

The Tebhaga

The Peasants' Movement in Bengal (1945-50)

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Abstract

The Tebhaga (two- third share) movement was the first politically organized peasant movement led by the Kisan Sabha under the aegis of the Communist Party of India with a definite ideology. This movement of 'Bargadars' (poor peasants) struck at the root of socio-economic structure of Bengal. The exploitative behaviour of the 'Jotedars' (middle and rich peasants) and opportunistic tendencies of political parties i.e. the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League towards Bargadars were witnessed in this movement. The peculiar features of this movement were its class and ethnic solidarity, which was the handiwork of the communists. These contributed to a sense of unity and confidence among the Bargadars.

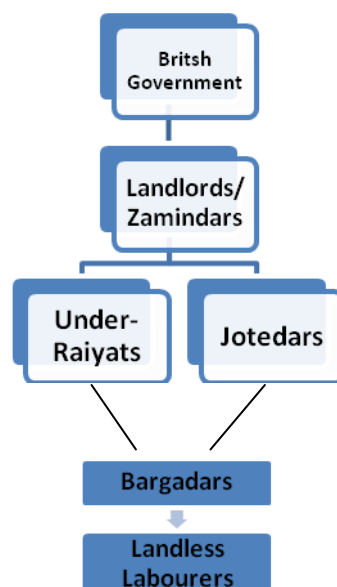
Introduction

It was a Bargadars' movement against their exploiter 'Jotedars' over two-third (Tebhaga) share of the produce. After putting both the labour and capital for production, the Bargadars were left with only half of the produce. Again, the harvested crop was divided at the Jotedar's khamar (thrashing place). At Khamar, Jotedars usually manipulated weights to the disadvantage of the Bargadars even with the existing system of share. Thus, their life became miserable and their survival became impossible. Emboldened with the success of the earlier peasant uprisings (Adhjar, Burdwan Canal Tax and Hattola) since 1934 to 1944, the peasant leaders of Kisan Sabha under the aegis of the Communist Party of India launched the Tebhaga movement in Bengal. The effective leadership won the confidence of large section of the peasantry.

Agrarian Hierarchies

The Bengal state in the British period was under the **Permanent Settlement** (zamindari) system of revenue collection since 1793, according to this system, the landlord got agriculture land from the British government after an auction on a fixed revenue, tenure, and the power to sublet it further, and thus, generated a new classes of intermediaries between him and the actual tillers. However, the number and class of intermediaries change from place to place. We have divided these into five broad categories as illustrated in the figure below. The zaminders or the landlords got lease as large tracts of agricultural fields for a specific period of time, which they further leased out to 'Jotedars'. The rights of these intermediaries were permanent, hereditary, power to sublet and rents fixed in perpetuity. Most of these sublet the tracts of land further to a class called the 'Bargadars'. However, there were Under-Raiyats, another agricultural hierarchy, who held land directly under the landlords for a fixed period of time, but their tenures and social position were inferior to those of jotedars. Both of these (bargadars and under-raiyats) involve further, the landless labourers in tilling the land. Most of the bagadars worked as agricultural labourers in a lean seasons.¹ So, a peasant could be a bargadar and agricultural labourer, if he had no land of his own, or poor peasant and bargadar, if he had little land, which was insufficient to maintain his family. After the famine of 1943 a large number of bargadars lost their land and become agricultural labourers.² However, when the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha launched the Tebhaga movement in September 1946, it didn't frankly talk about bargadar-agricultural labourers alliance as a revolutionary force.³ Though, lakhs of agricultural labourers fought for the cause of Bargadars, but none of their demands were actually taken up by the leadership. However, the most significant outcome was the 'class consciousnesses'. One of the earliest martyrs of this struggle was an agricultural labourers.⁴

Village 'mahajans' (money-lenders) were the major source of agriculture credit in rural Bengal.



