



A Descriptive Study Of Shatha Pasha Of Mahasuvi Region

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Abstract: The presented research paper describes the *Shatha-Pasha* tradition that has been going on for centuries in the Mahasuvi region. It depicts the life of *Shatha-Pasha*. In this, the facts of the impact of the war between *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* on *Shatha-Pasha* have been clarified. The research paper describes the journey of *Shatha-Pasha* from deep hostility towards each other to the emergence of mutual brotherhood between these two. Research has shown that these *Shathads-Pashads* reached *Mahasuvi* area on both sides of the *Giri* River and gradually their population increased and many *Khash Kanat* communities came into existence here, in which some *Shathad Pashad* communities were considered very brave. The four main communities among them have been described in this research paper under the name of four "*Gedu Khashiyas*". These *Shathad-Pashads* also used to attack each other and in order to protect themselves from these attacks, they built *Tharas*. There was a competition between both the groups to capture each other's land; hence there was a great fear of war during that period. Gradually, as awareness increased in the society, efforts were made by the intellectuals to end this animosity between *Shatha-Pasha*. *Khumlis* (meetings) were organized at many places in this land of *Shatha-Pasha* in which the chiefs and deities of both the parties also participated, as a result of which this conflict of *Shatha-Pasha* gradually came to an end. Now it was decided to present the war of *Shathad-Pashad* in the form of "*Thoda*" in *Bishu's Jubdi* (ground). Here also, for a long time, there was some feeling of animosity between the two parties, but in today's times, the feeling of hatred between the two parties has ended and both the parties play "*Thoda*" with each other with the feeling of brotherhood.

Keywords – Shatha-Pasha, Mahabharata, Thoda, Giri, Mahasu.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since human civilization came into existence, human evolution has been going on. Along with development, human ambitions also kept increasing. To fulfill those ambitions, a person wants to subjugate others. The typical causes of wars are that either one party is being oppressed or a war is waged to avenge the atrocities. Apart from this, wars also take place to subjugate someone else. If we talk in the context of Mahabharata, the reason for this was that *Dhritarashtra* became a victim of love for his son and *Duryodhana* himself also wanted to deprive the *Pandavas* of their rights. As a result, a fierce battle of *Kurukshetra* took place in which great warriors participated. *Shri Krishna* himself also guided the *Pandavas* by becoming the charioteer of *Arjuna*. It was in this battlefield that Lord Krishna preached *Geeta* to *Arjuna*. The Mahabharata war took place and in this war the *Kauravas* were killed and all the soldiers were killed. This destructive war of Mahabharata was over but who knew that a spark of the fierce flame of this Mahabharata would also fall on the land around *Giri* river where for centuries the supporters of *Kaurava Shathad* and supporters of *Pandava Pashad* shall be following the war traditions of *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* will continue.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to Saraik VN, Thoda, 2012 Thoda has been described in detail but complete light has not been thrown on Shatha-Pasha.

According to Sharma Anita, Kyonthal, 2022 there was a subtle discussion on Thoda in but Shata-Pasha's side remained untouched.

According to Bhardwaj Arun, Pathak R. K., Sinha A. K., 2017 in Fairs and Festivals of the Hatti Community of District Sirmaur, Himachal Pradesh: An Anthropological Investigation published in Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities Thoda dance which belongs to Solan has been included but there is nothing about Shatha-Pasha.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The tradition of *Shatha Patha* has a special connection with the areas on both sides of the *Giri* River in the Mahasuvi region of Himachal Pradesh. While the study of this tradition reveals the animosity in the past of *Shathad Pashad*, it also reveals the ending of enmity between the two parties with the passage of time and the emergence of a feeling of brotherhood in the society. The essence of this study also emerges that having enmity with each other in the society leads not to development but to destruction. Therefore, for development it is necessary to give up enmity and create a feeling of brotherhood. This study presents the fact that the invaluable trinity like "*Thoda*" also originated from *Shatha-Pasha*.

4. MEANING OF SHATHA PASHA

Shatha is related to *Shathad Khash Kanait Rajput* who is considered supporters of Kauravas. Some people believe that the origin of the word *Shatha* is from "Shat Putra" i.e. Kauravas because *Dhritarashtra* had hundred sons. Pasha is believed to mean *Pashad*. *Pashad Khash Kanait* considers themselves supporters of Pandavas. Similarly, some people believe that the origin of *Pashad* is "Panch Putra" or Pandavas.

