

The Santal Movement (1854–56) *Hazaribag Chapter*

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Abstract

The Santal Movement, in two distinct but interrelated phases (1854-54 and 1855-56) with the sole objective of establishing 'self-rule', is an important chapter in the history of freedom movements organised against the East India Company's government in the country. In this movement, the phase of 1855-56 has engaged the attention of historians and other scholars more than the events during 1954-55, which still await their due places in history. In this regard, mention may be made of the Hazaribag chapter of the Santal movement before 1855-56 and its contribution to the movement. Though the Hazaribag chapter of the movement is not unknown, its centrality is not duly established on par with the 1855-56 phase. In this essay, an attempt is made to study the causes, organisation, leaders, British policy, and approach to deal with the Santals, as well as the course of events in the Hazaribag division.

Keywords: Company Rule, Santal Movement, Exploitation, Manjhis, Battles of Rani Kundi and Chandrauri

1.0 Introduction

Hazaribag¹ district, one of the seven districts of present Chotanagpur division of Jharkhand, is located in its north-eastern part; the other districts being Bokaro, Chatra,, Dhanbad, Giridid, Koderma, and Ramgarh. For administrative reasons, this district was formed in 1834 A.D. In 1854-55, the area of this district was 12,444 square miles, and the population was 667,585, about half of which was under the control of the Maharaja of Ramgarh (Roy Choudhury 1956:11).

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However, in the survey conducted in 1858-63, the area of Hazaribag district was 7029 square miles, and the population was 716,065 (Hunter 1877:53). During the period under review (1845-1856), the largest tribal population in the district belonged to the Santal tribe with a population of 35306 (ibid.:60) and concentration in Gola (at present in Ramgarh district) and Kharagdiha Pargana (at present in Giridiah district), where they were engaged in agricultural and mining activities (Report. 1855). Mr. Imam and Mr. McKenzie of Kudukdiha (Kharagdiha) Pargana, located in the north, had a mining industry since 1849, where the Santals worked as labourers (Hunter 1877:63).

The Santals are generally a hard-working and peace-loving tribe, but when attempts are made to snatch away their water, forests, and land, they become rebellious and aggressive; as evident from their movement in the Hazaribag area of Chotanagpur Division and the Rajmahal area of Bhagalpur Division during 1854-56.

The Santals had been living in the Kharagdiha area in Hazaribag for a long time. The 'Chai-Champa' area, which earns reverence and admiration in their folk songs and where they lived with happiness and prosperity under their king in bygone days, was located in Kharagdiha Pargana. It was there that the Santals divided themselves into 12 totemic clans (JBORS 1916:22). These totemic divisions like Murmu, Hembram, Marandi, Baske, Besra provided the economic, cultural, social, and political base of the Santal community in later years. These totemic divisions had Manjhi as their leader and Kisku as the commander.

History records two distinct but interrelated movements of the Santals against the rule of the East India Company. The first one started from Kharagdiha Pargana of Hazaribag district, and the second from Bhognadih village of Damin-e-koh in Bhagalpur Division (currently Santal Pargana Division) (Dutta 1940:16). The Santal rebellion of Damin-e-koh, which started on 30 June 1855, under the four siblings Sido, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav was called 'Santal Hul' (Hunter 1868:313 and *The Calcutta Review* 1956). There was a debate in the Parliament of London about the Santal Hul of 1855-56, and Karl Marx also commented on it (Stanley 2022:10 and Chakravarti 1989:12). But the Santal movement of Hazaribag did not attract as much attention from historians as the Santal Hul did. Records show that the first bugle of the Santal movement was sounded in the Kharagdiha area (currently in Giridih district, but previously in Hazaribag district). Giridih was a *pargana* (sub-division) of Hazaribag district then. The Santals consider the Chai-Champa area of Kharagdiha in Hazaribag as their original homeland from where they migrated to other places (O'Malley 1910:10; Lister 1917:53 and Roy Choudhury 1965:10). However, core of the social and cultural elements of the migrant Santals did not change perceptibly.

