

## Dalit Namasudras in Colonial and Post-Colonial Period : Culture and Politics in Bengal

**Swati Sengupta Chatterjee**

Assistant Archivist

Directorate of State Archives, West Bengal.

Email: swatisengupta63@gmail.com

### *Abstract*

*Methodology and Sources Used: Intelligence Bureau files, Newspapers, secondary sources such as books and articles have been used in drafting the article. The works of two Dalit writers – Manoranjan Byapari and Jatin Bala have been included to show the condition of Namasudra displaced people in the camps. The rise of Matua Sect and its development under Harichand Thakur and Guruchand Thakur (1812-1937). Guruchand Thakur laid emphasis on the spread of education. The article covers three aspects of Namasudra life. The growth of education was an aspect of cultural life. Moreover stress was laid on moral standpoints of the Namasudras. The question of marriage was highlighted. The Kirtan songs worked as a unifying force. Gradually their political consciousness also developed. Like the Muslims, Dalit Namasudras, kept themselves away from the swadeshi movement. But Guruchand came into close contact with progressive left. After the reforms of 1919, Dalits got the chance to be elected in Legislative Councils in Bengal. Guruchand at this time felt the need of an organisation. The leader of All India Dalits, Dr Ambedkar felt the same way. He formed All India Scheduled Caste Federation in early 1940s. The Bengal Provincial Scheduled Caste Federation, was formed by J.N.Mandal, in 1943. He believed in ideology of Ambedkar. After the death of Guruchand in 1937, his close people, including his grandson P.R.Thakur, left his path. Some attached themselves to Congress and others directly with Hindu Mahasabha. Both in pre-partition years and post-partition days, J.N.Mandal, took different stands. Later a change came in Bengal Provincial Scheduled Caste Federation. On the other hand there was a reemergence of Matua – Matua Mahasangha in politics. Thakur and Mandal took different stands on the issue of partition and rehabilitation. Thus before and after the demise of P.R. Thakur, Matua Mahasangha underwent changes.*

*Keywords: Dr Ambedkar, Guruchand, Harichand, J.N. Mandal, Matua, Refugee rehabilitation policy. Scheduled Caste Federation.*

### **Introduction**

The present author would like to show some aspects of *Namasudra* life in pre-partition and post-partition period in Bengal. In respect of religion and society, development of *Matua* sect, is very important (1812-1937). During this period, *Namasudras* persistently developed a cultural life. Moreover political consciousness of the *Namasudras* developed which kept them away from the Congress led political movements such as the *Swadeshi* and Civil Disobedience of 1930s. With the death of Guruchand Thakur, came a twist in the *Namasudra* political life. The grandson of Guruchand Thakur, P.R.Thakur did not follow the anti-Congress stand. But after 1937, Jogendranath Mandal emerged and followed the earlier path. Moreover he was a follower of Dr B.R.Ambedkar. Here a new ideology came into being. The present author would like to show the politics of Bengal during the years 1937-47 with reference to J.N. Mandal and P.R.Thakur. The question why *Namasudra* movement declined in Bengal, in post-partition days will be dealt with in this article. Secondly the question- in what respect the approach of J.N. Mandal and P. R. Thakur differed on the issue of rehabilitation of

the displaced people will be discussed. Thirdly I would like to deal with the reemergence of Matua Mahasangha as a political body.

### Historiography

Literary Sources: The early writings on *Matua* are *Shri Shri Hari Lilamrita*, by Tarak Sarkar (Sarkar, 1417 BS). Mahananda Halder wrote *Shri Shri Guruchand Charit* (Halder, 2016). Next important work was Nabakumar Roy written *Shri Shri Guruchand Kathamrita* (Byapari, 2021, 2). On the other hand Manoranjan Byapari wrote on the same subject (Ibid, 2-3). Among the current books, one must mention Manoranjan Byapari's novel *Matua ek mukti senar naam*. He argued the earlier books had started with the words Shri Shri. Thus those books characterised Hari and Guru Chand as deities. The writers believed in *Bhaktibad* (Ibid). Jatin Bala also wrote a novel on the *Dalit* refugee lives of Bengal (Bala, 2017).

Historical Sources: Sekhar Bandyopadhyay also wrote on the subject of the *Matuas*. His works include "Popular religion and social mobility in colonial Bengal : Matua sect and Namasudras" in Rajat Kanta Roy edited *Mind , Body and Society , life and mentality in colonial Bengal* (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 152-192). His next book is *Caste , Protest and Identity, in Colonial India, 1870-1947* with a preface in the second edition (Bandyopadhyay, 2011, 247-274) . His latest work is titled *Partition, Displacement and Decline of Scheduled Caste Movement in West Bengal*(Bandyopadhyay, 2016, 152-192). Bandyopadhyay emphasised on the decline of *Namasudra* movement in post-partition period. Jagadish Mandal also penned a book titled *Mahapran Jogendranath*. He dealt with the activities of Jogendranath Mandal in post partition Bengal (Mandal, 2003). Swaraj Basu wrote on the *Rajbangshis* of Bengal (Basu, 2003) .

Kapil Krishna Thakur also wrote on the subject. He dealt with Matua Movement, pre-partition politics of Jogen Mandal and P. R. Thakur (Thakur, 2007, 26-31). It is pertinent to mention Kalyan Sinha Roy's article on the same subject. He dealt with the emergence of a new religious sect under Hari Chand Thakur and his son Guru Chand (Sinharay 2007, 39-41). Dwaipayana Sen also penned his thesis where he dealt with *Dalits* and Jogendranath Mandal (Sen, 2012). The next work is by Praskanva Sinharay. It is titled "Building up the Harichand, GuruChand Movement: Politics of Matua Mahasangha". It dealt with the emergence of Matua Mahasangha (Sinharay, 2016, 146-166). Manoranjan Byapari wrote his autobiography in 2018 (Byapari, 2018). Rup Kumar Barman focused on the changing perceptions of caste. He has attempted to restructure the caste based politics. He has emphasised on the changing nature of casteism as well as *Dalit* discourse( Barman , 2020). Santosh Rana and Kumar Rana wrote on the *Dalits* and *Adivasis* of West Bengal (Rana, 2018). Shibaji Pratim Basu also penned an article. In his article, he focused on the role of United Central Refugee Council, in mobilising the migrants from East Pakistan (Basu, 2017-18, 20-31).

The present author has used mostly governmental records, archival papers, newspapers and secondary sources to pen this article. The author will try to show how the Matua Mahasangha emerged in the 1990s. It emerged as a political body but the process was incomplete. There was no minister from the Matua Mahasangha in the Bengal Cabinet.