Organisational Structure, Ideology and Programme–

The movement had a three tier leadership. At the **provincial level**, the leaders were BhowaniSen, K.B. Roy, M.Ahmed etc., who came from the urban-based middle class of the Communist Party of India and its front rank organisation -the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha. Their task was to provide a general organisational sketch of the movement and supervision over the local leaders with regard to the programme and co-ordination. Second, tier of **district level** leadership comprised leaders like Sunil Sen, Ajit Roy, Moni Bagchi, Bibuti Guha, Ashok Bose, etc. They led and guided the participants in the day to day development of the movement. Third, tier was the grass roots leadership emerged from villages and played the key role in the movement. It sustained the movement like a nursing mother.⁵ The **Village level** Tebhaga Committee of Krishak Sabha, comprising both the middle and poor peasant was formed, to look after the day to day problems arising out of the peasant movement. These committees behaved like council of elders not only guiding and supervising the movement but also had unofficial jurisdiction over rural life. Parallel trial courts were setup at the village level. The persons who opposed the Tebhaga movement were punished. Many a time, they were brought under confinement and even convicted for opposing the movement.⁶ In order to generate support for the movement, regular '**Baithaks**', Assemblies, Campaigns, '**Hat Sabhas**'

were organised. Communist literature was distributed by Tebhaga leaders. A propaganda squad of volunteers force kept a watch on the police and over the activities of Jotedars. Legal aid Committees were formed to fight cases of the Bargadars implicated in false law suits by the Jotedars.⁷ A volunteer force of ten named '**Bahini**' was raised in every village on the theory of "**Ekbhai, Eklathi, Ek taka**". They were called upon to bear a cap and a budge. The Bahini was led by a captain in each Tebhaga Committee, whose task was not only to provide organization but also to look after the welfare of the peasants. This organised network harvested the crops of their arrested comrades in a cooperative manner and organised the boycott of Jotedars at the height of the movement.⁸ The Women were organised through '**The Mahila Atma Raksha Samiti**'. The continued and patient work of Mahila Atma Raksha Samiti on different issues like food, medical relief, shelter to destitute, relief in distress dehoarding campaigns brought a wave of women's awakening in rural Bengal.⁹ The awakened women often led the men in struggle and faced the hooligans of the Jotedars. They were supposed to keep a watch and protect the standing crop. Further, they were to join meetings, demonstrations, arrange food and shelter for the leaders. They also carried out communication between various centers and gave warning at the approach of the police.¹⁰ The **Communist Party of India** one of the constituent of the Left in 1944-45 completely captured the organisation of 'All India Kisan Sabha'. Between 1941 and 1944 several leaders of the Kisan Sabha were interned, which gave them an opportunity to sharpen their understanding of the agrarian crisis and the nature of class conflict in the countryside. A clearer articulation of the notion of 'peasant' and the class-base of the party emerged through the process of maturation.¹¹ The Kisan Sabha by 1945 had become predominantly a poor peasant organisation. During the period of natural calamities in the form of floods, famines and epidemics relief works were organised. These relief activities enabled the Left and their organization, 'the All India Kisan Sabha' to consolidate its organisation.¹² The enrolment of members showed considerable progress after 1944. In April 1943 the total membership of Kisan Sabha in Bengal was only 3000. In January 1945 it had risen to over 9000.¹³

Events

In the course of the relief work Kisan Sabha workers advised Tenants and the Bargadars to withhold rents or share of crop. However, the actual struggle for Tebhaga, calling for

direct action from the sharecroppersto retain a two-thirds share of the produce for themselves and to pay theJotedar only one-third, was lanuched in September 1946.¹⁴In the first phase, the movement erupted in organised areasparticularly in North Bengal and Mymensing district. The movement reachedits peak by early 1947. The first bloodshed in police firing after a bitterfight took place in Dinajpur.