The Santal movement that took place in Kharagdiha in the former Hazaribag district area during 1854-56 was extremely reactionary, violent, and organised as compared with the Kol rebellion of 1832. This rebellion was crushed with extreme brutality and cruelty by the orders of Lord Dalhousie (Kumar 1991: 81), suggesting the employment of gruesome methods more intense than those used by Lord William Bentinck to suppress the Kol rebellion (Jha 1987: Appendices 5 and 6). The houses of the Santals and their cattle sheds were burnt; women were treated inhumanely; and the rebels were shackled and thrown into jail. Many were deported and sentenced to death (Roy Choudhury 1959:43).

The main centre of the Santal movement in Hazaribag division was Kharagdiha Pargana. The government report acknowledged that this revolt took place when external elements (colonial administration) brutally attacked the social ideas, customs, and institutions of the Santals and snatched their land (Roy Choudhury 1956:187). In fact, the factor behind the movement was the colonial policy, which led to the torture of the Santals. This made them anti-colonial. The local people and landlords and the Mir Abbas Khan, the exile Amir of Sindh, lived in Hazaribag and they encouraged the Santal's fight against the Company rule and their agents and accomplices like police, zamindars, moneylenders, etc. Not only did a section of the non-Santal population encouraged and extended moral support, but also a large section of people from other tribal communities, dalits, and backward communities, including Muslims, directly participated in the movement (Devalle 1992:119).

It follows from the above discussion that the movement by the Santals of Hazaribag has its own significance in the history of the Santal Movement. In view of this, the present essay intends to study the causes, leaders, organisation, British policy, and course of events of the movement by Santals of Hazaribag in order to delineate a place for it. The essay, descriptive in nature, is based on primary and secondary sources of information available in published materials and archival sources. An attempt has been made to introduce place names of the colonial period corresponding to contemporary ones.

1.1 Analysis & Discussion

There was unrest among the Santals of the Hazaribag area since the beginning of 1845. The formation of the Hazaribag district in 1834 and the corresponding new administrative system did not benefit the Santals; rather, they were exploited. From 1834, they were victims of exploitation by government-backed landlords and moneylenders. Moneylenders were grabbing the land of Santals by giving loans at high rates. The justice system furthered the interest of zamindars, moneylenders, and other agents of the Company rather than the Santals, who became victims of exploitation by the former as is evident from the records stating that the Santals used to lose 09 out of 10 cases against the Company's accomplice. J. H. Hutton wrote that the period of exploitation that took place during the British administration resulted in a series of 'revolts' (Hutton 1941:419). J. Davidson, the Principal Assistant Agent of Hazaribag during the Agency² period (1834-1854), remarked that the zamindars of Chotanagpur did not control the farmers but rather forcibly took possession of their lands. With the support of the British government, the contractors not only increased the rent but also carried out land eviction (Letter (No.247) 1839). Sir John Shore, a member of the Governor General's Council, had warned the British government that the administrative system prevailing in the Santal region was being tampered with (Jha 1987:53), but the government forgot his warning and imposed a new system. British rule was unable to replace traditional local self-government. The entire area was under military rule and there was little civil administration (Virotam 2001:261). Due to this chaotic system of administration, the Santals faced livelihood insecurity and several problems in their day-to-day life. So, they started migrating from their original habitations (Jud. Corrs. (No.156) 1855). A number of Santals had turned from farmers to labourers, and their life was miserable. Several of them became servants of the exile Amir Abbas Ali of Sindh in Hazaribag. Thus, despair, anger, and sense of independence compelled the Santals to seek freedom from the Company rule.

Since 1852, information had been pouring into the ears of J. Simpson, District Officer of Hazaribag, that there was dissatisfaction among the Santals. The District Deputy Commissioner of Birbhum was also getting information about the unrest among the Santals. But government officials continued to believe that this was because of the landlords, and that the landlords would soon be able to control this discontent. The Commissioner of Chotanagpur gave instructions to his Principal Assistant regarding the condition of the Santals on 3 November 1853 (letter no. 584) (Jud. Corrs. (No.584) 1853). Based on this instruction, the Principal Assistant Commissioner wrote to the Magistrate of Barhi on 10 November 1853 (letter no. 478) (Jud. Corrs. (No.478) 1853). The Magistrate sent a reply to this letter on 13 November 1853. He wrote that he did not think it would be appropriate to keep the Santals of his area under surveillance as there was no evidence of their direct communication with the Santals of Birbhum and Bhagalpur. The Santals of his area lived in hilly and remote areas, separately from non-Santals. In such a situation, he wrote, even the local people had very little information about them³ (Roy Choudhury 1956:76 and Jud. Corrs. (No.478) 1853). But local landlords were aware of the fact that the Santals of the Hazaribag region had suffered a lot due to colonial system of governance and were waiting for the opportune moment for open rebellion. The Bengal Government, ignoring the reply of the Barhi Magistrate, ordered the Magistrate of Govindpur through a letter of 30 August 1852 to keep an eye on the Santals (Jud. Corrs. (No.50) 1852) migrating from one area to another.