### Socio- Religious Aspect of Namasudra – Matua Under Hari Chand and Guru Chand.

Some intellectuals held that if Bengal had remained undivided, the Muslims would have obtained greater power in the administration. In the hierarchy, the *Dalits* would have enjoyed the next position. The caste Hindus would be placed in the last position. But the formation of West Bengal saved the upper caste Hindus.

Before discussing the main theme of the article, it is essential to discuss the common idea that *Dalits* and Scheduled Castes were synonymous. In reality there are many people outside the Scheduled Castes but the generic term *Dalit* can be used to describe them. Scheduled Caste depends on the attitude of the administration. In Bengal, *Namasudra*, *Rajbangshi*, *Malo*, *Poundra*, are considered as

Scheduled Castes. But in Bihar, UP and MP, the case is different. Most of the Scheduled Castes had their origin in tribal clan-*kauma* from antiquity. It is important to note that greater *Dalit* community exclusively belonged to the toiling classes, not to intelligentsia (Thakur, 2007, 26; Barman, 2020, 122). According to Rup Kumar Barman, the caste system developed with the coming of the Aryans (Barman, 2020, 18).

*Dalit* castes were not always placed in a degraded position in the past. They often enjoyed royal status and controlled the power. *Namasudras* of present day ruled over some parts of Bengal. It was “affirmed by the remains and relics of Chandal Kings” forts in Bhawani of Dhaka district. Similar evidence is found in Gopalpur of Jessore district” (Thakur, 2007, 27). But for a long time these people were subjected to *Brahmanical* oppression and changed into a weak community. They went into obscurity and failed to carry their past glory. When the British came, gradually the modern education came. This helped the people belonging to the lower strata to rise to awareness -- a kind of ‘renaissance’ (Ibid). *Namasudras*, *Ranbangshis* and *Poundra* became politically conscious (Ibid. 27). In his *Annihilation of Caste*, Dr Ambedkar commented that “history bears out the proposition that political revolution have been proceeded by social and religious revolution” (Ambedkar, 1979, 43; Thakur, 2007, 27; IB File West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata). This historical action came true in case of awakening of *Dalits* in Bengal. According to Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, an organised Vaishnavism developed its image of the neo-*Brahmanical* order for promoting social cohesion rather than social revolution. The more traditional *Shahajiya* tradition, *Tantrik* tradition, had repudiated the caste system. Some other divine sects also developed. During the contemporary period, *Namasudras* were influenced by *Sahilalpir* (born around 1700). He had Muslim and Hindu disciples. The Hindus mainly belonged to *Namasudra* from Dhaka, Faridpur and Bakarganj. After his death (1805), the sect developed under his three sons. Pir preached *Bhakti* and spiritual emotionalism. Their rituals and philosophy was a total anti-thesis of *Gouriya Viashnava Dharma*. In Bengal, the *Bhakti* movement was started by Shri Chaitanya. The movement targeted at Neo-formal and “egalitarian rural variation”. But it failed to shift from great Sanskrit ideology and philosophy (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 159-161). Bandyopadhyay mentioned an incident. A family of rich *Namasudra* invited the Brahmins in a *Shradh* ceremony at their house. Due to the instigation of the *Kayasthas*, the Brahmins did not attend the ceremony. The *Namasudras* felt insulted. They and the Muslims stopped to work under the upper castes. Here the police had to intervene. *Namasudras* could not carry on the struggle for a long time (Ibid, 162). Against this background, descending from *Namasudra* lineage, Hari Chand Thakur (1812-78) led the Matua religious movement which had greatly influenced the Dalits (Thakur, 2007, 27). According to Kalyan Sinharay, the early ancestor of Harichand Thakur was Ram Das Bhrahmachari. Bhrahmachari was a Maithili Brahman. He settled in Jessore district in 16<sup>th</sup> century. He became an outcaste because of his liberal attitude which prompted him to arrange his son’s Chandra Mohan’s marriage with a *Namasudra* woman. Hari Chand was the 6<sup>th</sup> generation from Chandra Mohan (Sinharay, 2007, 38). We may conclude that the *Brahmans* of that time were conservative. But Bhrahmachari was liberal. So he arranged his son’s marriage (Chandra) with a *Namasudra* woman. But angry Ballal Sen outcasted them as *Sudras*. Sinharay questioned how a Brahmanical order could throw away a section of *Brahmans* without textual support (Sinharay, 2007, 38).

Hari Chand was born in 1811/1812, in a village called Safaldanga in Gopalganj, Faridpur. He and his family were *Vaishnavas* for generations. They were known as Thakur in the locality. His grandfather was a devout *Vaishnava* and known as Thakur Moncharam in the locality. Moncharam’s eldest son Jaswanta inherited the title Thakur. His son Harichand was evicted from his ancestral home by the *zamindar*. He ultimately settled in Orakandi village in Faridpur. At that time, he was already known as a religious person. People gathered around him. These people would sing songs in the name of Hari or Krishna. Gradually they came to believe that Harichand was gifted with supernatural power. He had come not only to cure diseases but also to subvert the hegemonic order. Gradually the sect grew in size. Lower castes and untouchables were included. Hari Chand died in 1878. But the sect

developed under his son Guru Chand Thakur (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 162-163). Guru Chand made the doctrines more formalised to make it suitable for the emerging lower caste peasant community. Hari Chand was supposed to destroy the pride of the *khatriyas*. He was supposed to bring *Brahmans* and *Chandals* together on a common platform. Hari Chand attempted this feat (Ibid., 1995, 164) Hari Chand was believed to be a new incarnation of Goutam Buddha. He appeared in Bengal when Ram Krishna Mission movement spread in Bengal and Gourakhini Sabhas grew up. Dayananda Saraswati supported the conservative Hindus. Gourakhini Sabha was his brainchild. These movements overshadowed the earlier progressive movements. These movements supported the conservative Hindus. The *Matuas* claimed that Hari Chand was not an *Avatar* of God but was himself an incarnation of a deity. Others were only a part of God's glory (Sinharay, 2007, 40-41). Hari Chand was the only Avatar of the householders whose salvation lay in performing home science, of growth of economic affluence, political unity, and following of morality. Hari Chand did not believe in *Moksha* (salvation). He also did not believe in aftermath dissolution with absolute (Ibid., 2007, 41).

