



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Swadeshi Movement And Swadeshi Initiative : A Case Study In Raiganj Subdivision Of Uttar Dinajpur District(1905-1911 AD)

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Abstract: "Janani Janmobhumischa Swargadapi Gariyasi"(Bhagabat Puran). Every Bengali had respect for this quote. They respected the birthplace as a mother. The present work attempts a detailed study of Swadeshi Movement and Swadeshi Initiative in Uttar Dinajpur district with special reference to Raiganj subdivision. Fearing the political activism of the people of Bengal, the then Governor General Lord Curzon planned the partition of Bengal. Lord Curzon wanted to weaken and disperse the people of Bengal politically through the partition of Bengal. When the partition of Bengal took effect on 16 October 1905, a large movement was formed throughout Dinajpur and Bengal. From British products to Government Offices, Courts, School, Colleges, everything were boycotted. The people of Bengal took various Swadeshi Initiative. Raiganj in the undivided Dinajpur district was no exception. Raiganj's renowned lawyer Kuloda Kanta Ghosh led the Anti-Partition of Bengal Movement in the whole of Raiganj. "Arandhan Diwas" was celebrated under the leadership of Kuloda Kanta Ghosh in Raiganj. Swadeshi Banks, Bookstores, Educational Institution, various stores etc. were built on the soil of Raiganj. When the Swadeshi Movement was going on all over Bengal as well as India, the revolutionary educational institution "Raiganj Coronation High School" was established under the chairmanship of the Kuloda Kanta Ghosh. Many students of this school were involved in "Dinajpur Anushilan Samiti". The students of this school have made an undeniable contribution to the Freedom Movement of India.

Keywords: Dinajpur, Raiganj, Revolutionary, Swadeshi, Kuloda Kanta Ghosh, Bangabhanga, Raiganj Coronation High School.

Introduction:

Raiganj subdivision i.e. Dinajpur was a well known land in Mythology. In the Ramayana, Ramchandra gave exile to Sita Devi in this Dinajpur. Places called Sitakot and SitaKunda continue to bear its testimony even today. This Dinajpur was under the rule of Parshurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Many stories of this Raiganj and Dinajpur are connected with Virat Raja during the era of Mahabharata. The Pancha Pandavas of the Mahabharata hid themselves in this Virat Kingdom while living incognito. In this region there was also the kingdom of the Virata king's brother-in-law, Kitchak. Villages called Kichoktola continue to bear its testimony even today. Balurghat subdivision and Raiganj subdivision were under Varendra land during Medieval Period. It was in this Varendra land that the Kaivarta Rebellion took place under the leadership of Divya. Raja Ganesh ruled Raiganj and Dinajpur during sultanate period. Many scholars believe that the name 'Dinajpur' was derived from this king Ganesh or Dinwas. During the reign of Akbar, the Raiganj was probably continued within the sarkars of Tajpur and pinjara. In 1765, the British acquired 'Diwani' and the right of revenue tribute was enforced in the whole of Dinajpur. The Dinajpur subdivision, comprises the central portion of the district and extends from Raiganj on the west to Ghoraghat on the south east. In 1786 excluding the Islampur subdivision Dinajpur was declared as district. The Farmers of Raiganj and Dinajpur were exploited and oppressed in various ways by the British. On July 14, 1948 AD Raiganj subdivision was formed with Raiganj, Kaliaganj, Hemtabad, Itahar, Kushmandi and Bansihari police stations. Raiganj subdivision was reorganised with Raiganj, Hemtabad, Kaliaganj, Itahar blocks, on April 1, 1992 AD for administrative convenience.

