিয়ন্ত্রণের অধিকার থাকবে কেবলমাত্র উপাচার্য মহোদয়ের।^{৪৪}

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিজস্ব কোন অনুষ্ঠান বা আন্তঃহলের কোন অনুষ্ঠানে এমন কোন প্রতীক প্রদর্শন, পাঠ বা আবৃত্তি অথবা সঙ্গীত পরিবেশন করা যাবে না যা কোন সম্প্রদায়ের ধর্মীয় বা রাজনৈতিক অনুভূতিকে আহত করতে পারে- এই বিষয়টি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অর্ডিন্যান্সে সংযোজন করার জন্য ১৯৪৪ সালের ২ সেপ্টেম্বর কার্যকরী পরিষদ একটি কমিটি গঠন করে। এই কমিটিতে ছিলেন উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হোসেন, চারটি আবাসিক হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষগণ, সুলতানুদ্দীন আহমেদ এবং পঞ্চজ কুমার ঘোষা।^{৪৫} এই কমিটির রিপোর্টের উপর ভিত্তি করে ১৯৪৪ সালের ২৫ নভেম্বর কার্যকরী পরিষদের সভায় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অর্ডিন্যান্সের প্রথম অধ্যায়ের ২৯ অনুচ্ছেদে একটি সিদ্ধান্ত যুক্ত হয়। সিদ্ধান্তটি ছিল ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিজস্ব কোন অনুষ্ঠান বা আন্তঃহলের কোন অনুষ্ঠানে এমন কোন প্রতীক প্রদর্শন, পাঠ বা আবৃত্তি অথবা সংগীত পরিবেশন করা যাবে না যা কোন সম্প্রদায়ের ধর্মীয় বা রাজনৈতিক অনুভূতিকে আহত করতে পারে। এছাড়া এই সভায় আরো একটি সিদ্ধান্ত গৃহীত হয় যে ছাত্রবৃন্দ অন্য কোন আবাসিক হলের কোন অনুষ্ঠানে যোগদানে ইচ্ছুক হলে এবং যথাযথভাবে আমন্ত্রিত হলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রাধ্যক্ষ মহোদয় এসকল ছাত্রবৃন্দকে ঐ হলের অনুষ্ঠান সফল করে তোলার জন্য সহযোগিতার আহ্বান জানাবেন।^{৪৬} সম্ভবতঃ উভয় সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি পুনপ্রতিষ্ঠার জন্যই এধরনের সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ হয়েছিল।

সম্পর্কিত আদর্শিক বিষয়ে নিয়ে প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন।

The University of Dacca has passed through many and varied difficulties during the past twelve months, and its difficulties are by no means over. Communal difference which had been an ugly and discreditable feature of the life of Dacca during last two years found their way among the students of the University this year and there were free fights between two sections of students in Curzon Hall and the Central buildings which resulted in injuries to a number of students one of which proved fatal. The University has no excuse or explanation to offer for this outrageous behaviour of its students who, in their excitement, forgot all the noble principles which should differentiate an educated man from an illiterate and uncultured door.⁶²

মনে করা হয় যে এই ঘটনা ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের জীবনে এক চিরস্থায়ী লজ্জার বিষয় হয়ে থাকবে। তবে এই পরিস্থিতি হতে উত্তরণের আশা সঞ্চর করতে পারে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষার্থীবৃন্দ। উপাচার্য ড. মাহমুদ হাসান এ বিষয়ে আশা প্রকাশ করেন যে ছাত্রবৃন্দ তাঁদের নিজস্ব শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের হৃত গৌরব পুনরুদ্ধারে সচেষ্ট হবে।⁶³ এতে কোন সন্দেহ নেই যে ১৯৪৩ সালে ছাত্রী হলের অভিষেক অনুষ্ঠানকে কেন্দ্র করে সংঘটিত ঘটনা ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইতিহাসে একটি অতীব কলঙ্কজনক অধ্যায়। ফলে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রশাসন, শিক্ষার্থী ও অভিভাবকবৃন্দ মারাত্মকভাবে চিন্তিত ও প্রভাবিত হয়। দীর্ঘ দিন পাঠদান কার্যক্রম বন্ধ থাকে এবং বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষকে শিক্ষার পরিবেশ পুন প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য বিভিন্ন সতর্কতামূলক ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করতে হয়। ঘটনাটি বিবৃত করে ১৯৪২-৪৩ শিক্ষাবর্ষের বার্ষিক প্রতিবেদন উল্লেখ করা হয়:

There was a disturbance during the installation of the Women Students' Council on Sunday, January 31, 1943. The singing of the Bandematarm and display of picture of Mongalghat were objected to by certain students and soon there was a free fight between two sections of the University students. The University was kept closed on Monday but was reopened on Thursday at the request of the students who through their representatives assured the Provost, the Deans and the Vice-Chancellor that they (the students) greatly regretted the incidents which took place on the previous Sunday and further assured the authorities of the University that the University could be reopened without there being any fear of fresh incidents. On Tuesday the University classes went on as usual till 12.30 P.M., when there was a serious disturbance, as a result of which, some 20 students were more or less seriously injured and one of whom expired. These disturbances seriously affected the normal activities of the University. The classes remained suspended from the 3rd February to the 11th March, 1943 and the summer vacation commenced prematurely from the 12th March and extended upon the 27th April, 1943, but the normal activities of the University could not actually be resumed before the 10th May, 1943.⁶⁸

ছাত্রী হলের সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানে সংঘটিত সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা অনতিবিলম্বে রাজনৈতিক মাত্রা লাভ করে। ১৯৪৩ সালের ১৪ ফেব্রুয়ারী কলিকাতার মুসলিম ইনস্টিটিউট হলে যে শহীদ নজীর আহমদ

দিবস পালিত হয় সেখানে সভাপতিত্ব করেন বাংলা আইন সভার সদস্য ও খাজা নাজিমুদ্দিন মন্ত্রী সভার শিক্ষামন্ত্রী তমিজুদ্দিন খান (১৮৮৯-১৯৬৩)। এই সভায় অন্যান্য বক্তা ছিলেন নাজিমুদ্দিন মন্ত্রীসভার আর এক সদস্য হোসেন শহীদ সোহরাওয়ার্দী (১৮৯৩-১৯৬৩), আজাদ পত্রিকার সহ-সম্পাদক মুজিবুর রহমান খাঁ (১৯১০-১৯৮৪) প্রমুখ নেতৃবৃন্দ। এঁদের সকলেই তৎকালীন লাহোর প্রস্তাবের ঘোর সমর্থক ছিলেন। অন্যদিকে হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়ের নেতৃবৃন্দ এখানে নির্লিপ্ত ছিলেন না, বরং বিষয়টি সাম্প্রদায়িক দিক থেকে বিবেচনা করেছেন। ছাত্রী হলে সংঘটিত ঘটনা তদন্ত কমিটির রিপোর্টে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শ্রেণীকক্ষের নিকট হতে মুসলমান ছাত্রদের আবাসিক ব্যবস্থা স্থানান্তরের সুপারিশ ছিল। কিন্তু দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধের সময় কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট তা একেবারেই অসম্ভব ছিল। এই পরিস্থিতিতে ঢাকা জেলা হিন্দু মহাসভার সাধারণ সম্পাদক ১৯৪৩ সালের ৮ মে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উপচার্যের নিকট লিখিত এক পত্রে জানান যে তদন্ত কমিটির উপরোক্ত সুপারিশ কার্যকর করার পূর্বে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খোলা সঠিক হবে না।^{৫৫} কেননা শ্রেণীকক্ষের নিকট মুসলমান ছাত্রদের আবাসিক অবস্থান হিন্দু ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ও তাঁদের অভিভাবকগণ বিপজ্জনক মনে করেন।

একটা বিষয় এখানে উল্লেখ করা প্রয়োজন যে ঢাকায় প্রগতিশীল সাংস্কৃতিক সংগঠনের সৃষ্টি হলে এবং সেখানে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র-শিক্ষক যোগদান করলে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার বিরুদ্ধে সোচ্চার হতে গিয়ে বিরূপ অভীজতার সম্মুখীন হয়েছিল ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রগতিশীল ছাত্রবৃন্দ। এ প্রসঙ্গে স্মৃতিচারণ করে অধ্যাপক সরদার ফজলুল করিম লিখেছেন:

৪২ কিংবা ৪৩ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে হিন্দু-মুসলিম ছাত্রদের মধ্যে যে রক্তক্ষয়ী সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা হয়েছিলো, যাতে প্রাণ হারিয়েছিলো ছাত্রনেতা নাজির আহমদ, সে দাঙ্গার বিরুদ্ধে সোচ্চার হওয়ার চেষ্টা করেছিলেন নাজমুল করিম, হেসামুদ্দিন (বাহাদুর), রবি গুহ এবং তাঁর অপর বন্ধুরা। এবং দাঙ্গাবিরোধী মনোভাবের কারণে তাঁরা নিজ নিজ সম্প্রদায়ের সাম্প্রদায়িক মনোভাবের ছাত্রদের দ্বারা নানাভাবে নির্যাতিতো হয়েছিলেন।^{৫৬}