1.1.1 First Phase of Santal Movement (1854-55)

Thus, the Santals of Hazaribag were suspicious in the eyes of the Government and administrative officials, and landlords were keeping an eye on them. Despite surveillance, in 1854, the Santal leader, Veer Singh Manjhi of Morgo village near Parasnath Hill of Giridih, took up arms against the administration. He announced receiving the message of Divya Bonga (their Supreme diety) and feeling divine power within himself; he claimed to be directed by Divya Bonga to punish the evil exploiters of the Santals and organise them against the former.

The movement thus organised was apparently against the pro-government moneylenders and landlords, who were snatching away the land of the Santals (Pandey 2014:175); but as they were part of the Company's system, the discontent and the fight were against the Company's rule. The visible strategy of the Santals was to get rid of the moneylenders as a mark of their ire against the government. They started gathering in droves against them and started looting near Gola-Petarwar-Chas of Kharagdiha Pargana and Kuju-Bagodar-Jharpo of Ramgarh (Lister 1917: 53-54). This initial battle was suppressed by the government; the rebellious Santals were punished; and many were lodged in Hazaribag jail. But no action was taken against the moneylenders who exploited the Santals. Being disheartened by the government's attitude, they were waiting for the right opportunity. Veer Singh Manjhi had taken an oath that he would form his own government in his area, and for this, he had contacted the Santals of the other districts (Pandey op cit. and Virottam 2001: 261).

After the Manjhi rebellion of 1854, the government imposed strict restrictions on the Santals. Their movement was monitored, and their gathering and meetings were also banned. It is evident from the commending letter of Chotanagpur Commissioner W.I. Allen written to

Hazaribag's acting Principal Assistant Commissioner Captain E. Sissmore on 15 January 1855 for his steps to deal with the Santals. At the same time, W.I. Allen reported on Santals' dissatisfaction against the steps taken and their preparation for a probable attack, for which they were making weapons. He instructed Captain E. Sissmore to collect more information on the Santals, deploy trusted native officers in their area, and a sufficient number of military forces should the Santals involve in activities amounting to disturbance of the peace. The letter also had an order to prohibit blacksmiths from making arrows and other weapons without government permission, punishing violators, and keeping the Santals in general under surveillance. It further directed an investigation of Manjhi's relations with the Amir of Sindh and prohibited his movement to Mufssil (rural area). W.I. Allen also issued order in the said letter to detain leaders, Mohan Santal and Jairam Manjhi, and keep them under surveillance suspecting their role in disturbing peace in the area. In the letter there were instructions for the Maharaja of Ramgarh to provide necessary assistance by deploying armed forces in his areas vulnerable to possible disturbance (Jud. Corres. (No. 600) 1855 and Roy Choudhury 1956:76-77). Following this instruction, on the orders of Captain Sissmore, a list of suspected Santals was issued, and they were directed to report to the authority constituted by the government within 10 days. The letter had instructions of releasing these leaders after investigation if they were not found guilty of disturbing the peace or being against the government. Otherwise, they were to be punished. According to the order and list of suspected Santals submitted by Captain Sissmore, police detained nine Manjhis (Roy Choudhury 1956:77).

After this order, panic spread in the Santal area. The Santals' discontent grew. They began to feel that the government was repressing them and attacking their religious and cultural traditions. As a result, they started preparing to avenge the government for anti-Santal approach.