Dinajpur -

During the Bengal Legislative Assembly, election in March 1946,the victory of Rupnarayan Roy, a peasant communist against a local Jotedaremboldened the whole peasantry and rekindled the new vigour andenthusiasm among the Rajbanshis in particular." The victory of a peasantcommunist proved the strong organizational base of the Communist Party ofIndia and theKisanSabha in Dinajpur.After the call for Tebhaga by the Bengal Provincial KisanSabha inSeptember 1946 the Dinajpur branch under the leadership of BibhutiGuha,Sunil Sen, Kali Sarkarorganised a number of Meetings, and distributedleaflets in local language in the villages.¹⁵The Muslim peasants too joined inlarge numbers. The entire area of Dinajpur divided into six sectors was putunder effective leadership of the Communist Party of India. Thakurgaoneast,west and town was led by AjitRoy, BibhutiGuha, Sunil Sen, and MohammadHaji Danesh, Bochaganj, Chiribandar and Dinajpur town were controlled byJanadhan Bhattacharya, SachinduChakravorty, Bhowani Sen.¹⁶ In October,1946 a joint meeting of Communist Party of India and KisanSabha tookplace to finalise the plan and strategy for Tebhaga movement.¹⁷ In December1946 KisanSabha led by the Communist Party of India workers calledupon Bargadars to remove all paddy to their homes after harvesting. KisanSamiti volunteers moved from village to village shouting various anti-Jotedarslogans like 'NijKholaneDhanTolo', 'AdhiNaiTabhaga Chai', 'JanithThakaUchehedNai' etc. and asked the Bargadars to die rather than to part with theirpaddy.¹⁸ Sunil Sen went to Rampur village, volunteers stood around withlathis and red flags to guard the harvest. Police came and arrested Sunil Senand 32 others. One Rajbanshi widow of Dipsari led the Bargadars against thepolice. This inspired the peasants in the neighbouring areas and the movementspread in most of the villages.¹⁹The first major clash took place in TalpukurVillage in Chirirbandar under the local leadership of SachinduChakravorty,SudhirSamajpati, and MadhuBurman. TheJotedars lodged a

number of charges of paddy looting by peasant activists. When police came to arrest the leaders on January 4, 1947, the peasant incensed by early arrest of Sachin Das assembled and a skirmish broke out.²⁰ The Santal peasants had come with bows and Rajbanshis with lathis. The police opened fire. The two activists Sibram and Samiruddin were shot dead and several peasants were injured. The Communists led people relief committee provided relief and the local communist MLA protested in legislative assembly.²¹

Khanpur Massacre

On February 17, 1946 a local peasant leader Krishandas Mohantawas arrested along with 15 peasants by the police on the charge of 'paddy looting'.²² Again, on the next day, a police force came to arrest 14 more peasants against whom they had warrants. Nagen Burman a local Kisan Samiti member, came out of his home and started shouting 'inquilab' which was a code calling upon peasants to assemble. The peasants thronged the ground with traditional weapons in hand and demanded prisoners release.²³ Some of them blocked the road by felling a tree and digging a trench on it. A police truck fell into the ditch; the police started firing indiscriminately killing 22 and injuring a large number of peasants. Neither the Indian National Congress nor the Muslim League showed interest towards this episode. On February 21, 1947 more than 100 peasants were arrested in the area.²⁴ The Prime Minister, H.S. Suhrawardy, gave a completely different version, he made the Bargadars responsible for the massacre.²⁵ Members of the Mahila Atmaraksha Samiti went round the villages and gave a graphic report of police atrocities. In another incident on February 21, 1947 in Thumnia village, another stronghold of Communists and Kisan Sabhaites, an inspector with 16 constables went to arrest one peasant leader Domo Singh. The Police force met with a stiff resistance of armed villagers, which resulted in killing of four peasants.²⁶ When the Kisan Sabhaites and the Communists like Bibuti Guha and Ajit Roy tried to organise a demonstration, the Government ordered their arrest. Section 144 was imposed in the entire region.²⁷ Kakdwip - 24 Parganas (Sundarbans) except for the cyclone of 1942 which had caused havoc in the Sunderbans area, reasons were same to make the conditions ripe for peasant mobilization.²⁸ Relief Committee, a voluntary organisation of the Communist Party of India led by Satyanarayan Chatterji, Jyotish Roy, Kangsari Haider, Nityanand Chaudhary and a newly recruited peasant activist with terrorist

