CHAPTER II

LANGUAGE MOVEMENT IN MANBHUM

India, a subcontinent, stretching for about two thousand kilometers from north to south and east to west. With an area almost equal to Europe excluding Russia, a population highest in the world next to China and a geographical position turning it into a junction of diverse religion, culture, race etc. But the most important component which makes India a land of diversity is the language. The linguistic scenario of India is dominated by a variety of languages. Grierson's linguistic survey of India had put the total number of languages at 872 covering all the known languages families. Of these languages some are highly developed possessing a rich literature and a long literary tradition, while others are less developed and even don't have any script of its own. Sometimes these create social and political cleavages in addition to those created by caste and religion. India, in post-independent period, witnessed violent forms of movements caused by language. The language movement of Manbhum was one such example, where the Bengali speaking people fought for the recognition of their language as official one. The span of the movement was of eight years from 1948 to 1956. But before going to its detail let us acquaint with the history of this region.

POLITICAL HISTORY OF MANBHUM

The history of the ancient period of Manbhum is not very much certain and clear. No written evidence of any considerable antiquity exists and there are no ancient inscriptions and other sources that can help to reconstruct the history of this area. It is also not known exactly that how the name ‘Manbhum’ originated. It is
assumed that the name Manbhum is apparently derived from one of the fiscal divisions within it, and is a mere artificial product of comparatively recent times. It is thus better to accept the derivation of Manbhum from the term equivalent to the 'land of the Mal, Male or Malar.' However, there can be little doubt that the 'Mundari' of 'Kolarian' races occupied the wild area of south Bihar in Pliny's time. It is suggested that the Mundari races are descended from that portion of the original population of Magadha which migrated south towards the great forest country of Chotonagpur, under pressure from the Aryan immigrants.

Some definite information's are available about Manbhum from the account of the Chinese traveler Hieun Tsang in the 7th century. His accounts describe the existence of powerful kingdom ruled by Sasanka. The kingdom of Sasanka comprised all the small hill states lying between Midnapur on the east and Sirguja on the west. To some historians the capital of the kingdom was near Barabazar in Bharabhum Pargona and to some others it was at Dalim in Patkum Pargona and is near Safaran on the banks of the river Subarnarakh. The evidence shows that the earliest civilization of Manbhum was that of the Jainas. In the eastern part of the Sadar sub-division the descendants of the Jainas, the Saraks, still exists in considerable numbers.

The whole of Manbhum area was not extensively cultivated or populated like the plains of Magadha. There existed very important trade routes passing through the area and going from Tamralipta, modern Tamluk, to Pataliputra, modern Patna, Goya, Rajgir and Banaras. Another route from Tamralipta to Banaras may be passed through Pakbira and Budhpur on the banks of the Kasai near Manbazar, and through Manbazar to Dalmi on the bank Suborna Rekha, passing westwards further on through Ranchi and Palamau to Banaras.

The Jaina civilization appears to have been superseded by Brahmin and their followers sometimes before the 7th century A.D. But they do not appear any
fighting between the Brahmins and the Jainas. It was probably the Brahmin gain supremacy by peaceful penetration and sheer force of intellect.  

History in the true sense is certainly non-existent for the whole of this period. There are no remains which can be positively ascribed to any date between the 10th or 11th century and the 16th century, when Muslim influence on architecture begins to be evident. The local Zamindar's genealogical trees give regular lines of succession throughout the periods. But no reliance can be placed on them.

**Medieval period**

To the historians of medieval period the whole of modern Chotanagpur and the adjoining hill state was known by the name of Jharkhand. It was a disturbed frontier country and required special military precautions to keep the area peaceful. Perhaps the earliest historical reference to any part of the Manbhum area is to be found in the 'Brahmanda' section of the 'Bhavishyat Purana', compiled in the 15th or 16th century.

Akbar about 1585 sent a force to subdue the king of Kokrah, or Chotonathpur, a country celebrated for its diamonds. In the Ain-I-Akbhawi Chaichampa part of Haziribagh district is shown as asses to revenue as pargana of 'Subah Bihar'.

