International Journal of Applied Social Science
Volume 6 (3), March (2019) : 750-759
Received : 24.01.2019; Revised : 10.02.2019; Accepted : 24.02.2019

RESEARCH ARTICLE
ISSN : 2394-1405 (Print)

Social Movements and Agrarian Structure: A Study of Kisan Sabha and Triveni Sangh in Central Bihar

AFAQUE HAIDER
Doctorate Scholar
Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi (India)

ABSTRACT

Central Bihar especially the districts of Gaya and Shahabad have been the center of many social movements. In this paper an attempt is made to historically trace radical agrarian social movements. This study tries to analyse the socio-agrarian structure of the state in order to understand the emergence of various socio-political movements in central Bihar. The Study will focus on major agrarian social movements in pre-independent India lead by Kisan Sabha and Triveni Sangh. The study also investigates the visible changes brought through these socio-political movements in that region. The study is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data.

Key Words : Social Movements, Agrarian Movements, Triveni Sangh, Kisan Sabha, Bihar

INTRODUCTION

It was among landless Dalit and backward caste population of central Bihar where the social movements found fertile ground. Various socio-political movements especially the movements mobilized by the KisanSabha, Triveni Sangh and the Socialist movement had found massive support here among landless labourers and small peasants.

Movements brought visible change in the socio-political structure of the state. In pre-Independent India socio-political life of the rural Bihar was fully controlled by upper cast landed gentry. The agrarian movements led by Triveni Sangh and Kisan Sabha tried to change the power relations in rural Bihar. Dalit and backward caste poor peasants asserted new political aspirations in Bihar. The Socialists movement led by Ram Manohar Lohiya gave it new direction and energy. These movements provided a concrete ground for backward and lower caste politics in the state which ultimately altered the power structure of the state and politically empowered lower caste landless labourers and small peasants.

Oommen (1990: 256) argues that the lower castes movement first established its ground against socio-cultural oppression, particularly against the problems of untouchability and social oppression. Gradually it resulted in mass mobilization for the purpose of political empowerment. Protests against economic exploitations gradually came to the fore. These protests are a result of and are organically linked to the hierarchy of deprivations as perceived by the lower castes.

Movements led by organizations such as Triveni Sangh and Bihar Provincial KisanSabha (BPKS) were basically social movements. Movements objectives were not to grab state power but It had also political and economic implication. It had greatly impacted the agrarian Socio-Political structure of the state which had a visible impact on the state politics and power relations.

Theoretical Framework:

Structure of the State, Movements and Socio-Political changes are three important phenomena which made socio-political history of Bihar. These are

How to cite this Article: Haider, Afaque (2019). Social Movements and Agrarian Structure: A Study of Kisan Sabha and Triveni Sangh in Central Bihar. *Internat. J. Appl. Soc. Sci.,* **6** (3) : 750-759.

interrelated concepts and consequence of one another. Landlessness and socio-political discrimination produced relative deprivation and strain in agrarian structure of the State. In consequence of these developments agrarian movements were emerged in rural Bihar. These socio-political movements tried to change socio-political structure of the state.

Rao (2006) defined social movements as organized efforts of the people through collective mobilization on the basis of ideology to bring changes or resist changes (partial and total) in the socio-political structure. He further argued that social mobility and change brought by the social movement lead to social transformation by changing the traditional balance of power.

Paul Wilkinson argued "A social movement is deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into 'Utopian' community"[1]

Muhkharjee defined social movements as any collective mobilization for action directed explicitly towards an alteration or transformation of the structures of a socio-political system. He further argued that social movements are product of a Social structure and emerges due to certain conditions in social structure. Social movement tries to bring change (or resist change) in structure. Social movements are a consequence of the structure (Mukharjee, 1979: 18).

Rao (1979) noted that relative deprivation and strain are two main theories which attempt to explain structural condition and motivational forces that give rise to movement. Marx and Engels (1973) further explained that dissatisfaction with the status quo in socio-political structure was not determined by absolute condition but by relative expectation.

Rao (1979) further argued that movement is a collective mobilization on the basis of ideology towards change. The leaders of a movement select different elements of relative deprivation and combine them in different ways to formulate an ideology. The ideology mobilized cadres towards action which results into change in Social or political structure. Action, cadre, and Ideology are important ingredients of social movements, these three main component forma movement and they are interrelated to one another.

Frank and Fuentes (1987) differentiate between social and political movement. They argued that Social movement do not strive for state power, It seeks more autonomy rather than state power. They further argued that objective of social movements is social transformation, It's cadres are mobilized to get social justice through social transformation. While many scholars did not differentiate between social and political movements. Every social movement had its political implication and every movement had its social implication. Dhangare and John (1988) argued that the difference between 'social' and 'political' movement is merely semantic. Any collective mobilization to bring about social transformation- Change in the labour and property relationship and to struggle for justice involve political institution though may not be on the immediate agenda of the movement. Herberle (1951) said that all movements have political implication even if their members don't strive for political implication.

