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Ancient Historical Background of Malda District (W.B)

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Abstract

Malda District is one of the important districts of West Bengal. It has its long history from the ancient period having many historical places and samples of historical architectural scriptures. In ancient times Malda was the capital of Bengal which is famous for the place of Gour, Adina. The history of Malda may be mentioned in the Ancient age, Middle age and Modern age. I have presented the era of history of the ages separately. I have summarized that Gourbhumis consists of Malda and Murshidabad of West Bengal. The important aspects of these ages are Pala dynasty, Sen Dynasty, Bangades, Pandrubardhan and Barendra etc. In the Middle age there were the dynasties like Khilgi dynasty, Balbani dynasty, Tughlag dynasty, Iliyashahi dynasty and Mughal Period and Hindu dynasty. In the Modern age the British government used force on Farmers of Indigo (Neal). The peasant movement was held several times and it had a special role in the independence movement.

Key-Words: Malda, Gour, History, Dynasty and Ancient etc.

Introduction:

Malda District has always been an important land of power in West Bengal. The existence of this historic location can be traced back to long back, at least to the existence of Mauryan Empire. Though the cities of Gaur and Pandura had always kept the district in the list of prominent locations of Bengal, due to the concentration of power at these two blocks, In 18th century, Malda city came into existence only after the arrival of British troops in this area. The chronological evidences of last 1500 years of this area are preserved in the museum of Malda district. Let us explore the history and origin of Malda in detail.

The history of Malda district basically tells the tales associated with the ruined city of Gaur and Pandua. The ancient city of Gaur is said to be in existence since an untraceable period. The first ever record of the city is found in the Hindu Puranic texts. The historical records of the city are however available from 500 BC, from the phase of Mauryan reign. Archeological findings also figure out that the entire region of Pandua, then known as Pundrabardhana, and Gaur had also been a part of Gupta Empire.

Objectives of the study:

The main purpose of this study is to find out the ancient historical background of Malda District.

Review of Literature:

Dr. Sujit Chandra Guha in his book "*Silk Industry of Malda and Murshidabad From 1660-1833*" analysed Textile Industries of Malda District in pre-colonial period to British period and other various productivity of Silk Industry.

Ananda Gopal Ghosh in his thesis paper "*Factory of the English East India Company at Malda*" (1981) pointed out the various factors to the development and growth of Malda district as a commercial and port town of the medieval and British Period.

Rupan Sarkar in his thesis paper "*Urbanisation in Malda in the Colonial Period: Growth of Englishbazar as a Case Study (1813-1947)*", (2015) has highlighted the history of colonial and urbanisation of Malda district. The scholar also discussed the health system, administrative system, education system, infrastructure development in the British period of Englishbazar Municipality.

Susmita Shome in her book "*Maldaha Jelar Itihas Chorchha*" (2006) wrote in detail on the historical background of Malda district and name of the investigation of Malda district, languages, religions, cultural aspects and also regional aspects and tendencies of Malda district.

Dr. Prodyot Ghosh in his book "*Maldah Jelar Itihas*" Part 1, published in 2015 where he discussed in detailed on atmosphere of Malda district, river, trees, Farraka barrage, river corrosion, horticulture of mangoes, some ancient dynasty, Old Malda Municipality and Englishbazar Municipality and especially he focused on architectural ideograph.

Kamal Basak in his book "*Ekaler Gour-Maldah O Sekaler Itihas*" published in 2019 where he discussed in detail in three parts in his book. In the first chapter he analysed the identity of geography, architectural aspects, folk cultures, time of travelling in historical places, connectivity and lodging of Malda district. In second chapter he discussed overview of historical sides and third chapter he also mentioned some historical important places in Malda district which spreading whole of the district like; Englishbazar, Chanchal, Kaligram, Old Malda, Madnabati, Gagdala, Kandaran and Sagardighi etc.

Abdus Samad in his book "*Malda Sthannam*" published in 2014 where he discussed in detail about the names of places of the district of Malda.

Dr. Radhagobinda Ghosh in his book "*Englishbazar Poursabar Itibrata*" published in 2010 where he collected many articles about Englishbazar Municipality which are arranged in a particular book. He explained about the evolution and several aspects of resolutions, declarations, notices, administrative works etc which are declared at different times by the state and central governments in relation to urban local self government and also important issue of this particular book is historical background of Englishbazar Municipality.

Dr. Malaysankar Bhattacharya in his edited book "*Maldaha Charcha*" (2012) where Nemaï Chandra Jha in his article entitled "Itihas Samridha Zela" has discussed the history of Pandrubardhan.