Manbhum had been a part of Bihar from the period of the beginning of known history and it had an integral relation with Mughals. Some evidences shows that during the time of Sahjanah it was an integral part of the Mughal empires. In the "Padishahnama" of 1632 and 1633 A D there is a specific reference to Bir Narayan Zamindhar of 'Pachet', a country attached to Subha of Bihar. In 'Jama-Tumari' of Sultan Singh settled in 1658, Pachet is shown as liable to 'Peshkush' or fixed tribute.
Modern Period

The East India Company did not face much trouble in getting 'Dewani' of Bengal and Bihar-Orissa from decaying Mughal Emperor Shah Alom in 1765 A.D. After getting the right of collecting revenue from Joagarh, Jhalda, Pachet etc the company was looking forward to establish their direct rule over these regions. With this intention and for the convenience of collecting taxes, a new district of Pachet was formed in 1772 by including the adjoining areas.

The tax collection process was initiated by the company in Jangal Mahal area. The Chuar Mutiny started at Barabhum -Manbazar-Balarampur-Kuilapal in 1767 A.D. and continued for long 66 years from 1767 to 1832. This was the result of the Dewani granted to the East India Company. The kingdom of Panchakot was auctioned by the British due to non-payment of taxes (1798-99). The subjects of 'Panchakot -Raj' rebelled against the company and denied to pay taxes to anyone else except the Panchakot king. The auction process was stalled due to the rebellion which was a rare incident in the history of this country. The rebellion compelled the company to rearrange the area and thus formed the new district of Janghal Mahal in 1805. The new district comprised of Purulia, Dhanbad, and apart of Jhar Gram, Bardhaman, Birbhum and Bakura. A total of 23 'parganas' or 'mahal' were attached to this new district with its headquarters at Bankura.

By abolishing Janghal Mahal district in 1833 the new district of Manbhum came into existence. The new district included Dhanbad, Purulia, Dhalbhum and present Bankura district's Raipur, Supur, Bhelaidiha, Ambika Nagar, Fulkusuma, Simlapal etc. The area was 7896 sq. miles with its headquarters at Manbazar which was later shifted at Purulia in 1838. Again in 1845 Dalbhum was curved out from Manbhum and attached to Singbhum. It was in 1846 eight police station areas including Chatna, Cheliama etc were attached to Bankura. In 1871 a portion of Nurgarh and Parha were attached with Bardwaman. Have a greater control over the Jangal Mahal area and to suppress rebellions the company began to split the area into a number of districts and in this way Manbhum districts faced several geographical changes in a short spell of time. In 1879 by an order eight police station areas including Supur, Raipur, Fulkusuma, etc were again curved out and...
joined with Bankura. The result was that the area of Manbhum district which 7896 sq mile in 1883 reduced to 4112 sq miles after 46 years in 1929.

The people of Manbhum revolted against the imposition of taxes by the British. The movement was started in Manbazar and Bodabazar led by ‘Barabhumraj’ Bibek Narayan. The rebellion was popularly known as ‘Chuar’ rebellion. In 1775 Bibek Narayan was defeated and dethroned. The rebellion was again started in 1799 and continued to 1832 under the leadership of Gangha Narayan. This movement of Manbhum stirred the foundation of the British rule in this region. The fight was between the traditional weapons and modern weapons.

The movement against the partitions of Bengal started in 1905. The division of Bengal was annulled in 1911 and the state of Bihar–Orissa was formed in 1912 and Manbhum was included to Bihar–Orissa. As per Act of 1935 provincial government and Bihar and Orissa emerged as two different provinces and Manbhum remained with Bihar.

In post-independent period the government of India constituted the ‘West Bengal and Bihar Transfer of Territories Act 1956’. To execute the Act Manbhum district was splited into three parts Chas and Chandankiari police stations were attached to Dhanbad and remained with Bihar. The three police stations namely Chandil, Ichagarh and Patamda were carved out and included to Singbhum district of Bihar. The rest sixteen police stations formed a new district of Purulia and attached to West Bengal.

**GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF MANBHUM**

Manbhum district forms the eastern part of the Chotanagpur Division and lies between 22° 43' and 24° 4' North Latitude, and 85° 49' and 86° 54' East Longitude. It covers an area of 4,147 square miles and a population, according to the census of 1911 of 1301364. The principal town and administrative headquarters is Purulia.

The district is bounded on the north by the districts of Hazaribagh and the Santhal Parganas; on the east by Burdwan, Bankura, and Midnapore; on the south by
Singhbhum, and on the west by Ranchi and Hazaribagh. The whole of the northern boundary is marked by the Barakhar river, on the north-east the Barakhar and Damodar separate the district from Burdwan, and on the west and south the Subarnarekha river flows along the boundary for short distances.

**BACKGROUND OF THE LANGUAGE MOVEMENT OF MANBHUM**

The genesis of the language movement of Manbhum, like the movement of Barak Valley and Bangladesh, was rooted in the colonial period. The rule of the East India Company or the Crown did not think about the people’s sentiment while taking any decision suited to their expansionist or consolidating policy. The inclusion of Sylhet with Assam in 1874 was one such example. The British Government even did not hesitate to take brutal action in order to suppress any legal movement by the people of their own region. In order to establish their own hold and for their smooth sailing of administration they followed the policy of divide and rule in so far as their Indian administration was concerned. The diverse character of India in almost every field provided the opportunity to them to execute the policy of divide and rule. In doing so sometimes they encouraged one religion against another, some times one linguistic community against other and caste against caste, territory against territory and many of such kinds as and when necessary and required.

The British after the consolidation of their territories in the last part of the 19th century gave attention towards the need of a more rational reorganization of states on the basis of linguistic or ethnic grouping of the people as well as for the smooth conduct of their administration. In the very beginning of the last century i.e. in 1901 the North West frontier province (NWFP) was formed by detaching the frontier districts from Punjab. Bengal was partitioned in 1905 which was guided by political consideration but apparently justified on grounds of better administration. It created the Lieutenant-Governship of East Bengal and Assam on the one hand and West Bengal joined with Bihar and Orissa on the other. This partition was very much resented by the Bengali speaking people. Great agitation was started which ultimately ended with the annulment of the partition in 1911. But on the same linguistic as well as administrative grounds, Assam was separated from Bengal, similarly Bihar and Orissa was constituted in to a separate province under a
lieutenant governor. But it was recognized that Orissa should also have preferably been made into a separate state at this very time but on account of the smallness of British occupied Orissa, it was allowed to remain administratively with the Hindi speaking Bihar. In the course of Indian freedom struggle the Indian National Congress in different public meetings and in various sessions of the party did not fail to recognize the importance of language. They promised that after independence Indian regions would be reorganized on the basis of its vernaculars. Once India attained independence and the idea of Indian nation state have been implemented, the regions demanded attention to their areas and languages. Various movements began to emerge in different parts of the country where different vernaculars were demanded to be recognized or the region be recognized on the basis of its vernaculars. The first movement of such type emerged in the Manbhum area of Chotanagpur regions.

The Bengali speaking people of Bihar mainly of the Manbhum area from the early date of the 20th century became very much conscious about their language and culture. The feeling of superiority was the driving force behind such thinking. The cry has been raised from time to time that the Bengalis of Manbhum were the victims of officials policy in the matter of their vernacular. The Bengali press always propagated that Bengali language was forcibly suppressed in Manbhum district.

