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THE TEBHAGA MOVEMENT: ITS COUSES AND OBJECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

In India Tebhaga movement arose during British colonial period, when economic policies characterized in the ruin of traditional handicrafts leading to change of ownership, overcrowding of land massive debt and impoverishment of peasantry. The Tebhaga movement was led by the share coppers of the Bengal against the oppressive jotedars. The Tebhaga movement was basically the sharecroppers movement demanding two thirds of the produce from land for themselves and one third for the landlords. Tebhaga literally means 'three share' of harvest. The sharecroppers were commonly called bargadars, adhiars, etc...

Keywords : Tebhaga movement, economic policies, sharecroppers, peasants.

INTRODUCTION

The Tebhaga movement in Bengal in the mid-forties was a struggle of sharecroppers to retain two thirds share of the produce for themselves and thereby to reduce from one-half to one third the produce as rent paid to jotedars – a class of rich farmers who held superior rights in land. The Tebhaga movement was limited in its impact and spread, and was launched at a crucial juncture on the eve of India's Independence and the partition of the subcontinent.

The Tebhaga movement can said to be the greatest movement in the history of India. The movement arose in the east – Pakistan. 'Tebhaga' the slogan of the movement, was the demand for the reduction of the share of the proprietor from one – half of the crop to one – third. Basically, this principle, the term, the demand from which ' Tebhaga' movement comes. Here, it may be added that the jotedars, the proprietors of the land, were in fact "occupancy tenants "i. e. with transferable and heritable rights in the land, who paid a fixed money rent to the zamindars, the great landlords. But it was the jotedarswho appointed the largest share of the crop, but their land was cultivated by bhangadorswho were the sharecroppers. At the same time, it can be mentioned here that the Tebhagamovement had been proceeded some year earlier by the great Bengal famine of 1943 in which three and a half million peasants had peashed.Bhowani, who led the movement, shocked by the difference in the peasants behaviour at the time of the great famine of 1943 in when millions of peasants had died without a struggle and their militancy and courage in later years Bhowanisen comment to explain the situation that "the intolerable conditions of the adhiars(the sharecroppers)". However the local communist and Kisan Sabha Cades mostly participated in it but the communist party did not put its full weight into the movement until the end of the war with tremendous force.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOVEMENT

The Tebhaga movement reflected the development of the political consciousness of the poor peasants and tribal sharecroppers and it may safely be opined that it marked a turning point in the history of agrarian movement in India. Under the Tebhaga movement pressure many landlords withdraw their litigation which filed against the Tebhaga movement activists. In some places The Tebhaga movement made such a headway that the peasants declared their zone as Tebhagaelaka, liberated elaka and teabhga committees. Such teabhga places are established in Jessor, Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri. The Tebhaga movement was successful in so far as it has been estimated that almost 40% of the sharecropping peasants got teabhga right granted willingly by the landlords. Therefore, the movement assumes a special significance in the study of Indian peasant struggles.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the main causes of the Tebhaga movement.
- To analyses the objectives of the Tebhaga movement.

METHODOLOGY

The paper is based on qualitative method. Secondary sources are collected from some books, websites, articles etc. The paper is analytical and descriptive in nature.

CAUSES AND OBJECTIVES OF TEBHAGA MOVEMENT

Accordingly, there are unique features, which helped in the rise of the Tebhagamovement as a consequence of the great famine of 1943. This are follows –

- Firstly, the weak peasant organizations were disrupted and disorganized by the overwhelming calamity of the famine. The Bengal peasants used to semi- starvation, was just helpless in the face of the disaster, and evidentlyproved too weak

to fight back. But when the kisan Sabha unit recovered them from this situation, they were quickly drawn into famine relief work.

- Secondly, large members of students and persons from the educated middle classes were drawn into the voluntary relief work during the famine and into large scale medical relief in the following year. This brought about a new contact between the peasantry and educated youth which provided social education for them both. This was a very important factor in creating new cadres for the communist party and the Kisan Sabha.
- Thirdly, a factor of vital importance was that following the famine the Kisan Sabha renewed its drive against hoarders and black marketers of food with fresh vigour. Its hands were stronger because the authorities too began to view the activities of the hoarders with a fresh concern because the magnitude of the famine as well as the fact that in the spring and summer of 1944 the Japanese had invaded Assam and parts of East Bengal. The power of the jotedars seen by the peasant to crumble in the face of the Kisan Sabha leadership, which gave the peasant a new confidence in that leadership and in the possibility to fighting back against the jotedars.

Accordingly, the Tebhaga movement was fought at harvest time. The fight were continued as the sharecroppers had to resist the attempts by jotedars with the support of the police. The continued struggle was led by peasant committees which become a power in the village and to administer justice. As a response to the agitations, then Muslim league ministry of Bengal launched the Bargadari Act, which provided that the share of the harvest given to the landlord and jotedars would be limited to one third of the total. But law was not fully implemented.

However, by the summer of 1947, the movement collapsed. Bhowani Sen, the leader of the movement, ordered the peasant to not to take any direct action that year, with the hope that after independence new government of Pakistan and India were to be given the opportunity to fulfill their promises to the people. But it was clear that this promises would not be fulfilled by them. So that, Bhowani Sen's, formalized the fact that the Tebhaga movement, which had described as "one of the biggest mass movement" had become to an end.

CONCLUSION

The Tebhaga movement is very important in the history of peasant movement. It also known as the sharecropper's movement. Teabhga movement helps the poor peasants to raise their voice against the landlords. This movement developed apolitical and economic consciousness among the poor peasants and tribal sharecroppers. And most importantly this movement marked a turning point in the history of agrarian movement in India. Women's participation in this movement is one of the biggest successes of the movement. Not only that this movement also tried fight against the patriarchy society for establish equality in society. Though the struggle didn't achieved immediate success so long as success is measured by that actual implementation of Tebhaga of the gross produce as rent but what looks like a failure in the eyes of one spectator may will take on appearance of the redeeming sacrifice of pioneers who laid the foundation for a better tomorrow.

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