

# Pabna Revolt: Voice of resent of the Marginalized Tenants in Bengal

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## ABSTRACT

*The Pabna revolt originated inside the Yusufshahi pargana, which's now the Sirajganj district inside greater Pabna. The zamindars mechanically collected cash from the peasants with the valuable resource of the illegal way of a compelled levy, abwabs (cesses), extra suitable hire and so forth. In 1873 peasants of Yusufshahi pargana of Pabna organised an agrarian league that raised funds to fulfil litigation fees and held mass meetings to which the sounding of buffalo horns referred to as villagers, drums and night cries passing from hamlet to hamlet, and additionally sometimes withheld hire. Similar movements were reported in the subsequent decade from numerous neighbouring East Bengal districts (Dacca, Mymensingh, Tripura, Backergunj, Faridpur, Bogura and Rajshahi). Despite many panic-stricken speak, in Calcutta zamindar circles, of peasant violence and rebellion, ryot resistance became eminently legalistic and non-violent other than a few intermittent incidents in Pabna. Pabna Peasant uprising turned into a resistance motion in opposition to the oppression of the zamindars. The zamindars perfunctorily collected cash from the peasants with the valuable resource of the illegal way of a compelled levy, abwabs (cesses), extra suitable hire and so forth. Peasants have been often dispossessed from land on the pretext of non-fee of rent. The zamindars tried to stop the peasants from getting occupancy proper, which became a reason for rising. The peasants have been an awful lot more organised than in various revolts via conferences, appeals and marches. They moved to the court, challenged the zamindars, raised the price range to pay for prison expenses, and satisfied the fee of felony war. The movement has become non-violent; however, Zamindars were killed at a few places, and violence did happen. The motion's aims had been additionally relatively restrained, for the withholding of rents become no more significant than a technique for triumphing particular wishes like a change inside the size standard, abolition of illegal cesses, and some discount in rents.*

**Keyword :** - Pabna, revolt, Yusufshahi, pargana, zamindari, ryot

The traditional Indian revenue system provided advantage to the proprietors of land and zamindars. Cultivators were pawns in the spiteful hands of the land owners who evicted them at the slightest pretext. The British colonialists thought it prudent not to fiddle with the existing revenue system and landowner-cultivator relationship so that they can wrangle the landlords and transmute the Indian agricultural scenario in due course of time to their advantage. Greed for money and wealth by the landowners and colonial indifference propelled the cultivators to agrarian unrest from 1870s onwards. The proprietors of agricultural lands enhanced rents beyond the means of the cultivators which brought to front the agrarian crisis of immense proportion. The imperial power, therefore, thought it prudent to bring in actions to protect the tenants. The result was Act X of 1859 in Bengal by which 'every ryot who had cultivated land for a period of twelve years had a right of occupancy in the land so cultivated by him' and should pay rent at 'fair and equitable rates. But this legislation divided the tenants into two categories- those who cultivated for twelve years and those less than twelve years. This was an implicit strategy of divide and rule by the imperialists, which did not disadvantage the land owners but brought in a slew of revenue litigations to the benefit of the landlords.

Additionally, anti-moneylender uprisings have been happening in Bengal (besides in tribal belts), for here too the mahajan turned into regularly the neighbourhood rich peasant or jotedar whose credit, anyways, turned into pretty indispensable for manufacturing. The zamindar, in contrast, had truly no effective position, and claims to "high landlordism" led to extensive struggle by using substantial ryots in huge components of East Bengal in the

1870s and early 80s. The storm centre was Pabna, a surprisingly rich district with quite a few double-cropping and a flourishing exchange in jute, in which more than 50% of the cultivator's had managed to win occupancy rights (giving immunity from eviction and a few restraints on lease-enhancement) under Act X of 1859.

Zamindari rents had improved seven-fold since 1793 by way of 1872, and the landlords launched a concerted power within the 1860s and early 70s to enhance hire via a spread of abwabs (cesses), using arbitrarily quick standards of size which robotically extended the cultivated vicinity, and sheer bodily coercion. This movements which amounted to an attack on the new protection received by means of the occupancy ryots.

In 1873 peasants of Yusufshahi pargana of Pabna organized an agrarian league which raised budget to fulfil litigation fees, held mass meetings to which villagers were known as by way of the sounding of buffalo horns, drums and night cries passing from hamlet to hamlet, and also sometimes withheld hire. Similar actions were stated for the duration of the following decade from several neighbouring East Bengal districts (Dacca, Mymensingh, Tripura, Background, Faridpur, Bogura and Rajshahi). Despite a lot panic- speak, in Calcutta zamindar circles, of peasant violence and rise up, ryot resistance changed into eminently legalistic and non-violent other than a few sporadic incidents in Pabna.