On July 7th, 1905, the "Decree of Partition of Bengal" was promulgated from Shimla. As a result, the first people of Bengal came to know that the British would rule Bengal by dividing it into two parts. At that time, like all the district of Bengal, Balurghat and Raiganj of Dinajpur also protested against this decision. Many meetings and associations were formed in Dinajpur. Anti-British attitude was born in Dinajpur's people. This "Anti-Partition of Bengal Movement" was the first protest movement against the nefarious plot of colonial English imperialism. The Bangabanga Movement first started from Dinajpur district and Bagerhat of Khulna. A big meeting was held on 21st July, 1905 AD in Dinajpur town under the chairmanship of Maharaja Girijanath Roy. Many dignitaries of undivided Dinajpur district were present in it. Lal Mohan Ghosh said in his speech-"No Bengali should give any help to the British Government". Girija nath Roy himself requested the entire Bengali nation from the seat of the president-"All Bengalis should resign from the positions of Unpaid district board, Municipal board and Panchayat members". On 3rd September 1905, a public meeting protesting the partition of Bengal was called at Dinajpur Diamond Jubilee Hall under the chairmanship of Hari Mohan Singha. Every Bengali appeared in this public meeting wearing nation clothes. It was at this meeting that a boycott of British goods was announced. As a result, many British goods were boycotted and shops were closed in the present two Dinajpur. When the partition of Bengal was officially announced on 16 October 1905, the Anti-Partition of Bengal Movement spread from Dinajpur to the whole Bengal and various states of India.

Swadeshi Movement in Raiganj Subdivision:

The Anti-Partition of Bengal Movement had a great impact in the present two Dinajpur(North Dinajpur and South Dinajpur) as well. Raiganj was the centre of Swadeshi Movement in Raiganj subdivision. A massive program of Anti-Partition of Bengal Movement was undertaken at Balurghat and hilli in South Dinajpur district. Jadu nath Roy, Nalinikanta Adhikari and Dr Chandrakanta Chatterjee led this Movement at Balurghat. When the Partition of Bengal took effect on 16 October 1905, "Arandhan Diwas" was celebrated in Balurghat and Raiganj. Dinajpur district Congress president was renowned lawyer Kuloda Kanta Ghosh, who was the lifeblood of Bangabanga or Swadeshi Movement in Raiganj. He attended the 1904 AD Bombay Congress Session as the sole representative of Raiganj and Dinajpur, and actively contributed to the discussions. The then Governor General Lord Curzon plotted the partition of Bengal to weaken the politically conscious Bengalis. On

October 16, 1905 AD, "Arandhan Diwas" was celebrated at Raiganj on the initiative of Kuloda Kanta Ghosh. Shops were closed and a complete Hartal was observed. Responding to the call of Rabindranath Tagore and Ramendra Sundar, "Rakhi Bandhan utsav" was held to unite all people of Dinajpur district irrespective of cast, creed and caste. A public meeting was convened at Diamond Jubilee Hall in Dinajpur on the occasion of Rakhi Bandhan utsav. Thousands of people walked barefoot in this public meeting. Perhaps the people of Raiganj were no exception. People's hatred for British goods grew and programs a boycotted of British goods, laws, courts, schools and colleges etc were taken up. It was preached to accept everything from one's motherland. Many songs and poems were composed to thwart this plot of partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon. Like Rajanikanta Sen's song-

"Mayer dewa mota kapor mathay tule ne re bhai

Din Dukhini maa je toder beshi ar sadhya nai"

The result of this song by Rajanikanta Sen was seen in the whole of Bengal as well as Raiganj. The Loom was installed in the house of Kuloda Kanta Ghosh in Raiganj. The women of the house wove and wore cloth of coarse thread. He also encouraged others to set up looms and weave clothes.

Swadeshi Initiative in Raiganj Subdivision:

Lord Curzon's decision to partition of Bengal created so much hatred for the British in the minds of the people of Bengal that the Bengali took up the Swadeshi Initiative on a large scale. Various Swadeshi Industries, Educational Institutions, Banking System, Swadeshi Shops, Press etc. were developed in Raiganj subdivision. Many Swadeshi Bank were established during the Swadeshi Movement in the Dinajpur. "Bengal National Bank" was established in 1907 AD. The four Banks of Dinajpur- the "Trading and Banking Company", the "Dinajpur Bank", the "Balurghat Town Cooperative Bank", the, "Raiganj Central Cooperative Bank Limited"- where all established between 1906 AD and 1947 AD. The purpose of these Bank was to promote and actively help in the development of Swadeshi Industry and Swadeshi Trade. "Dhana Bhandar" was founded by Jamini Ranjan Ghosh at Raiganj during the second decade of the twentieth century. Various Swadeshi Bookstore were also opened in Raiganj. Perhaps the aim of these Bookstore was to promoted indigenous culture. Jagesh Sarkar was opened a Bookstore called "Kamala Book Store" in Raiganj. This Bookstore was the oldest Bookstore in Raiganj. Raiganj Coronation High School's Teacher Sudhir Ranjan Dey opened "Mukul Press". "The Swadeshi Bhandar" set up by Jagindra Chandra Chakrabarty, Paramesh Chandra, Hari Narayan Bhattacharya in 1906 at Raiganj was declared to be cheapest and the best house of Indian goods.

