

Role of Muslims in the Quit India Movement in Undivided Tamluk Sub-division, Tamluk, Purba Medinipur



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Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to trace the role of the Muslims of the undivided Tamluk Sub-division¹, (Purba Medinipur, West Bengal) in the Quit India Movement. In the history of Indias freedom movement the place of undivided Midnapur is indisputable². Though the freedom movement of undivided Midnapur was nothings but an echo of the all India freedom movement, yet is to be noted that in all the phases of freedom movement the people of undivided Midnapur took the leading part³.

The impact of the Second World War (1939-1945) was very severe to the people of undivided Tamluk Sub-division. Immediately after the outbreak of the Second World War, the Defence of India Act was brought into operation at the place of our study and meetings and processions were prohibited⁴, possibly considering the past role of this place in national movement, especially in the Civil Disobedience movement. This prohibitory order was followed by other repressive measures as soon as the fall of Singapore and Malay took place at the hands of Japan who participated as an ally of the Axis Camp i.e. Germany and Italy.

Moreover, the rapid advance of the Japanese forces in Burma posed a serious challenge and threat in the security of British colonial India. Under the circumstances in April, 1942 undivided Tamluk Sub-division along with other costal areas of undivided Midnapur was declared 'an emergency area'⁵ for fear of Japanese invasion from the Bay of Bengal. Against this political background the imperialist British government followed the drastic denial policy by withdrawing most of the motor bases from the roads, by destroying or removing all types of boats from the 'emergency area' and by seizing all bi-cycles from the area of our study⁶. These caused great hardships to the people in regard to conveyance and earning.

Boats were the most important means of conveyance in estuarial area like ours and export and import of goods in our area solely depended on the boats. Export of paddy, rice and hay was the basis of cash economy in the place of our study. This solely depended on boats since water transport was the only means of communication with the outside area especially the Sundarbans in the district of South 24 Parganas. A large number of people of our area including land-lords, cultivators and traders depended on agriculture and trade of the Sundarbans. The fishing community living in our areas was also entirely depended on boats. Important necessary goods like kerosene, cloth, medicine spices etc. were brought from outside by boats⁷. Thus the destruction as well as the removal of boats from our place of study caused hardships to the livelihood and prosperity of the people irrespective of caste and creed.

The situation further aggravated when the government followed the policy of exporting food-grains i.e., paddy and rice from this region instead of importing food-grains from outside to meet the deficit⁸. The government did so for making stock for the army. This enraged the people to a great extent⁹.

Keywords: Ally, Costal area, Bay of Bengal, Seizing, vigorous, Prejudice.

Introduction

To copy with this reactionary governmental policy and to make more close contact with the masses for forming opinion against these

arbitrary measures of the government, the sub-divisional Congress Committee (henceforth SDCC) of undivided Tamluk decided to raise a large band of volunteers known as Swechchhasevak Bahini during the end of 1941. Among the six thanas (police stations) under undivided Tamluk Sub-division, Mahishadal and Sutahata thanas took the initiative in this matter. Later on, such a Bahini was formed at

S. No.	Name
1.	Atihar Rahaman
2.	Ali Akbar
3.	Asedali
4.	Abdul Gani
5.	Abdul Jalil
6.	Ali Mahammad
7.	Amed Box
8.	Khalil Mir
9.	Arfan Ali
10.	Abdur Rahaman
11.	Asiruddin
12.	Abdul Rahaman
13.	Abdur Rahaman
14.	Abdul Gofur
15.	Abdul Hosain
16.	Isahak Ali
17.	Kausar Ali
18.	Mirja Abdur Rahaman
19.	Rahim Ali Khan
20.	Refayet Ali Khan
21.	Rakhil Sekh
22.	Saharaf Ali
23.	Harun Rasid
24.	Haru
25.	Pulin Khan
26.	Mir Mansur Ali
27.	Sekh Rahamat
28.	Akbar Khan
29.	Amsuddin Mallik
30.	Khoda Box
31.	Based Ali
32.	Meher Ali
33.	Sekh Mobarak
34.	Sekh Rahaman Ali
35.	Sekh Nakimuddin

Among fifty two Muslim participants many of them also participated in earlier movements like Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience.

