CHAPTER -2

NADIA DISTRICT :

GEO-POLITICAL AND SOCIO- CULTURAL

BACKGROUND

In the history of our national freedom struggle, the ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942 had played a most effective and a most laudable part, in so far as the challenge it offered to the continuing British rule in India was really incomparable in the whole history of our struggle for freedom. In fact, the movement had impregnated a romantic sense of nationalist struggle and thereby raised a great wave of mass-agitation all over India. And this wave had also reached Nadia —— a district of Bengal. And this district had also played, to speak historically, a great part in the movement, as it has worked its level best in organizing and launching the movement, though on local basis. That was why the ‘Quit India’ movement in the district of Nadia, though often unorganized and unsystematic, was as much remarkable as that of the other parts of India.

However, before making a detailed discussion of the political historiography of the ‘Quit India’ movement in Nadia district, it would be
worthwhile to know first the geo- political and socio- cultural background of the district during the pre- independence period of India, for such a preliminary knowledge would help much make a clear estimate of the significance of the present study.

**GEOGRAPHICAL SCENARIO OF NADIA:**

Prior to independence, the district of Nadia consisted of five Sub-divisions: Kusthia, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Krishnanagar and Ranaghat. But after independence, the subdivisions of Kusthia and Chaudanga and all the areas of the Meherpur Sub-division excepting the police stations of Karimpur and Tehatta had been included in East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Presently, Nadia district consists of four Sub-divisions of Krishnanagar, Ranaghat, Tehatta, and Kalyani. The new sub-divisions of Tehatta and Kalyani were, however, respectively under the Krishnanagar Sub-division and Ranaghat Sub-division till 1983. In the present study, we would focus our attention on the present geographical structure of the district of Nadia, and thus the Sub-divisions of Kusthia, Chaudanga and Meherpur of the previous geographical area of the district are kept aside from the study.

In the pre- independence period, the geographical location of the district was Strategically important to the-then politics of India and specially of Bengal. It
was the crossroads between the-then places of politico-administrative importance, namely Calcutta and Murshidabad. The district of Murshidabad — an historic district — had covered (covers) the North and the North-West frontiers of Nadia. The district of Pabna of Bangladesh covered (covers) its North-East area. The district of 24 Parganas was (is) to its South and South-East area. To its West the Bhagirathi river was (is) there, on the other bank of which there was (is) the Burdwan district. This is the compact picture of the geographical location of the district of Nadia, consisting of, according to the Census report of 2011, the areas 1,516 square-miles.

**SOCIAL SCENARIO OF NADIA:**

Before India’s independence, Nadia district did never face the problem of population explosion as it really did in the post-independence period due to the continuous influx of the refugees from Bangladesh (East Pakistan as it was then named). However, at the time of the ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942, the population of the-then undivided Nadia district was 8,40,303. Out of this population, 51% was male, while 49% was female. Nearabout 75% of the Nadia’s population was Hindu and 22% was Muslim. Besides these two major religious communities, there were others like the Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain etc.
Out of the total Hindu population of Nadia at the time of the ‘Quit India’ movement more than 30% belonged to Scheduled Caste (S.C.) and Scheduled Tribe (S.T.). Despite the caste division, Hindu people however remained in the district as a unified entity.\textsuperscript{9a} Besides, though there were the people of diverse religious communities in the district of Nadia, yet there was no serious problem of communal conflict. In fact, the people of Nadia belonging to different castes and religions normally used to lead a very peaceful and cordial life. The social aspect of their life was cohesive and co-operative. They were therefore socially united and psychologically unified and thus maintained a balanced socio-cultural and ethno-religious life. This is why the-then district of Nadia was more or less characterized by communal peace and harmony.\textsuperscript{10}

**ECONOMIC SCENARIO OF NADIA:**

In the economic filed, the-then Nadia however seriously lagged behind the other districts of Bengal.\textsuperscript{11} This backwardness of the district was mainly due to the fact that though the district was heavily dependent upon agriculture, yet the lack of proper irrigation facilities and the sterility of the soil resulted in the growing decline in the agricultural production.\textsuperscript{12} Besides, the deplorable conditions of the rivers surrounding the district could not afford any help in irrigation of the lands.
It is to be noted in this regard that the district of Nadia was geographically a river-based area, surrounded by different rivers and canals, namely Bhagirathi, Jalangi, Mathabhanga, Churni, Ichhamati etc. All these rivers and canals had once played a great part in the economy of the district. But these rivers gradually became of no use in irrigation of the lands and unfit for navigation for the business purpose due to the construction of the pillars of the over-bridges anywhere and everywhere on the river bed.