1.1.2 Second Phase of the Santal Movement (1855–56)

On 30 June 1855, under the leadership of Sido and Kano, the Santals of Rajmahal area (Damin-e-koh) took up arms against the British. The flame of rebellion in Damin-e-koh also reached the Santals of Hazaribag. This raised the concern of the government because the Santals of Hazaribag were agitated and angry; besides, they had contact with the Santals of Damin-e-koh who had similar cultural bases and experience of similar intensity of exploitation. After receiving information about the Santal Hul in the Rajmahal area, the Bengal Government directed Hazaribag officials to take strict measures to prevent the Santals of Kharagdiha Pargana from rebelling. The king of Ramgarh and the local *ghatwals* (guards of Hilly paths) were also ordered to stop the entry of the rebellious Santals of Damin-e-koh into Hazaribag. Guards were placed on the *ghats* (hill passes) and roads (Jud. Corres. (No. 13) 1855). Seeing the situation in Kharagdiha, Commissioner W.I. Allen of Chotanagpur made a trip on 30 July 1855, took stock of the situation, and directed the local landlords and the magistrate of Barhi to initiate necessary steps (Jud. Corres. (No. 44) 1855).

The situation of the Govindpur sub-division of Hazaribag was also brought under scrutiny as the Santals there were showing unrest. G. Gray, the Sub-divisional officer of Govindpur, informed District Officer G. N. Oakes of Manbhum (a division of Hazaribag Agency) that Manjhis and their Santal followers had gathered in large numbers at Tundi in Govindpur sub-division. G. N. Oakes directed G. Gray to keep an eye on the activities of the

Santhal gathering and inform him about activities regularly. He also cautioned about the deployment of military troop should there be no compelling situation to do so. Gray was not unaware that the Santals of his area were already suffering from the atrocities of the landlords, and hence there was resentment among them towards the British administration. On 30 August 1855, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal issued instructions to the Magistrate of Govindpur that I. H. Mangels (an officer appointed by the Government of Bengal to keep eye on the Santals) visited a Santal camp on the banks of the Barakar River, in which 6000-7000 Santals had gathered. He also wrote that the news was brought to the knowledge of F.D. Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Mr. Holliday that Santals of Damin-e-koh, those who were not part of the Santal Hul, were running towards Hazaribag with fear. He suggested the government to encourage such Santals, who are fleeing their villages out of fear, to settle in this area instead of their native areas (Roy Choudhury 1956:77-78). J. Simpson, the District Officer of Hazaribag, informed the Commanding Officer of Dinapur on 23 December 1855 that the Santals living in Lada of Kharagdiha were returning to their homes in Bhagalpur (ibid.:81).

On 01 November 1855, Commissioner Allen of Chotanagpur wrote a letter to Captain E. Sissmore, the acting Principal Assistant Commissioner of Hazaribag. In this letter, W.I Allen authorise E. Sissmore and Deputy Magistrate Barhi to make a decision on the release of the nine detained Santal Manjhis, as mentioned above. Captain E. Sissmore was further instructed to monitor the conduct of the recent migrant Santals to Khardahdiha Pargana from Serampur. The Deputy Magistrate of Barhi was also instructed to ensure whether the Santals who fled to Kharagdiha Pargana had contact with the Santals of Bhagalpur and Birbhum or not. The Deputy Commissioner was authorised to take steps to stop the contact should there be any (Jud. Corres. (No 478)1855 and Roy Choudhury 1956:78). On 3 January 1856, the acting Principal Assistant Commissioner of Hazaribag, Captain E. Sissmore, replied to the letter of Commissioner Allen of Chotanagpur (Roy Choudhury 1956:82). Captain Sissmore wrote about his visit to the Khadagiha camp. He informed about the nine Santals Manjhis who were detained in Hazaribag and justified their detention as he was reported that they were responsible for organising rebels in his Pargana since August 1855. Captain Sissmore also informed about his authorising the Magistrate for the trial of nine under trial Santhal Manjhis based on the merit of the case (Jud. Corres. (No. 588) 1856-57 and Roy Choudhury 1956:82).