background Jatin Maiti and the Kisan Samiti formed in Budhakali mobilized the peasants and gave a call for Tebhaga in September 1946.²⁹ The Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha president K.B. Roy and secretary Mansur Habib opposed the communal riots and organized peasants to struggle for land and food. About 7000 peasants both Hindu and Muslims met in Kakdwip to take a decision about Tebhaga. The Government repeated the story of Dinajpur and arrested a large number of Bargadars. Police killed at least 7 peasants at Bermajur (Sandeshkhali), but the movement went on.³⁰ However, the strength of the combined force of adivasi archers, tea garden workers and sharecroppers was manifested in battles of "Kholan Bhangra Movement" particularly in Bhodor's Kholan in Haihaipathar on April 4, 1947. This struggle between peasants workers on one side and the police on the other cost six policemen lives.³¹ This was the first time the Tebhaga volunteers could inflict a significant blow on the police. Samar Ganguli organized Tebhaga in the adjoining villages of Binaguri – Banarhat area and got tremendous support from adivasis and tea-garden workers.³²

In 1948, there was a change in the Communist Party of India's line at the Second Congress in Calcutta. In this Calcutta Congress of the Communist Party of India, the earlier policy of supporting the Indian National Congress was completely reversed. Now, the focus of the Communist Party of India was on deepening the movement. Ashok Bose became the most militant leader of this phase. Under his guidance Communist Party's voluntary organisations such as relief committee and Krishak Samiti (Krishak Bahini - armed force) gave a befitting reply to atrocities in frontal armed clashes, burning of Kutcheries of Jotedars.³³ The most violent phase occurred in this area between December, 1949 and January, 1950. Peasants were organized for armed struggle by Major Jaipal, who had recently retired from the Indian army.³⁴ The intensification of the movement made the authorities more vindictive and atrocities became common. Most of the leaders were thrown in jail while others left Kakdwip and went underground in Calcutta.³⁵ The movement also spread in the Rajbansi villages in adjoining Rangpur and Jalpaiguri districts. The pattern of the movement was the same. The bargadars took the crop to their khamar, volunteers shouldering with this marched across villages with slogans "Inquilab Zindabad", "Tebhaga Chai". There was a spontaneous response and the movement spread readily.³⁶ Anticipating police offensive, the leadership took no risk and

went underground. In Jalpaiguri, the movement spread in three police stations: Debiganj, Bodaand Pachagarh. While in Rangpur the movement was confined to Nilphamarisubdivision, which was severely affected by the great famine of 1943.³⁷ The Tebhaga struggle was no longer confined to North Bengal districts, Mymensingh and Midnapore districts were equally effected. In Mymensingh district the struggle was intense in Kishorganj subdivision, the peasants were mostly Muslims and tribals, while zamindars and taluqdar were Hindus. Despite the attempts of the Muslim League to rouse communal passions, there was remarkable solidarity among Hindu and Muslim peasants. Rapacious Hindu and Muslim Jotedars like Lalit Bagchi and Fatik of Chatla called the government to suppress the movement. On December 6, 1946 the district level leaders of the Communist Party, Pulin Bakshi and Maulavi Fazlal Ali were arrested, but majority of leaders eluded and went underground.³⁸ Almost simultaneously, the Hajongs in Susang district started the 'tanka' movement. On December 8, about 5000 Hajongs held a demonstration demanding reduction of tanka rent and its conversion into money-rent. Like adhi, Tanka was produce rent which a tenant had to pay in a quantity fixed by landowner, even if the crop failed due to drought or heavy rains. The expense of cultivation was borne by the tenant. Like Bargadars, tenants had not tenancy rights and could be evicted by the landowner. Apart from Hajong the Muslims formed a large portion of tanka tenants, and the movement first started among Muslims peasants in Dasal village in Susang district.³⁹ They knew nothing about the tactics of agitation and the Communists came in picture and led the Hajongs. The peasants took the crop to their houses and refused to pay tanka.⁴⁰ It was directed against the zamindars of Susang. The movement was perfectly peaceful and took a violent turn only towards the end of January 1947. The Communist Party of India and the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha took full advantage at this juncture and their leaders Moni Singh and Sudhin Roy sharpened the peasant dissent on a definite communist ideology. That is why in the Hajong area of Mymensingh, the peasants knew the Communist Party of India first and then the Kisan Samiti while in rest of Bengal the peasants knew kisan samiti first, than the Communist Party of India. On January 9, 1947 a serious clash took place between police and Hajong at Pahartoli. Severe violence took place, casualties were reported from both sides. The Government blamed instigation from the communists as the root