Besides, due to the frequent floods, the major rivers of the district like the Bhagirathi had immensely changed their original courses and lost their depth that ultimately resulted in their being unfit for navigation and irrigation as well. This was why adequate amount of river-water had not been available for agricultural production in the district. Consequently the condition of agriculture in Nadia that was once highly improved and enriched had become gradually deplorable.

It is also to be noted here that the district of Nadia had once reached the peak of prestige and pride for its cottage and small-scale industries, namely the sugar industries of Plassey, Tehatta, Krishnanagar etc, the handloom industries of Shantipur, Ranaghat, Chakdaha, Haringhata, Fulia etc., clay-industries of Krishnanagar, Nabadwip, Birnagar, Taherpur, Ranaghat etc., bell-metal industries of Nabadwip, Krishnanagar, Badkulla, Plassey etc. and jute-industries of Karimpur, Betai, Aranghata, Majdia, Bagula Tehatta etc. But no large-scale
industries, worth the name were established side by side to keep up viable economy of the district.  

In fact, the above-mentioned small-scale industries, in the absence of the full-fledged large-scale industries, were then not at all in a position to improve and supplement the economy of the district. Consequently the per-capita income of the people of Nadia was seriously low and their living standard was thus very low. Poverty had cast its eyes on almost all the villages of the district. In fact, the common dresses, dwellings and food of the local people and the absence of modern facilities had their direct impact on the economic backwardness of the district.  

**EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO OF NADIA:**  

However, Nadia district, though a poor one economically, was not lagging behind in educational sphere of life. It had rather a glorious tradition in education. The town Nabadwip, an educationally enriched area of the district, where there were different Tols (i.e., Sanskrit Academic Institutions) to teach different Shastras (i.e., Sankrit Scriptures) like Kabya, Nyaya, Vyakarana, Vedas, Vedanta etc., was popularly called ‘the Oxford of Bengal.’
At the time of Srichaitanya, Nabadwip had achieved academic excellence and had become the center of higher education, enriched knowledge and improved culture and civilization. Since then it had become the very citadel of the educated, learned and cultured people and had greatly drawn the attention of the world especially for its glorified academic tradition.

Besides this Shastra-based traditional education, the modern system of education was also there in Nadia district. At the time of the ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942 there were two Colleges in Krishnanagar and Nabadwip and about fifty Secondary Schools in different places of the district, namely, Krishnanagar, Ranaghat, Nabadwip, Shantipur, Chakdaha, Haringhata, Birnagar, Badkulla, Taherpur, Karimpur, Plassey, Majdia, Bagula, Dhubulia, Tehatta etc. 21 There were more than twenty five Libraries also in the district of Nadia at that time. 22

Along with this educational tradition, the district of Nadia had also been maintaining a glorious past in civilization and civic culture. And the district had thus long been more or less successful in maintaining peace, happiness and unity among its inhabitants. 23

It is worthwhile to note here that Sri krishna Chaitanya, a world-respected socio-religious personality of Nabadwip, had flooded Nadia with his great message
of love, toleration, peace and unity. It was with the great flow of his cult of Sankirtana, i.e., the high-pitched chanting of the name and glory of Lord Srikrishna along with devotional dance and loud performance of different musical instruments, that as if “Shantipur was about to be drowned (and) Nade (i.e.,Nadia) was to be flooded” or “Shantipur dubu dubu, Nade bhesa jai.”

**POLITICAL SCENARIO OF NADIA:**

Needless to say that the people of Nadia district had gathered a rich political experience, for they had frequently launched different socio-political movements against the oppressive zamindars and even against the imperialist rulers. Even in the freedom struggle of India, they had taken part valiantly. In fact, they had fought quite bravely in the Battle of Plessey (1757) and also in the historic Indigo Revolt (1859-60). Besides they had taken direct part in the Swadeshi Movement (1905-8), the Non-co-operation Movement (1920-21), the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-33) and also in the ‘Quit India’ Movement (1942). Really speaking, they had played an heroic role in organizing and popularising the ‘Quit India’ Movement all over the district of Nadia. It is in this way that Nadia had gathered a rich tradition of political orientation and political motivation as well.
Historically speaking, in the great Battle of 1757, held at Plassey, a tiny and peaceful village of Nadia district, the people of the district along with the people of Murshidabad district boldly fought against the British Power in favour of Siraj-Ud-Doula, the last sovereign Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In this historic Battle of Plassey, they, however, failed to reach the target-object of conquering the imperialist Power of the British government as well as of reinstalling the sovereign authority of the Nawab Siraj-Ud-Doula mainly due to the heartless treachery and parochial conspiracy of some personnel of the Nawab’s Court.

Besides, though Nadia district had really a very little role in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, yet the mutiny had impregnated the very orientation to, and mental make-up of, revolt against imperial injustice in the minds of Nadia’s people. Thus they vehemently started the historic Indigo-Revolt during 1859-60, symbolizing a deep sense of grave protest against the British oppression in agriculture in India.