Guru Chand, the son of Hari Chand envisioned a society where there would be no differentiation among the human beings. More importantly there should not be any division of caste among the *Matuas* (Halder, 1393 BS, 90 ; Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 164). According to Guru Chand, food and water can be taken from anyone with a pure character. Moreover as the human body was the living place of God, there would be no ground for anyone to be impure and untouchable. Guru Chand believed that he should work for other depressed untouchables in order to deliver his community (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 164). According to Bandyopadhyay this showed Guru Chand's awareness of the outer world and the new humanism which was made popular by the Bengal renaissance. The depressed *Namasudras* were attracted to this sect because it openly challenged the *Brahmins*. The *Matua* sect did not advocate idolatry and ritualism of Hindu practices (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 164-166). *Kirtan* was an essential part of the *Matua* religious life. It was sung together by the disciples. Therefore the sect got a congregational character. It also made the *Namasudra* devotees to construct and continue their collective identity through the shared experience of devotion. This congregational singing had a long history in Bengal (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 167).

Guru Chand thought education was most important prerequisite for acquisition of power, for resisting the existing power elites. He established a *Pathshala* in 1880 in his village Orakandi. The local *Kayastha zamindars* did not cooperate with him. So the school failed to gather enough funds. Guru Chand at that point of time approached the Australian Baptist missionary C.S. Mead to open a mission and a school at Orakandi on a plot of land denoted to Guru Chand (Mead, 8). Guru Chand thought by educating the *Namasudras*, they would not only escape from oppression of high caste *zamindars* but also gain closeness to new world of professions. According to Guru Chand it would usher in social respectability for them.

The cultural developments took place under the *Matuas*. The *Matua* sect were known for their interests in spirit (liquor), and pork. The upper castes often condemned them for alleged lack of morality. In order to be accepted into Hindu society, the *Matua* sect attempted to reform the manners of the *Namasudras* at a mass level. The *Namasudras* had the social norm of free mixing. The physical environment helped them in mixing freely. Hari Chand had advised his disciples to enter into family life only after being married (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 171). It showed the cultural developments gradually took place in the *Matua* sect.

Even after education was spread among the *Namasudras*, it was still found that *Matua* leaders adopted the same patriarchal family structure. For the *Matuas* as well, the women were prevented from joining outdoor activities. In the similar conservative vein, Guru Chand ordered a dictum. He said love marriage without the parents' approval would lead to disasters. Thus it must be discouraged (Sinharay, 2007, 42-43).

Here I would like to mention a few words narrated in the preface of the novel *Matua Ek Mukti*



*Senar Naam*, written by Manoranjan Byapari. According to Byapari those who had actually seen Hari Chand and Guru Chand closely, they wrote about Hari Chand and Guru Chand. The writers were largely influenced by *Bhaktibad*. Thus their writings were far away from the logical thoughts of the present day. It appears that one of these writers had opined that the *haribad* of the *Matuas* did not mean hailing of *Gokulbari Hari*. These writers traced the origin of the word *Hari* to Lord Shiva's name Hara and Ri, the last syllable of Gouri, his wife. One of the logically minded man, considered the red flag of the communist party and the red flag of the *Matuas* to be the same. So the *Matuas* were the only friends of the labouring people in their revolt.

Byapari stressed that most of the followers of Hari Chand and Guru Chand placed them at a high place. They considered Hari Chand and Guru Chand as gods. This exaltation was a great loss for the *Namasudras*. No one could replace Hari Chand and Guru Chand as they had been elevated to the status of gods. The disciples of Hari Chand and Guru Chand continued to establish the *mandirs* of Gurus. They built the idols of their Gurus in those *mandirs*. Byapari also referred to a young poet. The poet admitted that he considered himself to be Lenin when the spirit of revolution developed in his heart. Similarly the *Namasudras* must stop exalting Hari Chand and Guru Chand. Like the poet who said 'I am Lenin', the ordinary people must consider themselves to be Hari Chand and Guru Chand. Only then social and economic revolution would arrive. Byapari also said a few words about the Jews. They were once stateless. But now they had one. The *Matuas* were more concerned about gods and not a state to call their own. So the *Namasudras* in India were mostly considered as displaced people, intruders and *bastuhara*. They were even incarcerated without any cause. Tarak Sarkar (*Hari Lila Mrita*) mentioned that *Matua* religion was anti-*brahmanical* in nature. But there are others who considered the *Matuas* as non-Hindus. Byapari questioned how it was possible for the *Matuas* to be non-Hindus? (Byapari, 2021, 1-4) Thus it is seen that *Matua* religion's rise had profound impact on religion, society and politics.

### **Political Developments and Reactions of the Namasudras.**

Matua Guru Chand considered the nationalist movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to be detrimental to the community interests of the *Namasudras* (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 180). In 1905, the *swadeshi* movement developed in Bengal. Corresponding with Surendranath Bandyopadhyay, and later with Chittaranjan Das, Guruchand advised the Congress leadership, to change their attitude and thinking *Namasudras* as 'untouchables'. Guru Chand Thakur believed that only when caste Hindus form a common platform with the depressed classes, only then a common fight can be conceived (Thakur, 2007, 28). He clarified his views towards nationalism during the time of *swadeshi* movement. He and his associates told the members of their community that *swadeshi* was a slogan of the rich, high caste Hindu gentry. This caste in the past had oppressed the *Namasudra* peasants, both socially and economically. Guru Chand told his disciples that the *swadeshi* movement had led to shifting of the burden to the poor peasants by forcing them to purchase more expensive *swadeshi* goods (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 180). Political consciousness remained in a rudimentary form during the *swadeshi* movement. Gradually it took a distinct anti-Congress stand. In course of time, a pro-Muslim philosophy developed amongst them. It helped Jogendranath Mandal to carry on his activities during the years 1937-47. He became a collaborator of the Muslim League.

Meanwhile the reform of 1919 gave the depressed classes the right to representation in the legislative council. In 1920 two followers of Guru Chand got the chance to represent the *Namasudras*. Nirod Bihari Mallick won his seat at the election. Bhishma Deb Das was nominated but he lost the contest (Thakur, 2007, 27). It was a step towards right to representation of the depressed people. Prior to these reforms and subsequent elections, a *Matua* Mahasangha was started (before 1919) to bring the *Matuas* under an organisational network. Through the initiative of one of the earliest disciples of Guru Chand, Tarak Gossain, P. R. Thakur reactivated the social organisation and a general conference of the *Matua* devotees was held in 1931 (Bandyopadhyay, 1995, 183).