Raiganj Coronation High School:

The impact of this movement was also widely reflected in the field of education. Government Educational Institutions were boycotted. In many parts of Bengal, Bengalis established many schools, colleges and universities at their own expense. Kuloda Kanta Ghosh of Raiganj planned to open a native school. When Dinajpur and the whole of Bengal was stirring with the Swadeshi Movement, Kuloda Kanta Ghosh held talks and meeting with Kulchandra Guha, Kulchandra Mitra, some educated people and some wealthy men of Adi Bandar. On January 17, 1911 AD, Raiganj Coronation High School was established. Kuloda Kanta Ghosh was the founder Secretary of Raiganj Coronation High School. Kuloda Kanta Ghosh was a staunch Patriot. It was in this school that the freedom fighters on the soil of Raiganj were initiated into the mantra of Patriotism. Several students of Coronation High School participated in the freedom movement and were imprisoned. Kuloda Kanta

Ghosh initiated the people of Raiganj in the Mantra of Nationalism. Many students of this school were involved with Dinajpur Anushilan Samiti. Anadi Kumar Roy was born in 1912 at Adiyar in Raiganj police station. He got admission in "Raiganj Coordination High School" after completing his education at Maharajahat Pathshala. He also joined the Freedom Movement while studying in that school. They used to communicate with the revolutionaries of Dinajpur. He used to perform his own "Anti-British Songs" in Yatras and Kirtans organized in the Village. He was imprisoned for Anti-British activities. Sucharu Guha studied at Raiganj Coronation High School. His elder brother Sukuar Guha passed the Matriculation examination from Raiganj Coronation High School in 1915 AD. This school was a hangout for revolutionaries at that time. In 1940, the "Forward Block" branch was established in Raiganj. Sukumar Guha had a special role in it. Saroj Bose of Raiganj passed first division in Matriculation examination from Raiganj Coronation High School in 1931 AD. During his studies at this school he came in contact with the Anushilan Samiti. On the evening of 24 October 1933, Saroj Bosh along with some youths from Dinajpur district looted the "Darjeeling Mail" at hilli railway station. Rabindra Kumar Bhowmik of Mohanbati(Raiganj) was admitted to Raiganj Coronation High School in 1929 AD. There he received training in martial arts and exercise from teacher Arun Chandra Ghosh. At that time, many revolutionaries studies in Raiganj Coronation High School. He also involved himself in revolutionaries activities. Balurghat was freed from British rule for about 24 hours on 14 September 1942 AD. Balurghat Civil Court, Cooperative Bank and all registry offices were destroyed. In this way the students of Raiganj Coronation High School participated in the Anti-British program and formed a larger movement.

Conclusion:-

In 1905, the Independence Movement became stronger in Dinajpur since the Bengal partition movement. Although no big British movement took place in Raiganj, it was the revolutionaries of Raiganj who led the Anti-British Movement in Balurghat and Dinajpur. Although the seeds of revolutionary thought were sown long ago in Raiganj, they took shape under the care of Kuloda Kanta Ghosh. "Raiganj Coronation High School" established under the chairmanship of Kuloda Kanta Ghosh gave birth and maintained revolutionary thought in the soil of Raiganj. Many students of this school involved themselves in Anti-British activities in many parts of Dinajpur, from Non-cooperation Movement to Quit India Movement. The Contribution of the revolutionaries and Freedom Fighters of Raiganj to the Indian Freedom Movement were Undeniable.

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