During the period of this historic Indigo-Revolt that was bravely organized in almost all the areas of Nadia, namely, Bansheria, Khalboalia, Shikarpur, Karimpur, Loknathpur, Nishchindipur, Kachikata, Tehatta, Dhaora, Plassey, Shyamnagar, Natiponta, Melepona, Chitrashali, Hanskhali, Bagula, Shantipur, Muragachha, Nakashipara, Hatboalia, Meherpur, Damurhuda, Jayrampur,
Kushththia, Krishnanagar, Krishnaganj, Dhoradaha, Poragachha, Kalyani, Madanpur, Ranaghat, Haringhata and so on, a great revolutionary wave was raised in the form of the life and death Indigo Revolt.

Though this great revolt of the people (farmers) of Nadia was ultimately subdued and crushed by the mightier power of the British Government, still their fighting attitude, mental courage and revolutionary activities had frightened the imperialist government a lot and thereby had created a deep desire for independence in the mind of the people of India as a whole and made a glorious tradition of political movement in the whole history of India’s struggle for freedom.

Moreover, the students of Krishnanagar Sub-division strongly launched a revolt against the oppressive rule of the British Government for which an historical trial was instituted in 1884. 28 Again in the protest movement against Lord Curzon’s arbitrary declaration of the Partition of Bengal in 1905 and in the Swadeshi movement afterwards, Nadia had played a significant part.29 According to the Programme of the All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.), 30 held in Calcutta in 1906 (i.e., Calcutta Congress of 1906), the Nadia district Congress Committee (N.D.C.C.) joined the Swaraj, Boycott and Swadeshi movements and even in the National Education movement also. 31 Even in the Non-co-operation
movement, launched as per the plan of the Calcutta Special Congress in September, 1920, the district of Nadia played really a remarkable role.  

Besides, in 1922 the peasants of Shikarpur—a North-Frontier village of the district—launched a strong movement against the British land-owners. An All – Bengal Youth and Students’ Conference was held in Krishnanagar in 1926. Tulasi Goswami and Srimatni Sarojini Naidu, two important leaders of the Indian National Congress, presided over the conference respectively. This district had also participated in the famous ‘Red Shirt’ movement in 1927.

It is to be mentioned here with especial attention that the district of Nadia had also played a very significant role in the 2nd Civil Disobedience Movement (C.D, Movement) of 1932, organised and directed by Mahatma Gandhiji at the national level. In order to materialize the 2nd C.D Movement, a strong No-Tax Movement (1932-33) was launched at Tehatta ---a tiny village and police station of the district. The leaders and workers of the district in general and those of Tehatta and its surrounding areas in particular had very courageously and also with the very sincere spirit of nationalism organized and launched the movement at Tehatta on the 13th April, 1932 with a view to accelerating and actualizing the 2nd C.D. Movement and thereby raised a great nationalist sentiment all over the district of Nadia. Hence the No-Tax movement at Tehatta deserves especial attention indeed.
The main purpose of the No-Tax Movement at Tehatta was invariably to weaken the British Government specially at the local level of Tehatta by refusing to pay taxes to the British coffer. In order to materialize this purpose of the movement, a Satyagrahi committee was formed consisting of the district leaders and the local leaders as well like Haripada Chattopadhyay, Smarajit Bhandyopadhyay, Narendranath Chatterjee, Haridas Bhattacharyya, Satyesh Chandra Bhattacharyya, Haridas Mukhopadhyay, Amarendranath Chatterjee, Ramesh Chandra Goswami, Mohan Chakraborty, Manmatha Biswas and a few others. They had very successfully launched a vigorous No-Tax Campaign among the people of Tehatta and its contiguous areas that ultimately resulted in the popular excitement to refuse to pay taxes all around the Tehatta areas.

At this growing gesture of the Tehatta No-Tax Movement the local authority of the British Government had become seriously infuriated and it had thus angrily declared all pro-movement activities illegal and officially proclaimed, for this purpose, Section 144 Cr.P.C. But it was factually true that defying the very Section the leaders, workers and supporters of the movement picketed at the day of the session of the Union Board and gheraoed the Union Court. The angry police had made an indiscriminate lathi charge over them and also made inhuman torture on them. In protest to these inhuman police-atrocities, the local Chowkidars and
Dafadars had resigned and joined hands with the movement leaders, that had added an extra stimulus to the movement.

In order to suppress the No-Tax Movement in its very early stage, the police authority had arrested first Haripada Chattopadhyay, the main organizer of the No-Tax Movement at Tehatta and then all the important leaders and workers one by one. With the arrest of the leaders and workers the vigorous No-Tax Movement had immediately faced a state of inertia and immobility.