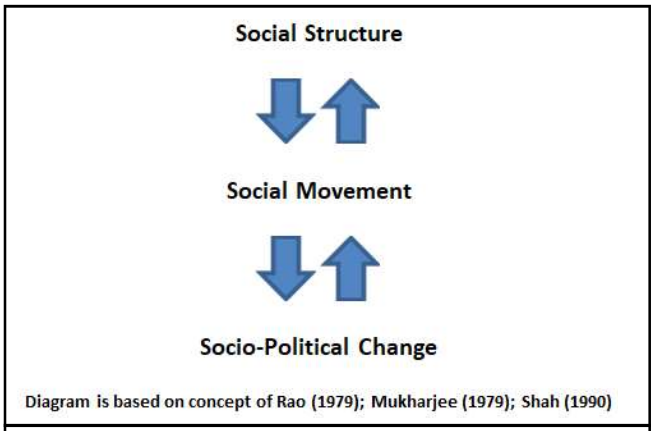

Fig. 1 :

In Bihar Socio-Political structure was semi feudal which generated relative deprivation among masses, it produced strain in structure resulting in various socio-political movements. These produced socio-political movements that tried to change the power relations in structure.

Movement of Triveni Sangh and Bihar Provincial KisanSabha in colonial Bihar were basically social movements and their objectives were not to grab state power but they had political and economic implication. Both movements eventually had impact on Socio-Political structure of state which had visible impact on politics and power relation. In post independent Bihar Bhudan movement and Naxalite movement were also social

1. Cited in Shah, Ghanshyam. 1990.Social Movements in India: A review of Literature. New Delhi: Sage publication

movements of peasant trying to liberate land from landowners by very different method but in the course of action they changed political relations. Even the objective of Naxallite movement was to grab state power through armed struggle but they had to go through social change in structure. In broad concept Social movements had political implications and political movement had social implication.

Agrarian Structure of Bihar:

Roots of all Socio-Political movements in Bihar were found in centralised land ownership and the agrarian structure of the state. The semi feudal agrarian structure of the Bihar state paved the way for Socio-Political unrest. Agrarian structure of the state was inherited as a result of the colonial legacy of land settlement. Caste and class were the two main factors which determined status in agrarian structure of Bihar (Chaudary and Shrikant, 2001:09).

The Zamindari system of land administration was introduced in Bengal province (at that time Bihar was part of Bengal province) in 1793 under the Permanent settlement act. Under Zamindari System land was provided to Zamindars in lieu of fixed revenue. The revenue that was paid by zamindars to the government was about nine tenth of the rent he collected from the tenants (Louis, 2002:98). But the rights of agricultural labourers and tenants were not protected in this act and they were exposed to exploitation by land owners. Illegal exaction, higher rent and unpaid work were demanded by the Zamindar.

The right to land was vested in the landlords, but no protection was given to the cultivators. It was only through the Act 19 of 1859 and through the Act 8 of 1885 (formerly the Bengal Tenancy Act which later became, with some modifications, the Bihar Tenancy Act) that the right of the tenants got some legal recognition. According to the agrarian act, 1859 (X) if a tenant has cultivated a land for more than 12 Years then tenants had the right to occupancy of land. Again it was reformed as the agrarian act of 1885 (VIII) of Bengal province. Tenancy acts intended to bring a balance between the zamindars and the tenants. They aimed at giving occupancy right to a section of the peasants which became the leading strata of the peasant movements in the 1930s. At the same time, the Act of 1885 gave tremendous power to the zamindars to increase the rent without any proportionate increase in the revenue (Das, 1983:23; Barik, 1992:03; Chaudhary and Shrikant, 2001:20).

The Zamindar was legally a proprietor but working as an intermediary between the British governments and tenants. Zamindars collect revenue on behalf of the government. The big landlords gave land for rent tenure (Pattedar) to hold it for fixed annual revenue. The occupancy tenants (KaymiRaiyat) had right to occupancy on the lands they held. The non-occupancy tenants (Raiyat) did not have right to occupancy of land temporarily in their possession. The under tenants (Dar Raiyat) were rent paying holders of land with temporary possession under a tenant. There were multiple layers of exploitation (Chaudhary and Sharikant, 2001:17-18)

Jannuzi (1974:11); Chaudhary and Shrikant (2001:18) noticed the stratified system of relationship of people to land created by the permanent settlement act between 1793 and 1950, in the following order: the state (the 'super landlord'), the zamindar and the tenure-holder (an intermediary of the state for collection of rents), the occupancy tenants (a rent paying holder of land having the occupancy on the land held by him), the non-occupancy tenants (a rent paying holder of land not having the right of occupancy on land temporarily in his possession), the under- tenants (a rent paying holder of land having temporary possession of a holding under a tenants, agriculture laborers