cause of the trouble.⁴¹ After independence the East Pakistan government adopted a repressive policy and forced the Hajong leaders to leave Mymensingh. The newly elected Government of the Congress suppressed the Kakdwip struggle and declared the area “disturbed” and also tried to bring in legal relief by passing the Bargadar Act of 1950. By now, the Communist Party of India had decided to pursue the parliamentary path. The party withdrew the struggle that already had petered out.⁴²

Middle Peasants' Dilemma

Initially, the middle peasants played an important role in Tebhaga committees, but at the peak of the struggle, this class proved to be vacillating. A Communist Party of India circular on Tebhaga January 2, 1950 indicated, “the middle peasant showed a vacillating tendency from the harvesting of paddy to the sharing of the produce and ultimately went for reconciliation and to solve this problem, we shall have to organise the poor peasants and agricultural labourers for future struggle.”⁴³ However, it might not be quite fair to denounce outrightly the middle peasants, who, according to Bhowani Sen, played a crucial role in both the development and the collapse of the movement. In his view, one of the main failings of the leadership was that it could not win over the “middle class and working class” for the movement.⁴⁴ On the crucial role of middle peasant he observed, “many of them are poor and petty Jotedars, who, recognised this system as bad, and feel that it should be liquidated, at the same time, opening other avenues for their employment. We should have advised the Bargadars to exempt petty Jotedars from the operation of Tebhaga and concentrated against the richest and the biggest.”⁴⁵ When the movement faced stagnation in May 1947, he wanted the Kisan Sabha to take up a broader agitation against the zamindari system itself, in order to draw the middle peasants into the struggle.⁴⁶ In reality, the effective participation of the middle class peasants was not possible because some petty jotedars and under-raiyats, active in Kisan Sabha, employed Bargadars for cultivating their lands, and the Tebhaga demand had affected many of them as much as it had effected the rich peasants and big jotedars. That's why the middle peasants either turned indifferent to the movement or sided with the big Jotedars.⁴⁷ Hamza Alavi too, supported this argument.⁴⁸ However, what is interesting is the fact that of the 4000 Tebhaga agitators and leaders convicted, the proportion of middle peasants was higher than that of Bargadars. This is because the

bigjotedarslodged complaints with the police,they invariably named important local leaders of the kisansabha who were mostly middle peasants.⁴⁹