Rupasree Chattopadhyay in her book "*Gouriyō Sanskriti Biksha*" (2014) discussed in detail the identity of background in nature and geography, Gourjanapadh, Gournagar and Gour state.

G. E. Lambourn in his book "*Bengal District Gazetteers*" briefly discussed the historical background of Malda district, Local-Self Government, Communication view, Agriculture, the Public Health Status, Educational status of Malda district and General administration status etc.

Malda District in Ancient Period:

Gaur Bhumi: In relation to the past history of Malda district, the context of ancient Gaur janapada has been repeated because ancient and modern historians have believed that the current Malda district belonged to the gaur janapada. In the Paninis formula there is a mention of a region called gourpura. From kautilya's arthashastra it is known that gourpura was located in eastern India. Therefore, it can be assumed that Kautilya's mentioned Gour and present Gour in Malda district are the same which belonged to the Mourya empire. "Gour has been described as famous for silk according to the Jain book Acharanga Sutra. The first coup of Gour happened sometime before the fall of the gupta empire. In the 16th century barahamihir had described gour as a part of bengal in his birshamitra. At the end of the 18th century, Murari Mishra, author of Annargha Raghaba, wrote that Champa was the capital of gour. There is a mention of Pancha gour at Skandapuram, These five places like Saraswata (Punjab), Kannakunja (Kanouj), Gour (Bengal), Miyhila (darvanga) and Utkal (Odisha).

Shashanka was the first sovereign ruler among Bengali kings. He was the feudal king of the kingdom and was first under the Sengupta of Moukhari. During Shashanka the boundary of Gour spread Southwest to Kangada in Ganjan district of Odisha. His capital was Karnasuvana (Murshidabad). By opposing Harshavardhana and Vaskar Varman, king of Kamrupa he kept his kingdom strong. The exact date of Shashanka's death was unknown but it is believed that he died between 619-637 A.D.

After Shashanka's death, a political crisis appeared. Approximately in 641 Harshavardhana conquered Magadha and in the next year he went west for Utkala and Kangada. Before that Vaskar Varman, king of Kamrupa overpowered Gour."

Pala Dynasty:

The Pala Kings dynasty began at the end of the 8th century of the Christian era. The family members of Pala King were originally Buddhists and the later members of the family became Hindus under Brahminical influences. Most of the stone-work bearing traces of Buddhist art to be found in the ruins of the district belonged to their rule. The little that is known of the history of the period is mainly derived from inscriptions on copper and stone of which a number has been found in recent years in the modern district of Malda and its neighbours. Many of these inscriptions refer to grants of land, and from them it is possible to reconstruct roughly the succession of Pala kings. The district may be mentioned as that of Dharmapala of about 800 A.D. and which was discovered at Kalimpur near Gour in 1893. Other

important kings of the dynasty were Narayan Pala (900-925 A.D.) and Mahipala (980-1035 A.D.). It was in the region of Mahipala about 1030 A.D.

Sen Dynasty:

The Pala dynasty was supplanted after reigning for 300 years by the Sen Rajas at the beginning of the 11th century. The first member of the Sen line kings Samanta Sen described as Brahma-khatrya by caste. His great-grandson, Ballal Sen, the most famous Hindu King of Bengal was reigning in Gour in 1169 as ruler of Bengal and Mithila. The fame of Ballal Sen rests mainly on the institution of Kulinism. This measure appears to have been an attempt to solve three problems of the social and religious confusion which had arisen in the dominant Aryan ruling classes from their contact with local beliefs, the pressure for Brahminism reinforced by fresh immigration from the West and the legacy of the long period of Buddhism. The modern stereotyped separation of each of the higher castes of Bengal into Rarh and Bardhaman division each amongst the results of the policy of Ballal though in its inception that policy seems to have ended at establishing an hierarchy based on the merits of the individual and not on geographical distribution. In any case, the comparative ease with which the Mahomedan invaders overran Bengal in successive reason suggests that the policy failed to close the ranks even of the Aryan section of the population, much less to form the foundation for a union between the masses of the population and their Hindu rulers. During the reign of Ballal there still remains the Sagaradighi tank and the ramparts of Gour near Sadullpur.