Barik argued that the permanent settlement act brought out by the British benefitted only the zamindars. The main motive of the law was to collect maximum revenues without any investment in the agriculture sector. It destroyed the fabric of social peace existent in rural Bihar. Instead it brought the rural society to turmoil and unrest as the society was deep rooted in the agrarian

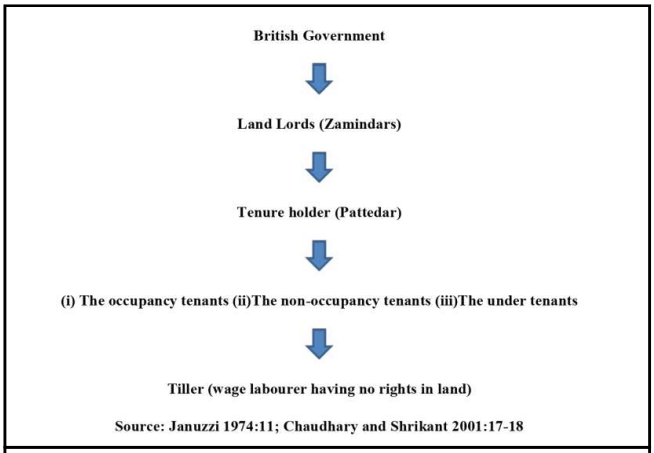

Fig. 2 : Hierarchy of agrarian structure in Bihar

structure (Barik, 1992:03).

The permanent settlement act led to an extremely exploitative agrarian structure in the countryside of Bihar, which in turn led to large scale alienation of the peasants from their lands. The lands after becoming bakasht lands of the zamindars, continued to remain a source of tension and this tension often resulted in violent outbursts. In the decade of 1930 the tenants were hit by low prices of food grains due to depression. Faced with excessive rental demand, the farmers resisted this forced alienation of land, and as a result the Bakasht disputes became the focal point of peasant unrest in Bihar (Sharma, 2005: 962)

Ramagundam argues that the agrarian structure of colonial Bihar was feudal and oppressive in nature. The ownership of land was only in the hands of few upper cast land lords. The congress party did not take any clear stand on that issue. Even within the congress party there were always disputes on the issue of land reforms. Ramagundam also points out that Gandhi was not in favour of Zamindari abolition. Gandhi did not want to forcibly evict the land lords of their lands. He expected to convert Zamindars and other capitalists through non-violent methods and change their heart (Ramagundam, 2006: 74).

Oomen (1990:87) cites Bipin Chandra and argues that the landlords were kept within the national movement by guaranteeing the protection of their class interests while the peasants on the other hand, were mobilized through the ideology of nationalism. Even the left parties failed to established a strong link between anti-feudalism and the economic consciousness of the peasants and anti-imperials.

Ramagundam also points out that the position of Congress was not clear. The party did not want to dispossess Zamindar forcibly. He cited that Nehru too had complained that the remedy suggested by Gandhi for poverty alleviation had not touched the 'the fundamental cause of the poverty' in 1928 and indignant Nehru had written, 'You do not say a word against the semi-feudal Zamindari system which prevails in a great many parts of India'. Nehru moreover believed in the inevitability of class conflict (Ramagundam, 2006: 73)

Gandhi was firm that nothing enduring could be built on violence. Any attempt to rearrange land holdings in rural India through state sponsored violence or even through groups advocating violent methods to social change would mean a bloody India and Swaraj for few (Ramagundam, 2006:74).

Social Structure:

In the newly formed Bihar province, social structure was determined by Caste and Class. If someone is from high caste and Zamindar, then naturally he had a high social status. A high caste tenant was on a higher level of social hierarchy than a backward caste landlord in a social structure. English and Europeans were on the top of social hierarchy followed by Brahmin, Muslims and Rajput landlords. Bhumihar and Kayasth landlords ranked below these in the social structure. An important point to note was that the backward caste Zamindar was on a lower level in comparison to an upper cast tenant in the social hierarchy. It means that caste was more important factor than class in the hierarchy of social structure. One of the important points was that the rate of land rent was determined by the status on social hierarchy. Lower social status means that one needs to pay high level of rents for land. For similar piece of land lower castes had to pay almost three times more rent to the landlords. Social structure in Bihar had economic impact, mostly of lower caste and lower backward caste tenants could not pay high rate of rents and lost their lands. It was also a reason for high rate of landlessness in Dalits and lower backward castes (Chaudhary and Shrikant, 2001: 57-61)

The permanent settlement act reestablished the caste hierarchy which further crippled the agricultural revolution. The hierarchy was maintained on the basis of the fact that this group did not engage in manual labor. The agrarian structure therefore had clear cut caste dimensions. The four upper castes, *i.e.*, Bhumihar, Brahmin, Rajput and kayastha, therefore had a heavy shares in the land. Each of these castes owned large princely houses. Owing to the zamindari system, the zamindars belonging to the upper castes had established complete political and economic control in the countryside (Sharma, 2005: 961-962).