১৯৪৩ সালের এই সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গাই ছিল ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অভ্যন্তরে প্রথম ও শেষ সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা। যদিও বিভিন্ন সময়ে ঢাকায় সৃষ্ট সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে প্রভাব বিস্তার করেছে, কিন্তু কখনোই ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রবৃন্দ নিজেদের মধ্যে কোন রক্তক্ষয়ী সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গায় প্রবৃত্ত হয়নি। ভাবতেও অবাধ হতে হয় যে একদা ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মুসলিম ছাত্রবৃন্দ রাজনীতির প্রতি ছিল অত্যন্ত নিস্পৃহ; সুশিক্ষিত হয়ে সমাজে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত হওয়াই ছিল তাঁদের একমাত্র উদ্দেশ্য। এমনকি ১৯৩৬ সালে মুসলিম ছাত্রনেতা আবদুল ওয়াসেক কোলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শ্রী-পদা যুক্ত মনোগ্রাম এবং বন্দে মাতরম্ সংগীতের বিরুদ্ধে আন্দোলনে বহু চেষ্টা করেও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মুসলিম শিক্ষার্থীদের যোগাদান করাতে ব্যর্থ হন। কিন্তু ১৯৪০ সালের লাহোর প্রস্তাবের পর ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মুসলিম ছাত্রবৃন্দের অধিকাংশ মুসলিম লীগের রাজনীতির প্রতি উৎসাহিত হন। বলা বাহুল্য যে মুসলিম লীগ অনেক আগেই বন্দে মাতরম্ সঙ্গীত ও ধ্বনির বিরোধিতা শুরু করে। মনে হয় পূর্ব বাংলাএ শিক্ষিত মুসলমান যুবক লাহোর প্রস্তাবের মাধ্যমে সৃষ্ট পাকিস্থানের মধ্যে নিজদের

আশা-আকাঙ্ক্ষার বাস্তবায়নের সভাবনা লক্ষ্য করে মুসলিম লীগকে সমর্থন করেছিল, কিন্তু পাকিস্তান সৃষ্টির পর পরই খুব দ্রুত তাঁদের ভুল ধরা পড়ে। অন্যদিকে ১৯৪৩ সালের এই ঘটনার পর হতে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মুসলিম ছাত্রবৃন্দ সকল সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গার বিরুদ্ধে একটি প্রতিবাদী শক্তি হিসেবে আত্মপ্রকাশ করে। একটা বিষয় এখানে উল্লেখ করা প্রয়োজন যে ঢাকায় প্রগতিশীল সাংস্কৃতিক সংগঠনের সৃষ্টি হলে এবং সেখানে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র-শিক্ষক যোগদান করলে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা রোধে নতুন শক্তির অভ্যুদয় ঘটে। ভারত বিভাগের সময়কাল হতে আজ পর্যন্ত ঢাকায় বিভিন্ন সময়ে সংঘটিত সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গায় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মুসলিম শিক্ষক ও ছাত্রবৃন্দ হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়কে বিভিন্নভাবে রক্ষা করে চরম মানবিক গুণাবলীর পরিচয় সমুন্নত রাখে।

তথ্য নির্দেশ :

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- ২। Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Vande Mataram: The Biography of a Song, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2003.
- ৩। “Even then Dacca University did not become a stronghold of the Muslim League till the Lahore resolution was passed in 1940. It was the idea of Pakistan which brought about a tremendous change in the attitude of young men and women getting trained in this university.” Mahmud Husain, “Dacca University and the Pakistan Movement”, in the Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935-1947, edited by C.H.Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1970), P. 371.
- ৪। ১৯৪০ সালে নোয়াখালীর রামগঞ্জের চটখিল পাঁচগাঁওয়ের উচ্চ ইংরেজী বিদ্যালয়ের প্রশাসনিক জটিলতা সাম্প্রদায়িক রূপ ধারণ করে। একই বছর নোয়াখালী প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষক নিয়োগের ব্যাপারে সাম্প্রদায়িকতার প্রশ্ন উত্থাপিত হয়। ১৯৪০ সালে বর্ধমান জেলার কেতুগ্রামে আশুতোষ মেমোরিয়াল গভর্নিং কমিটি গঠনে সাম্প্রদায়িক অসন্তোষ সৃষ্টি হয়। ১৯৪৩ সালে পাবনা এডওয়ার্ড কলেজে মুসলমানদের আযান নিয়ে বিতর্ক হয় এবং সৃষ্টি হয় সাম্প্রদায়িক পরিবেশ ও রাজনীতি। ১৯৪৬ সালে বগুড়া আজিজুল হক কলেজে মহারাজা নন্দকুমার শীর্ষক নাট্যানুষ্ঠান নিয়ে সাম্প্রদায়িক পরিস্থিতির সৃষ্টি হয়। একই বছর বগুড়া করোনেশন ইনষ্টিটিউটে মুসলিম লীগের পতাকা উত্তোলন নিয়ে সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্পর্কের অবনতি ঘটে। ১৯৪৬ সালে সিলেটের মুরারীচাঁদ কলেজে আযান নিয়ে বিতর্ক সৃষ্টি হয় এবং পরিস্থিতি অশান্ত হয়ে ওঠে। ১৯৪৭ সালের জুন মাসে দিনাজপুরের ঠাকুরগাঁও উচ্চ ইংরেজী বিদ্যালয়ে কংগ্রেসের অধিবেশনে আগত হিন্দু ডেলিগেটদের আশ্রয় দানের ঘটনা শেষ পর্যন্ত সাম্প্রদায়িক রূপ পরিগ্রহ করে। ১৯৪৭ সালে রাজশাহী কলেজের ছাত্রীদের আবাসিক হলে আলোকসজ্জা নিয়ে সাম্প্রদায়িক বিবাদ হয়। এসকল ঘটনা সম্পর্কে সরকারি দলিল দস্তাবেজ ও তৎকালীন পত্র-পত্রিকায় প্রচুর পরিমাণ তথ্য পাওয়া যায়। আল্যোচ্য