The Quit India resolution of 8th August and the arrest of Congress leaders including Gandhiji on the next day were "immediately followed by peaceful and non-violent popular demonstrations in the shape of haratals and processions over nearly the whole of India"¹² and undivided Tamluk Sub-division, our special field of study, is not an exception. In the meantime a new sub-divisional Congress Committee was formed and Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee become the secretary of the S.D.C.C. Police-man direct confrontation began in the place of our study on 8th September, 1942 when a crowd of about two thousand five hundred persons including one Muslim named Ased Ali¹³ tried to stop the export of rice by the mill-owner of Danipur under Mahishadal thana. Another confrontation took place on the 27th September, 1942 at Iswarpur of Nandigram thana

Tamluk thana. At Mahishadal and Sutahata thanas two trained volunteer corps numbering about three thousand volunteers including fifty female volunteers were formed in course of one month¹⁰. the number soon rose to five thousand and several camps, were started to train these volunteers¹¹. a few Muslims participated as volunteers. Among them mention may be made of the following.

Village	Thana (P.S.)
Kanchanpur	Mahishadal
Mirpur	"
Ichchhapur	"
Kanchanpur	"
Kakurda	"
"	"
"	"
Natsal	"
Jagannathchak	Sutahata
"	"
Fatepur	"
Basulia	"
Mohanpur	"
"	"
"	"
Jagannathpur	"
Fatepur	"
Jagannathchak	"
Pattarberiya	"
Mohanpur	"
Jagannathchak	"
Barbasudevapur	"
Jhikurkhali	"
Mohanpur	"
Kulapara	Nandigram
Beyal	"
Gopimohanpur	"
Janubasan	Tamluk
"	"
"	"
Chak Srikrishnapur	"
Siuri	"
Srirampur	"
Dakshin Jiyada	Panskura
Srikantha	Moyna

where the police had gone to arrest two persons in the local Congress Office. In both the places police opened fire against opposition of the mob. As a result there persons at Danipur incident and four persons at Iswarpur died¹⁴.

Against this background the War Council (Samar Parisad) of undivided Tamluk Sub-division already formed and the important Congress leaders in a meeting decided to organize mass action against the government¹⁵. "In the history of India's freedom struggle September 29, 1942 was a remarkable day because on that day a concerted move was taken by the freedom fighters of Tamluk Sub-division to occupy the police stations (thanas) and government offices at Tamluk, Mahishadal and Sutahata purely on a peaceful manner. On the next day similar attempt was made at Nandigram P.S. of the same Sub-division. No such attempts were made at Panskura and Moyna police stations both belonging to undivided Tamluk

Sub-division, due to the lack of proper Congress Organization."¹⁶

As a result of the heavy firing the processionists dispersed and a few of them died martyr's death including one Muslim named Alauddin Sekh of Muhammadpur village under Nandigram police station¹⁷. This national upsurge which was characterised by Herbart, the then governor of Bengal, as a "large scale rebellion" made the government very much worried¹⁸. as the movement assumed a vigorous form at our place of study, Indian Gurkha

S. No.	Name of the tortured person
1.	Abdur Rahaman
2.	Abdul Hossain
3.	Ismail Ali
4.	Isahak Ali
5.	Arsed Ali
6.	Kausar Ali
7.	Chausar Ali
8.	Mirja Abdur Rahaman
9.	Refayet Ali Khan
10.	Akbar Kha
11.	Amusddin Mallik
12.	Khoda Bax
13.	Ali Akbar

Inspite of severe repression and Cyclonic storm followed by tial wave near the sea on October 16, 1942 the Congress Organisation of undivided Tamluk Sub-division established national government named Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar with a view to collapse the British imperialism from this area and to offer better administration for fulfilling the aims and aspirations of the people. As branches of the newly formed Jatiya Sarkar, the thana Jatiya Sarkar were established at Sutahata, Mahishadal, Nandigram and Tamluk. It is further to note that so long the Jatiya Sarkars existed, almost the British government could not function properly in the place of our study.

