

Political Construction of The Civil Disobedience of 1930-34



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ABSTRACT

Bihar in 1930s was overwhelmingly an agrarian society. Out of the thirty-seven and a half millions of people, excluding the four and a half millions in the Orissa state, eighty percent of the population was depended on agriculture and lived in villages. Land provided not only the chief recourse of their live hood. But an individual's standing in the society depended upon how much land he possessed on this score, within villages, these social levels, although with imprecise boundaries, could be isolate. small landlord and rich peasant formed the topmost layer of the village society; middle peasants formed the middle segment while at the bottom stood the poor peasants.

INTRODUCTION

The category of poor peasants of low status Muslim formed about 40 percent of the village population. The distinctive features of the poor peasantry may be said to have in their possession so insufficient land or no land at all on which to subsist round the year. It meant that to survive they depended partially or wholly on the sale of their labor to landlords and dominant peasants.

This class of poor peasants enveloped sharecroppers, short-term tenants, petty occupancy tenants, and landless laborers. This class also incorporated village artisans and fishermen, who combined their occupation with small cultivation and with agriculture, labor to subsist with.

The category of middle peasants was generally composed of peasants coming from middle as well as low castes who had in their control land enough to derive subsistence round they year through the use of family labor and sometimes hiring part time labour from peasants. This class also comprised almost 40 per cent of the total village population in the genetics plain.

Above these stood two categories of peasants rich peasants and small landlords. They had in their possession substantial acres of village land as zamindara or as occupations tenants. They were generally high caste Hindus or high status Muslims and formed and round 10 per cent of the village population especially in the genetics plains. Often they had their land cultivated by middle and poor peasants under a variety of tenurial arrangements these men were village elite.

Both conflict and collaboration occurred within the village elite over the control of land labour and its members were often subject to inter-caste rivalry. Differences also arose out of the elite had common interests against those lower doen in village socity. So was the case when they had to deal with forces

outside rivals who used to be great landlord and urban professional and administrative elite thus , both conflict and collaboration existed within the village.

Above them was a group of big landlord. through they were rooted in village they spent most of their times in towns or within their castles. They thus were not in close touch with peasants. They were the descendants of the ruling chiefs who had sway under the mughals. One such leading great landlord was kameshwar singh , maharaja of the darbhanga raj. His property covered some 2,400 square miles, which was about 11 per cent of the total area of north Bihar the maharaja received from land rents an income of approximately Rs. 4,000,000.

He paid 10 per cent of this income as land revenue and taxes to the provincial government and spent another 10 to 15 per cent in the administrative costs of running holding spread over a wide area ; remainder , supplemented by the proceeds from investment in industries undertaking and real estate, formed the substantial sum , much of it spent in a manner befitting a maharaja of ancient line.

The maharaja of Darbhanga owned much of the northern half of darbhanga district , and had properties in the districts of muzaffarpur, north mager , north Bhagalpur and patna. among the other great landlord, the maharaja of hathua owned most of the northern half of muzaffarpur district. The maharani of bettiah the maharaja of ramnagar and the zamindar of madhuban owned almost all the land of the district of champaran. The maharaja of darbhanga and hathua employed assistants to run their estates, Whereas the other great landlord leased out on a commission basis, the right to collect rent to thikadars (rent farmers). The thikadars generally came from the small landlord and rich peasants. in champaran they also including European indigo planters.

There had been a slight rise of the town population since 1921 but the expansion of commerce and industry in the province had preceded very slowly. in the percentage for its livelihood there had been no appreciable change. Seventy per cent of the working population tilled the soil; 960 persons out of every thousand lived in villages and 40 persons in towns Patna , the capital town of the province, whose population had increased by 40,000 was the only town in the province with more than 100,000 people in 1931. 1931. there were only seven towns with a population varying between 50,000 and 1,00,000 of these Jamshedpur with a population of 84,000 had added 27,000 to its inhabitants in the last ten years. this was due to the development of copper and iron mines of steel industry at and around Jamshedpur. towns in general include professionals, government servant artisans and unskilled laborers and were sleepy backwater rather than dynamic centers of growth the meager large mining and manufacturing industries of the province located at town owed their existence to capital supplied outside the province and hence contributed little to the provincial revenues. nor had they assisted a government report added , as much as might have been expected in creating and retaining within the province reserves of wealth which would be available to finance , agriculture and the smaller threads of industries in town of Bihar. Credit was imperfectly organized and even with the facilities provided by the cooperative banks, it did not flow with sufficient freedom into the hands of the trades of cultivators. Even in the prosperous year their indebtedness was on the increase when

trade was bad the poor cultivator suffered from the reduced demanded of labor in mines and factories in towns.

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