5. BEGINNING OF SHATHA PASHA

Shathad Pashad is believed to be related to Kauravas and Pandavas. When the Mahabharata was going on in Kurukshetra, it is believed that some soldiers of Kauravas and Pandavas, chasing each other from this battlefield, continued moving towards Yamuna and further settled in the areas on both sides of the *Giri* river. They kept attacking each other here also. After coming here, these *Shathad Pashad Khash Kanait Rajputs* started establishing their dominance over the castes like *Kol*, *Kirat*, *Gandharva* etc. settled here and by subjugating them, they started ruling them. Some people also believe that *Shatha Pasha* is influenced by the ideology of Kauravas and Pandavas because ancestors might have been directly or indirectly associated with the Mahabharata. Due to their influence, their descendants still consider themselves supporters of the Kauravas and Pandavas. During the exile of Pandavas, they came to this land of *Shathad Pashad*, evidence of which is found in ancient temples of Pandava style at many places. Evidence of this can also be seen in the historical site *Balag* situated on the banks of *Giri* river. All these facts indicate the relation of *Shadad Pashad* with Kauravas, Pandavas and Mahabharata. Gradually the population of *Shadad Pashads* increased and the animosity also increased. Whenever one group got a chance, they used to attack people of the other group. One party used to try to dominate the areas of the other party and due to such incidents this enmity increased further. Whenever people or animals of one group went to the area under the control of the other group, they were made captive. Sometimes even the head of a person from the other group was cut off. People of both the groups were always wary of attacks from each other. People even kept weapons hidden in their fields and at the place of daily work so that they could be useful to them when the time came. If ever suddenly one group overpowered the other group, then the people of that group were forced to leave that village and take shelter with the people of their group in another village. To avoid such attacks, *Tharas* were created.

6. CONSTRUCTION OF THARAS

After *Shathad Pashad* came into existence, due to increasing animosity, *Tharas* were also constructed. The *Thara* was constructed by the inspiration of a fort. These were built approximately seven, nine or eleven stories high. When *Shathad Pashads* used to attack and enter deep inside each other's village borders, then all the people of the village used to gather in these *tharas* with their valuable property, grains, water and animals etc. and the only gate of it was closed. To attack the enemies from inside to outside, a special place was made which is called *munhari*. When enemies from outside came near the *thara* and tried to break the main gate or set the *thara* on fire, they were attacked through the *munhari* with kanaru or sharp arrows. Because the situation of attack could continue for a long time, food, water and wood were stored inside these *tharas* so that the people gathered inside them would not remain hungry and thirsty. When there was apprehension of an attack, people from the nearby villages were informed by going to the

upper floor of the *thara* to gather inside the *thara*. Apart from this, to convey important messages were also given from the height of these towers from one area to another.

7. KANAIT

Shathad-Pashads are *khsh kanat rajputs* only. In the local dialect, these warriors have been named *Kanait*. *Kanait* means one who shoots arrows with his bow drawn up to his ears. These are also called *Khaush* or *Khashiyas*. The *Shathad-Pashad Kanat* community spread here from *Dak Paththar* to *Khada Pathar* and even today their descendants are present here in various *parganas* (Sub Division) on both sides of the *Giri* river with the name of *Shathad-Pashad*. *Shathad-Pashad* of this region is famous by the name of eighteen *Kanaits* & “*Char Gedu Khashiye*” which are sung in the folk song *Harul*.

8. RISE OF GEDU RAJPUTS

Gradually four brave communities came into existence among the *Shathad Pashad Rajputs*. These four communities were named *Gedu Khashiye*. *Gedu* means brave. As *Shatha Pasha* came into existence, some *Shatha Pasha Khash Kanait* community became brave. Among the four *Gedu Khashiyas*, there are *Habbani* and *Manjhganvi* in district *Sirmaur* on one side of *Giri* river and *Janhena* and *Fagena Rajput* communities in *Shimla* district on the other side. Other communities recognized bravery of these *Gedu Khashiyas*. Even today these communities are carrying on the *Shatha-Pasha* war traditions.