As in case of the *swadeshi* movement, *Namasudras* in large parts of Bengal remained totally unaffected by the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements. Even in different parts of Bengal, *Namasudras* opposed nationalist movements (Home Confidential, File Number 599 of 1930, File Number 597(1-3) of 1930, File Number 345(1-3) of 1931, WBSA; Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings Vol -7, No-2, 20 February 1922, p.9, Kolkata. ). Gradually Guru Chand came to believe that unless the *Namasudras* actively participate in politics, the *Namasudras* would not gain social power. In 1930, a meeting at Khulna *sadr* town, Guru Chand in his presidential address said that the emancipation of lower castes and untouchables could only be achieved by sharing political power. It could be achieved through constitutional reforms (Halder, 1393 BS, 142-143). Political power on the other hand could be achieved by the formation of a separate electorate. Thus it was seen the *Matuas* were moving towards organised political life.

In the all-India politics, Dr Ambedkar also reached the same conclusion. In 1930, with Md. Ali Jinnah's approval, Ambedkar succeeded in getting separate electorate for the untouchables in the Round Table Conference held in London. It was termed as 'Communal Award' by many. There were lots of controversies gathered around it. The election that followed 1937, a number of Guru Chand's close associates, including his grandson P. R. Thakur, contested and won as independent candidates. Then they decided to support Krishak Praja Party – Muslim League coalition government. It reduced the impact and the influence of Congress in the mainstream nationalism. It placed the Congress as a minority party in Bengal Legislative Assembly (Bandyopadhyay, 1990, 180-182). The Calcutta Scheduled Caste league was formed in early 1937. In the meantime, *Namasudras* became disappointed with the coalition ministry as they did very little for the Scheduled Castes (1938 23 February, *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*).

According to Kapil Krishna Thakur, the ascendancy of the *Dalits* as a third force in the politics besides the Muslims and Pro-Manu forces was proceeded by the movement led by Guru Chand in Bengal. Guru Chand even sent his son Shashi Bhushan to Salimullah in Dhaka to focus on getting the support of Muslim League. Guru Chand died in 1937. At this stage, Jogendranath Mandal followed Guru Chand's idea of communication with the Muslim League (Thakur, 2007, 28; 1956, 5 November; *The Nationalist* ; IB File 717D/46, WBSA). Thus it is clear, Mandal was trying to forge a unity between the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes.

Jogendranath Mandal believed that the *Dalits* and Muslim peasants in East Bengal had similar interests. So the Dalit-Muslim League stand was in the best interests of the *Dalits*. But other *Namasudra* leaders did not agree with him. According to them, the relationship between the *Dalits* and Muslims was not always of harmony and cooperation. So around this time two other rival Scheduled Caste Organisations developed; The Depressed Classes League headed by P. R. Thakur and Depressed Class Association led by Birat Chandra Mandal. The Depressed Classes League, supported Congress. The Depressed Class Association on the other hand came closer to Hindu Mahasabha( IB File Number 191/46, IB Dept, WBSA ; IB File Number 581/46 IB Dept, WBSA). It is seen that there was a lack of unity among the *Namasudra* organisations.

Dr Ambedkar had made great imprint on the mind of Jogendranath Mandal. Through the writings statements and actions, Ambedkar became Mandal's ideal. The All India Scheduled Caste Federation came into being in the early 1940s. Its object was attainment by Scheduled Caste a status, distinct and separate from national life. He wanted them to obtain political, economic and social rights to which they were entitled (Mandal, 2003, 98 ; 1946, 24 August, *The Azad*).

The *Dalit* politics in Bengal in and around 1942 revolved around Mandal. He was the main advocate of Ambedkar's ideology. He opened a branch of Scheduled Caste Federation in Bengal. According to Mandal, *Dalits* and Muslim League had similar interests. So a Dalit- Muslim League alliance was in the best interests of the *Dalits*. I have already mentioned that some other *Dalits* did not accept this alliance. Two other *Dalit* political associations grew up as a result. One was led by P. R. Thakur and the other one by Birat Chandra Mandal( IB File Number 191/46, IB Dept, WBSA. See also IB File

Number 581/46 IB Dept, WBSA).

I would like to discuss the role and respective views of *Dalit* leaders in the years preceding partition. Jogendranath Mandal put great emphasis on participation in Assembly and Ministry for pushing through much needed enactments. It was needed for making the administration to consolidate the position of the *Dalits*. There were three conditions- Scheduled Castes were to get three berths in the Ministry. Three parliamentary secretaries were to be appointed from them. An amount of Rs.500,000 were to be allotted for educating the Scheduled Caste children. Reservations in jobs for Scheduled Caste were to be made in accordance with the communal ratio. According to Kapil Krishna Thakur “the three conditions on the basis of which the support of 20 scheduled caste members were lent to the Nazimuddin led government”. These minimum demands were not accepted by Congress or Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Fazlul Haque. Muslim League on the other hand accepted these demands. In the interests of the *Dalit* community, Jogendranath joined the government. Later as the only representative from Bengal, he joined the interim government. Jinnah recommended his name. Mandal was criticised for this. According to Mandal “my entry in the interim government has the effect that Hindus will not dare to inflict injustice or oppression on the Dalits”(Thakur, 2007, 29 ; IB File SBDN Dated 21<sup>st</sup> August 1946,WBSA). Jogendranath Mandal eventually became part of the government (1946, 5 November, *The Hindustan*).

After the entry of *Dalit* leader Jogendranath Mandal in politics, a great period commenced for the *Dalits*. The Cripps Mission had a proposal for effecting the transfer of power. It proposed to form a constitution making body with the representatives of provincial law council who were elected in the general election held in 1946. The *Dalit* leaders wanted to see Dr Ambedkar being elected to the body. But the Congress leadership was against Ambedkar getting elected to the Constituent Assembly. When the election result was declared, it was found that only Jogendranath Mandal was elected. Ambedkar could not win his seat. Mandal was very frustrated but he did not lose his heart. He realised that Ambedkar’s presence in the Constituent Assembly was indispensable and Ambedkar should be at any cost enter the Constituent Assembly (Thakur, 2007, 29).

It appears that Ambedkar complained to Mandal. The former believed he had no chance of winning the seat except from Bengal. Ambedkar had a hope to get the support of the European MLAs from Bengal. When Ambedkar arrived in Bengal, he discovered that European MLAs would not participate in the elections. Mandal decided to help Ambedkar in this respect. Jogendranath Mandal directed various activists of the Federation to garner support from the MLAs whose votes could count. It is noteworthy that P. R. Thakur and M. B. Mullick decided to contest. It made Mandal’s efforts more challenging. Eventually an agreement was made between the independent *Rajbangshi* leader Nagendra Narayan Roy and Jogendranath Mandal. At this stage as well, the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha did not support Ambedkar. On the other hand, Goyanath Biswas, the elected Congressman, was willing to support Ambedkar. Biswas sent word of his intention to Mandal. Goyanath Biswas and Dwarikanath Baruri assured Mandal that they would vote for Ambedkar. Mandal also received commitments from MLAs Bholanath Biswas and Haran Chandra Barman from Jessore and Pabna. Ambedkar won this election (Sen, 2012, 335-336). It is to be noted that both Haran Chandra Barman and Bholanath Biswas supported Dr Ambedkar. They were *Malos* by caste ( Barman, 2020, 1-224).