As we have discussed in preceding paragraphs, the Santals were reported to be migrating from one place to another. This was a serious concern for the British government as they suspected it to be a strategy of the Santals to spread the movement on a large scale. Taking this situation of migration into account, on 10 November 1855, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal declared martial law, which was applicable to Bhagalpur, Murshidabad, and Birbhum districts (Proclamation 1855). Six copies of the declaration imposing martial law were also sent to the Commissioner of Chotanagpur (Letter (No. 3108) 1855 and Roy Choudhury 1956:79).

The government wanted to keep the Santals away from rebellion and break their unity by employing them in road construction, and by eliciting secrets about the rebels and their plan from them. But the government officials, in contrast, adopted the strategy of intimidation to suppress the Santals (Letter (No. 3) 1855).

Since August 1855, the Santals of Kharagdiha in the Giridih area were waiting for a suitable time for rebellion. Prominent leaders of the rebels, such as Arjun Manjhi and Lubiya Manjhi, were keeping an eye on the movement of the company's army. On 21 January 1856, through his letter No. 612, Commissioner Allen of Chotanagpur directed Hazaribag's Principal Assistant Commissioner Captain Sissmore to announce a reward of Rs 50 for the capture of Arjun Manjhi, who was suspected to be the main leader of this rebellion. In his letter, W.I. Allen pointed out the lapse in the decision of not detaining Arjun Manjhi earlier and investigating his communication with the Santals of Bhagalpur and Birbhum.

Attached with the above letter of reference was the statement elicited from one Pirchi Santhal. In the letter, E. Sissmore was directed to conduct an investigation into Arjun Manjhi's role by taking the statement as evidence (Letter (No. 3108) 1856 and Roy Choudhury 1956:83). Captain Sissmore replied to this letter of Allen on 24 January 1855 and wrote that three messengers from Damin-e-koh had handed over letter to Arjun Manjhi in the absence of the Amir of Sindh. Earlier Arjun Manjhi was working as a servant of Amir. Based on this letter, Arjun Manjhi was initially detained, but he escaped while being brought to Hazaribag, and a reward of Rs 50 was announced for his re-arrest (Letter (No. 3108) 1856 and Roy Choudhury 1956:83).

On 19 February 1856, the Santals of Kharagdiha Pargana took up arms. They looted near Sherampur, targeting Chakradhar, Luddi, and Dudetar and other places associated with the moneylenders. This looting continued for six-seven days. After this the rebels hid in the forests. On 28 January 1856, vide letter number 622, Commissioner W.I Allen of Chotanagpur wrote to Principal Assistant Commissioner Captain Sissmore of Hazaribag to keep the Santals of Ramgarh Hills under close and discreet watch so that immediate information could be received if any sign of discontent appeared. Deployment of two companies of the 44th Native Infantry of Ramgarh Battalion in Barhi military was recommended in the letter to suppress the discontent of the Santals of Kharagdiha Pargana at the time of need (Letter (No. 622) 1856).

On 01 March 1856, Captain Sissmore came to Barhi and toured the entire area. He ordered the removal of the inspector of Kharagdiha, and the surveillance over the major landlords, farmers, and kings. On 03 March 1856, Captain Sissmore ordered Captain Tudy, the Magistrate of Barhi, to appoint an experienced and skilled inspector in Kharagdiha Pargana. The letter also expressed dissatisfaction over Captain Tudy's efforts to control the rebels, depending on the help from the king of Serampur and other landlords, instead of engaging himself at Kharagdiha with the army stationed at Barhi (Letter (No. 259) 1856).

In the first week of March 1856, the Santals of Kharagdiha again looted the moneylenders and shopkeepers of Jagannathdih and Chakradih. This attack and loot happened suddenly. By the time the government forces were in a position to deal with the rebel, the latter had fled towards the forest. Probably the Santals had received information about the arrival of government troops from the king of Serampore. On 9 March 1856, Captain Tudy sent a report to Captain J. Simpson that before he could reach Baromasia, the rebels had gone beyond his reach, and he suspected association of Serampore's king with the Santal rebels of Kharagdiha, as he did not inform about their activities to the former. In the report, Captain Tudy mentioned his action

of confiscation of property and detention of some Santals who were engaged in looting and preparation for rebellion (Roy Choudhury 1956:81).