9. THAUD

Whenever *Shathad Pashad Khash Kanat* attacked each other, they would cut off the enemy's head and bury it in a pond. Later, their pandits or priests would consecrate it and give it the form of *Kali*. It was worshiped in the form of *Thaud*. *Thaud* is considered the clan goddess of *Shathad* and *Pashad*. *Shathad Pashad Kanaits Rajputs* have their own thoad. Some people believe that *Thaud* refers to the goddess for whose honor eighteen sacrifices were made. Its meaning is that only when at least eighteen heads were buried in the pond, *Thaud Mata* was respected. Whenever these *Shathad Pashads* went to attack each other, they used to worship their *Thaud Mata* ritually and seek her blessings and when they killed their enemies in battle, they used to cut off their head and offer it in the temple of *Thaud Mata*. Today, even though the enmity between *Shathad Pashad* has reduced, they are still worshipping *Thayd Devi* as their clan goddess.

10. SHATHA PASHA'S RELATION WITH KAURAV PANDAV WAR TRADITIONS

Although, *Shathad* and *Pashad Khash Kanat Rajputs* consider themselves supporters of the *Kauravas* and *Padvas*, and if seen, the traditions of *Shathar Pashad* are quite similar to the war traditions of the *Kaurava Pandavas*. *Kauravas* and *Pandavas*, despite being from the same clan, became enemies and had enmity with each other which resulted in the *Mahabharata* war. Similarly, in the *Shatha Pasha* tradition, there were two groups in the same community, *Shathad* and *Pashad*, in which there was a lot of enmity. Just as in *Mahabharata* one person used to fight with another person, in the same way in *Bishu's Jubdi* also it was already decided which person from *Shathad* group would fight with which person from *Pashad* group. These pairs were made considering the height and physical ability of the people of both the parties. After this, whenever these *Shathad Pashad* parties went to the battlefield i.e. *Bishu's Jubdi* to fight with each other, only the pre-determined pairs used to fight among themselves. Until some one of them died, both of them used to fight with each other all their lives whenever they went to the *Jubdi of Bishu*. Just as in *Mahabharata*, the war started with sunrise and ended at sunset, in the same way *Shathad Pashad* also used to go to *Bishu's Jubdi* with sunrise and kept fighting among themselves till sunset. *Mahabharata* war used to start with the sound of *shankh*, similarly *Shathad Pashad* also used to enter *Bishu's Jubdi* to the beat of *Dhol* along with the sounds of *Ranasingha* and *Karnal*.

11. WEAPONS OF SHATHAD-PASHAD

11.1 Dhonu-Kaneru

The reflection of the bow and arrow used in wars is also seen on the weapons of *Shathad Pashad*. Just like bow and arrow, *Shathads* and *Pashads* used *Dhonu-Kaneru* for mutual war. The shape of *Dhonu* resembles a bow which is made of bamboo or *chaon* wood and the string is also made of bamboo wood. *Kaneru* is also like arrow. In this, the back part was made of wood and the front part was made of pointed iron or wood by sharpening it. Poison was used on *Kaneru* to cause more injury to the enemy. *Dhonu* and *Kaneru* were especially used for striking from a distance.

11.2 Dangru

Dangru has been the special weapon of *Shathad Pashad*. The reason behind its adoption was that there is a holy place of *Renuka ji* and *Parashuram* on the banks of river *Giri* and Lord *Parashuram* used to keep *Kandasa*. The same has also affected the shape of the *Dangru* of these *Shathad-Pashads* settled around *Giri* river. *Dangrus* were mainly made of iron and brass. *Shathad-Pashad* considered it a convenient weapon to attack each other.

11.3 Sword

Just as swords were used in wars, in the same way *Shathad-Pashads* also adopted swords as weapons. In big battles, swords were used by *Shathad-Pashads*.

11.4 Khukhri

Shathad-Pashad also used *Khukhri* to attack the enemy standing in front. *Khukhri* is especially considered the weapon of *Gorkhas*. The reason behind the use of *Khukhri* by *Shathad-Pashads* is that people also believe that in ancient times, many places in *Mahasu* region were attacked by *Gorkhas*. Probably for this reason *Shathad-Pashad* also adopted *Khukhri* as a weapon.