But in order to remove the state of inertia of the movement the leaders and workers of the movement who were still not arrested and anyhow managed to abscond to avoid arrest, had toured tirelessly all over the nearby villages of Tehatta to organize the people in favour of the movement and the people had once again become very much interested to join the movement and to make it a vigorous one.

When during the course of the Tehatta No-Tax Movement the Nadia District Congress Committee (N.D.C.C.) had met its 2nd session on the 19th June, 1932 at Tehatta with a view to reinvigorating the movement, about 20,000 people from different corners of Nadia district had assembled there defying all restrictions on rail, road and ferry communications, imposed by the local authority of the British Government, and even boldly violating the Section 144 Cr.P.C.
The police, having noticed the daring attitude of the people in spontaneously joining the meeting of the N.D.C.C. in such a great number, had become absolutely furious in anger and instantly broken in violence. The police men had immediately made indiscriminate lathi-charge over the gathered people and made many of them seriously injured. Out of the serious fury the police men had once started to fire quite blindly on the people gathered there. In this gun-shell firing of the police Satish Sardar, an innocent peasant living in the village Chanderghat, adjacent to Tehatta was killed on spot and many other people were seriously injured. It is indeed a pathetic side of the history of the No-Tax Movement at Tehatta.

Regarding this pathetic incident occurred during the No-Tax Movement at Tehatta, the Indian League Delegation consisting of Mr. Leonard Metters and Miss Ellen Wilkinson, the-then two M.Ps. of the British Parliament and a few others, appointed by the British Government in London in 1932, had prepared a very compassionate report in the direction that in a conference of the Nadia District Congress Committee, held at Tehatta on the 19th June, 1932, four or five thousand people according to police report (and about 20 thousand according to another local report) gathered. As per the report of the Delegation----------------

“The crowd was not violent. Police broke up the gathering with lathis, bayonet and butts of rifles. The
police now opened fire and wounded about twenty five people and killed Satish Sardar…

“Satish Sardar was not a Congress man but a (mere) spectator. He leaves a widow and five children between the ages of one and twelve. A number of people, including the wounded, were later on tried and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment each. During the trial the police alleged that the brickbats were thrown at them, but no independent witness were called…”\textsuperscript{38}

Needless to say that this very pathetic report of the Indian League Delegation consisting of the official representatives of the British Government in London had thus become “a very valuable record of acts of terrorism perpetrated in 1932” in India by the reactionary authority of the British Government.

In fact, this historic report of the Indian League Delegation had made an official endorsement on the gravity and extent of the No-Tax Movement at Tehatta in particular and on the depth and seriousness of the political role of the district of Nadia in general. This was why the No-Tax Movement at Tehatta had created a great political sensation all over the district of Nadia and sincerely raised a glorious nationalist sentiment throughout the district as well. So Nadia had played really a
great role in the All India 2nd Civil Disobedience Movement through this very historic No-Tax Movement at Tehatta.

Not only in the Civil Disobedience Movement in the early 1930s, but even in the ‘Quit India’ Movement of the early 1940s, (in fact, in 1942 in particular) also, the district of Nadia had played a very glorious role. The leaders and political workers of the district had strongly organized the ‘Quit India’ movement throughout the district with the great nationalist spirit of patriotism and the pro-movement object of making the British Government quit India as early as possible and thereby created a romantic pro-movement sensation all over the district and brilliantly kept a mark in the whole history of the ‘Quit India’ movement in India.

The political leaders and workers of the district of Nadia had started to organize the ‘Quit India’ movement in the district immediately after they had got the news of arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Rjendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Ballava Bhai Pattel and many others in the early morning of the 9th August, 1942 through Radio. These prominent leaders of the Indian National Congress were arrested by the British police as soon as the All India Congress Committee (AICC) had adopted the historic ‘Quit India’ Resolution at the deep night of the 8th August, 1942 in the direction that an all-comprising mass movement in India under the supreme leadership of Gandhiji is
going to be immediately organised just to ensure “the immediate ending of British rule in India.”

The news of arrest of almost all the national-level Congress leaders had mentally aggrieved a lot the Congress leaders and workers of Nadia. They had immediately organized Hartal i.e., Bandh in almost all the important areas of Nadia in the very morning of the 9th August. After that they had organized processions against the arbitrary arrest of the all-India leaders with the pro-movement slogans like ‘Bharat Mata, Jindabad’, ‘Gandhiji, Jindabad’, ‘British, Quit India’, ‘Samrajyabadi Juddhe ek Pai-o Noy, ek Bhai-o Noy’(i.e. ‘Not a Pai, not a Bhai’) and so on. In this way they had instantly started the ‘Quit India’ movement in the district of Nadia.