Social stratification was almost similar to that based on the ownership of land. The upper middle castes were mostly peasants, non-occupancy tenants and few of them were traders and landless laborers, while the lower middle castes were essentially agricultural laborers and a few of them were artisans and peasants. The scheduled castes were mainly farm laborers (Sharma, 2005: 962).

The extent to which the cultivators got possession of the land was directly related to their place in the caste structure. Lower down the caste structure, very few

cultivators got possession of the land. There were differences within backward castes too, with the kurmi, Jadhav and koeri doing much better than the depressed backward castes of ex-artisans and service workers. (D. N. 1988: 42)

Bhumihars were economically well off but in the social hierarchy their position is after Brahmin and Rajput. The Kayasth had already got high social status through the court so the Brahmins wanted to legitimise their claim through myths by declaring themselves as Brahmin Bhumihar (Babhan). In 1931 census, they also insisted to register them as Babhans instead of Bhumihars. (Chaudhary and Shrikant: 1998)

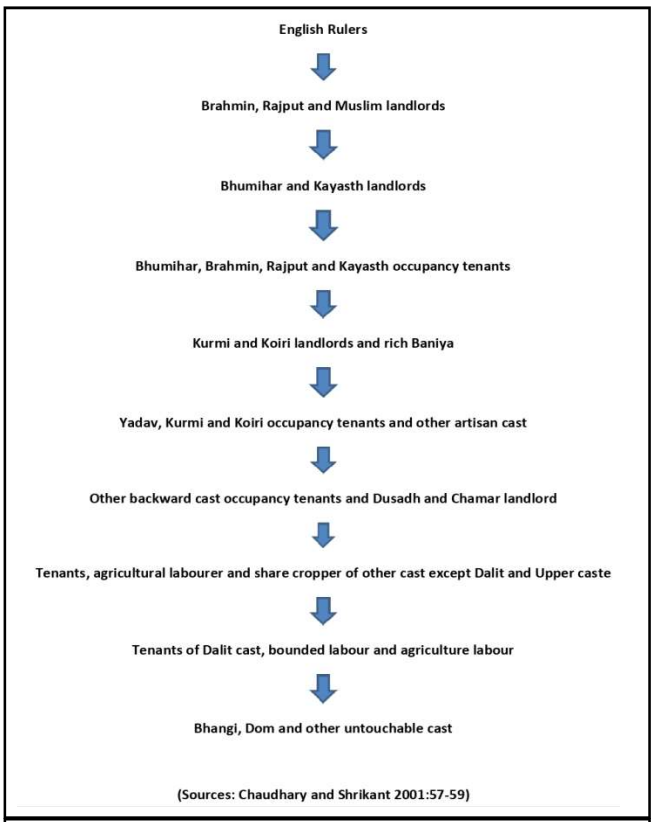

Fig. 3 : Social structure in Bihar

In order to achieve higher social status, Movements such as wearing a sacred thread were started by different castes. The sacred thread gave authenticity to a higher social status. Since yadavs declared themselves as yadav kshatriyas, kurmis as kurmik shatriyas, koiris as kushwahak shatriyas, Dusadh declared themselves as dusadhvanshiyek shatriyas. Castes who were in lower social status were also trying to achieve the social status of higher castes. They tried to achieve their values and perception. In the beginning of the 20th century, all backward castes tried hard to claim high social status in caste hierarchy. They legitimated their claims through mythology (Chaudhary and Shrikant, 2001;2005;1998).

Every caste in Bihar at that time tried to find higher social status for itself. They started the movement of wearing the sacred thread for self-respect. It had social dimensions but it had economic and political aspects too. Being higher in social hierarchy meant that they had to pay fewer taxes to Zamindar. Upper caste Rajputs and Brahmin tenants had to pay 1/3rd less rent in comparison to the lower cast tenants. Rate of tax gradually decreases as you got higher social status in the caste hierarchy. So every caste claimed higher social status in the caste hierarchy by adopting the values and cultures of upper caste people. Power relation in the social structure was one of the reasons of emergence of backward and lower caste movement (Chaudhary and Shrikant, 2001; 2005).

Table 1 : The percentage of Population of 17 major castes in Bihar

Caste	Percentage in Population
Ahir (Yadav)	11.02
Brahmin	4.91
Rajput	4.37
Kurmi	4.33
Kori	4.15
Dusadh	4.10
Chamar	4.00
Bhumihar	2.85
Dhanuk	1.75
Kahar	1.67
Kandu	1.61
Mallah	1.46
Hajjam	1.45
Kayasth	1.18
Pasi	0.55
Dom	0.48
Halalkhor	0.07

Source: WG Lacey, Census of India, 1931, Vol II, Part II, Patna, 1932 Pp. 136-139
Cited in Barik, R.K. (2006), Land and Caste Politics in Bihar, Delhi: Shipra Publication

Das argued that lower castes effort to improve their status through various socio-cultural rituals, led to considerable friction and occasional disturbance. He further quoted the underlying tensions which existed in rural Bihar were manifested in the form of fast multiplying caste associations and caste meetings of one kind or another in many centres. The most prominent issues in

such meetings were vows of temperance, effort towards educational progress, assumption of the sacred thread and determined opposition to the system of beggar (Das, 1983:70).