সমস্যা সম্পর্কে লেখকের একখানা গ্রন্থ যন্ত্রস্ত থাকায় এ সম্পর্কে তথ্য নির্দেশিকাসমূহ দেয়া হলো না।

৫। বিস্তৃত আলোচনার জন্য দেখা যেতে পারে, রতন লাল চক্রবর্তী, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে নারী, (ঢাকা: কল্যাণ প্রকাশন, ২০০৪), পৃ ১৪০-৪৪১

৬। “We are very much perturbed and agitated over the orders that have been just issued for an immediate evacuation of Jagannath Hall of its present habitat. We understand that it has been suggested that the Hall would be shifted to Dacca Hall building. We would like to make it plian that we could, no on account and under no circumstances, agree to lose our separate entity. You can, we are confident, realise how painful it is on our part to leave this Hall with the walls and buildings of which our memories are so intimately bound up.

But if we go at all, and now we are sure, we have to go, we must go to a place where our separate existence shall be fully maintained, and where our collective interests as students of Jagannath Hall shall be adequately preserved. The causes that necessitate the maintenance of our separate existence are numerous.” Letter from the students of Jagannath Hall to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, University of Dhaka, 24 January, 1943. Bundle No. 2, Serial No. 1942-43, Dhaka University Record Room.

৭। “Moreover, I am afraid a handful of our Hindu boarders may not feel quite comfortable in the midst of an overwhelming number of Muslim boarders, particularly as many of them will not be students of this college. And in the present atmosphere of strained relation between the two communities I do not consider it expendent to keep them together. I, therefore, approach you with the request that you would kindly accommodate our Hindu boarders numbering a dozen or so during the period of this emergency in the Dacca Hall of the University, which is quite adjacent to our hostels.” Letter from Dr. M. Ahmed, Principal, Dhaka Intermediate College to Dr. Ramesh Chandra majumdar, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 5 June 1942. Bundle No. 2, Serial No. 1942-43, Dhaka University Record Room.

৮। Letter from Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University to Dr. M. Ahmed, Principal, Dhaka Intermediate College, 6 June, 1942, Bundle No. 2, Serial No. 1942-43, Dhaka University Record Room.

৯। অজয় রায়, ঢাকা-জগন্নাথ হল থেকে জগন্নাথ হল, বাসন্তী সংখ্যা, জগন্নাথ হল, ১৯২১-১৯৮১, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ১৯৮১, পৃ ১৭৮-৭৯।

১০। রঙ্গলাল সেন, ঢাকার সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি ও দাঙ্গা-হাঙ্গামা, বাংলাদেশ ও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, (ঢাকা: শিখা প্রকাশনী, ২০০৩), পৃ ৪২৮-২৯।

১১। রফিকুল ইসলাম, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আশী বছর, (ঢাকা: অনন্যা, ২০০৩), পৃ ১০৪-১০৭।

১২। বিস্তারিত জানার জন্য দেখা যেতে পারে, রতন লাল চক্রবর্তী, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে নারী, পৃ ৩৮২-৪১৯।