11.5 Shobal

Shobal was used to attack one's enemy from a distance. The shape of the *shobal* is like a spear in which the front part of the wooden stick was either made pointed or iron was sharpened in it.

12. BISHU'S JUBDI: THE BATTLEFIELD OF SHATHI PASHI

With time, *Shathad Pashad* chose *Bishu's Jubdi* as the battlefield to show their bravery, where both the parties started showing their bravery. Both, *Shathi* and *Pashi* enter the *Jubdi* of *Bishu* in their respective groups with the rhythm of *dhol*, *Karnal*, *Ranasinga* and sounding *shvahalas* on *Rathewala taal*, singing folksongs and dancing. The place earmarked for *Bishu's Jubdi* is never plowed nor can crops be sown. If a person violated this, he would be blamed by the gods which is known as *Dosh* and he would be punished for this. Most of the *Jubris* of *Bishu* are also known by the name of deities. In this *Jubdi*, both the parties praise their bravery.

13. TRANSFORMATION OF SHATHA PASHA DEADLY GAME INTO THODA DANCE

Changes took place with the passage of time and the intellectuals of the society and the social reformers of *Shathad-Pashad* saw the destructive consequences of the feeling of animosity of *Shathad-Pashad* towards each other. As a result seeing this, they tried to remove this feeling of hostility. *Shathad-Pashad* used to become thirsty for each other's blood, but with the passage of time, awareness started rising in the society, hence maintaining such an environment in the society was now becoming unbearable for humanity. Even during the game of *Shatha-Pasha*, the mutual hatred between the two parties was clearly visible and many a times fights also took place during this period. Therefore, an attempt was made by some intellectuals to convert this game filled with feelings of hatred into the '*Thoda*' dance, game and folk drama of goodwill. For this, meetings of intellectuals of both the parties and heads of many *khush kanait rajput* fraternities were held at many places. In this, an effort was made to create a feeling of mutual brotherhood with a view to remove differences of opinion and improve the society with time.

Under this, a *mahakhumli* (meeting) also took place in *Kotla* village of *Pajhauta* in *Sirmaur*, in which the enmity between the two parties was ended after 18 people from both the *Shathad-Pashad* parties were killed and beheaded. 18 *Kanait Rajputs* and 4 deities participated in this *mahakhumli* and the enmity between *Shathad-Pashad Kanait*s of *Kufar* and *Dibbar* villages was ended forever. Centuries ago, with the aim of ending the enmity between *Shatha-Pasha*, a *Khumli* was held in *Pab* village in which 32 *Rajputs* gathered and decided to end the enmity between *Shatha-Pasha* and start the game of *Thoda*. Gradually, the feeling of enmity between the two parties ended and a feeling of brotherhood started emerging. Earlier, people from both the parties did not marry the other party, but now marriages started taking place in both the parties and relations became cordial. This game of *thoda* no longer has the feeling of enmity and has become a game of entertainment. Although the rules and traditions of this game were kept the same as in the war of *Mahabharata*, but after ending the mutual enmity, in *Bishu ki Jubri*, the players of both the teams did not act like enemies, but like player artists entertaining the people present in *Bishu ki Jubri*, following the tradition, with dance, comedy and satirical dialogues.

14.CONCLUSION

Shadhad-Pashad considers themselves supporters of Kauravas and Pandavas. But if we see, we do not see a clear image of the Kauravas in the *Shathds*, nor there is complete influence of the Pandavas on the *Shathads*. Don't know why both of them kept carrying on the tradition of Mahabharata war. One reason behind this is that in order to establish their supremacy and to avoid the other party subjugating them, they continued to follow the *Shathad-Pashad* war tradition. We see that society improves with time. Big enmities turn into brotherhood. The intellectuals of the society also tried to end this enmity between *Shatha-Pasha*. As a result, relations between both the parties became cordial. Earlier there were no relations of any kind between the two parties, but after the enmity between the two parties ended, now marriage relations have started forming between the two parties. But the tradition of *Shatha Pasha* and their enmity in history still shows us the animosity between the two parties.

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