In order to accelerate the speed of the ‘Quit India’ Movement throughout the district of Nadia, the leaders and workers of the district had instantly taken the decision to organize and launch the movement on both the methods of 1) overt constitutional non-violent activities and 2) covert spontaneous violent activities. The overt constitutional activities included (a) meeting (b) procession, (c) bandh i.e., hartal, (d) boycott of academic insitutions and Law Courts, (e) gherao, (f) hoisting of National flag on the top of the Government buildings, offices, courts etc., (g) pro-movement postering and wall writing and so on. The covert violent activities, on the other hand, included (a) removal of railway lines, fishplates,
signal posts, telegraph posts etc., (b) cutting of railway wires and telephone wires, (c) burning of the Government offices, record rooms of the Government, post offices, railway stations, trains, refugee camps made by the Government etc., (d) snatching of post bags, (e) political dacoity, (f) forceful disruption of communication system, (g) throwing of brickbats towards the patrolling cars of the police, (h) throwing of bombs, (i) use of arms and ammunition and so on.

It is on the basis of the use of both the overt constitutional means and covert violent means as well that the leaders and workers of the district of Nadia had very strongly and quite brilliantly organized the ‘Quit India’ movement all over the district.

It is very interesting to mention here that the leaders and workers of both the-then Nadia District Congress Committees (N.D.C.C.s)---Ad-hoc and Suspended ----had directly organized the ‘Quit India’ Movement all over the district of Nadia as a joint venture. The leaders and workers of the Nadia branch of the Forward Bloc, organized by Subhash Chandra Bose, had whole-heartedly taken direct part in organizing, launching and guiding the movement throughout the district. The Nadia branch of the Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI), led by Soumendra Nath Thhakur, had not only directly participated in the movement, but also played a very crucial role in it and expedited it throughout the district to a large extent especially through the covert violent pro-movement
activities. Even the district branch of the Congress Socialist Party (C.S.P) had also played a very direct and prominent role in the movement.

But it is equally interesting to mention here that due to the international contact of the Communist Party of India (CPI) with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the district branch of the CPI did not join the movement against the British Government in India, as the Communist Government of the Soviet Union (to which the-then CPI’s international political guide CPSU identically belonged,) was an ally to the British Government in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} World War and did not want to harass and embarrass the British Government in India. Even the Nadia district branches of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League had not also joined the movement.

It is also interesting to note here that more than five hundred leaders and workers of Nadia were arrested during the ‘Quit India’ movement. Nearly three hundred arrested persons were sentenced to imprisonment from six months to three years and nearly one hundred and fifty arrested persons were acquitted due to the lack of evidence against them and nearly fifty persons got released on producing written promise of not being involved in the pro-movement activities in future.
This is, in short, the very outline scenario of the historic role of the district of Nadia in the ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942. We will discuss this outline sketch of the role of the district in the later chapters with greater detail.

**Political Legacy of Nadia**

Needless to say that the district of Nadia had inherited a great political legacy from the historical past. Srichaitanya, a Baishanava monk of Nabadwip of Nadia, had vigorously organized the First Civil Disobedience Movement in India against the arbitrary and unjust ordinance of prohibition on the Cult of Sankirtana, i.e., the holy culture of Nam-Gan of Lord Krishna, promulgated by the Kazi Saheb of Nabadwip; and with this mass Civil Disobedience Movement he had quite democratically convinced the Kazi Saheb to withdraw his order of injunction over Sankirtana and he was greatly successful in doing this. And the Kazi Saheb had withdrawn his prohibitory ordinance on Sankirtana unconditionally and Srichaitanya had thus achieved splendid success in the First Civil Disobedience Movement in India. According to Sukumar Sen, an eminent literary personality, “It (i.e., Srichaitanya’s Sankirtana movement against the unjust injunction of the Kazi Saheb of Nabadwip over the cult of Sankirtana) was perhaps the first act of civil disobedience in the history of India.” 39a
Nadia district had also experienced with great pride the glorious tradition of the historic Indigo Revolt during the period of 1859-60. The indigo farmers of Nadia had fought a great battle very bravely and valiantly against the British Nilkar Sahebs who under the safe protection of the British Government in India forced them to plant indigo at a very minimum price which was by no means sufficient for the livelihood of them (the farmers) and their families. They had thus boldly organized the Indigo Revolt in almost all the parts of Nadia. Though their revolt was eventually subdued by the mightier power of the British Government, still their courage and energy in organizing the revolt had created a history in the whole scenario of the political movement of India. 39b

Besides, Nadia is the birth-place of many freedom fighters and political leaders and workers. It is also the working place as well as the dwelling place of many of them. They had organized many socio-political movements in Nadia. Their political activities and pro-movement efforts had become so serious and so effective that the local authority of the British Government had felt seriously disturbed and irritated. The police had thus often unnecessarily and arbitrarily harassed them, arrested them, tortured them and often fired at them. They were often sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for a period of six months to ten years
and often they were sentenced to deportation to Andaman. It is in this way that the
district of Nadia had acquired a rich political legacy of its own.