- ১৩। কিরণশঙ্কর সেনগুপ্ত ও সরদার ফজলুল করিম, *চল্লিশের দশকের ঢাকা*, (ঢাকা: সাহিত্য প্রকাশ, ২০০১) পৃ ৯৫-৯৬।
- ১৪। বন্দে মাতরম বিষয় ও সঙ্গীত নিয়ে আলোচনার জন্য যে সকল তথ্যগ্রন্থসমূহ ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে তা হলো: বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়, *আনন্দ মঠ*, (চিত্তরঞ্জন বন্দোপাধ্যায় সম্পাদিত), কলিকাতা, ১৯৯৩; প্রভাতকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়, *রবীন্দ্রজীবনী ও রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্য-প্রবেশক*, কলিকাতা, বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ, ১৪০১, প্রথম খন্ড: প্রশান্তকুমার পাল, *রবিজীবনী*, কলকাতা, দ্বিতীয় খন্ড (১৯৯০) ও তৃতীয় খন্ড (১৩৯৪); শিশির কর, *ব্রিটিশ শাসনে বাজেয়াপ্ত বাংলা বই*, কলকাতা, ১৯৮৮; প্রিয়নাথ গুহ, *বঙ্গ-ভঙ্গ বা বরিশাল প্রাদেশিক সমিতির ইতিহাস*, কলিকাতা, ১৯০৭। (Former India Officer Library and Records London, V. Tracts No. 14127 bb. 4(2) Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *Vande Mataram: The Biography of a Song*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2003.
- ১৫। ঢাকা প্রকাশ, ৭ ফেব্রুয়ারী, ১৯৪৩, পৃ ২।
- ১৬। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে গোলযোগ সম্পর্কে তদন্ত কমিটির রিপোর্ট, ঢাকা প্রকাশ, ২ মে, ১৯৪৩, পৃ ২।
- ১৭। Memoranda by Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, University of Dhaka, 2 February, 1943, D. Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ১৮। আহতদের মধ্যে ছিলেন সুবোধ রঞ্জন সেন, চিত্তরঞ্জন সাহা, সুধীর দত্ত, নিত্যানন্দ পাল, রুপেন্দ্র ব্যানার্জী, রামপ্রসাদ দাশ শর্মা, অমল রায় ও ক্ষিতীন্দ্র নাথ বসু-যারা সকলেই জগন্নাথ হলের ছাত্র। অন্যদিকে ফজলুল হক হলের ছাত্রদের মধ্যে যারা আহত হয়েছিলেন তারা হলেন এ. এইচ. এম. মুসলোউদ্দিন, আব্দুল খালেক, মোহাম্মদ দানেশ এবং সলিমুল্লাহ মুসলিম হলের মোহাম্মদ এমদাদুল্লাহ, এ. এম. সিদ্দিক আহমদ, মোহাম্মদ চান্দ মিয়া ও খোন্দকার মোশতাকাহমদ। উল্লেখ্য শেযোক্ত ছাত্র খোন্দকার মোশতাক আহমদ ছিলেন প্রথম বর্ষ (সম্মান) ইংরেজী বিভাগের, আর ইনিই পরবর্তীকালে আওয়ামী লিগে যোগ দেন, মুক্তি যুদ্ধে অংশ গ্রহণ করেন, মন্ত্রীত্ব লাভ করেন এবং বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের নত্যার পর ১৯৭৫ সালে বাংলাদেশের রাষ্ট্রপতির পদ গ্রহণ করেন। প্রশ্ন উঠতে পারে যে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গায় লিপ্ত খোন্দকার মোশতাক আহমদ ও বাংলাদেশের রাজনীতিবিদ ও রাষ্ট্রপতি খোন্দকার মোশতাক আহমদ যে একই ব্যক্তি তার প্রমাণ কি? ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের দলিল পত্রে খোন্দকার মোশতাক আহমদের পরিচয় এভাবে লেখা হয়েছে যে, Khandaker Moshtaq Ahmed, S/O Kabiruddin Ahmad Khandaker, Vill. Doshpara, P.O. Gouripur, Dr. Tippera (D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76) খোন্দকার মোশতাক আহমদের প্রায় ঠিক অনুরূপ পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় বাংলা একাডেমী চরিতাভিধানো (২য় সংস্করণ, ১৯৯৭, পৃ. ১৪২-৪৩)।
- ১৯। নজীর আহমদের বাড়ী ছিল বর্তমান ফেনী জেলার আলীপুর গ্রামে। তাঁর পিতার নাম ছিল আবদুল মজিদ। ১৯৪২ সালে পাকিস্তান নামে একটি পত্রিকা প্রকাশের সাথে জড়িত ছিলেন। নজীর আহমদ সম্পর্কে বিস্তৃত আলোচনার জন্য দেখা যেতে পারে, কাজী নজরুল হক, *শহীদ নজির*, কলিকাতা, ১৯৪৫ ও *অমর জীবন: শহীদ নজীর* (সম্পাদিত) হাসান জামান, ঢাকা, সোসাইটি ফর পাকিস্তান ষ্টাডিজ, ১৯৭০। নাজমুল হক সম্পাদিত, *শহীদ নজির*। উল্লেখ্য যে এই স্মৃতিমূলক