Das further argued the Permanent settlement and its operation had created various issues, the tenants provided the man-power and the Sri Sitaram Ashram became point of the focus. All that was required was charismatic leadership that was provided by Swami Sahajan and Saraswati. In the tenant's lands in Bihar, the seeds of KisanSabha were sown (Das, 1983:78).

Peasant movement: KisanSabha (1927-1947):

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati formed west Patna KisanSabha in 1927 at Shri Sita Ram Ashram in Bihta as he was deeply distressed by the plight of the peasants. In the beginning, the objective of the KisanSabha was to bring harmony and unity between the landlords and the tenants through reconciliation. Very soon KisanSabha spread all over in Bihar (Louis, 2001: 124). Das noted that with passage of time, the ashram at Bihta became the focal point of peasant movements and organizations and not only Bhumihars but tenants of other castes also started congregating there with their grievances and plans of resistance (Das, 1983:77).

In the beginning, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati was associated with establishing the credentials of Bhumihars with those of Brahmins. Bhumihar is a caste specific to Bihar and the adjacent parts of eastern UP. They were not priests, but cultivators. An important section of Zamindars were Bhumihars but they were a considerably different caste, included in their ranks were even a section of peasants who participated in all kinds of field labor, except that of ploughing (D. N., 1989: 661).

In 1930, Bihar provincial KisanSabha (BPKS) under the leadership of Swami Shahajanand Saraswati emerged as a first strong organized peasant movement. The movement focused on grievances of tenants against landlords but movement did not heed much on issues of landless labourers and lower castes peasants. KisanSabha demanded lands for tenants. Leadership of KisanSabha was dominated by Bhumihar caste though Rajput, Brahmin and Kayasth were also at leadership level, most of the members of kisansabha were middle class peasants and some of had substantial land. The support base of the KisanSabha comprised largely of upper caste substantial tenants and was dominated by the Bhumihars; it did not cover under-tenants and agricultural laborers. Since the KisanSabha was dominated by upper caste occupancy tenants, so they addressed their grievances. Issues of farming had always been main agenda of KisanSabha since its formation, KisanSabha's conference in Jehanabad, May, 1931 and Sonepur, July 1931 resolution was about land revenue and demand of receipt for land revenue. KisanSabha took up four major issues: Ploughing, Unpaid labour, Illegal exaction and Snatching. KisanSabha did not take the issues of lower and backward caste agricultural labourers and under tenants. They also did not raise the issue of caste discrimination among tenants (Louis, 2002:124; Mukharjee and Yadav, 1980:20; Sharma, 2005: 963)

The main objective of the KisanSabha movement was that of abolishing zamindari system. The zamindars had received abolition of tax-collecting rights from the Permanent Settlement, so that raiyats would become the direct tenants in the state. Apart from zamindari abolition, the KisanSabha's main demands were: cancellation of agrarian debt, grant of ownership rights to peasants, exemption from taxation of all those whose income was below the minimum for a family. As far as movements go, the other major movements led by the KisanSabha were the Bakasht struggle, for the restoration of lands seized from the occupancy raiyats: and the bhaoli struggle, to transform produce rent into money rent (D. N., 1989: 661).

D.N. stated that the Kisan Sabah's land reform movement was not a full-scale anti-feudal movement. It dealt only with the occupancy tenants and not with the under-tenants and farm laborers. Therefore, demands like ending sharecropping or other forms of tenancy were not the part of the KisanSabha movement (D.N., 1989.661).

Mukherjee (1980) argued further that Kisan Sabha totally neglected, even opposed, the granting of land rights to the lower castes and other agricultural laborers. The attributive notion which was characteristic of a feudal society (whether organized into castes or estates), that labor could not be farmer was a part of the KisanSabha philosophy. What the BPKS demanded was merely 'gainful employment' for the landless. The KisanSabha in its manifesto had stated: "*A peasant is known as a grihastha, a person who earns his livelihood by cultivation and agriculture, be he a petty landlord, raiyat or labourer working on wages for ploughing fields*"

In the beginning, Kisan Sabhast and was not very

clear on the issue of Zamindari abolition; the objective of the organization was to bring harmony between the tenants and Landlords. Its' primary focus was on class reconciliation instead on class struggle. But in course of time there were internal contradictions within the party regarding Zamindari abolition. KisanSabha took a strong stand against Zamindari system. Swami Sahajanad Saraswati strongly opposed idea of compensation to the land lords by congress party (Louis, 2002; Chaudhary and Shrikant, 2001)

In Shahabad district, the discontent and rage among peasants were on peak by 1936, Swami Sahajanad Saraswati visited the area with their close aid Jadunand Sharma and organized a big peasant conference in Jittora. Kisan Sabha raised many issue related to peasant including reduction in land revenue. By 1936, the issues of Peasants took center stage in state politics and Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha enters into the politics of State, under new circumstances congress reorganized his approach towards issues of peasant (Mukharjee and Yadav, 1980:21).