The pro-Hindi supporters on the other hand stated that in impartial enquiry would reveal that it is not Bengali which was suffered and which had been or being outstanding, but that Bengali had been imposed upon the people of the area who are essentially non-Bengali speaking people. They also cited examples that when Bihar was under Bengal the Bengali officers of the districts followed a very tenacious and systematic policy of planting Bengali and uprooting other languages from this area. Like other places of India in Manbhum also the British succeeded in sowing the seed of separation between the Bengali and Hindi speaking people. Thus when in the year 1913, on a representation made by the people of Dhanbad Hindi was declared as a second court language in addition to Bengali for the sub-division, a protest was lodged by certain Bengali resident of the Dhanbad Sub-division. Mr. Hignell, the deputy commissioner of Manbhum in the year 1915, wrote in connection with the representation.
“The hon’ble Revd Dr. Campbell informs me that when he first came to the sub-division (I believe some 35 or 36 years ago) all pleaders and Mukhtears addressing the Sub-divisional courts, spoke in Urdu or Hindi. At the end of 1912, there was not a single Hindi speaking pleader or Mukhtear practicing at Dhanbad. In the interval, that has elapsed between 1912 and now, it appears that one Bihari pleader and three Bihari Mukhtear joined the local bar. The ascendancy which the Bengalis had obtained in the Sub-division was not confined to the courts only but had permitted every sphere of official activity. In 1912, there was a single Bihari clerk either in my office or in that of the sub-divisional officers. Practically all police officers were Bengalis, and in the school Hindi was hardly talked as all the educational officers from the Deputy Inspector of school downwards, sub-inspectors and inspecting Pandits, were Bengalis, this is not surprising but it is significant that even in the Topochanchi Thana, adjoining the Hazaribagh district where the last census shows some 75 percent of the population to be Hindi speaking, there was not a single school in which Hindi was taught or used as the medium of instruction.”

“... The extent to which natives of the Bankura district had monopolized government and semi-government appointments is almost incredible to anyone not conversant with the actual facts. The gradual transformation is not surprising, if we remember the extent to which every Government and semi-Government post came to be monopolised by Bengalis.”

It is established fact that Bengali was the court language of Manbhum district as it was Bengali populated regions. But non-Bengali people of the Purulia Sub-division of Manbhum district was also not a negligible component of the total population of Manbhum. They felt strongly against the prevalence of the Bengali as a court language. In 1915 a memorandum was submitted for the recognition of Hindi as an alternative court language. These attempt of the non-Bengali people was resented by the Bengali people of this area and great obstacle were created in the way of Hindi being accepted as an alternative court language. The Deputy Commissioner’s opinion on this occasion was as follows.

“... As Hindi has been considered the proper court language of Santhals and aborigines in Santhal pargonas, it might at least be tolerated at the head quarter of a district their 55 percent of the population speak Hindi, Santhali, or other aboriginal
languages Hindi is the chief language of the province and of the division to which Manbhum belongs. These facts alone would seem to justify the toleration of Hindi in the courts of Purulia not to speak of encouraging its use."

The dominant Bengali community, however, succeeded in influencing the British authority and the representation of the people for the acceptance of Hindi as an alternative court language was rejected. On this action the Deputy Commissioner wrote:

"The truth is that the Bengali section of the population has monopolized the advantages of education and the school teacher are all Bengalis who impose their alien language on their pupils. The result has been that many parents have abstained from sending their children to school where only Bengali is taught. The Hindi speaking children who do not attend school are receiving the schooling in a foreign tongue."

Under such circumstances and the increasing consciousness among the people, the Hindi speaking people of Manbhum district and the areas of Chotanagpur and the district of Santhal Pargonas who constituted a decided majority in all these areas made a strong demand for proper facilities for the education of their children through the medium of Hindi. The various sections of people namely the Kurmus, Mahtohs, the Muslims, and Santhals passed resolution urging on the government the acceptance of their demands for adequate facilities for education through the medium of Hindi. As it is the accepted and declared policy of both the government of India and the Government of Bihar to provide facilities to the people for education through the medium of the mother tongue, these legitimate demands of the people of these areas could not remain unattended. The Government of Bihar in compliance with the policy enjoyed in these behalf by the central Government, framed scheme for the gradual introduction of Hindi school in this area."