It is interesting to note that Sri Jatindra Nath Mukhopadhyay,\textsuperscript{40} popularly
called ‘Bagha Jatin’, a great revolutionary, started his political life first in this
district of Nadia while studying in the A.V. School of Krishnanagar. Again Nadia
feels proud of Tarak Das Bandyopadhyay\textsuperscript{41} who once upon a time was the soul of
Nadia politics in particular and Bengal politics in general as well. Besides, many
important all-India leaders like Bipin Chandra Paul, Chittaranjan Das, Sarojini
Naidu, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Dr Aney, F.K Nariman\textsuperscript{42} and a few others made several
political tours in Nadia and organized the masses in favour of the mainstream of
India’s struggle for freedom.

At the early phase of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Kazi Najrul Islam, \textsuperscript{43} a most
revolutionary poet, used to live in Krishnanagar, where he wrote his famous poems
“Chal, Chal Chal, /Urdha Gagane Baje Madal,” “Kandari Hunshiar,” “Amra
Shakti Amra Bal AmraTarun Dal” and so on. \textsuperscript{44} Even Netaji Subhash Chandra
Bose came to Krishnanagar many a time in 1913, 1930, 1931, etc. in order to
supervise and guide the political situation of Nadia district and also to organize the
people of the district in favour of India’s struggle for freedom. \textsuperscript{45} Even the great
poets, namely, Dwijendra Lal Roy, Karuna Nidhan Bandhyopadhayay, Bijaylal
Chattopadhayay etc. were born and brought up in this district and had rendered invaluable contribution to Nadia’s politics through their patriotic literature.  

Even on the 4th September, 1884, young Rabindra Nath Tagore came to Ranaghat---a Sub-division of Nadia district—where he met Nabin Chandra Sen, the-then Sub-divisional Officer (S.D.O) of Ranaghat, who wrote the epic-poem “Palashir Yuddha.” The-then young Poet Rabindranath Tagore had made a great discussion with the senior Poet and experienced administrator Nabin Chandra Sen regarding the socio-political scenario of Ranaghat in particular and of Nadia district in general along with their common discussion on Bengali language and literature. Obviously the district of Nadia had once become a place of immense socio-political importance.

It is once again interesting to note here that Nadia district used to launch different movements frequently against the oppressive rule of the British Raj. Different cases were thus instituted against the freedom fighters belonging to this district. The cases like Throwing of Bombs, Use of Fire-arms, Robbery of Mail Bags,, Removal of Railway Lines etc. were most notable. Besides, Krishnanagar High Street Rioting case, Krishnanagar Town Hall Rioting Case, Krishnanagar
Sedition Case, Ranaghat Rioting Case etc.\textsuperscript{51} deserve special mention in this regard.

While launching the political movements, especially the freedom movements in different times and also participating in them, the leaders, supporters and participants of Nadia district were arrested, beaten and even fired.\textsuperscript{52} According to the Report of the Indian League Delegation, officially appointed by the British Government in London in 1932,\textsuperscript{53} Satish Sardar, a peasant of the District, was shot dead in a police firing at a meeting of the Nadia District Congress Committee (NDCC) at Tehatta in 1932 (19.6.1932) on the occasion of a ‘No-Tax Movement’ in favour of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Civil Disobedience Movement organized by Mahatma Gandhi at the national level and this pro-movement meeting of the N.D.C.C at Tehatta had created a great political sensation among the people of the district of Nadia and thus in the very meeting more than 10,000 people (20,000 people according to another report) gathered with quite spontaneity and also with great political zeal.\textsuperscript{54}

Besides, the Unlawful Association Ordinance, Unlawful Instigation Ordinance along with the Sun-Set Law ----the law prohibiting the leaders from going out of house at night—were strictly imposed in Nadia district to control and curbe the sensational political activities of the political leaders and workers of the district.\textsuperscript{55} Despite all these restrictions, the leaders and the political workers of the
district had been continuing their movements and pro-movement activities in favour of India’s struggle for freedom.\textsuperscript{56}

In this direction, the role of some of the local freedom fighters\textsuperscript{57} deserves special attention. The political history of Nadia can never forget the contribution of Ajit Kumar Ganguli, popularly called ‘Patal-da’ who, as the main political figure of the district, actively participated in all the movements of the district since 1920. Ananta Hari Mitra of Krishnanagar was hanged on 28.9.1926 due to his involvement in the Kankori Conspiracy Case.\textsuperscript{58} Basanta Biswas, a great revolutionary of Nadia, was also hanged on 11.5.1915 due to his involvement in a case of murder of a police constable in Lahore.\textsuperscript{59}