Objectives of the study

This study is basically done to point out the role of Muslims in the freedom history which is ignored in current history. Besides, the indirect effects /co-operations of Muslims are to be captured in this study.

Section – II

Against this background of raping, burning of houses, damaging of household goods and various types of torture on the people by the British Police and soldiers, the organiser of Tamralipte Jatiya Sarkar, took many measures. Many Muslim participants of the place of our study helped in the following ways to make the movement a success in their areas.

First

They participated in the processions, haratals, picketings, meeting, etc. at the time of Quit India movement. Especially they participated in the processions leading to occupy the police stations and government offices purely on a peaceful manner on the 29th September (30th November at Nandigram), 1942.

Secondly

A few took active part by associating themselves in different organisational activities i.e., as

and British soldiers were posted by founding camps in different areas of the Sub-division to oppressed men and women in a manner which may be compared with Nazi methods. While raiding the soldiers did not hesitate to commit rape¹⁹. Besides raping on 74 women, physical torture both men and women in various ways were regularly carried out by the police and military²⁰. Many Muslims suffered physical torture as they actively participated in the Quit India movement.

List is furnished here.

Village	Thana (P.S.)
Mohanpur	Sutahata
"	"
Jagannathpur	"
"	"
Mohanpur	"
"	"
Basulia	"
Jagannathpur	"
Mohanpur	"
Janubasan	Tamluk
"	"
"	"
Mirpur	Mahishadal

members of the Suechchasevak Bahini, as a worker of the Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar (Ali Akbar, son of Abbas, village Kanchanpur under Mahishadal P.S.) (Abdul Gani, a son of Ismail, village Kanchanpur under Mahishadal P.S.) and so on.

Thirdly

One Muslim actively associated with the movement, gave shelter to the Congress workers fighting for the national cause (Harun Rasid, a son of Pijuruddin, village Jhikurkhali under Sutahata P.S.).

Fourthly

One Muslim named Nur Mahammad encouraged his wife Jabedan Bibi, village Thekua under Sutahata P.S. to take part in the Quit India Movement.

Section – III

From all these facts one can easily guess that how the Muslims of undivided Tamluk sub-division involved themselves in the Quit India Movement. In this movement their role were varied and ivider.

Three Muslim participants suffered imprisonment. They are Seikh Nakimuddin of village Srikantha under Moyna P.S., Jamal Ali of village Iswardaha Jalpai under Sutahat P.S. and Rahim Ali Khan of village Patharberia under Sutahata P.S.

As a result of severe tortures, four Muslim participants had to take shelter in the neighbouring district of 24 Parganas for several years. They were (i) Abdur Rahaman, (ii) Abdul Hosain, (iii) Irsed Ali and (iv) Kosar Ali all belonging to Mohanpur village under Sutahata P.S.

It is further to note that though most of the Muslim participants were illiterate villagers, their enthusiasm and love for freedom made them to bear untold sufferings as stated above.

The reason is not far to seek. The programme of close mass contact since Non

cooperation movement followed by the Gandhian Congress leaders of SDCC of undivided Tamluk helped the people of our area in general and Muslims in particular to make themselves involved in greater numbers in the Quit India movement under the guidance of their self-sacrificed leaders.

However it is very unfortunate to know that Sri Bidyut Chakraborty in his research work entitled "Local politics and Indian Nationalism Midnapur 1919-1944" New Delhi, 1977 writes. "The Quit India Movement was primarily a Hindu movement despite Gandhi's urge to create an anti imperial platform incorporating everybody regardless of religion. Midnapur did not differ much for through there was a Muslim minority in the district was not a single instance of Muslim participation was noticed." (P. 175) But our investigation about the role of the Muslims of undivided Tamluk sub-division throws completely a different picture as discussed in our present picture. Thus the remark of Mr. Chakraborty does not carry any weight as stated above.