These decision of the Government was very much resented by the Bengali speaking people who established their hegemony over the non-Bengali population of the district. The population pattern of the Manbhum district can be understood from the census report. According to the census report of 1921, the total population of the Manbhum district was 15,48,111. The linguistic distribution of this population was as follows:
Bengali speaking 1035386
Hindi speaking (including Urdu) 289356
Tribal languages 213301
Other languages 10734

The figures mentioned above showed that the Bengali was the majority of the total population of Manbhum district. But there was contradiction regarding the figures of Bengali speaking population. It was said that the aboriginals and semi-aboriginals were also counted as Bengali speaking.

The Settlement report of Mr. B.K. Gokhale for this period stated that there were 794290 aboriginals and semi-aboriginals in the districts in the year 1921. The distribution of this aboriginals and semi-aboriginals population was shown by Mr. Gokhale according to it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurmi</td>
<td>286125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santhal</td>
<td>238534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauri</td>
<td>107977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhumij</td>
<td>92194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhuiyan</td>
<td>38395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kora</td>
<td>19968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kheria</td>
<td>5649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oraon</td>
<td>3165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>2283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>794290</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These reports totally contradicted with the census report of 1921. The mother tongue of these peoples were not Bengali but they were shown as Bengali speaking. Out of 794290 tribal population only 213301 were shown as tribal speaking people.

The census report of 1941 reveals that how the population of the district is comprised of typically Bihari and tribal people. According to this report, out of a total population of 2032146 in the district of Manbhum, the people belonging the tribal races as Santhal, Bhumij and Mundas were not less than 1173898. In addition to this, there were about 6 lacks of kurmis. It is said that these 86 percent of population
could not legitimately be considered as Bengali people. On the question of the language of Manbhum Mr Copland wrote 27

"There is a great difference between the Rarhi-Boli (Language spoken in Manbhum) and Bengali spoken in Bengal proper. I have noticed this very particularly in the case of pliders who have newly come to the district and who happened to be pleading in my court. I have often had to explain to them what witnesses said. In fact, Bengali is only spoken by immigrants in to Manbhum and their descendents." 28

"A dialect of Hindi is spoken by 163000 percents, Santhali by 183000, Kurmali by 3779, Bhumij by 2340, Mundari by 1888, Kora by 2229 and Mahli by 1168. not more than 10 percent speak to Bengali" 29

Like this the census figures of 1911 was also not out of doubt. In 1915 the Deputy Commissioner of Manbhum district stated, "The census figure of 1911 are not above suspension, seeing that they are prepared from the reports of Bengali enumerators. I have unearthed a note by Mr T.Milne who took great interest in the matter, while he was the Deputy Commissioner in Manbhum in 1912. He was convinced (and I am sure he was right) that 291000 Kurmi Mahtoos the backbone of the agricultural class, had been wrongly shown as Bengali, though they should have been treated as Hindi speaking aboriginals. This class, being added to 326363 shown as Hindi speaking and 233684 shown as Shantals and other aborigines, gives a total of 851047 non-Bengalis out of a total population of 1547576 for the whole districts." 30

It is thus evident from the above discussion and the census report and other sources that the Bengalis of Manbhum was a mixture of Bihari and Bengali dialect. The language that was spoken by the majority people of Manbhum region was not the language as spoken in Calcutta proper. In participating a debate in the Bihar legislative assembly Sri Dabeodra Nath Mohato a member of the assembly from Manbhum analysed how Kurmali was a Bihari dialect. He gave list of Kurmali words to show how essentially it was a Magahi dialect and not a form of Bengali. He also stated how social custom of Kurmis also essentially Bihari and not Bengali. 31 However, the Bengali speaking people, though it was also in the way of forming nationality and little bit of advance then the Bihari people, succeeded in establishing
their hegemony over the Bihari people. The influence of Bengali was so deep that some aboriginal and semi aboriginal of Manbhum district considered themselves as Bengali. It is obvious that the similarities of both the languages played a significant role in so far as the question of identity is concerned.

