
JAMATIA REVOLT OF 1863 CE - A HISTORICAL STUDY

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Abstract: Tripura is one of the seven sisters North East Sister in India. In fact, it is the third smallest State in India. The state is surrounded by Bangladesh on its North, West & South Tripura. On the eastern side, it is surrounded by the states of Mizoram and Assam.

The word Jamatia came from the Arabic word Jamayet meaning assemblage. The soldiers of the Kings were drawn from different tribal communities, predominant among them being the Tripuris. They lived in barracks and camps and formed themselves, in course of time, into a new tribe the Jamatias. According to another interpretation, the word Jamatia came from the Arabic Word 'Jama' which means taxes. The Jamatias for their military services were exempted from paying taxes. So this also points to their origin from the army class. The use of the Arabic words clearly shows that this is of comparatively recent origin, as this term could have originated only after the coming of the Muslim rulers in Bengal.¹

The Jamatia women play quite a vital role in their domestic and economic front. But their role in social, religious and political sphere is quite negligible. The status assigned to them by the society in these spheres is lower than what their male counterparts enjoy. The adoption of a child by a family, usually by a childless one, has social, religious and legal sanction among them.²

“The Jamatias in the past served in the army of Tripura. The word Jamat means a group or a congregation of people. The army which was formed by them was called jamat. Since then they have been known as Jamatias”. Omesh Saigal holds the view that Jamatia in Urdu means an assemblage of persons. The former rulers of Tripura used to recruit his army from a class of Tribals who were not only warriors but also have proved their loyalty to him. A fair proportion of his (sic) armed forces were drawn from amongst the Jamatias who formed a group in his (sic) army, and it was from this fact that they derived their clan name. The view of Thakur Nagendra Debbarma is worth mentioning here. He points it out that -It is known from the investigation of the history of Tripura that when Udaipur was the capital of Tripura, tribal people were given permanent residence round the capital for doing the various duties of the state. The system of paying monthly salaries to the soldiers did not exist at the time. Instead, they were given land settlement around the capital. This assemblage of the community gradually established matrimonial alliance and blood relationship among themselves and ultimately develops into a separate endogamous community.³

In this context it should be noted here that till to – day the Jamatias are concentrated mainly in the Amarapur and Udaipur Sub – Division which were erstwhile capitals of Tripura. Amarapur was the capital of Tripura for a short period during the reign of Amar Manikya and Rangamati which was later named as Udaipur during the reign of Udai Manikya was the capital of Tripura for a long time. Yet another group of elder persons of the Jamatia community are of the opinion that when Pub Narayan (a legendary hero of the Jamatia community) brought the image of Biyagwang Goriya (one of the popular deities of the Jamatias) from the land of Kukis by exhibiting great valour and presented it to the king, the king ordered him to worship the deity in a Jamayet i. e in an assemblage and since then those persons who are worshipping the image of Goriya in a group came to be known as Jamatias.⁴

Literature review:-

The Jamatias of Tripura - by Prodip Nath Bhattacharjee, and MODERNITY IN TRADITION A Historical Study of the Jamatia Tribe of Tripura, this book attempts to give a general account of the Jamatias briefly touching the social political and religious fringe of their life. A sociological study of some Jamatia villages has been included in this book to show the changes that have come over their economic, social, and political life in recent years. While discussing Political Development in Tripura in the book 'North East India: A Sociological Study' by S. M. Dubey, Banikanta Bhattacharjee observes that there were only two major rebellious uprisings during the monarchical rule before 1947, namely the Jamatia Revolt and the Reang Revolt.

Basically Jamatia community is considered as a royal army of Tripura. They enjoyed certain privileges during the reign of Maharaja Krishna Kishore Manikya. But unfortunately a chaotic situation occurred in the royal darbar

which created a lot of bloodshed between the Jamatia community and the ruler. Nothing positive could be achieved after the war but it led a wide gap and hatred feelings between themselves.