As a member of Surawardi’s cabinet and as secretary to the interim government, Mandal made contributions to the *Dalit* movement in Bengal. During this period, the *Dalit* leaders of Bengal, were thinking of social changes with the Muslim League government by ensuring the participation of *Dalits* in the administration. *Dalits* also dreamt of the spread of education and employment among the Scheduled Castes (Thakur, 2007, 29). Mandal was condemned for his support for the Muslim League, the Muslim atrocities on the Scheduled Castes during the Calcutta carnage and forcible conversion (IB File 581/47, WBSA).

When the question of transfer of power became apparent, various parties raised various demands for the future of Bengal. Md. Ali Jinnah demanded Pakistan should be comprised of whole of Bengal and

Assam on its eastern frontier. The Muslim League also developed its idea that Hindus and Muslims were two nations (1947, 1 May, *The Statesman*).

The Communist Party of India on the other hand had an opposite view. It wanted undivided Bengal to stay in sovereign and federal India. The Hindu Mahasabha demanded since 1946 (January), the homeland for the Hindu Bengalis. Surawardi and Sarat Chandra Bose supported the idea of sovereign Bengal. At this juncture, the Congress working committee, put the proposal for partition of Bengal. According to the Congress working committee “ after the formation of Bengal into a separate sovereign state... the portions of Bengal, as are desirous of remaining within the union of India, should be allowed to remain so. And be formed into a separate province within the union of India” (1947, 5 May, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*).

In May 1947 Mandal and Bengal Federation fought a campaign opposing a demand for the partition of Bengal. The Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha demanded it. Mandal believed that partition would not solve the problem of communalism in Bengal. It would crush the Scheduled Caste and put all power in the hands of the caste Hindus in West Bengal. In East Bengal, the rich and the influential Hindus would be able to migrate to West Bengal. The Scheduled Castes on the other hand were very poor; so they could not be rehabilitated in West Bengal. A united Bengal was necessary for the Scheduled Castes (Sen, 2012, 351-252; IB File , IB Dept, WBSA).

Throughout May 1947, Mandal and the federation held meetings in different parts of Eastern and Western Bengal. Various articles in *Jagaran* indicated that the caste Hindus deliberately ignored these rallies to atomise their importance. The Hindu press also spread misinformation about these meetings. According to Dwaipayana Sen “in some cases, local congress committees, attempted to muzzle gatherings resolving against partition” (Sen, 2012, 353). Senior leaders such as Amulyadhan Ray, Anukul Chandra Das, and others supported the anti-partition meetings. Throughout May 1947, Mandal addressed numerous meetings. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, there was a meeting at Jalpaiguri. Some Hindu *gundas* of the Congress, attempted to stop the meeting. The schedule caste personalities from the schedule castes such as *Bagdi, Kaora, Bowri, Hadi , Dom*, attended a meeting held in Calcutta and Burdwan on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1947 (Sen, 2012, 354). It appears there was no unanimous demand for or against partition. According to Sen “ Shyama Prasad Barman, the president of North Bengal Khatriya Samiti took his colleague for standing against and subsequently supporting the partition demand” (Sen, 2012, 354-355).

There were other *Dalit* leaders who were not in favour of Jogendranath Mandal. Mandal was the League nominee in the interim government. No other independent Scheduled Caste leader was solidly in favour of partition of Bengal. Birat Chandra Mandal, president of All India Depressed Classes Association, considered that because Jogendranath Mandal was working in the interim government; so he had forfeited his right to speak on behalf of the Scheduled Castes. Meanwhile the leader of All Bengal Nationalist Depressed Classes Association, P. R. Thakur, urged the people of Bengal to establish united Bengal (Sen, 2012, 356).

Thakur’s interest was to keep the *Dalits* of the districts of Bakarganj, Faridpur, Jessore, Khulna, within the Hindu homeland of West Bengal. The *Dalits* were divided on the issue of partition. They were concerned about political, cultural and physical space (Bandyopadhyay, 2016, 63).

According to Jogendranath Mandal, the creation of West Bengal would reduce the area of Bengal. It would become narrow and nearer for both the contending parties. This he believed would lead to direct confrontation. The Hindus of East Bengal would have no option but to take shelter in West Bengal. On the other hand, P. R. Thakur was did not endorse this viewpoint. Thakur held that Mandal’s views were not correct. Scheduled castes of Bengal were in fact not opposed to the idea of partition of Bengal (1947, 28 April , *Amrita Bazar Patrika*).

P. R. Thakur also met the central leadership of Congress. They assured him that there would be no problem for those who after deserting their lands in East Pakistan would come to India. Thakur supported the inclusion of undivided Bengal in India; so that the Scheduled Caste dominated districts



such as Jessore, Khulna, Barishal, remained in India. With this end in view, he organised meetings in villages, to get the support of the people (1947, 30 June, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*). Jogendranath Mandal and the Scheduled Caste Federation held that anyone who accepts their demands, would be automatically supported by Mandal and the Federation. As a grandson of Guru Chand and president of Matua Mahasangha, P. R. Thakur had a lot of responsibility and importance. Therefore Thakur met with Lord Mountbatten on the issue of partition. At the same time Thakur also approached Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru to secure assurance of rehabilitation of *Dalit* people who would migrate from Eastern Bengal (Thakur, 2007, 30-31). When Radcliffe's final surgery was complete, it became apparent that Jogendranath Mandal failed to achieve his goal and hopes of P. R. Thakur were also not fulfilled. Thakur came to West Bengal. Mandal joined the ministry in Pakistan (Thakur, 2007, 31). Political dreams of both Thakur and Mandal remained unfulfilled.

Some aspects of *Namasudras* following 1950 may be discussed here. The present author raises a few queries. 1) Why there was a decline of *Namasudra* movement in post partition period? 2) On what respects the concept of rehabilitation differed between Mandal and Thakur? 3) How the Matua Mahasangha reemerged?