গ্রন্থদ্বয়ে তথ্যের চেয়ে আবেগের প্রাধান্য বেশী।

২০। রঙ্গলাল সেন, ঢাকার সম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি ও দাঙ্গা-হাঙ্গামা, বাংলাদেশ ও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, পৃ. ২২৩, ২৩৭।

২১। এ লজ্জাজনক ঘটনাটি সম্পর্কে ঢাকা প্রকাশ সংবাদ পরিবেশন করে যে: ২রা ফেব্রুয়ারী তারিখে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গৃহে যখন গোলমাল চলিতেছিল সেই সময় একট সোনার হার ছিনাইয়া লওয়া হইয়াছিল বলিয়া জানিতে পারা গিয়াছে। ঢাকা প্রকাশ, ৭ ফেব্রুয়ারী, ১৯৪৩। ব্রজেন্দ্রকৃষ্ণ সেনগুপ্ত ঢাকা হলের প্রাধ্যক্ষের মাধ্যমে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের রেজিষ্ট্রারকে লেখেন: My daughter Miss. Tripti Sen, a student of the First year B.A. Class, has reported to me that her necklace was snatched away from her neck during the disturbances that took place on Tuesday last. I inform you this so that you may kindly make necessary enquiries about it and return it to me if recovered." Letter from Brajendra Krishna Sen Gupta to Registrar of the Dhaka University, 4 February, 1943, D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76. Dhaka University Record Room.

২২। Letter from Dr. M.N. Basu to the Registrar, Dhaka University, 3 February, 1943. D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.

২৩। "That a committee consisting of the Commissioner (Mr. A.S. Larkin), Chairman and Convener, Mr. P.C. Ghose and Mr. Md. Ibrahim be appointed to enquire into the incidents which had taken place on Sunday the 31st January and Tuesday the 2nd February 1943 and the general state of affairs and discipline in the University and to make definite recommendations." Dhaka University, Extract from the Minutes of the Executive Council held on 3rd February, 1943.

২৪। Resolution of the Meeting of the Muslim Students of Dhaka university, 3 February, 1943, D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.

২৫। ঢাকার ব্যাপার, দৈনিক আজাদ, ২১ মাঘ, ১৩৪৯, ৪ ফেব্রুয়ারী ১৯৪৩।

২৬। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সলিমুল্লাহ মুসলিম হলে ১৯৬০ এর দশক পর্যন্ত শহীদ নজীর দিবস পালিত হতো।

২৭। Letter from the Registrar, Dhaka University to District Magistrate of Dhaka, 5 February, 1943, D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No 76, Dhaka University Record Room.

২৮। Letter from the Additional Superintendent of Police to the Registrar, Dhaka University; 13 February, 1943 D-Register, Bundle -7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.

২৯। Memorandum submitted by 64 teachers of Dhaka University to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor Dhaka University, 25 February, 1943 D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.

৩০। Letter from Durga Mohan Sen to Dr. Mahmud Hadan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 5 February, 1943, D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76 Dhaka University

Record Room.