The immediate historical past of the existing growing in Pabna turned into a case filed through zamindars in opposition to forty-three main ryots of Urkandee village. These ryots refused to pay the enhanced rent, which they claimed to be unlawful. The ryots had deposited the hire with the courtroom. In support of their needs, the zamindars produced documents and claimed that the ryots were paying the rent demanded of them for one decade. The Munsiff of Shazadpur Court decreed in favour of the zamindars in April 1872, but the Civil Judge of Rajshahi reversed the selection in December 1872, believing that the zamindars had 'concocted' the documents. The Judgement of the appellate courtroom was regarded upon via the ryots as their moral victory over the zamindars.

The targets of the motion had been additionally pretty restricted, for the withholding of rents become no extra than a technique for triumphing precise needs like a exchange within the dimension general, the abolition of illegal cesses, and a few discount in rents. Nor become the Pabna agitation consciously anti-British: the most intense call for raised become that the ryots desired" to be the ryots of Her Majesty the Queen land of Her most effective". Such appeals to the remote overlord as in opposition to the immediate oppressor are of route now not unusual in peasant movements, and the Pabna ryots have been advocated in fact by way of positive seasoned-peasant actions through officers like Lt. Governor Campbell's proclamation in July 1873 which well-known peasant combinations as lawful even whilst condemning violence.

The Pabna uprising and similar actions in other districts evoked sharply varied reactions among the Bengali intelligentsia. The zamindar-ruled British Indian Association changed into bitterly antagonistic, and its organ Hindu Patriot tried to portray the Pabna movement as a communal agitation of Muslim peasants in opposition to Hindu landlords.

Actually, though the bulk of the peasants in Pabna happened to be Muslim and their zamindars typically Hindus, the communal detail became as but sincerely absent (in sharp assessment to what turned into happen frequently in the 20th century) the three main leaders of the agrarian league being the petty landholder Ishan Chandra Roy, the village headman Shambhu Pal (each caste Hindus), and the Muslim jotedar Khoodi Mollah.

Incidentally, one of the zamindars mainly affected was Dwijendranath Tagore, elder brother of the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, who recommended the authorities to take drastic action "for the recuperation of order and tranquility" in July 1873. Professional organizations with much less connections with large zamindari, but, took an extra sympathetic attitude, as evinced in R.C. Dutt's Peasantry of Bengal (1874) and a touch later in the Indian Association campaign in defence of tenant rights (which even concerned the company of a number of ryot conferences) at the eve of the Tenancy Act of 1885. Occupancy rights were preserved and incredibly extended by using the latter Act, yet what's at least as big is the total absence of concern whether inside the Pabna motion, the later Indian Association agitation or Government regulation, for peasants without occupancy claims, sharecroppers or agricultural labourers.

Occupancy ryots who had been already regularly sub-letting their land to ryots were left absolutely unprotected, and no emphasis changed into ever placed on linking up occupancy rights with actual cultivation. The ultimate effect of this complete duration of agrarian unrest and tenancy regulation in Bengal developed to foster the growth of jotedar agencies who preserved as manipulative and bloodsucking because the zamindars, whom they

were to replace gradually. Some lords forcefully accrued rents and land taxes, often more desirable for the negative peasants and additionally averted the tenants from obtaining Occupancy Right beneath Act X of 1859. The peasants, who were regularly evicted from the land because of non-payment of rent, frequently carried out violent acts so one can take advantage of extra cash. Due to the decline in the production of Jute within the 1870s, the peasants were struggling with famine. Some of the lords declared an enhancement of land taxes and that triggered the insurrection. Some peasants declared their Parganas impartial of zamindari manipulate and tried setting up a local government with an "army" to combat the zamindari "lathials" or police. Deputies were located in charge of the riot military and had been stationed at different parts of the district.

When the Pabna Ryots' League (created in May 1873) threatened the public peace, the authorities intervened to restore peace. In a proclamation of four July 1873 Sir George Campbell, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, guaranteed British aid to peasants in opposition to excessive zamindar demands and advised the zamindars to claim their claims by way of legal approach only. In the face of police movement and further famine that broke out in 1873-1874, the rebellion subsided but it was an ominous sign of peasants revolting against age old oppression by the landed elite and imperial ill-judged intrusion.