On 16 March 1856, in a reply letter to Captain Tudy, J Simpson expressed his concern about the communication of the Santals of Kharagdiha Pargana with the Santals of Birbhum and Bhagalpur and ordered for immediate action to stop their dialogue and communication. Tudy was directed to camp immediately in Kharagdiha with the European army contingent, maintain peace, and protect GT Road by himself. Later on, J. Simpson informed the Commissioner of Chotanagpur about deployment of one contingent of infantry at Kharagdiha and another at Eliyapur. In the absence of the Magistrate of Barhi, the Sub Assistant Commissioner was instructed to stay in Barhi (ibid.).

By then, the government was completely on alert mode to suppress the movement at any cost. Leaves of soldiers and officers were cancelled and intensive military operations were conducted at places where Santals assembled. It was decided that the Santals would be caught, jailed, and their houses set on fire. Ghatwalas were also asked for help. Despite the government's preparations, on 20 March 1856, rebels under the leadership of Kurio, Lakshmi Thakurain, and Dharma looted the Akhlapur market. After carrying out the loot, rebels disappeared into the forest of Tutma Kaudiya. Captain Tudy tracked them to catch. There was fear of the rebels all around. To escape the attacks of the rebels, landlords helped them with grain and other materials.

Due to this perhaps Captain Tudy could not capture the rebels. On 1st April 1856, Captain Tudy detained some Santals on charges of illegal gathering and possession of weapon. Captain Tudy could not detain other Santhals forcibly because they peacefully moved forward, but the military detachment kept trailing them. He also instructed the landlords to keep vigilance eye on the Santhals and inform him periodically (ibid.).

On 8 April 1856, about 400 rebel Santals gathered in Muzaldiha of Kharagdiha to carry out their plan. From there about 100 Santals moved towards Hazaribag. Their main objective was to spread disturbance in Hazaribag by crossing GT Road. Thakur Churaman Singh, the landlord of Markachho, informed this to the Maharaja of Ramgarh who in turn passed on this information to the Principal Assistant Commissioner of Hazaribag. The information made the administration of Hazaribag active. A cavalry force was immediately sent to Muzaldih. The security of GT Road was strengthened. Inspectors of Gomia and Ramgarh were instructed to keep an eye on the movement of Santals. It was announced to reward those who would share information about the Santals. For additional security, 50 cavalry were kept in reserve (ibid.)

On 15 April 1856, Tudy reported to the Principal Assistant Commissioner, Hazaribag that the Santals had gathered at various places in Doranda and Kespo Gaddi. He mentioned the problem of sending the military contingent to watch over the rebels, based on information obtained from the landlords. Despite having knowledge of Santals rebellion at various places, the government could not stop it (ibid.). Till then, the government was not able to take any direct action against the Santal rebels hiding in the forest of Khadaghiha Pargana. The risk was high and the chances of success were less. As a result, the government resorted to the 'policy of divide' among the Santals by providing employment and direct money to some, and discriminating against others. Local kings such as Chudaman Singh, Roop Mangal Singh, Parasnath Singh, Ramchandra Singh, Ranbahadur Singh, along with Tikaits, were warned of

punishment if Santals created any disturbance in their areas. Distrust was also spread among the Santals towards the rebels when government officer implemented the policy of “divide and rule”. The government benefited from this and two Santals met Captain Tudy who was camping in Kharagdiha and informed him about the rebels. According to the information, the leader of the rebels was Lubiya Manjhi who was helped by the Manjhis of Gua, Dorunda, Kisko and Borio (these areas are situated at present in Giridih District). As a result, the Assistant Principal Assistant of Hazaribag ordered their arrest (Jud .Corres. (No. 267) 1856).

1.1.2.1 The battle of Muchia Hill (KharagdihaPargana) (29 April 1856)

On 29 April 1856, about 33 Santals under the leadership of Lubiya Manjhi and Bhairav Manjhi entered Chatropatti and looted. Captain Tudy got information about this and he travelled to Chatropatti with Lieutenant Ryan, two *dafadars* (non-commissioned officers in the former Indian army or police) and 15 horsemen. By the time he reached Chatropatti, the Santals had looted the Mangal Bazaar. Captain Tudy followed them. He found that they had joined the Santals who were already gathering on the Muchia Hill of Fatehpur. About 150 Santals were armed with bows and arrows and other weapons in this meeting. Upon seeing the army, they started beating the drums loudly. For the first time, rebels and the British army confronted face to face. Captain Tudy asked them to lay down their arms. But armed Santals did not surrender. Captain Tudy ordered to open fire. The army started firing from their carbines. Santals also replied. Some British soldiers were killed. Tudy also suffered a back injury. Lubiya, Suraj, and Gopi fought so bravely that the British army had to turn its backs and run away. Captain Tudy returned injured and took a month's leave (Roy Choudhury 1956:84).