Besides, the political leaders like Haripada Chattopadhayay, Lakshmi Kanta Moitra, Tarakdas Bandyopadhyay, Amarendra Nath Chakraborty, Amritendu Mukherjee, Asim Kumar Mazumder, Abdul Mannan, Kanai Paul, Shyamapada Bhattacharyya, Salil Paul, Taradas Mukhopadhyay, Nibaran Chandra Mazumdar, Niranjan Modak, Nirapada Roy, Fazlur Rahman, Debesh Singha Roy, Bireswar Basu, Shiba Chandra Chattopadhayay, Haridas Bhattacharyya, Haridas Mukherjee, Ramesh Chandra Goswami, Manmatha Biswas, Mohan Chakraborty, Narendranath Chatterjee, Amarendranath Chatterjee and a great many others had contributed a lot to the political movements of Nadia district.\textsuperscript{60}
Moreover, the freedom fighters namely Smarajit Bandyopadhyay, Kashi Kanta Moitra, Gobindra Chakraborty, Shibaram Gupta, Dhirananda Goswami (Madhu Babu), Sanat Kumar Mukherjee (Vadu Babu), Mohan Kali Biswas, Jagannath Majumdar, Keshab Chandra Mitra, Harendra Nath Bose, Gopendranath Mukherjee, Sudhiranjan Lahiri (Kabu-Da), Shikharesh Chandra Moitra, Dulal Bose, Amal Sarkar, Narayan kumar Dutta, Balai Goswami, Balailal Mukherjee, Shyam Sundar Halder, Mihir Ranjan Dey, Tinkari Bhattacharyya, Bimal kumar Chatterjee, Sudhir Kumar Chakraborty, Tripura Prasad Bagchi, Nitai Paul, Phani Khan, Shashi Khan, Bhabadeb Bhradra, Ramesh Dutta, Manoranjian Sen, Someswar Chowdhury, Satyesh Chandra Bhattacharyya, Baidyanath Paramanik, Kalimuddin Sheikh, Nani-Gopal Singha, Bhabesh Dasgupta, Chandicharan Chakraborty, Rabindranath Mukherjee, Shyamal Chatterjee, Gour Chandra Kundu and many others had left an abiding impression in the political history of Nadia.61

Furthermore, the female freedom fighters like Shailabala Majumdar, Aparna Bandyopadhyay, Priti Chattopadhayay, Supriti Sanyal, Sailabala Majumdar, Pramoda Das, Nirmal Nalini Ghosh, Alpana Bandyopadhayay, Rekha Roy (Majumdar), Mamata Ganguli, Minati Das, Lalima Mukherjee, Uma Mukherejee, Minati Nandi and a great many others had also played a very significant role in the Nadia’s political movements.62
In fact, “with the enthusiastic participation of the large and innumerable famous-unfamous and known-unknown male and female, the great freedom history of Nadia will remain ever radiant.”

It, therefore, needs no saying that Nadia district had had a solid political experience for a pretty long time. And this experience had played a great part in inspiring the political leaders, workers and even the common people of the district to follow up the line of the country-wide ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

2. Calcutta and Murshidabad were of historic importance. Calcutta, the English settlement, was nearest the sea (generally the river Hoogli) and the ships of other nations (namely French, Dutch ships) had to sail past Fort William to reach their respective ports.”---See K.A.Nilkantha Sastri and G.Srinivasachari; Advanced History of India, Allied Publishers’ Private Limited, New Delhi, 1982, p.589.
“Murshidabad was (once) the capital of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It was an historically important place of the 18th Century. It experienced burning patriotism on the one hand and despicable treachery on the other. This Murshidabad was associated with the memory of Nawabs Ali Vardi, Siraj-Ud-Daula, Mirjafar, Miran, Mirkashim (etc.). It was the playground of the British rule at its adolescence.” See Pratibha Moitra; Oittihasik Murshidabad: A Guide to Historic Murshidabad (in Bengali), Gana-Nirdesh Pustakalay, Murshidabad, 1975, p.1.

3. “… The history of Murshidabad City is the history of Bengal during the eighteenth century.” According to Lord Clive, “The city of Murshidabad is as extensive, populous and rich as the city of London with this difference that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than in the last city.” Quoted in Pratibha Moitra, op.cit., p.1.

4. See Kumud Nath Mallik, Nadia Kahini (in Bengali), Nadia Kahini Publicity Department, Ranaghat, 1972 p.378. See also Nadia (in Bengali), op.cit., p.1.


6. See Nadia (in Bengali), op.cit., p.1. See also ‘District Census 2011’ for the present population of Nadia district. As per the Census present population of Nadia is 5,168,488 with a population density of 1,316 inhabitants per square
kilometer (3,410/Square miles). The population growth rate of Nadia was 12.24%.