Causes of the revolt:

Political – Administrative cause: - The mid-19th century, in the annals of Hill Tipperah, was a Saga of the dependants – officials. Overburdened by his predecessor Krishna Kishore Manikya's (1829-1849) debts, and being incapable of meeting the expenses consequent on the nominations of a Jubaraj or heir apparent, Ishan Chandra Manikya (1850 -62) entrusted Dewan Balaram Hazari, the sole management of his kingdom. He was a devious man and hill people soon became disgusted for his ill treatment. Bipin Behari Goswami, the Guru of Spiritual guide of Ishan Chandra Manikya played an important role in the political affairs of Tripura. During the last 7 or 8 years of his reign, Ishan Chandra Manikya had given the whole sole management of every matter to Guru Bipin Behari Goswami .5

After the death of Maharaja Ishan Chandra Manikya on 1st August 1862 his brother Birchandra Manikya ascended the throne. But there were many claimant's for the throne specially Nilkrishna Thakur and Chakra Davja who belonged to the royal family. Therefore, Britishers also supported to Birchandra Manikya to the throne and before Ishan Chandra Manikya died. Following the years, Bipin Behari Goswami emerged as a powerful Chief Secretary but every one of the royal family members used to go against him for his act and arrogance behaviour. Thereafter, Birchandra Manikya was appointed to be the king and finally he usurped the throne. Just after that he used to observe every members of the royal family and those who were found guilty or favour of Bipin Behari Goswami were ousted from their posts and position. Therefore the member of the royal family power had risen up and begun their rule upon renters for their advantages. This was the reasons which led to the Jamatia revolt of 1863.

Making of passage/Roadways: - The Jamatia community lived in Tipperah as troops and they used to serve the kings in times of war. They also cultivated the agricultural activities like others. Generally making of passage is called Titung which means clearing the bushes or making the routes by cutting jungles free of cost for the movement of king and his associates including his family members.

Social cause: - The Jamatia community lived in Tipperah as troops and they used to serve the kings in times of war. They also practice agricultural activities when there is no problem in the royal darbar. Since the past, Jamatia not only serve as royal army but also loyal to the king that's why they were exempted from paying taxes. But with the passage of time things went wrong and once again like earlier they were imposed tax which is called Titung. Generally making of passage is called Titung which means clearing the bushes or making the routes by cutting jungles free of cost for the movement of king and his associates including his family members. Hunters writing in 1876 says "the Jamatias were exempted from this forced coolie labour, a privilege of which they were very hard, the contravention of which was the cause of sanguineous rebellion some years ago. But missip Oakhirai Hazari by forcibly trying to impose 'Tyethung' system on Jamatias. This further makes angry the Jamatias and they were rejected of Oakhirais order.

Immediate cause: - Being rejected, Oakhirai Hazari was reported to have told the Rajha, The Sardar (Akra) of the Jamatias is a man of deceitful character. He thinks himself to be a leader of speciality, and taking advantages of the allegiance of his clan, had a plan to establish a State for Jamatia alone. As the intervention and persecution of the officials increased in scale and strength, the Jamatias portrait against the officials and put a strong resistance as an outbreak of the accumulate discontent. The Jamatia fomented because they had been asked by Oakhirai to carry his wife on a bamboo – made cradle (Oaying) who was her in menstruation period. This was taken as Turpitude by the Jamatias, and this behavior on the part of Oakhirai Hazari deepened the distrust and hostility of the Jamatias towards him. They thus arrayed against oppression when Oakhirai Hazari made extreme provocation to them. An also complained to the king about the refusal to pay taxes and insulted him. The Rajah was apprised by Oakhirai Hazari that the Jamatias refused to pay taxes for them had a plan to have an 'Independent Jamatia State. Such exotic report of Oakhirai Hazari created suspicion in the mind of the Rajah, and he then sent some Binindias to identify the real intention of Parikshit. By the order of Rajah, the Binindias went to the village of the Jamatias. Oakhirai was reported have some collusion with some of the binindias and named some of the Jamatias who denied to carry his wife on an oaying .5 On their arrival, the Binindias, being colluded with Oakhirai, started to threaten the people of the Jamatia villages. They were arraignment of ill – manner shown to Oakhirai Hazari. Hearing such arraignment, the Jamatias started to clamour. "We have an immense respect for him. We extended our unstinted hospitality to him. The only objection we made was that we could not carry his wife who was in her menstruation period during the visit. Their quarrel reached to such a situation that the Jamatias killed all Binindias. The Raja was kept in complete dark about the real intention of the Jamatias vis – a – vis the Jamatia Sardar. Jamatias had to bear the mess mark of sedition. The Rajah Birchandra Manikya, Parikshit and even the headmen (Chakdiris) of the