This incident was worrying and shameful for the Government of the East India Company. The Santals had driven away Captain Tudy and his army, inflicting humiliating defeat on the government. The Bengal Government held Captain Tudy responsible for imprudently confronting the rebels with small force and suffering the defeat. Both his policy and conduct were assessed not suitable for his post in dealing with Santal rebels in the Barhi sub-division. So, he was removed from his post and sent on leave. He was also replaced by Captain W.R.E. Alexander from the 5th Regiment of Punjab Cavalry stationed at Barhi (Bengal Jud. (Crim.) Proc. 1857).

The morale of the Santals rose due to the defeat of the government army. Due to this victory the Santal movement spread with even more ferocity and determination to the other area of Hazaribag division. The rebels crossed the Grand Trunk Road in Bagodar area and moved towards Gola and Petarwar areas of present Ramgarh district. The move frightened European officials. Allen visited Hazaribag and Kharagdiha to boost the morale of the defeated officers under Tudy's leadership who were engaged in suppressing the rebellion (Bengal Jud. (Crim.) Proc. (N0.239) 1857).

After the defeat in the Muchia Hill battle, Chotanagpur Commissioner Allen prepared a new strategy. Along with military action, he made a policy to win over the Santals on his side. Action was taken against the rebels and the needy Santals were provided food and clothing, which the Santals refused to take. Here, Captain Alexander, the new Magistrate of Barhi, reached Chatraopatti with military force on the instructions of Allen to take strict action against the

Santals. A reward of Rs 100 was announced for the capture of the rebels (Roy Choudhury 1956:84). But the rebels were still out of his reach.

1.1.2.2 Battle of Rani Kundi (15 May 1856)

After the success of the Muchia Hill battle, the Santals attacks became more intense. Tikaits were scared of the Santhals. The rebels demanded Rs 400 from the Tikat of Gua (at present in Giridih district). They also attacked Sijma, Kisua and Banasatar. On 10 May 1856, about 150 Santals attacked the house of Tikait Vikram Singh of Chandauri. Two days later, they looted the Ghuranji police post. The leader of this incident was Gora Manjhi and a reward of Rs 200 was announced for his capture. Meanwhile, information was received from intelligence sources about a gathering of 1200 Santals near Rani Kundi. Captain Alexander arrived there on 15 May with a large army contingent to take action against the Santhals. Lieutenant Ryan was also in his contingent. Twelve Santals were killed in the battle; seven horses, five riders, and three other people of the British army were injured. Ultimately, the Santals could not match the trained British army; they retreated (Jud.Corrres. (No. 408) 1856 and Virottam 2001: 266).

Meanwhile, on the basis of information provided by Tek Narayan Singh (a local landlord of Kharagdiha) to Assistant Principal Commissioner of Hazaribag, Bhairav Manjhi was arrested along with his family on 28 May 1856. Evidence of anti-government activities was seized at Bhairav Manjhi's house. Four other Santhals were arrested on espionage charges (Jud.Corrres. (Nos. 259, 269 & 276) 1856).

1.1.2.3 Battle of Chandauri (29 May 1856)

The arrest of Bhairav Manjhi was a blow to the Santal movement of Hazaribag, but it did not die out. The government received information from intelligence sources about gathering of 300 rebel Santals in Chandauri Giridih area. The British army, under the leadership of Lieutenant Rid, Lieutenant Thomson and Lieutenant E. Rowcroft, reached there. On 29 May, an encounter took place in Chandauri, and about 30 Santals were killed (ibid. and Virottam2001: 267).