However, the issues raised by Kisan Sabha were very limited and narrow. They did not raise the issue of caste discrimination in revenue collection and social oppression of lower caste tenants and agricultural labourers. They advocated land for tenants who predominantly belonged to the upper castes, they did not demand land for tillers. The issues of agricultural labourer and poor peasants were not their priority. The leadership of the KisanSabha remained in the hand of upper caste well tenants. The movement failed to take along with it the lower cast peasants and labourers.

The KisanSabha excluded from its agenda the oppression experienced by the lower layers of the agrarian hierarchy, including tenants who were usually share croppers and agricultural laborers by keeping its approach limited to upper caste peasants. However, such elements of the agrarian population were oppressed by the very tenants who protested against the oppression of the Zamindars (PUDR document, (1992:8)

Lower Caste Peasant Movement: Triveni Sangh (1933):

In 1933 new socio-political organization of backward and lower cast peasants - Triveni Sangh came into existence lead by three powerful lathaith (Henchman) castes :- Yadav, Kurmi and Koiri. They not only raised the economic issues but also the social issues. They clubbed the idea of class with caste identity. Prominent issue in their agenda was fight for social dignity. They demanded land reforms and land for tillers who cultivated it (Louis, 2002:124).

Triveni Sangh was a struggle for Social dignity and it took shape in 1930s. It was a socio-political platform which responded to the rising Socio-political aspirations of backward and lower cast people. Due to the reform in tenancy act, a small new well economic class emerged within the backward classes. The new class wanted its new socio-political identity. Backward and lower castes did not get proper representation in the congress party. The congress was dominated by upper caste similarly like BPKS. The issues of lower and backward caste were not raised by these organizations, so they felt alienated (Chaudhary and Shrikant, 2002; Louis, 2002).

The Movement of Triveni Sangh which started with the wearing of the sacred thread as it symbolized equal status with the upper caste had united the backward castes. These castes had low representation either in the congress or in the KisanSabha. Movement started with the social purpose of getting equal status with upper castes but soon it changed into a political and economic movement which demanded land to the tiller and equal representation of backward castes in power structure (Louis, 2002).

The KisanSabha, which had a much stronger presence in central Bihar, failed to mobilize its forces against social oppression because most of the KisanSabha cadres were rich tenants from upper caste Bhumihars. Though they were themselves waging protests against the oppression of the landlords but in turn socially and economically exploited the lower castes and opposed the fight of the Triveni Sangh for the social dignity (Louis, 2002:132).

The ignorance of Congress and KisanSabha provided fertile ground for lower caste politics. Three dominating upper backward castes which were Yadavs, Kurmi and Koeris had raised the banner of the protest against social oppression by the upper caste landlords. At this point of time, three castes associations Yadav Kshatriya, Kurmi Kshatriya and Koiri Kshatriya came together in Shahabad district and formed umbrella organization Triveni Sangh in 1933 (Chaudhary and Shrikant, 1998:07).

The Triveni Sangh, which constituted the kurmi, koeri and Jadhav castes, was the main instrument of the backward caste peasants in their struggle against feudal exactions, like Begar and Abwabs. The Kisan Sabha of

Swami Sahjanand, though an organization of peasants, was led by sub-feudal, village level landlords, mainly from the Bhumihar caste. The target of its movement was not all kinds of landlords, but only the feudalism from above, the revenue-collecting zamindari rights created by the Permanent Settlement act. The KisanSabha failed to reflect the full anti-feudal aspirations of the peasantry; and, besides alienating the backward caste peasantry, even set itself firmly against granting land rights to the lower castes, landless labourers (D. N. 1988: 942).

Triveni Sangh took up the issue of political representation of backward castes and the issue of social oppression which was not in the agenda of Kisan Sabha and Congress Party. Triveni Sangh negotiated with congress party for political representation on behalf of backward castes. Congress Party did not give positive response to the demand of Triveni Sangh even called it casteist organization. In the 1937 election of Bihar province Triveni Sangh fought independently and all its candidate were defeated. The candidate of Triveni Sangh got 5000 votes in Shahabad district (Shrikant, 1995:23).

Again in elections of Sahabad district board in 1939, Triveni Sangh submitted a list of backward class candidates to congress leader Dr. Rajendra Prasad but the congress did not pay much heed to it's demands. At last, Triveni Sangh fielded its' own candidate in the election. In the 1939 district board election of Shahabad, a good number of backward candidates had won for the first time people voted for their respective castes. In this way the politics of identity started and this was the first political assertion of backward caste politics in Bihar. (Chaudhry and Shrikant, 2001:120; Shrikant, 1995).