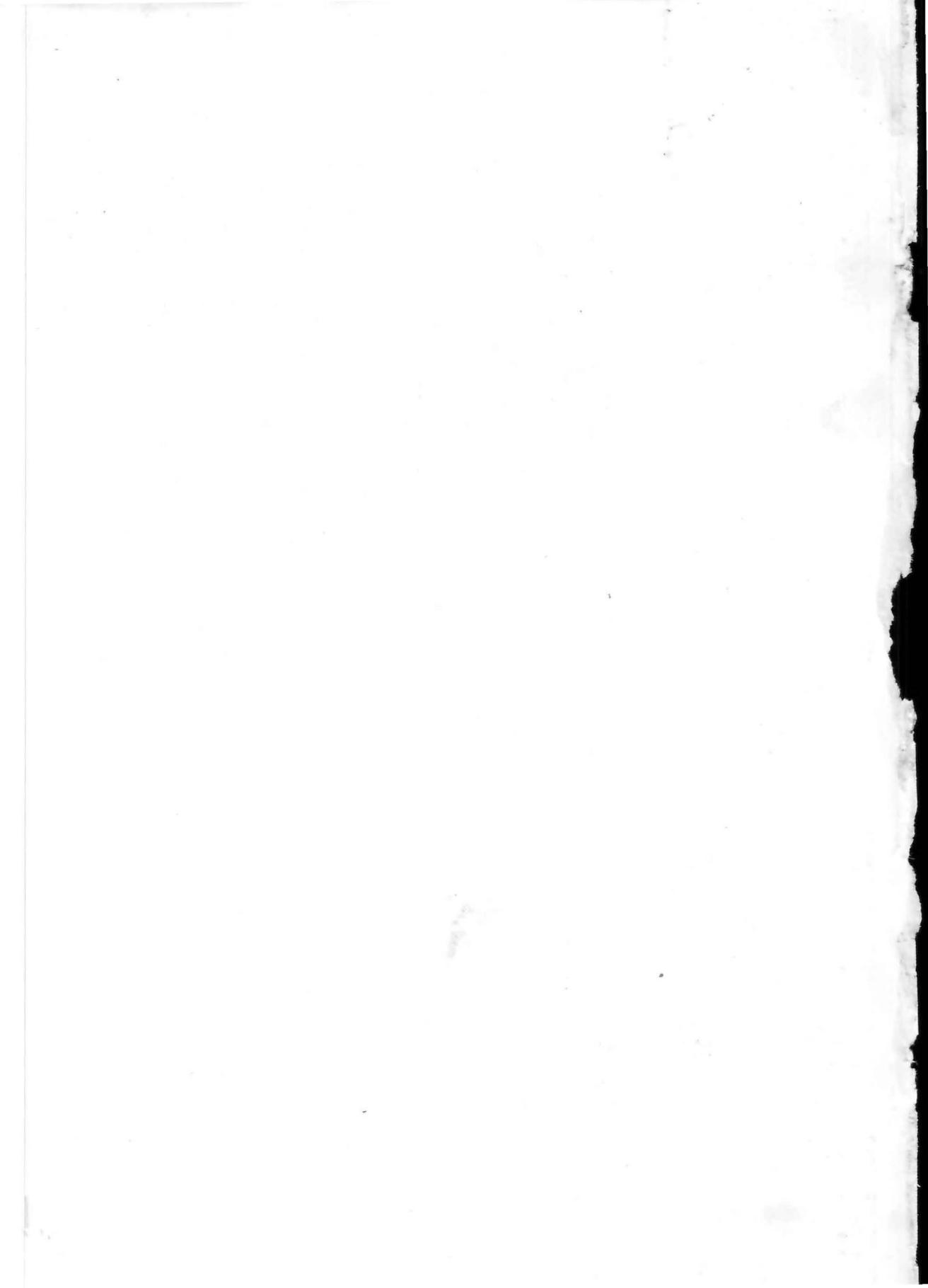
- ৩১। Letter from Dr. Haridas Bhattacharyya to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 1 March 1943 D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ৩২। Letter from Dhirendranath Banerjee to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 6 March, 1943, D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ৩৩। Letter from Qazi Motahar Hossain, House Tutor, Fazlul Haque Muslim Hall to Dr. Syed Moazzam Hussain, Provost, Fazlul Haque Muslim Hall, Dhaka University, 7 March, 1943. D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ৩৪। Memorandum on the meeting of Dr. Mahmud Hassan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University with the teachers of Dhaka University, 11 March, 1943, D-Register, Bundle-7C Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ৩৫। রফিকুল ইসলাম, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আশী বছর, পৃ ১০৫।
- ৩৬। Memorandum on the meeting of Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University with the distinguished persons of Dhaka, 11 March, 1943. D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76 Dhaka, University Record Room.
- ৩৭। Dhaka University, Extract from the Minutes of the Executive Council held on 1st February, 1943.
- ৩৮। "Firstly, that the Muslim Hall should be removed from the University Central Buildings. Secondly, that disciplinary action should be taken against those students who have been found guilty by the Enquiry Committee. We, however, shall gladly welcome all attempts made to bring about understanding and good will among all sections of students." Memorandum of the students of Jagannath Hall and Dhaka Hall to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 12 May, 1943. D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76 Dhaka, University Record Room.
- ৩৯। "They also raised the question of the punishment of guilty students. I told them that I was not prepared to discuss details with them, but that I would do my duty as Vice-Chancellor impartially and I would not be forced into any course of action or be prevented from taking any action by the opinion of any person or persons." Statement of Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 13 May, 1943. D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76 Dhaka, University Record Room.
- ৪০। "As to your answer to our second grievance, that you will set before us an example of discipline by taking necessary steps against miscreants in the 2nd February fracas after due enquiry and that you will do it quite impartially in conformity with the laws of equity and justice, we hereby let you know that you will under all circum-

stances get all possible help from us. We are ready to help you in the maintenance of discipline and justice provided that you allow us, at all times, to exert our weights of the liberty of thought and discussion.” Memorandum of the students of Dhaka Hall and Jagannath Hall to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 14 May, 1943, D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.