Role of Political Parties

The Indian National Congress and the Muslim Leagueboth didn't participate in the Tebhaga movementwith great vigour and enthusiasm. First, they were preoccupied with issueslike partition and transfer of power and were unwilling to participate in amovement which could jeopardize their objective of transfer of power byunleashing a massive conflict between different sections of the society.Secondly, they characterised the movement as looting instigated by a particular political party' obviously referring to the Communist Party ofIndia.⁵⁰The response of both the Muslim League and the Indian NationalCongress was also influenced due to the class consciousness of 'Jotedars', as aclass. The solidarity between Hindu and Muslims Jotedars and the formationof the 'Jotedarsamities" against Tebhaga movement in various districts suchas Dinajpur, Mymensing, Jessore, 24 Parganas and Jalpaiguri were never significantly constrained by the heightened communal feelings or religiousbigotry.⁵¹ The basic objective underlying in the formation of these samitieswas that a movement like the Tebhaga, involving the deprived and thedown trodden, could be detrimental to their interests. It also became theircompulsion to protect the interests of the Jotedars as a class. Because Jotedarshad an influential voice in these parties.⁵²Moreover, after the 1937 electionresults, these parties started to drift apart on the Communal issues. Thetension in the agrarian scene which had predominantly the Muslim peasantsand the Hindu Zamindars became imminent. The Muslim league propagandaagainst the Congress as a Hindu organisation caught the imagination of ruralMuslim poor, and thus, differences between Hindu and Muslim increased.⁵³When we scrutnise the All India Congress Committee papers,inference can be drawn that Gandhi and the Indian National Congress paidmore attention in mobilizing the rural rich peasants and the exploitation ofthe poorest section of peasantry remained generally unnoticed.⁵⁴ The fewpeasants leaders of the Bengal Congress who tried to identify themselves withpoor peasants stood completely isolated. They failed to influence the BengalProvincial Congress Committee members who were opposed to class consciouspeasant movement. Nor, these workers were powerful enough to challengethe Calcutta-based upper caste Bhadrakol leadership of theBengal ProvincialCongress

Committee. The Congress leadership of Bengal had a clear tie with the landowning classes as most of its supporters came from this section of the society.⁵⁵ While the Muslim League apparently a supporter of Tebhaga demand in the beginning, became hostile to it in the later phase. The leadership hoped to gain political support, as most of the 'adhiars' were Muslims and low caste Hindu or tribals.⁵⁶ So, they thought that it would be politically unwise to become openly hostile to the demands of these 'adhiars'. Thus, the socio-economic interest of the leaders made them hostile ultimately.⁵⁷ In the 1946 election the Muslim League led by H.S. Suhrawardy and Abul Hasem won almost all the Muslim seats. The communal feelings spread like wild fire leading to the Great Calcutta killing and then to the Noakhali riots in 1946.⁵⁸ In between Gandhi showed interest in the ongoing Tebhaga movement by raising a favorable statement in favour of the sharecroppers of Bengal. However, this was probably made only in passing, as he travelled through riot-torn Noakhali. Jinnah, however, from the very beginning of his political career was indifferent to the demands of poor peasants.⁵⁹ Hostility between the Congress and the Muslim League reached its peak in 1946 on the issue of Pakistan. The Muslim League openly asked 'pirs' and 'Maulvis' to arouse Muslim opinion and raised hopes that all problems would be solved with the formation of Pakistan. The Bengal Congress didn't lag behind. Its slogans became clearly anti-Pakistan and throughout 1946 and early 1947, communal riots continued in Bengal.⁶⁰ But, after seeing this communal episode in which both the Congress and the Muslim League were targeting each other, a strange thing happened just two months later, when the Tebhaga movement broke out, both the Muslim League and the Congress came together in effect to oppose it. Economic interests became more important than the communal interest of both these parties.⁶¹ When the sharecroppers started to take away 2/3rd share of the paddy from the fields, local Congress leaders described this act as 'dacoity'. Many such allegations, like looting of paddy 'anarchism', were published in newspapers like 'Amrita Bazar Partika' about Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Noakhali, Dacca, Mymensing and 24 Parganas. The same newspaper also went all out to support the Congress efforts to give a communal colour to the movement by propagating that only Hindu minority in Eastern Bengal were suffering from such 'paddy looting' by Muslim sharecroppers.⁶² However, Hindu and Muslim Jotedars joined hands in 'Jotedar Samities' to safeguard their economic interest.