Conclusion

On the other hand it may be concluded that the role of the Muslims in the undivided Tamluk sub-division in the Quit India Movement was noteworthy in the history of freedom movement in India. As a birth place if many freedom loving Muslims, this place deserves our admiration inspite of any prejudice²¹.

Endnotes

1. In 1988 Tamluk sub-division was divided into two sub-divisions – Tamluk and Haldia – with the creation of a few police stations. The undivided Tamluk Sub-division consisted of six police i.e., Tamluk, Mahishadal, Sutahata, Nandigram, Moyna and Panskura.
2. Majumdar, R.C. *History of Freedom Movement*, Vol.-3, Calcutta, P. 563; Maity, S.K. *Freedom Movement in Midnapore*, Vol.-1, Calcutta, P.48; Majumdar, *History of Modern Bengal Calcutta* PP. 339-40.
3. For details the following works may be consulted; Bhattacharya, T.S., *Swadhinata Sangrame Medinipur* (1973); Pramanik, P.K., *Swadhinata Sangrame Medinipur* (1973); Goswami, G., *Banglar Haldighat Tamluk* (1973); Maity, S.K., *Freedom Movement in Midnapore*, Vol.-1 (1975); Das, N.N., *History of Midnapore*, part – 2 (1980); Das, B.K., *Swadhinata Sangrame Medinipur*, 2 vols. (1980 & 1984); Maity, P.K., *Biyalliser Tamluk O Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar* (1981); Maity, H., *Swadhinata Sangramer Itihas, Mayna thana* (1985); Bramachari, B., *Mukti Sangramer Kahini* (1988) Bhakta, B.B., *Nandigram Swadhinata Sangram* (1989); Ghose N., *Role of women in the Freedom Movement in Bengal* (1988); Pal R. And Maity, H. *Swadhinata Sangrame Medinipur*, Vol.-3 (1992); Das, K., *Aitu Sangrami Nandigram* (1994), Bhunia S.S. and Bhowmik, A. *Swadhinata Sangrame Nandigram*, etc.
4. Samanta, S. And others, *August Revolution and two years, National Government in Midnapore*, part – 1 (Tamluk), 1946, P.4.
5. *Ibid*, P.6
6. *Ibid*, PP. 6-8
7. Maity, P.K. *Quit India Movement in Bengal and the Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar*, Pathi Pustak, Calcutta, 2002, P.19
8. Samanta and others, *op.cit.*, P. 10; Pramanik, P.K., *Swadhinata Sangrame Medinipur*, P.33
9. *Sangrame Purush Kumarchandra*, Pub by Tamralipta Swadhinata Sangram Itihas Committee, Tamluk, 1984, P.99
10. Samanta and others, *op.cit.*, P.9
11. *Ibid*
12. Majumdar, *op. Cit.*, Vol.-3, P.647
13. *Data collected from Swadhinata Sangramider Jiban Panji*, Vol.-1, P. 83, Pub. by Tamralipta Swadhinata Sangram Itihas Committee, Smitisaudha, P.O. Kulberia, Purba Medinipur.
14. Maity, P.K. *op. Cit.*, P. 24
15. *Ibid*, P. 25
16. *Ibid*
17. Roy, Santimoy, *Bharatar Mukti Sangrame Muslim Abadan*, P. 94; Goswami, Gopinandan, *Medinipurer Sahid Parichaya*, 1977, P. 39
18. *Governor's Secretarial Papers (Bepal) (Hereface GSP)*, Note by J.A.H. Herbert, Governor of Bengal, 10th October, 1942
19. Samanta and others, *op. cit.*, PP. 62-64, Goswami G. *Bapalac Haldighat Tamluk*, PP. 80-83
20. Samanta and others, *op. cit.*, P. 42
21. For details about the Muslim participants in the place of our study and their roles we have collected data from *Swadhinata Sangramider Jiban Panji*, Vol-1 & 2, Published by Tamralipta Swadhinata Sangram Itihas Committee, Smitisaudha, Nimtauri, P.O. Kulberia, Dist. Purba Medinipur in 1987, 1999.