So far as the language movement of Manbhum was concerned it was practically started after the annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1911, Bihar became a province and the Bengali dominated Manbhum district went with it. This was the beginning of Bengali resentment as they feared that in a new state dominated by the Hindi speaking people they would lose their position and privileges that they were enjoying. Not only in Manbhum but in the whole of Bihar the Bengali had a predominance in the job sector and a socio-cultural domination over the Biharis which became the bone of contention between the Bengali speaking people and the Hindi speaking. The people of Bihar for a long time demanded for a separate provincial government and this had initially centered round the issue of the predominance of Bengalis in jobs and educations.

**MASS MOVEMENT**

The dominance of Bengali language had been seen in the Manbhum district of Bihar throughout the British period. The Bengali hegemony was not liked by the people of this region. In India after independence small nationalities also demanded the recognition of their vernacular or their region. As Bihar was under the jurisdiction of Bengal for a long spell of time and the hegemony of Bengali was witnessed by the non-Bengali people of Bihar. There were instances of representation to accept Hindi as a court language in addition to Bengali but their demand was rejected. Naturally, an internal current of discontent was moving on in the minds of the non-Bengali people of Bihar. There were instances of resentment but the British Government did not give much attention on their demand as it was introduced by them for their administrative convenience. This hegemony of Bengali was challenged in post-independent India. Thus immediately after the independence the Bihar government declared that Hindi would be the official...
language of Bihar. All possible attempts were made to reinstate Hindi in place of Bengali where applicable. Sometimes it took the form of repression and force full imposition. The situation thus indicated that a mass movement was not far away. The Bengali leaders took the initiative in getting the support of the Bengali people. They cited the example of the position of Bengali during the British period and the situation under Bihar government. All these created the plot of the beginning of a Bengali language movement which was going to be the first of its kind in the Indian Sub-Continent.

India attained her freedom on 15th August 1947 and Manbhum has conceded to Bihar. Immediately after the partition the resentment of the Bihari people took the shape of a planned oppression on the Bengali speaking people of the Manbhum district. All the Bengali officials of the district were transferred to other districts of Bihar in 1948. The official language of Bihar was Hindi but the court language of Manbhum was Bengali in pre-independent India. The Indian National Congress, though promised to constitute the language based province and due recognition would be given to each linguistic minority, but once they attain the power to rule after independence they become not very much interested to implement their promise. Thus when the proposal for Bengali as the language of Manbhum district was placed before the District Congress Committee of Manbhum it was defeated by 43/55 votes on 30th May 1948.

As a result of this defeat the president and the secretary along with 35 members of the Manbhum District Congress resigned from congress party. They all together and along with some other members formed a new organization named ‘Lok Shebak Snagha’ on 14th June 1948 at Pakbira village to fight for the Bengali Language and to protest against the imposition on Hindi on the Bengali speaking people as a state policy. These language movement (Bhasa Andoloon) was the first of its kind in India. The Bihar Government restricted the use of Bengali in the Manbhum district. Thus a major group of Bengali speaking people deprived from getting education through mother tongue.

In the mean time the leaders of Bihar travelled throughout the province and preached for Hindi language. School Inspector of every district sent circular to the
Inspector of sub divisions that those school received financial grants from Bihar Government would have to introduce Hindi as medium of Instruction, signboards of school would have to be written either in Hindi or Debnagri. In the prayer of schools ‘Ramdhun’ should have to be sung. The Inspector of School also instructed that 72 aboriginal schools would have to be transformed in to Hindi schools and these must be included in the annual report of the school and the condition of getting recognition was the introduction of ‘Ramdhun’ and the signboard was to be written in Hindi. It was also instructed that if Hindi was not introduced the grant would be withdrawn. The schools were previously under district administration but it was shifted to the State Education Council after the independence of the country. It became mandatory to get teacher’s training in Hindi medium. Like this the Government of Bihar made all possible attempts to introduce Hindi and thus to make Bengali as an insignificant language.

