

Sido and Kanhu, Great Martyrs of Santal Hul in India: A Dispute in Scions

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Abstract

Sepoy revolution (1857) in India is regarded as the first national war of independence against the British rule in India. Before this revolution, a movement took place in 1855, which is known as Santal rebellion (1855). The main leaders of this revolution were four brothers Sido, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav. Presently, official documents of Government of India are adding the title 'Murmu' with their name i.e., in the present documents names of Sido and Kanhu are written as Sido Murmu and Kanhu Murmu. Murmu is a title of Santal sub-caste. Some of the evidences draw the attention towards disputes in their titles. In the present study, it has been given some logics in support of disputes.

KEYWORDS: Sido Murmu, Kanhu Murmu, Santal Rebellion in India, Garain

1. INTRODUCTION

History of Santals is found from the opinions of different historians. Folklores reflect some flavours about the origin of Santals. Datta (1940) described the Santal insurrection of 1855-57. Sen (1984) wrote 'The Santals of Jungle Mahals: an agrarian history, 1793 – 1861'. With the help of their ideas, it can be known that Santals had to move different regions of India for their own existence. Basically, no written history of sub-caste 'Garain' is found. Also, the existence of 'Garain' is seen in the area related to residing area Santals. Taking all these entire idea in to account, the origin of Santal may be described briefly as follow.

2. ORIGIN OF SANTALS: A BRIEF DISCUSSION

From the messages of folklores, it is assumed that primitive shelter of Santals was 'Chei Champa' which is in the region of Hazaribag under Jharkhand state (presently) in India. They identified themselves by the term 'Abo do Harh'. By the introduction of external intruders, basically, the disturbances created by 'Munda' tribal, they had to leave their native place and spreaded over different regions. The major portion of them reached to 'Sanat', an area of Midnapur district (Presently) under the state of West Bengal in India. Being residence of Sanat area, they renamed themselves by 'Santal'. Gradually, they were spreaded over other districts –Manbhum(purulia and Dhanbad), Birbhum, Burdwan and Bankura of west Bengal. A few part of Midnapur and some part of other five districts were used to call 'Jangal Mahal'. They used to prepare cultivated land by cutting the forests. They acted a positive role by producing grains during the famine (1770) in west Bengal. But due to chaotic condition created by 'Bhumij revolution' and tyranny of Zaminders(Landlords), a major part of them had to leave their existing area and took shelter at 'Damil-il-koh', an area from Dumka (presently under Jharkhand state) to Bhagalpur (presently under Bihar state) during the period, beginning of nineteenth century(vide- report of Sutherland and

Buchanan). They continued to live in this area and started cultivation by cleaning the forest.

3. SANTAL HUL AND ITS LEADERS

The meaning of 'Hul' is revolution. Santals were very laborious. They started to produce huge amount of grains and were very happy at Damil-il-koh. But after the first half of nineteenth century the position started to change. The usurers and businessmen reached in that region. They started to cheat the innocent Santals. They misused Governor Officials for cheating these innocent Santals. Unbearable tortures of these cruel people excited Santals to initiate a revolution. Sido and Kanhu were the leaders of this revolution. They were two brothers. Besides them, their another two brothers, Chand and Bhairav took part actively in this revolution.

4. DISPUTE IN TITLES OF SIDO AND KANHU

Presently, official documents of Government are adding the title 'Murmu' with the name of Sido and Kanhu i.e., in the present documents their names are written as-Sido Murmu and Kanhu Murmu. Some of the evidences draw the attention towards disputes in their titles. Chakravorty(1895-1896), completed his manuscript on Santal revolution by collecting different evidences from different sources e.g., (i) documents and administrative report from Pakur Raj Estate (ii) Being a lawyer in Pakur Court, collected documents of administrative report from Sub divisional office of Pakur (iii) Being a person of that area, he talked with the people who took part in the revolution.

He wrote that Sido, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav were sons of a well-off state 'Garain' family in the circle of Soomara under Ambar Jabdi.

Hence, this line arises the dispute in the title of four leaders of Santal revolution (1855).

5. LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DISPUTE

For logical analysis, following factors are very important.

- (i) Since, Digamber Chakravorty mentioned the term 'Garain' in his manuscript 'History of Santal Hul- 1855'. So, the reliability factor depends on his personality, knowledge, capacity and ability.
- (ii) Anthropology of 'Garain' and 'Santals' should be compared.
- (iii) Behavior and Character of both should be compared.

We shall discuss one by one as follow-

'Paschimbanga', a Govt.'s journal published by the department of Information and Culture, a special issue (1995) on Santal rebellion has given the identity of Digamber Chakravorty in the first chapter. Chakravorty passed entrance examination from Raj High School Pakur. Pakur is about forty mile distance from the Bhognadih which was the epicentre of Santal rebellion. After getting higher education, he had been in teaching profession in Raj High School Pakur. After that he went to study law and started to practice law in Pakur court. During this period, he came in contact with many Santals and persons related to Santal rebellion. He started to collect different evidences of Santal rebellion. With the hard labour for a long time, he completed the manuscript in 1895-96 on Santal rebellion -1855. He has written the manuscript by the direct contact with the revolutionaries and collecting written evidences from Pakur Raj Estate and other places. So, his statements may be assumed to be reliable.

Chakravorty wrote that at the village 'Bhagnadih' a family of four brothers used to live. Their name was Sido, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav. They were sons of a well-off state 'Garain' family who was actually a resident of Amber Jabdi under the circle Surmara. After the tyranny of Mahajan and Zaminder, these four brothers became the leader of Santal rebellion.

Anthropologists tend to identify the Santals in the racial category of proto-Astraloid. It is assumed that the ancestors of this stock of people migrated from mainland of Australia to India some ten thousand years ago. Santals skin colour is dark, hair is black and smooth to wavy, they have broad nose with thick lips and they are of medium height. It is found that there is similarity in physical structure of Garain and Santals.

Behaviour and Characteristics of rural Garain and Santals are similar.

Most of the Garain and Santal people are found in Jangal Mahal and Damil-il-koh Area.

It may be possible that a part of Santals became more civilized by coming in contact with Bengali people when they lived at Jangal Mahal of West Bengal and they renamed themselves by Garain.

6. CONCLUSION

We may conclude that parents of Sido and Kanhu were Garain. So, it is wrong to write the title Murmu with their name. Secondly, Garain's were very closed to Santals. It may be possible that earlier, they were Santals and by coming in contact to the mainstream civilization they separated themselves by giving the title Garain.

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