June 1856 took a heavy toll on the Santal movement. The British army was continuously on action mode. The Santal villages were being burnt. Their women were being caught and detained. Several Tikaits (small zamindars) sided with the company government. One by one the rebel leaders were being captured. On 2 June 1856, Buka Manjhi was captured, and a reward of one hundred rupees was offered for his capture. Other leaders such as Litai Manjhi, Etu Manjhi, Kishun Manjhi, Hari Manjhi, and Fagu Manjhi were arrested one by one subsequent to the arrest of Buka Manjhi (Jud. Corres. (No. 154) 1856).

The movement had become weak. The Santals surrounded from all sides. Captain Alexander, Lieutenant Thomson, and Lieutenant Rid, along with their army, took inhumane action against the Santals (Jud.Corrres. (No. 275) 1856). Hazaribag jail was filled with Santals to such an extent that they had to be transferred to prisons in Bhagalpur and other state (Jud.Corrres. (No. 171) 1856). Captain Alexander's work was appreciated and the soldiers of the Sikh Army and Ramgarh Battalion were also praised (Milt. Proc. (No.465-66)1857). Local

landlords were thanked for their cooperation (Jud. Corres. 1857). Thus, by the end of 1856, the Santal movement of Hazaribag was suppressed.

1.2 Colonel E. T. Dalton and Santal rebellion

By November, the Santal rebellion had subsided. It can also be said that this rebellion transformed into the great war of 1857, with the soldiers of the Ramgarh battalion leading in Hazaribag city and Doranda in Ranchi. After W.I. Allen, E.T. Dalton took over as the Commissioner of Chotanagpur in March 1857 (Pandey 2022: 59). He was an administrator and an anthropologist. He reviewed the steps taken by the authorities regarding the Santal rebellion and tried to instil a positive feeling among them about the Santals. He sent a report to F .D. Halliday, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, stating that there was no need to give much importance to the gathering, making weapons, hunting, and celebrating festivals by Santals of Tundi of Govindpur area. These activities were part of their life during festive seasons, which the Govindpur officials could not appreciate (Bengal Jud. Proc. (No. 247) 1857). Mr. Holliday, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, did not agree with this report of Dalton. In contrast, he instructed Dalton to issue order to Assistant Magistrate Gray of Govindpur to resolve the matter judiciously, which was not handled by landlords (Bengal Jud. Proc. (No. 248) 1857).

1.3 Conclusion

The Santal movement of Hazaribag was not only an expression of resentment against colonial policy but also revealed mistakes committed by the British authorities in not understanding the tradition and culture of the Santals in a right perspective. It also exposed the prevalence of exploitation of common people in general, leading the non-Santal population to join Santal leaders in fighting against the British. The movement therefore was not confined to the Santals, it was a mass movement in the area. It is not preposterous to claim that the first phase of the Santal movement in the Hazaribag division was the precursor to the Santal Hul of the Bhagalpur region, in which Santals of Hazaribag also played a crucial role. It was also violent in nature and aimed at establishing the self-governance, where the Santals envisioned living with dignity in their surroundings. This rebellion was eventually quelled. Later on, Colonel Dalton's efforts led the British authorities to adopt a policy of non-interference towards the traditions and culture of the tribals. A crucial aspect of the movement was the face-to-face battle with the army of the East India Company.

Notes

1. In British records and in some works Hazaribag is spelt wrongly as Hazaribagh. In local phonetics it is *bag* (meaning garden), not *bagh* (which means tiger). The name is derived from garden which is also evident in Bradley-Birt's description of the place as "the Garden of Thousand Trees" (Bradley-Birt 1903: 229). However, when the works of colonial writers are cited the spelling is Hazaribagh is kept. Similarly, the Santal name is spelt as Santhal. We use the spelling 'Santal' in our essay.

2. Sir Thomas Wilkinson was the chief administrator of South West Frontier agency by that time. For administrative and economic reasons, he divided the Agency into three parts and appointed a chief assistant in each newly created division. J. Davidson was appointed for Hazaribag, J.R. Ouseley for Lohardaga and P. Nicholson for Manbhum.
3. In Santal movement people from different non-Santal communities participated. This shows interaction between Santal and non-Santal communities. This interaction could not be appreciated by colonial officials and this shows their ignorance and/or wrong reading socio-cultural dynamics of people across communities.

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