Jamatia villages had not become acquainted with the real cause of such disturbances between the Jamatias and the Binindias. The Jamatias, though peace-loving and loyal to king, were not familiar to endure turpitude without any protest. The disturbances created by the Binindias caught the mildew that was already being Calm. A rumour already was made public in Agartala that all Binindias were uprooted by the secret forces of Parikshit. Rajah Birchandra then had a suspicious belief that Jamatias had really become seditious and acquired a secret force so as to dethrone him. Rajah ordered troops to go Udaipur and subdue the Jamatia peoples but they failed. Most of the soldiers were assassinated and wounded. It is steep to go to Jamatia villages. The Jamatias, as and when were aware of the arrival of the king's officials at their village, use to flee away, along with all men and women in the dense forest. They attacked, at some intervals, some officials at an opportune moment. Later on the king thought of inflicting severe punishment to them and sent a group of Kuki people to Udaipur under the leadership of Sardar Murchai Lala and Hapui Lala. They reached the village and killed many Jamatia people and brought 200 heads which were hung on Agartala trees. The revolt, at the outset, was confined to a place called Killa in Udaipur. The Jamatias are socially cohesive. The revolt of Jamatia had a deep impact in Tripura's History. The grievances which led to the rebellion were basically against some social and economic exploitation subjected to them by the Rajah's.

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Misinterpretation of Oakhirai Hazari : -Once upon a time while oakhirai Hazari come towards Udaipur alongwith soldiers to collect taxes from some villages. But on the way his wife feeling ill and asked Jamatias to carry his wife on the bamboo cradle but denied. So it led him anger and looked for revenge. Therefore, without wasting time he misinterpreted the king about Jamatia. Soon Kings Bir Chandra Manikya sent his soldiers to attack upon Jamatias but failed.

Pardoned to the Chieftainship of Jamatia :- The leader of the Jamatia revolt named Parikshit Jamatia chieftainship (Hada Akra) was arrested and brought to agartala and also for short while he was kept in a custody at royal darvar. But later on, Rajah Birchandra pardoned him to follow the practice of Vaishnava way of life.

Impact:- As a result of the revolt about 200 Jamatias were killed and their houses were burnt completely. On the one hand, this revolt was hastened due to the misinterpretation of Oakhirai Hazari and on the other hand without knowing the fact king Bir Chandra Manikya economically Jamatias. Hence, the revolt was confined to killa, Udaipur.

Problem findings: - The history of the Jamatia revolt is relevant to the annals of the Hill Tipperah mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the Jamatias was one of the Hill tribe and not a war like by character and secondly, the grievances that led to the revolt against some social and economic injustices.

Conclusion: From the above facts we can clearly justify that the miscommunication of the Royal family led to the Jamatias revolt between the King and Parikshit, the leader of Jamatia community. Thus the Jamatia revolt was spread like a forest fire which compelled the British to take the effective initiative to bring the situation under control and soon the problem was resolved peacefully via referendum. But due to the rigorous initiative of British Govt. who sent a message to Birchandra Manikya to settle the situation peacefully via referendum. In this way, the conflict came to an end.

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