Table 2 : Membership of Shahabad district board by caste

Caste	1927	1930	1933	1939	Total
Rajput	18	18	21	11	66
Kayasth	5	5	8	2	20
Bhumihar	2	3	6	1	12
Brahmin	3	2	4	8	17
Kurmi	1	1	-	2	4
Yadav	-	-	-	2	2
Koiri	-	-	-	3	3
Muslim	1	1	1	1	4
Others			1	1	2
Total	30	30	40	30	160

Source: Chaudhry and Shrikant (2001:120)

Unlike Kisan Sabha and Congress, cadres of Treveni Sangh mainly constituted of poor peasants and agricultural labourers who mainly came from lower and backward castes. Triveni Sangh advocated land for tillers who cultivated the land. In 1939, Triveni Sangh demanded job reservations for backward castes. In 1952, a bill was introduced in Bihar legislative assembly regarding job reservation for backward castes, though the bill was defeated in the house. In 1978, Bihar government under the leadership of Karpoori Thakur implemented Mungeri Lal commission report which approved reservation for backward castes in jobs. The struggle for power share goes back to the struggle of Triveni Sangh which prepared the ground for the backward caste politics in Bihar (Chaudhary and Shrikant, 2001;2005;1998).

Table 3 : Socio-Political Movements in pre-independent Bihar

Movement	Organisation	Cadre	Demand	Nature	Freedom
Nationalist	Congress	Upper cast and land lords	Trusteeship or Zamindari abolition with compensation	Political front	Freedom
Peasant	BPKS	Upper and tenants	Abolition of Zamindari and land to the tenants	Political and Economic	Freedom with Land
Backward and lower cast	Triveni Singh	Backward and lower cast tenants and cultivator	Abolition of Zamindari and Land to the tiller	Social and Political	Freedom with land and dignity

(Sources: Louis 2002, Shrikant and Chaudhary 2001, Ramagundam 2005, Urmislesh 1989)

Louis (2002) argues that Triveni Sangh achieved some of their aims in the Shahabad region, but from there itself it began to disintegrate. A major section of its leaders joined Congress while the cadres joined the radical democratic party of MN Roy. Later, most of them became members of the socialist party formed by Ram Manohar Lohiya.

The base which was prepared by Triveni Sangh and Kisan Sabha, was later used by radical communist and socialist movements. The question of Identity and dignity, which was first raised by Triveni Sangh in the form of Izaatki Laria (fight for dignity) in 1930s, was taken up by the Naxalite movement in 1960s and the same question of dignity and freedom, the Naxalite movement tried to address it in its' own way through an armed struggle. After Triveni Sangh, theradical communist and socialist movements in Central Bihar carried out the fight for freedom and dignity for the deprived and backward.

Conclusion:

Peasant movement of Bihar Pradesh KisanSabha and Triveni Sangh emerged due to semi feudal exploitative agrarian structure of the state. There was a

relation of dominant and sub-ordinate among Land Lords and landless peasant and labourers. The movements of KisanSabha and Triveni Sangh tried to change the power relationship of the socio-political structure in their own way. The peasant movement of KisanSabha under the leadership of Swami Sahajand Saraswati successfully organized peasants under their organization and pressurize congress for Zamindari abolition even congress party under that pressure accepted some of their demands. Though Kisan Sabha started with economic discrimination but ended up with the political participation and representation. Some of the KisanSabha leaders fought elections on the ticket of congress party and even Swami Sahajanand Saraswati was a prominent leader of congress party in Bihar. However KisanSabha failed to address properly the issues of social discrimination with Dalit and backward caste peasant and labourers. Even their issues were not at agenda of the movement. KisanSabha was confined to upper caste tenants and even was not in support of land to the tiller. Political vacuum left by Congress Party and KisanSabha in decades of 1930s was filled by Triveni Sangh. Triveni Sangh which was started with the question of social discrimination and wearing of sacred threads but ended up into political and economic movement. Triveni Sangh addressed the issues of social discrimination with economic deprivation and political representation of backward castes. Even Triveni Sangh forced congress party to give space to lower caste in congress party and bargained with congress party in elections. Triveni Sangh emerged as first organization which represented the political aspiration of backward castes. For the first time the district board election was fought on the basis of caste identity. The movements which were started by KisanSabha and Triveni Sangh prepared ground for radical agrarian politics. Thus the central Bihar became experimental ground for the socialist and communist radical politics.

Acknowledgement:

This paper is based on my Ph.D. Thesis 'Socio-Political Movements and Mass Media: A Study of Gaya District in Bihar (1990-2005)'. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my research supervisor Dr. Rahul Ramagundam for the continuous support of my Ph.D. Study and related research. My sincere thanks also goes to my friends Junaid, Younus and Purnima for their inputs and guidance.