It is true that all school did not follow the government order and as a result some schools, more than one dozen faced the consequence and lost their recognition.

The ‘Lok Shebak Sanga’ was established on 14th June 1948 and Autul Chandra Ghosh and Bibhuti Mohan Das were unanimously elected as president and secretary respectively. In that meeting it was also decide to start agitation at multi level pattern, these were (i) Satyagraha Andoloon or Non-violent agitation, (ii) Haljoal Andoloon and (iii) Tusu Satyagraha Andoloon.

As decided earlier in the meeting of ‘Lok Shebak Snaga’ a total strike was observed on 22nd June 1948 in the town of Purulia. Influenced by this movement in other parts of the district also followed the same way and started agitation. Thousands of piecetekters of Manbhum district went to jail. Communist Party, Bar Association Purulia Municipality, eventually participated in the agitation. Here, their demand was not only the recognition of Bengali as court language of the district but for the accession to West Bengal. Bihar Police in association with some miscreants attack the picketers, set fire to the houses. It was also announced that those who would work in favour of Hindi would be awarded certificate of freedom fighter and special permit and lisence for business etc. would be given.
On 11th December 1949, the entire district of Manbhum observed strike. By virtue of Bihar Maintenance of Public Order Act (BMOP) the Bihar Government stopped Martyar Chunrai Govinda Memorial Meeting which was arranged by the Lok Shebak Sangha.\(^4\)

Citing all the incidences the Lok Shebak Snagha requested the provincial and the Government but they did not get any response. Getting no response from the authority the ‘Sangha’ announced weak long protest movement in the District under the leadership of Atul Chandra Ghosh the people participated in the movement in Hurah Police Station area. In the presence of police some miscreants attacked picketers and destroyed some vehicles. The movement of Manbazar was led by Laboyna Probha Ghosh. Here also the supporters of Hindi showed black flag to the picketers. No incident was reported from Bandokhan and Barabazar. In these two areas movement was led by Kaju Sobor and Jogo Bondu Jota respectively. In the Boloram Pur area the movement was led by Gubordon Mahato. In Roghnathpur Bhim Chandra Bhowmik took the led of movement. Here the protester were beaten by some social miscreants and national flag was snatched from the picketers. Under the leadership of Baul Mahato the people of Baghmundi participated in the movement. Almost every where in the district picketers were arrested and physically tortured either by the police or by the supporters by the Hindi. They even did not hesitate to through chilli powder in the eyes of the protesters. In these mass movement not less than 200 peoples were injured. Amongst the injured persons the condition of Badya Nath Dutta and Ram Komol Mallik were serious. Both of them were sent to Purulia and Calcutta for better treatment.\(^5\)

In the mean time continuous drought for two years caused law productivity which resulted famine in Manbhum. Apart from the police repression non availability of cloths, repression in the name of levy, price hike, corruption involving issue of license and permit aggravated the situation to such a degree that Lok Shebak Sangha was compelled to launch protest movement by adopting a district level programme in this regard. Huge public meeting took place in Purulia and Jaldha. In a party meeting of Congress in ‘Jubilee Maidan’ the congress Minister Anugraha Narayan and Krishna Ballab Sohay delivered lecture being inspired by the Bihar
police and their agents against the movement which was opposed by some people and as a result they were physically assaulted by the police and arrested.43

In the election of 1952 Lok Shebak Sangha owned majority seats of Assembly and the total two parliamentay seats In the legislative assembly Sri Sachindra Banarjee and Bim Chandra Mahato voiced against the oppression but they were not allowed to deliver their lecture in Bengali.44

