

South Asia: The 1855-56 historic Santal Revolt Day to be celebrated in Bangladesh

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30th June is the historic Santal Peasant Revolt Day. In 1855-56 this revolt started against the British ruler. However, on 30th June massive genocide took place against the rebels. 25,000 Santal people including their leaders Sindhu-Kanu-Chand-Bairob were brutally killed by the then police of British emperor. Hence it has become a big historic event in the history of peasant movement in this Indian sub-continent.

The significance of this historic revolt is very crucial for the left politics in Bangladesh. Indeed the independence of India and Pakistan came out in 1947 in the continuation of the movement of peasant and indigenous people movement. That time there was no political party in Indian sub-continent. So, only peasants groups fought against the British ruler calling them fringy who invaded the country illegally.

The British ruler took over the India sub-content through very tricky policy. First they started trading activities in this region. They started with East Indian Company which imposed many cruel things on the people. As for example, they compelled the peasants to cultivate indigo as per their needs. But our peasants were not ready to cultivate the indigo as they are not used to it. As a result, they were thousands of revolts taking place at different places against the British ruler. If any peasants denied their proposal they were tortured and killed brutally.

Even this rebellion started in 1763 immediately 6 years after the British took over the Bengal in 1757. Since then these rebellions had happened continuously until 1885 when the political party called 'Congress' was formed with the middleclass in Indian sub-continent.

From 1763-1885 AD for 122 years different peasants groups incessantly built movement, struggle, revolt and they were defeated and killed British police but they never compromised with the British ruler. There is no precedence of compromise with British. However, the party congress of middleclass formed in 1885 the politics of compromise started. Although the country achieved independence in 1947 based two nations determined by religions, Muslim and Hindu the peasant's movement of that kind continued for long time.

In 1947 when the country divided into two countries, India and Pakistan Bangladesh's fate is determined to be the part of Pakistan as it was Muslim dominated. Immediately after the partition Pakistani ruler tried to make Bangladesh a colony like country. They began to exploit Bangladesh, former East Pakistan. They ignored the people in Bangladesh. Exploiting Bangladesh they Developed West Pakistan. Discrimination was quite visualized to the people in Bangladesh. Moreover, in 1952 Pakistani ruler tried to impose their own language Urdu as state language on the people of Bangladesh. Because of strong resistance they could not but continued misrules on the people. Finally people of Bangladesh waged an all-out liberation struggle with participation of all level people including indigenous people and achieve independent Bangladesh.

Thus, the indigenous people of Bangladesh have their history of long struggle in this country. Now the total population of indigenous people is around 3.4 millions across the country. Santal community is treated largest one in the plain land area. They are also considered to be the oldest community who made the country livable fighting against wild animal like tiger and cleaning the deepest forest. They are very simple and are considered to be offspring of the soil. In 1855-56 in the revolt against they had the massive participation.

Anyway the historic Santal Revolt Day was not observed in proper manner for the long time. As Santal people are not much educated they would observe this day by drinking local wine called Chuani and be drunkard.

In 1991 with the close support of Bangladesh Krishok Federation and Bangladesh Kishani Sabha Bangladesh Adivasi Samity was established with some specific demands. The demands includes the recognition indigenous people in the constitution of the country, recovery of land they lost in different ways, stopping repression of the forest department, check in the tendency of Adivasi people to leave neighboring country India, protection of culture, language and norms of indigenous people, protection of the customary right of landless people to the land,

Furthermore, we decided to commemorate the day in proper manner. We built a monument of Sindhu, Kanu, Chand, Bhairab including 25000 martyrs in 1992 in Dinajpur district where is dominated by indigenous people. Hence the day is observed with befitting manner every year by different community people. It includes discussion meeting, rallies, demonstration, procession, etc.

This year we, Bangladesh Krishok Federation, Bangladesh Kishani Sabha, Bangladesh Adivasi Samity and Bangladesh Bhumiheen Samity decided to hold a discussion meeting, procession, demonstration and placing floral wreath to the monument of the Revolt Day.

Bangladesh Krishok Federation (BKF), Bangladesh Kishani Sabha (BKS), Bangladesh Adivasi Samity (BAS) and Bangladesh Bhumiheen Samity (BBS)

Request for financial support

The previsional budget to carry out this program smoothly with 500 participants (300 out of them will coming from various areas) amont to **Tk. 263000/- or, in Euro: 2630** (Two thousand Six Hundred Thirty Euro in total).

This includes renting the hall, sound system, making banners, festoons, purchase of floral wreath, transport cost for who will come from far area, one meal for the participants.

ASM Badrul Alam

President

Bangladesh Krishok Federation

To send donations

Financial support can be collected through ESSF.

Cheques

cheques to ESSF in euros only, payable in France, to be sent to:

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93100 Montreuil

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Bank Account:

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Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525)

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93100 Montreuil

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