

“The Role of Bhasa Andolan in regard to Manbhum’s Bangabhukti”

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Abstract: In 1833, the British Government made Manbhum as a district to suppress the successive revolt in JangalMahal . in 1912, when the province in Bihar & Orissa was made , The Manbhum district was joined with the new province. From this time the Govt. of Bihar started to propagate the language Hindi in Bengali speaking Manbhum with great craft. In 1937, the Govt. of Bihar introduced ‘Domicile Certificate Act’ and made the Bengali speaking people of this province into second class citizens. In protest against this injustice, Bihar-Bengali samiti’ was established in 1938. After the Independence, the Bihar Govt. became very strict about the language Bengali and ordered to accept Hindi compulsorily in govt and non govt organizations . The president of Manbhun zilla congress, Atul Chandra Ghosh and many others protested strongly against this and appealed to the president of India, the Prime minister, and also the Home minister, but it gave no results. So in this situation ‘Lok Sevak Sangha ‘ was established in 1948.This party sent their representatives in the Bihar legislative assembly and also in Loksabha and they protested against the atrocities of the Bihar Govt.In 1954 the Govt. of Bihar banned the song’TUSU’. Then ‘Lok Sevak Sangha’came forward and observed ‘Tusu Satyagraha’.While being dissatisfied with the recommendation of the state Reformation commission the chief minister of both West Bengal & Bihar proposed to form ‘Bihar – Paschimbanga Sanjukto Pradesh’ and then ‘hartal’ was observed throughout the Bengal. Besides Lok Sevak Sangha arranged a long march from Pakbirra Village to Calcutta in 1956. In this situation,’west Bengal & Bihar land transfer Bill’ was put in Loksabha in1956.When it was passed in Both Loksabha & Rajyasabha,The president of India Dr.Rajendra Prasad signed the bill on 1st September. According to this law taking sixteen of twenty one police stations of Purulia Sadar sub division, the district Purulia was Made and it was added to WestBengal.Traditional Manbhum was thus abolished and the New district Purulia appeared in the Map of West Bengal on 1st November,1956.

Key Word: JangalMahal, Hartal,Tusu,Police Pakbirra, Manbhum

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I. INTRODUCTION

When India was under the British Rule, the language Movement(Bhasa Andolan), as an important part of freedom movement of Manbhum, i e ,Purulia undoubtedly draws our attention.In1833,as as an administrative step the British made Manbhum as a district by dividing JangalMahal to suppress the successive revolt in the province of Jangalmahal.In 1905 through Lord Carjon announced the partition of Bengal, it was revoked in 1911 by the pressure of movements.During this time in 1912 When the province of Bihar & Orissa was made the distrit Manbhum was joined with this new province. In protest against this resolution , the whole Bengali speaking people of Manbhum raised their voices.as the main issue of this movement was about the acceptance of mother tongue Bengali, it is mostly known as the ‘Bhasa Andolan’ Many again call this Banga Bhukti Movement”.

To discuss the complete history of Language movement of Manbhum in simple ways , it can be divided into two parts – the period before independence and the period after independence.

About the re- formation of province on the basis of language , the congress leaders of Bihar realized the attitude of the national congress.So in1912 when Manbhum was added to Bihar they took clever steps to spread Hindi.but when census was made in 1931, it was found that 87% people of Purulia sadar sub- division of manbhum were Bengali speaking. So a differential attitude between the bangalees and the biharies grew up and the people of Manbhum demanded to form states on the basis of language.*I* In 1936 the govt of India made Bihar and Orissa as two different states .During this time the congress leaders of Bihar thought that Manbhum should be separated from Bihar for its large Bengali inhabitants.But they did not want to lose this district from their position as it was rich in natural resources.In this situation under the presidenship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad ,

‘Manbhum –Bihar Samiti’ was established in 1935. The main object of this Samiti were to propagate Hindi in Manbhum and also to establish Hindi schools here.

To stop this tendency of spreading hindi in manbhum , ‘Manbhum Samiti’ or ‘Bengali Samiti’ was established in 1935 under the presidentship of barrister Prafulla Ranjan Das , the brother of Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das. Its object was to establish Bengali medium schools and teach the students there. Besides , its another object was to supply the students slate,pencil, books etc. free of cost.² On 18th May 1935 , as the spokesman of Manbhum samiti, ‘Manbhum Samiti Patrika ‘ was published first,and its secretary was Ananda Prasad Chakroborty.