Laxman Sen, the son of Ballal gave his name in the form of Lakhnauti or Lakshmanavati to the northern suburbs of Gour. The seat of his place is pointed out near Englishbazar on the Rajmahal road. He was the last of the Hindu kings of Gour in 1194 he was overthrown at Nadia by Mahomed Ibn Bakhtiyar Khilji, the Lieutenant of the Delhi emperor who led the Mahomedan invasion of Bengal. It is said that Laxman was told by his advisors that his kingdom would be overthrown by the Turkis or Mahomedans led by a warrior whose arms reached down to his knees, a physical peculiarity of Bakhtiyar, and on his account a less spirited resistance was made to the invaders.

Bongadesh:

Before 1947, the homeland of Bengali was called Bangladesh. At first we get the name of this Banga as the name of a group of people. The term Banga, then used in the geographical sense. The names of the Banga first found in Uitarayoo Bhahmana. In the fourth century B.C. Banga was included in the Maurya Empire. At that time Banga was known many names like, Gour, Banga, Samatat, Chandradip, Bangal, Pandru, Bardhaman, Radh, Tramalipta, Barok, Kankagram, Burdwan, Dangavhukti, Khati and Nabya etc. Its geographical boundaries and different ages were different. On the west bank of the Bhagirathi river Kajangal, Radh, Kangaram, Kabat, Sushkha, Tramplipta and Dangavhukti the history of Banga is known in the Ramayana, Mahavarata and Puran.

It is said that the Alexander attacked India and the independent Banga lost its independence. Until the beginning of the 6th century the Bengal Gupta's were under. It is believed that since this time, Aryan culture was invaded by Bangladesh. In 638, the Chinese traveler Wang-Tsung came to the country. He saw Bengal divided into five states like Kangajal, Pandruvardhan, Karnasubarna, Tramplihti and Samatat. From this it can be assumed that after the death of Shashanka, the portion of Bengal was broken due to lack of skilled administrators. There was a great deal of king. After that Bengal was

attacked and destroyed by multiple foreign powers. These lead to extreme anarchy and emergence of Matshany. The founders of Pala dynasty Gopal he protecting Bangladesh from this widespread anarchy. This Pala dynasty ruled for four hundred years, an extraordinary event in Indian history. In the history of ancient Bengal, Banga and Bangal was known as two Janapadh. Foreign tourists at different times called different parts of this vast land as Vanghala and Benglala. British says in these region as Bengal.

Pandrubardhan:

Pandrubardhan city is the Capital of Pandru. The current name of this city is Pandua or Padua. Pandua is located on the left side of the 34th National Road, Gazal, 16km North-West of English Bazar. The name of the Pundravardhana kingdom is found in the Mahabharata in the Mythical period of the Dwapara period. But in the present time most historians have accepted that the pandua or malda is ancient Panduravardhan or Pandrunagar.

Pandru is the ancient place between Kortoya and Ganga rivers. Pandru was famous for cultivation of sugarcane. Sandhakar Nandi in his "Ramchriti" has mentioned that the Barendrabhumi is the famous place for cultivation of Sugarlane. It is known from the writings of the Greek writer Ilias and Lukan that there was an economic structure of the Barindrabhumi for the excellent forming of sugarlane. The special product of Bengal is Molasses. These molasses were exported to other countries. Perhaps Gaur was originally due to its international fame.

According to Huan-Tsung description it was a big state. The state was well planned and dynasty populated. In the capital there was water reservoir, flower garden and there were also twenty conservatories. There were 3000 Buddhist monks living here and there were one one hundred Hindu deities. Among the Hindus, Shibya, Baisnab and Kartik were worship by the of worshipers. Under this state there were places like Garhhunda, Alihunda, vandar, Kandarana, Kurshida, Vhluka etc."

Barendra:

Barendra is a part of Malda district located on the west side of Rajmahal hills in the east between Garo hills. This part is the part of the Barendra which is known as the Brendrabhum. The approximate age of this soil is five million years. The word Barendra in Sanskrit language means the best and Araya language means agricultural land. Here excavation results in numerous ancient ponds, multiple statues and other patterns are available. These prove that the Barendra bhumi was full of prosperity.

Conclusion:

Up to 1876, this district formed part of the Rajshahi Division and between 1876 & 1905, it formed part of the Bhagalpur Division of Bihar. In 1905, it was again transferred to Rajshahi Division, and till 1947 Malda remained in this division. In August 1947, this district was affected by partition, between the 12th & 15th Of August. 1947, the fate of the district as to which side it should go, to Pakistan or to India was undecided because the announcement of the partition award of Sir Radcliffe did not make this point clear. During these few days, the district was under a Magistrate of East Pakistan, when the details of the Radcliffe award were published, the district came over to West Bengal on the 17th of August. 1947.

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