REFERENCES

Alakh N. Sharma (2005). Agrarian Relations and Socio-Economic Change in Bihar. *Economic and Political Weekly, 40*(10), 960-972. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4416306

Barik, R.K. (2006), Land and Caste Politics in Bihar, Delhi: Shipra Publication

Barik, R. (1992). Tenancy Reforms Act in Bihar during the First Congress Government: 1937-39. *Social Scientist, 20*(5/6), 3-20. doi:10.2307/3517929

BPKS (Bihar Provincial KisanSabha), 1935. 'Report of Bihar ProincialKisanSabha, 1925-1935', Bihta

Chaudhary, P. and Shrikant (2005). Swarg Par Dhawa: Bihar Mein Dalit Andolan (1912-2000). New Delhi: VaniPrakashan

Chaudhary, P. and Shrikant (2001). Bihar Mein Samajik Parivartankekuch Aayam. New Delhi : VaaniPrakashan.

Chaudhary, P. and Shrikant (1998). Bahi Dhar Sangh Triveni Ki: Bihar Mein Samajik Nayay Ka Pahla Sangharsh, Patna: LokTantr

Chatterjee, P. (2008). Democracy and Economic Transformation in India. *Economic & Political Weekly,* **43**(16) : 53-62. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40277640

D. N. (1988). Problem of Unity in the Agrarian Struggle: Case of Bihar. *Economic & Political Weekly,* **23**(19) : 941-943. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4378457

D. N. (1989). Swami Sahjanand and the KisanSabha. *Economic & Political Weekly,* **24**(13) : 661-662. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4394597

Das, A.N. (1982). Agrarian Movements in India: Studies in 20th Century Bihar, London: Frank Class

Das, A.N. (1983). Agrarian Unrest and Socio-Economic Change (1990-1980), Delhi: Manohar

Das, A.N. (1987). Revolutionary Movement in Bihar. *Economic & Political Weekly,* **22**(22) : 843-846. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4377045

Das, A.N. (1992). The Republic of Bihar, New Delhi: Penguin

Dhanagare, D. and John, J. (1988). Cyclical Movement towards the 'Eternal' 'Nine Theses of Social Movements': A Critique. *Economic & Political Weekly,* **23**(21) : 1089-1092. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4378526

Document of CPI (ML) (1986): Bihar KeDhadhtkte Hue KhetKhalihanon Ki Dastan Gorakhpur

Frank, A. and Fuentes, M. (1987). Nine Theses on Social Movements. *Economic & Political Weekly,* **22**(35) : 1503-

1510. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4377447

Herberle, Rudolf (1951). Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology. New York: Appleton Century Crafts

Louis, P. (2002). People Power: The Naxalite Movement in Central Bihar. Delhi : Wordsmith.

Louis, P. (2005). Viewing Bihar. *Economic & Political Weekly*, **40**(51) : 5371-5372. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4417543

Louis, P. (1998). State Repression and People's Resistance: Assessing Social Transformation in Bihar. *Economic & Political Weekly*, **33**(21) : 1228-1230. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4406797

Louis, P. (2000). Class War Spreads to New Areas. *Economic & Political Weekly*, **35**(26) : 2206-2211. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4409433

Mukherji, P. (1977). Social Movement and Social Change: Towards a Conceptual Clarification and Theoretical framework. *Sociological Bulletin,* **26**(1) : 38-59. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/23618292

Mukharjee, P.N. (1979). Naxalbari Movement and the Peasant Revolt in North Bengal. inRao, MSA (Ed.) Social Movements in India. New Delhi: Manohar Publication.

Mukharjee, K. and Yadav, Rajendra (1980). Bhojpur: Bihar Mein NaxalvadiAndolan Delhi: RadhaKrishn Publication

Oommen, T.K. (1990). Protest and Change: Studies in social movements. New Delhi: Sage Publication

Party Documents of CPI (ML) (1992), Bitter Harvest: Root of Massacre in Central Bihar, Delhi.

PUDR document (1997). 'Agrarain Conflict in Bihar and the RanvirSena'. Delhi

Rao, M.S.A. (1979). Social Movements in India. Manohar Publication. New Delhi

Ramagundam, R. (2017). Including the Socially Excluded. New Delhi: Orient Black Swan Publication

Ramagundam, R. (2006). Pausing Poverty: Gaya in Bihar. New Delhi: Grass root Publication

Shah, G. (1990). Social Movements and the State (Ed.). New Delhi: Sage Publication

Shah, G. (1990). Social Movement In India: A Review of Literature. New Delhi: Sage Publication.

Shah, G. (1977), Protest Movement in two Indian States, Ajanta: Delhi

Shah, G. (1977). Revolution, Reform, or Protest? A Study of the Bihar Movement: III. *Economic and Political Weekly, 12*(17), 695-702. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4365524

Shrikant (2005). Bihar Mein Chunav: Jati, HinsaAur Booth Loot, Vani New Delhi: VaniPrakashan

Januzzi, F. Thomson (1974). Agrarian Crisis in India: The Case of Bihar, New Delhi: Sangam Publication

Urmilesh (1999). Bihar KaSach. New Delhi.: PrakashanSansthan

****