1-Debaprasad Jana ‘Ahalyabhumi Purulia’ p-104 Dr .Santi Sing,’Tusu’, Kolkata 1405 bangabda

2-Dilip kumar Goswami,’Manbhum’s Bhasa Andolan o puruliar bangabhukti’ P-69

After the formation of the ministry of congress in Bihar in 1935, this Government introduced the ‘Domicile Certificate Act’ in 1937. According to this act, the Bengali speaking people of the province of Bihar were made into second class citizens. Besides, various types of restrictions were imposed upon them in the fields of service,contracting , admission in schools and colleges etc. In protest against this injustice ‘Bihar Bengali Samiti’ was established in 1938 under the presidentship of barrister Prafulla Ranjan Das. This samiti played an important role to reject this disgraceful law. Besides, strong claim was made to revoke the Domicile Certificate Act in the assembly of ‘Manbhum zilla Congress.’ Which was held at Raghunathpur under the presidentship of Prafulla Chandra Ghosh in 1938.

Thus a continuous dispute followed between the congress leaders of bihar and the Bengali speaking people of Manbhum regarding the use of language before the independence. The leaders of Manbhum never showed any mentality to take advantage in respect of their language in different movements’, against the British government like Non Co-operational Movement, Civil disobedience Movements’, Quit India Movement etc.³

After the independence, the provincial Govt of bihar was very strict to apply Hindi in govt and non govt organizations to avoid Bengali.⁴ In this way the government of bihar was not only able to spread Hindi in Manbhum in great extent but also was active to repress the language Bengali using various illegal and unjust methods .⁵ In protest against this aggressive activities of the government of Bihar ,Atul Chandra Ghosh , the president of Manbhum zilla Congress of that time and Bibhuti bhusan Dasgupta, the secretary made a request in writing to the president of India, the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and also the president of Bihar Congress to stop the torture towards the Bengali speaking people , but it gave no result.

In this situation, forty distinguished members of manbhum zilla Congress organized a meeting at Pakbirra village , under Pancha PS on 13th June 1948 under the leadership of Atul Chandra Ghosh and formed a new Gandhibadi Party named ‘Lok Sevak Sangha’. Atul Chandra Ghosh was elected the President of it and the secretary was Bibhuti Bhusan Dasgupta. Then the Language movement of Manbhum started to move under the guidance of Lok Sevak Sangha.

From 1947-56, the ‘Bhasa andolan’ in Manbhum was held into some phases. From 1949 -51 when Bhasa Satyagraha Andolan’ was occurring in different parts of the district, the government of Bihar, with the help of the Police , the local businessmen and even the anti socials, tried to stop this movement.

3-Dr Jayanta kumar Dab, ‘Abibhakta Puruliar Jatiyatatabadi Andolan(1921-47) Phire dekha’ p-21-27

4-DR pradip Kumar Mandal,’Manbhum Zillar Bhasa Andoloner Itihas’(1912-56)’. P-94

5-Girish Chandra Mahato, ‘Naba Bharat o Manbhumer Sangram’ p-24-25

But through this satyagraha, the people of Manbhum finally got back the right of freedom of speech, and also the right of arranging meetings and processions . Towards the year of 1952 and 1953 , ‘Lok Sevak Sangha’ decided to send their representatives in Bihar Legislative assembly and loksabha and so they made election to select them. These representatives strongly pointed out about the deprivation showed by the government of Bihar towards Manbhum and also demanded to ensure the right of their language. In 1954 when the song ‘TUSU’ was banned, Tusu Satyagraha was observed throughout the district singing Tusu song by the common people and also the women of houses.⁶ During this movements Atul Chandra Ghosh , Bhajahari Mahato , Hem Chandra Mahato, Labanyaprabha Devi and many others were arrested again and again.

Different magazines of Manbhum at that time played important roles and expressed about Manbhum’s Banga Bhukti’. Of the Bengali magazines , ‘Mukti, ‘Marmabina’ , kalyanbarta, Harijan, Pallisevak, ‘Tapoban’, and Manbhum’ were famous and the Hindi magazines like ‘Nirala’, ‘Pragati’, ‘Janasevak’, ‘Samabeta’ etc. opinioned strongly for and against Manbhum’s bangabhukti.