According to Santash Rana and Kumar Rana, *Namasudras* lived in a fertile land. Moreover, they received support of the Muslims against the Hindu *zamindars* in undivided Bengal. But after the partition, political alignment between *Namasudra* and Muslims broke down. A large section of *Namasudras* had to leave East Pakistan. They came to West Bengal. It took nearly 60 years for the *Namasudras* to establish themselves. Other *Dalit* groups failed to establish themselves. In West Bengal, the higher caste leaders got the predominance over the lower castes (Rana, 2018, 128).

According to Sekhar Bandyopadhyay and Anasua Basu Roy Chaudhury there was an absence of "caste based aggressive landlordism" in West Bengal. Secondly there was a problem of "modernity" in West Bengal. Thirdly leftist ideology brought land reforms and ushered in the *Panchayat Raj* that eradicated any extreme form of untouchability, stopped some form of violence against the *Dalits* and led to limited empowerment of the *Dalits* (Bandyopadhyay, 2016, 60; Bandyopadhyay, 2014, 32-47). In pre-partition days, the base of the Scheduled Caste movement was East and North Bengal. The *Rajbangshis* were active in North Bengal (Bandyopadhyay, 2016, 60-61). The loss of special anchorage resulted in physical displacement and dispersal of *Dalit* peasant of Bengal after the partition. Partition adversely affected the social and political. Now they had to fight for resettlement. The *Dalit* peasants after partition got a new identity movements – the Refugee. The displaced people were never a homogeneous group. Bandyopadhyay argued that in the interests of united struggle, their left liberal and pre-dominantly high caste leadership "deliberately purged the vocabulary of caste from their language of protests". But caste question was not resolved. It only became less important. The *Dalit* displaced people adjusted to the realities of post-partition West Bengal (Bandyopadhyay, 2016, 61). It is worthy of mentioning that migration of Hindus from East Pakistan started since 1947. In the first wave of migration, mostly the upper caste Hindus, gentry, educated middle class people came to West Bengal (WBSA, IB File No.1238/48, IB Department, WBSA). Even newspapers such *the Statesman*, *Ananda Bazar*, *Amrita Bazar* also stated the same fact.

In December 1949 an incident took place in Bagarhat subdivision of Khulna. A police party had come to a *Namasudra* village called Kalshira in search for the Communists. A skirmish followed between them and the villagers. A police constable died in this struggle. Next day, a big force of police and *Ansars* came to that village and other 22 such villages (1950, 24 February *Ananda Bazar Patrika*). This news created a kind of frenzy. The Muslims from West Bengal left for Pakistan. In Pakistan riots took place in Khulna, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Mymensingh and Barishal. This time after 1950, *Namasudras* and the *Santhals*, had to leave East Pakistan. Finally the *Dalit*-Muslim goodwill broke down. *Dalits* came to West Bengal in large numbers (IB File No. 1238/48, Part III, IB Dept, WBSA). There was a view that these migrants were economic migrants. But the testimonials of the migrants, it becomes apparent that, there was definitely an economic reason behind the migration.

But when there was a great pressure in the land, the relationship between Muslims and *Namasudras* was destroyed. *Namasudras* had to emigrate to West Bengal (IB File No. 982/48(Sealdah), IB Dept, WBSA).

It had been already mentioned that Jogendranath Mandal joined the Pakistan cabinet after the partition. But on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1950, he came to West Bengal after resigning from the Pakistan cabinet. It was his protest against the repression of Hindu minorities in East Pakistan (1950, 9 October, *The Statesman*). Sekhar Bandyopadhyay mentioned the book by Tathagata Roy. This letter was mentioned in Roy's book (Bandyopadhyay, 2022, 80). Mandal had to wait for years to be accepted by the *Dalit* displaced people (IB File 581/46, WBSA). The *Namasudra* displaced people considered his association with the Muslim League to be the cause of the miseries of the *Dalits* after partition. Mandal eventually got the chance to come closer to the camp displaced people in 1957. He started his career as a member of Sara Bangla Bastuhara Sanmela. The aim of SBBS was to launch a *satyagraha* against the dispersal policy specially against the Dandakaranya scheme (IB File No. 1483/32, IB Dept; IB Files – 353/24, 820/46). After the failure of the *satyagraha* of SBBS, Mandal became disappointed. He planned to establish his own organisation. Ultimately he established a non-political organisation of the displaced people (IB File No. 64/32, IB Dept, WBSA). He raised the caste question in the camps (IB File No. 1483/32, IB Dept, WBSA). The CPI leaders went against Mandal for introducing the issue of caste in the camp (IB File 1483/32 WBSA, IB File 353/24 WBSA, , IB File No. 88/39, IB Dept, WBSA). As the leader of East India Refugee Council, Mandal fought against the settlement of displaced people outside West Bengal. He communicated with centre right Hindu Mahasabha, Janasangha and Praja Socialist Party. Throughout the period 1959-61, Mandal participated in anti-dispersal campaigns. He urged for the rehabilitation of the camp displaced people within West Bengal (WBSA, IB File, IB Dept WBSA; IB File 820/46, WBSA).

On the other hand P. R. Thakur supported policy of rehabilitation. Thakur relied more on self-help. He established the *Dalit* colony at Thakurnagar. It was started by *Dalit* initiative in India. It was the first *Dalit* Colony in India. He later received government grant (West Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Vol.20 , No. 1, June – August 1958, 64-65, Kolkata). In course of time, Thakurnagar became the major cultural centre of the displaced people and the *Namasudras* (IB File 2076/50, WBSA). Thakurnagar Bastuhara Adarsha Pally was inspected by Nishipati Manjhi, Parliamentary Secretary of government's non-military supply department. He urged that the *Bastuharas* of the colony should not consider themselves as Scheduled Castes. But they should consider themselves as the inhabitants of West Bengal. In this ideal pally, 300 displaced people produced for themselves on co-operative basis. They expressed their grievances before Manjhi. Manjhi told them that steps would be taken for improvement of such ideal co-operative colony (1949, 26 January, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*).

Jogendranath Mandal identity was merged into caste and refugee. In the first election (1952), Mandal contested from Beniapukur Reserved Assembly Seat in Calcutta as an independent candidate. In the campaign, he did not project himself as a scheduled caste leader but both as a refugee and scheduled caste. Thus he received support from both the groups. On the contrary, the Congress connection of P.R.Thakur continued. In 1957 and 1962, Thakur was elected to the Legislative Assembly as the Congress Candidate ( Bandyopadhyay , 2011, 264). Thakur was in favour of the Dandakaranya scheme. But this did not make him dear to the camp's displaced people. He was recognised as the Guru of Matua Mahasangha. The followers of Matua Mahasangha, concentrated in and around the border districts of Nadia and North 24 Pargana (IB File No. 2076/50, IB Dept, WBSA).