Thus, inherent dichotomy in Bengal's plural society had a negative role in the actions of political parties. Politically, the Bengal Congress became pro-Hindu in the late 1940s and was trying to give communal colour to the Tebhaga struggle, and the Muslim League adopted the posture of supporting the Muslim Bargadars at the local level but at the higher level the party joined hands, with Hindus in Jotedar Samities to suppress the movement.⁶³ Again, when the Muslim League Government took repressive measures like police firing, detention of the Tebhaga leaders, Congress attacked on it for what was called 'repression and rising lawlessness, but the co-operation between them at the local level went on and interestingly, these same leaders criticised the Communist Party of India for 'instigating trouble' and looting of paddy'. Thus, we see the ambivalent attitude of the Congress for its contradictory statements. Later, the suppression of the movement by the Muslim League Government, the total indifference, if not hostility, of other parties like the Congress and unforeseen political developments like the demand for partition of Bengal, the Mountbatten Plan ultimately sealed the fate of the movement in Pre-independent Bengal.⁶⁴ After Independence, the West Bengal Government passed the Bargadars Act 1950 to give relief to sharecroppers on the Tebhaga issue and the East Pakistan Government conceded the main demands of the 'Tanka' peasants. The demands of the poor peasants couldn't be fully discarded for electoral consideration. On the other hand, the economic interests of these parties which remained heavy on their thought were just of opposite nature.

Clearly, the Tebhaga movement was the outcome of politicization of peasantry in Bengal. While, the agrarian class structure, the social change took place until the mid forties and the economic crises following the war and famines were all conducive to such a resistance movement, but without the Communist Party of India and the Kisan Sabha's mobilization and leadership the Tebhaga struggle would not have developed.⁶⁵ The struggle was both traditional and modern in nature. As far as the spontaneity and militancy is concerned, it had a tribal traditional manifestation. On the other hand, the concept of stratified leadership, well knit organization, party discipline and above all class struggle given by the Communists were definitely a modern phenomenon. It was only due to the Communists leaders, their ideology, programmes and their way

of mobilization that the poison of Communal hatred couldn't penetrate the peasant society.⁶⁶ **Conclusion**

D.N.Dhanagare is absolutely right in his analysis of the Indian society that it is a socio-cultural plural and complex society with her institutional peculiarities and prolonged subjugation to colonial rule circumscribed the scope of any social movement. The bargadars couldn't develop its own leadership, despite having great organizational and revolutionary potential. They had to depend upon the crutches of the other political parties throughout the struggle, which not only retarded the growth of the momentum at various junctures but also used the potential of the bargadars for their own interests. After going through the incidents, it seems that the participants have tremendous enthusiasm and the whole struggle has great momentum, but when we see the outcome, it is observed that the leadership couldn't fully utilize it. The total number of peasants died in various clashes was around fifty and number of arrestees was around three thousand, but not a single jotedar was killed or any house of this section was burnt down. Hamza Alavi asserted that the middle class peasantry didn't participate in this movement, definitely this did happen, but it was also reality that many from this section had engaged the bargadars in cultivation and the tebhaga demand had affected many of them. But the lower section of this class, who had reservations for this exploiter zamindari system could be incorporated in this struggle.

This movement has in no way challenged the very structure of authority especially, the root cause—the Permanent Settlement or the zamindari system. Once the bargadars took the paddy to their khammar, the struggle in a sense was over. The bargadars didn't make any effort to set up a parallel system of governance or to seize lands of those jotedars, who had fled, when the movement was in progress. The movement was also suffering from the wave of communalism on account of partition. The bargadars and the landless peasantry which were the backbone of the movement belonged to the Muslims in majority, whereas the zaminders and jotedars were mostly Hindus. However, each class category in terms of caste and religion was not homogeneous. This exclusiveness of the Indian society has created a problem for both the kisansabha and the Communist Party of India in building a class struggle or class movement. The issues which were not resolved

in this episode remained focused in the arena and later addressed in the Naxal movement in Bengal.

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