In this situation the state Reformation commission visited the places of Manbhum like Maithan Dhanbad and Purulia in 1955, and took public opinion.⁷ To include Manbhum, barabhum etc. in West Bengal, Purulia sadar local board submitted Memorendum.⁸

On 13th October 1955 the state Reformation commission disc;losed their report to the public. The commission recommended ten police stations of Dhanbad sub division for keeping in Bihar. Besides the commission advised to keep two of twenty one police stations of Purulia sadar sub division as Chass and Chandankeyari in Bihar, and the rest nineteen were advised to include in West Bengal.

While on 23rd January 1956 the Chief Minister of West Bengal at that time, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy and the Chief Minister of Bihar, Krishna Singha jointly said that the commissions report regarding borderline failed to satisfy none of both the states. So they decided to form a single state with Bihar and west Bengal and it would be ‘Bihar Paschimbanga Sanjukto Pradesh’. The people of Bengal strongly objected to this resolution of Bidhan Chandra Roy. On 24th February, ‘Hartal’ was observed throughout the whole West Bengal. On 19th March 1956 ‘Hartal’ was observed in Manbhum.⁹

6-Bhibhuti Bhusan Dasgupta (Publisher), Manbhum Tusu Satyagraha and our stand’, Purulia, 1954, P-6

7- DR pradip Kumar Mandal, ‘Manbhum Zillar Bhasa Andoloner Itihas’(1912-56)’. P-251

8-Mukti Patrika;19/04/1954, P-2

9-Mukti Patrika;19/03/1956, P-14-15

To reveal the conspiracy of Bidhan Chandra Roy “Lok Sevak Sangha ‘ decided to collect Public opinion and so a long march was arranged from Purulia to Calcutta covering the distance of 300 kilometres . This activity made by Lok Sevak Sangha has become famous in the name of ‘ Banga Satyagraha Abhijan’. On 20th April 1956 one hundred ten pedestrians from Pakbirra village, under puncha ps started their journey for Calcutta uttering words like ‘Vande mataram’, ‘Banglar mati Banglar Jal’, ‘Bangla Bhasa Praner Bhasa’ etc..They reached Calcutta crossing Bankura, Burdwan, Hoogly, Chandannagar and Howrah on 6th May. Gandhiji’s ‘Dandi Abhijan’ influenced Atul Chandra Ghosh and so he started this ‘Gandhibadi Andolan’. It was found that the walk that started with one thousand people first, turned into a stream of people on the way and several lakhs of people joined it. Finally Bidhan Chandra Roy rejected the plan ‘Banga Bihar Ekikaran’.¹⁰ Meanwhile the land transfer bill was raised in the Legislative Assembly of West Bengal & Bihar respectively.¹¹ In such situation, this bill was put in Loksabha on 25th July, 1956. The select committee put the bill in Loksabha on 12th August. After a long argument the Bill regarding the border line of West Bengal and Bihar was passed in Loksabha on 16th or 17th August. On 28th August the bill was passed in Rajyasabha with a huge difference of margin of votes. The president Dr. Rajendra Prasad put his signature in this ‘Land Transfer Bill’ on 1st September and then Bihar and West Bengal transfer of territories Act 1956’ was passed.¹² According to this act the district Manbhum was divided into three parts. Chas and Chandankeyari were joined with the subdivision and police station of Dhanbad and Dhanbad was made a district and it was in Bihar. Two of twenty one Police stations of Purulia Sadar sub division were again added to district Dhanbad. To please the TATA Company, Police stations like Chandil, Patamda and Ichagarh were added to the district Singbhum of Bihar. Again sixteen of thirty one police stations of undivided Manbhum were included in West Bengal.

So the movement organized against the government of Bihar from 1947-56, is rightly called the second freedom movement of Manbhum, as to stop this movement the government of Bihar tortured greatly, the leaders and workers of Lok Sevak Sangha with the help of administration and police. Innumerable number of people were arrested by false allegation. Besides the Bihar government tempted the zamindars, the chowkidars with money and tried to suppress the movement, but in vain. Rather the movement reached its extremity in spite of such administrative atrocities. Its impact was more specially in the areas like Bundwan, Manbazar, Barabazar, Purulia etc. However, traditional Manbhum was thus abolished and a new district named Purulia appeared in the map of the west Bengal on 1st November 1956.

10-Mukti Patrika; April-June, 1956

11-Mukti Patrika; 09/07/1956 P-6-9

12- DR pradip Kumar Mandal, ‘Manbhum Zillar Bhasa Andoloner Itihas’(1912-56)’. P-318

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