The prime folk festival of Manbhum is ‘Tussu’. The whole of Manbhum throughout the Bengali month of ‘Poush’ celebrated the festival Actually it is a festival of harvesting At the end of the month the festival ends with ‘Tusu Bhashan’. The Lok Shebak Snagha turned this festival into a new mode of language movement Section 144 was introduced In spite of this Lok Shebak Sangha started agitation and announced to launch civil disobedience movement which was known as Tusu Satyagdraha. People ignored the imposition of the Section 144 and gathered in front of the Mukti Press. The police tried to spread fear by sending the message to the picketers to call off the strike otherwise it would led to heavy bloodshed This act of police acted as fire to the flame. In protest against it seven to eight thousands of people assembled in front of the police station. The ‘Tusu Songs’ got new magnitude and songs were compiled by relating them to the language movement and the repression of the state. These songs provoked the police and they started arresting the participants in the civil disobedience movement. The scale of the movement created a kind of fear and the government started arresting all leaders and others to suppress the movement. The police arrested Atul Chandra Ghosh of 73, Labonya Probha Ghosh, Bhaja Hari Mahato, Samarendra Nath Ojha and many more Atul Chandra Ghosh and some of his co-workers were sent to Hazaribagh jail which was 135 kilometers away from the area of movement By virtue of Public Security Act Manindra Mukhapadhaya and Santosh Bhattacharya were arrested, fined and imprisoned for a period of nine months. Many other workers throughout the district were arrested and some were imprisoned for violating section 144 and some were arrested for creating disturbances.45
After Math of the Movement

One of the causes behind the formation of ‘State Reorganisation Commission’ (23rd Dec 1953) by the Union Government of India was the language movement of Manbhum. The Commission held hearings at Manbhum district on 5th February 1955. In the report, Commission proposed the formation as well as the accession of a new district “Purulia” dominated by the Bengali speaking people to West Bengal from erstwhile Manbhum district of Bihar. The new district comprised of nineteen police stations from the then Manbhum district. Bihar would have its share from Manbhum district with ten police stations from Dhanbad Sub-division and two police stations of Purulia Sub-division. Later on, the chief Minister of West Bengal Bidhan Chandra Roy gave his consent for accession of three police stations namely Patamda, Ichagarh and Chandil to Bihar by a special request of TISCO, Jamshedpur.

The report provoked mixed reaction at Manbhum district. The supporters of Bihar called strike at Manbhum district. Pro-Bengal supporters were also not very happy with the proposed association of Dhanbad district to Bihar. In the mean time, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, and chief Minister of Bihar Mr. Srikrishna Sing came forward with a unique proposal of unification of West Bengal with Bihar. In protest against the said unification proposal, Lok Shebak Sangha started a non-violent march on foot to Calcutta from Pakbirra village of Manbhum comprising of not less than one thousand people. The procession reached Calcutta and the agitators were sent to jail on 7th May 1956. Subsequently the proposal for unification of West Bengal and Bihar was withdrawn. The ‘Bengal-Bihar Border Demarcation’ Bill was passed in the Parliament. Finally with sixteen police stations and with a population of 11,69,097 the new district Purulia was acceded to West Bengal on 1st Nov. 1956.

The language movement of Manbhum is the first of such kind in India and stands with countries like Bangladesh, Haiti, Philippines and many other on linguistic issue.


Ibid, p. 48

Ibid

Ibid

Ibid

Ibid

Ibid

Ibid

Ibid

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Manbhum District Gazetteer, pp. 53-54.

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A Memorandum Presented to the State Re-organisation Commission by Baldeva Sahani, President, The Bihar Association, pp. 22-23.

Ibid, p. 197.

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Census Report of India, Bihar, 1921.

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Observation of Mr. T. Iuby, I.C.S. Deputy Commissioner of Manbhum, quoted in the Memorandum呈呈 to the State Re-organisation Commission by Baldeva Sahani, President, The Bihar Association, pp. 197.

Sri Debenrata Mahato’s Speech in the Bihar Legislative Assembly on 13th May, 1953, quoted in the Memorandum Presented to the State Re-organisation Commission by Baldeva Sahani, President, The Bihar Association, p. 189.


Ibid.

Sen, Kajal, *op cit*, p. 45.

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Sen, Kajal. *op cit*, p. 42.

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Sen, Kajal, op-cit, p 50

Ibid, P. 51

Ibid, Pp. 51-52

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Ibid