- ৪১। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে গোলযোগ সম্পর্কে তদন্ত কমিটির রিপোর্ট, ঢাকা প্রকাশ, ২ মে, ১৯৪৩, পৃ. ২।
- ৪২। Dhaka University, Extract from the Minute of the Executive Council held on 5th June, 1943.
- ৪৩। Proposal submitted by D.H. Northfield for the consideration of the Executive Council, Dhaka University, 28 June, 1943. D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No 76, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ৪৪। Extract from the Minute of the Executive Council held on 17th June, 1943.
- ৪৫। Extract from the Minute of the Executive Council held on 2nd September, 1944.
- ৪৬। “That the provosts be requested to meet the students and impress upon them that if they, on invitation, choose to attend a function of a Hall of which they are not members, they should show courtesy to their hosts in every way and co-operate in making the function successful.” Extract from the Minute of the Executive Council held on 25 November, 1944.
- ৪৭। Letter from Professor N. Ahmed, Principal, Dhaka Intermediate College to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka university, 7 February, 1943. D-Register, Bundle-9C, Serial No. 88, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ৪৮। “That the foregoing scheme be approved provided that no religious ceremonies shall be performed in the quadrangle of either of the two Hall buildings (The Dacca Hall and the F.H.M. Hall). They may be performed in the Dining Halls or the Common Rooms of the respective Halls.” Extract from the Minutes of the Executive Council held on 22 September, 1943.
- ৪৯। “I Shall be glad to know whether there is any E.C. resolution regarding the holding of any religious ceremony in the half-quadrangle. If so, kindly send me a copy of the reslution with date.” Letter from Professor S.N. Bose to Registrar, Dhaka University, 17 January, 1944. D-Register, Bundle-9C, Serial No. 88, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ৫০। “It is necessary for me to know whether you will sanction the holding of a 2nd year pass class in Islamic Philosophy of the single woman student with the boys of the same class. This girl is an Honours student in Islamic Studies and is therefore reading with Muslim boys in her Honours class. If you did not sanction this, as you did not sanction the other day the holding of the joint class of Hindu boys and girls,

then it would mean that two pass classes in Islamic Philosophy will have to be provided as an hour when Mr. Jilani is not free and so the work will fall on Mr. A.H. Talukdar who does not like this subject. Conversely, Mr. Jilani will have to take a class in greek Philosophy (now taken by A.H. Talukdar), which would increase the number of his subjects, and so he does not like this arrangements that I have been obliged to make at present provisionally.” Letter from Professor Haridas Bhattacharyya, Head of the Department of Philosophy to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 4 June, 1943. D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76 Dhaka, University Record Room.

- ৫১। Extract from the Minute of the Executive Council held no. 11 November, 1944.
- ৫২। Vice-Chancellor’s Convocation speech, M. Hasan, 6 december, 1943, Dhaka University, The Convocation Speeches, compiled by Sirajul Islam Choudhury, Vol. I, 1923-1946, (University of Dhaka, Dhaka, 1988), pp. 403-404.
- ৫৩। “The incident of this year will always remain shameful blots on the fair name of this institution and source of sorrow and shame to every one of its members. We can only hope that our students have fully realised the enormity of their transgression and they will do their best to re-establish the honour and prestige and the good name of their ‘alma mater’ by their laudable conduct in future. I am happy to say that the present feelings and relations between the students of the University are very cordial and encourage us to believe that troubles of this kind will never again heap shame and sorrow upon the University”. Vice-Chancellor’s Convocation Speech, M. Hasan, 6 December, 1943. Dhaka University, the Convocation Speeches, compiled by Sirajul Islam Choudhury, Vol. I, 1923-1946, (University of Dhaka: Dhaka, 198), pp. 403-404.
- ৫৪। University of Dacca, Annual Report for 1942-43, pp. 1-2.
- ৫৫। “I have gone through the repost as published in the newspaper and also the decision of the Executive Committee. It appears that though there is recommendation for the removal of the Boarding attached to the University classes, the Committee did not consider that question. I understand there is demand from the Students and Guardians as well, for the removal of the Boarding house from the University building, in spite of that there is no sttempt for such steps. It is not desirable to open your classes on the 10th before removing the aforesaid Boarding, as the guardians are apprehensive of danger. I will therefore, request you to see your way if such steps in (sic) possible.” Letter from the Secretary of the Dhaka District Hindu Mahashabha to Dr. Mahmud Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, 8 May 1943. D-Register, Bundle-7C, Serial No. 76, Dhaka University Record Room.
- ৫৬। কিরণশঙ্কর সেনগুপ্ত ও সরদার ফজলুল করিম, চল্লিশের দশকের ঢাকা, পৃ ১৪৩।



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