After 1962 Thakur became the Minister of State for Tribal Development. He delivered speeches on the government rehabilitation plans. He was against the approach of the Communists (Bandyopadhyay, 2011, 264). Thakur resigned from the Legislative Assembly in 1964 as a protest against the torture of displaced people in Bongaon (Ibid., 2011, 264; IB File No. 29/26, IB Dept, WBSA). He then joined Bangla Congress and got elected from Nabadweep constituency to Lok Sabha with a big margin

(Bandyopadhyay, 2011, 265).

When P. R. Thakur became disillusioned with the Congress, he felt the need of an organisation for the Scheduled Castes. The reservation policy had only helped a very few families. So the Scheduled Castes needed an organisation and self-help. Ultimately in 1986 he took the decision to revive *Matua* Mahasangha, mainly to organise the dispersed *Namasudras*. After his death, his son Kapil Krishna Thakur established a centre at Ashti in Maharashtra to mobilise the *Namasudra* displaced people, settled in central and south India (Bandyopadhyay, 265).

During the period of 2006-07, the Left Front government reached the verge of collapse after the incidents of Singur and Nandigram. Initially the Left Front government had a pro-poor and pro-people stand. It made the party successful for more than three decades (Chatterjee, 2009, 53-62; Chakraborty, 2009, 290-310). Left Front received at the earlier stage the support of the displaced people, including the *Dalit* support. It introduced land reforms and the three tier centralised local government machineries. There was "Party Society" in rural Bengal. When Trinamool Congress came to power (2011), it only followed the existing community organisation for electoral and political benefits (Sinharay, 2016, 147-151).

In the post-partition period, Mahasangha took a step forward towards the political field. It took the structure of modern voluntary associations with offices, the concept of membership, bureaucratism, publications and some quasi-legislative processes such as conference and other means. The earlier *Matua* Gurus stressed the importance of education. In post-partition period, *Matuas* took step towards spread of education. *Matuas* established a primary school Pramatha Ranjan Prathamik Vidyapith. It also performed some community services at the local level like providing relief to the flood victims. Gradually the *Matua* Mahasangha realised need for formation of a political organisation to achieve political power. The rudimentary form of political activities of the *Matua* Mahasangha started with agitation before Bangladesh High Commission of Calcutta to protest against the atrocities committed against Hindu minorities in Bangladesh (Sinharay, 2016, 153-154).

From the interview with Ganapati Biswas, the secretary of All India *Matua* Mahasangha, it can be deduced that until the passage of law, the *Matua* Mahasangha was not politically known. When the law of 2003 regarding the coming of the displaced people from East Bengal and the concept of their citizenship was passed, 21 displaced people from the *Matua* community went on a fast till death in Thakurnagar to protest against it in 2004 (Interview with Ganapati Biswas, General Secretary, All India *Matua* Mahasangha, 12-13/11/ in Sinharay, 2016, 161).

From 2009 *Matua* Mahasangha showed that it can guarantee votes in the *Matua* populated area. So the parties tried to come closer to the *Matuas*. Left Front sanctioned a plan of government college at Chandpara and provided land for Hari Chand –Guru Chand Research Foundation. Moreover TMC also promised numerous things. It indicated *Matua* Mahasangha was politically organised.

From 2009, *Matuas* became known supporters of TMC. In 2018 Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee went to meet *Barama*, wife of P. R. Thakur. Banerjee also announced the formation of *Matua* Welfare Board. In the meantime in 2014, Kapil Krishna Thakur, son of P. R. Thakur, won the Bongaon Lok Sabha seat. After his death, his wife Mamata Bala Thakur contested the election. In the meantime Bharatiya Janata Party spread its influence among the *Matuas*. Mamata Bala Thakur against Subrata Thakur another grandson of *Barama*. He supported BJP. As per the promise of Mamata Banerjee, Manjul Krishna Thakur, the younger son of *Barama*, became a minister in West Bengal. But later Manjul Krishna Thakur and Subrata Krishna Thakur joined BJP. Manjul's another son Shantanu Thakur became Narendra Modi's work programme organizer. Modi also met *Barama* to spread BJP's influence. Because of the Citizenship Amendment Act, Modi gradually lost the favour of the *Matuas*. In the last Legislative Assembly election in West Bengal, TMC got *Matua* votes. But it was not enough. 4 seats of North 24 Pargana went to BJP. Some English and Bengali Newspapers such as *The Telegraph*, *The Statesman*, *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and *Amrita Bazar Patrika* were consulted for obtaining this information. The BJP failed to get support from the *Matuas* in the municipal election

of 2022. They only won the Bongaon seat (2022, 3 March, *Bartaman*).

Jogendranath Mandal had established Scheduled Caste Federation in pre-partition Bengal. But after partition, no branch of the Federation existed in West Bengal. There was a branch only in Murshidabad with 300 members. It had no activity since 1952 (WBSA, IB File No. 191/46, IB Dept).

### Conclusion

The *Matua* religion emerged during the years 1811/12-1937. Under Hari Chand Thakur and his son Guru Chand Thakur, social and cultural developments took place. Politically they were against Congress conducted nationalist movement. But they remained close to the Muslim League. After the death of Guru Chand Thakur in 1937, the grandson of Guru Chand Thakur-P.R.Thakur, did not remain close to the Muslim League. On the contrary he came closer to Congress and remained so till 1964. After 1964, he left Congress and joined Bangla Congress. From 1937-47, Jogendranath Mandal followed the path shown by *Matua* Gurus. He was in favour of the Muslim League and Scheduled Caste alliance. Moreover he was a believer in the ideology of Dr Ambedkar. During this period, both Mandal and Thakur, fought for the interests of the Scheduled Castes. But their dreams remained unfulfilled. After partition the approach of Jogendranath Mandal and P.R.Thakur differed in case of rehabilitation. Mandal was against the dispersal policy of the government. But Thakur supported the Dandakaranya Scheme. Gradually Thakur realised the need of a political body and established *Matua* Mahasangha. Mandal fought against the dispersal policy from 1958-68. A distinct feature of the *Matua* Mahasangha can be seen that in the pre-partition period, *Matuas* did not pose any organised threat against the government. But when the Citizenship Amendment Act was passed in 2003, *Namasudra* were hit hard. There was organised hunger strike by the volunteers of *Matua* Mahasangha. Moreover it became vote bank for both BJP and TMC. The most important refugee organisation that emerged in 1950 was United Central Refugee Council. It dominated the members. So the Scheduled Caste leaders who wanted an organisation to work under, did not join UCRC. They joined Sara Bangla Bastuhara Sanmelan( Refugee wing of Praja Socialist Party). The only exception was Hemanta Biswas who joined UCRC. He later joined SBBS. Jogendranath Mandal formed his own refugee organisation in 1958 known as East India Refugee Council. P.R Thakur worked independently and became a congress minister later.

The conditions of the camps are depicted in the autobiographical work of Manoranjan Byapari. He gave description of Basuderpur camp of Bankura. Jatin Bala also wrote in his stories about some work site camps. He was influenced by Byapari. From the interviews taken by Subasree Ghosh and Debjani Dutta, we can get some ideas of the camps. Similarly Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury took some interviews of the camp refugees. The present author interviewed her and got some idea of the *Namasudra* refugees of the camp. In the colonies, mostly the upper middle class people lived. The leaders of the refugee organisations (UCRC and SBBS) had mostly come from upper caste and class. So ultimately the question of refugees, especially the *Namasudras* was not properly addressed. There were Scheduled Caste leaders in the camp level- Jatin Saha, Ratish Mandal, Hemanta Biswas and Jogendranath Mandal. Biswas and Mandal played important roles in the later years( Chatterjee Sengupta, 2014,166-176 ; 2019,183-185; 2019, 108-128; 2021, 279-299).

### Notes and References

Primary Sources: Unpublished(Archival and Government Files)

Home Political Files (West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata).

Intelligence Bureau Files( WBSA, Kolkata).

West Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings Files(Kolkata).

News Papers.

*Amrita Bazaar Patrika.*

*Ananda Bazaar Patrika.*



*The Azad.*

*The Hindusthan.*

*The Nationalist.*

*The Statesman.*

*The Telegraph.*

Secondary Sources(Books and Articles).

Ambedkar, B.R..(1979). "Annihilation of Caste" in *Writings and Speeches* , Govt. of Maharastra, Vol-I.

Bala, Jatin, Joydeep Sarangi ed.(2017).*Stories of Social Awakening, Reflections of Dalit Refugee Lives of Bengal*, New Delhi: Authors Press.

Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar.(1995). Popular religion and social mobility in colonial Bengal : Matua sect and Namasudras in Rajat Kanta Roy ed., *Mind , Body , life and mentality in colonial Bengal* , Calcutta : Oxford University Press.

.....(2011).*Caste , Protest and Identity, in Colonial India, 1870-1947*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Bandopadhyay, Sekhar and Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury.(2016)Partition, Displacement and Decline of Scheduled Caste Movement in West Bengal, in Chandra, Uday, Geir Heierstad and Kenneth Bo Nielson eds. *The Politics of Caste in West Bengal*, New Delhi, London, New York: Routledge.

.....(2022). *Caste and Partition in Bengal, The Story of Dalit Refugees, 1946-1961*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barman, Rup Kumar.(2020).*Caste, Politics, Castism and Dalit Discourse, The Scheduled Castes of West Bengal*, New Delhi: Abhijeet Publications.

Barman, Rup Kumar.(2020). *Caste, Class and Culture, the Malos, Adwaita Malla Barman and History of India and Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Abhijeet Publications.

Basu, Shibaji Pratim.(2017-1018). "Mobilising the Migrants: The Role of UCRC in the Indian State of West Bengal-A Critical Assessment", *Vidyasagar University Journal of History*, Vol.6, pp.20-31.

Basu, Swaraj.(2003). *The Dynamics of Caste Movement:Reflections of North Bengal, A Study of Caste Movement, 1910-1947*, New Delhi: Manohar.

Byapari, Manoranjan.(2018), *Interrogating My Chandal Life, An Autobiography of a Dalit*, New Delhi: Sage Samya.

Byapari, Monaranjan.(2021). *Matua Ek Mukti Senar Naam*, Chennai: Eka.

Chatterjee Sengupta, Swati.(April-September 2014). Role of Some Prominent Scheduled Caste Leaders in 1950s, *The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, LIV(1&2), pp.166-178.

.....(2019), *West Bengal amp Refugees, Dispersal and Caste Question, 1950-1965*, Kolkata:Sreejoni.

Chatterjee Sengupta, Swati.(2019), Namasudra Refugees: From Exodus to Dispersal, 1950-58, in Amrita Sengupta ed., *From the Armenian Migration to Namasudra Refugee Exodus to Inida, Anthology of Historical Ideas*, Kolkata:Sreejoni.

Chatterjee Sengupta, Swati.(2021). East Bengal Refugees, Through the Prism of Sealdah Station 1948-1961, in Amrita Sengupta and Swati Sengupta Chatterjee eds., *Various Aspects of Indian History, An Anthology of Essays in the Memory of Prof. Kalyan Kumar Sengupta*, New Delhi: Kunal Books.

Halder, Mahananda. (2016) *Shri Shri Guruchand Charit*, Thakurnagar:Modern Press (5<sup>th</sup> edition).

Mandal, Jagadish.(2003)*Mahapran Jogendranath*, Kolkata : Mahapran Publishers.

Mead, C. S.(1911). *The Namasudras and other Addresses*, Adelaide: Hussey and Gillingham.

Mitra, Asoke.(1969-1982). *Paschimbanger Pujo-parbon O Mela*, Volumes V, Delhi.

Rana Santosh and Kumar Rana.(2018). *Pashchim Bange Dalit o Adibasi*, Kolkata: Gangchill.

Roy, Kalyan Sinha.(2007). Haribuddha and Namasudra Movement, in Biswajit Chatterjee and Debi Chatterjee eds., *Dalit Lives and Dalit Visions in Eastern India*, Kolkata : Centre for Ambedkar Studies, Jadavpur University.

Sannyal, Hitesh Ranjan.(1989).*Bangla Kirtaner Itish(in Bengali)*, Calcutta: K.P.Bagechi.

Sen, Dwaipayan.(December 2012) 'The Emegence and Decline of Dalit Politics in Bengal, Jogendranath Mandal, The Scheduled Caste Federation and the Partition, 1932-1968', Unpublished Thesis , Chicago University.

Sinharay, Praskanva. (2016). Building up the Harichand, GuruChand Movement: Politics of Matua Mahasangha in Chandra Uday, Geir Heierstad and Kenneth Bo Nielson eds. *The Politics of Caste in West Bengal*, New

---

Delhi , London, New York.

Thakur, Kapil Krishna.(2007).Dalits in East Bengal: Before and After Partition” in Biswajit Chatterjee and Debi Chatterjee eds., *Dalit Lives and Dalit Visions in Eastern India*, Kolkata : Centre for Ambedkar Studies, Jadavpur University.