7. Naresh Chandra Chaki, Nadiar Parichiti, (in Bengali),N.N.Ghosh Pustakalay, Ranaghat,1976,p.4. See also Nadia, op.cit.,p.9. Presently Nadia has a sex-ratio, as per the ‘District census, 2011’, of 947 females for every 1000 males and a literacy rate of 75.58%

8. Naresh Chandra Chaki, op.cit.,p.4. See also Nadia,op.cit.,p.11.


9a. Interviews with Smarajit Bandyopadhayay, Harendra Nath Bose and Balailal Mukherjee

on 14.2.1985,27.2.85. and 2.6.85.respectively.

10. Interviews with Smarajit Bandyopadhayay and Kalimuddin Sheikh on 14.2.1985 and 4.7.85 respectively.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.,pp.3-4. For a detailed study on the rivers of the district see Kumud Nath Mallick, op.cit.,pp.380-95.


15. Nadia,op.cit.,p.2. See also Kumud Nath Mallick, op.cit.,p.381
16. Ibid., p.3 and also p. 13. And this view was also shared by Smarajit Bandyopadhayay and Shibaram Gupta in their interviews on 14.2.1985 and 27.2.85 respectively.


18. Ibid.


22. Ibid., pp. 57-8.

23. Interviews with Smarajit Bandyopadhayay, Shibaram Gupta, Harendra Nath Bose, Salil Paul and Ashim Kumar Majumdar on 14.2.1985, 27.2.85, 12.5.85, 6.5.85 and 31.5.85 respectively.


25. It is popularly known as the Battle of Plassey, fought between the large army of the Nawab Siraj Ud-Daula and the British forces of 3,200 troops under the
leadership of Lord Robert Clive at Plassey on the 23rd June, 1757. In this battle, Mir-Jafar who ‘had under him 25,000 troops of Siraj’ “did not fight for Siraj. The battle that followed the next day was a ridiculous affair, the victors having 23 killed and 49 wounded and even the vanquished having not more than 500 losses… Siraj was completely defeated. Clive saluted Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Bengal and enthroned him at Murshidabad. Poor Siraj was put to death by the order of Mir Jafar’s son” Miran. See K.A.Nilakanta Sastri and G.Srinivasachari, op.cit.,pp.591-92.

26. There was a conspiracy against Siraj-Ud-Daula, engineered by Jagat Seth, Mir Jafar, Raj Ballabh, Roy Durlabh etc. who were not satisfied with Siraj’s behaviour. They signed a secret contract with Lord Robert Clive on the condition that Clive would help Mir Jafar in achieving the throne of Murshidabad, and in exchange Mir Jafar would extend to the British Government special commercial privileges. See Atul Chandra Roy, Bharater Itihas (in Bengali), Calcutta Book House, Calcutta, 1972, p.262.

27. For a detailed study of the role of the district of Nadia in the Indigo Revolt, see Swadhinata Sangrame Nadia, Nadia District Citizens’ Council, Krishnanagar, 1973, pp.69-94 and also p.125. See also Nadia, op.cit., p.23 and Naresh Chandra Chaki, op.cit., p.125.

29. Interviews with Shibaram Gupta, Sanat Mukhopadhayay, Harendra Nath Bose and Smarajit Bandyopadhyay on 27.2.1985, 16.6.85, 12.5.85 and 14.2.85 respectively.


31. Interviews with Smarajit Bandyopadhyay, Shibaram Gupta, Salil Kumar Paul and Harendra Nath Bose on 14.2.1985, 27.2.85, 6.5.85 and 12.5.85 respectively.


35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.


37a. Ibid.


39a. This comment of Sukumar Sen has been quoted by Biswajit Sarkar, ‘Srichaitanyadeva O Bharater Pratham Gana-Andolan’ in S. Paul and S. Roy (eds.), op.cit., p.184.(bracket is ours).


41. Ibid., pp. 252-4.


47. *Swadhinata Sangrame Nadia*, op.cit., pp. 63-64. See also Naresh Chandra Chaki, op.cit., pp. 57-65. Besides, the interview with the S.D.O of Ranaghat, Sri Kanta Prasad Sinha taken on 4.9.1984 regarding the event of meeting of the-
then S.D.O. Nabin Chandra Sen with the young poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, enlightened a great deal about the matter.


49. For the study of different political cases, See Swadhinata Sangrame Nadia, op.cit., pp.143-45.

50. Interviews with Salil Paul, Smarajit Bandyopadhyay on 6.5.1985 and 14.2.85 respectively.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.


   The I.L.D. Report runs in the way:

   “At Tehatta, in Bengal, a conference of the Nadia District Congress Committee had been called on the 19th June, 1932. Police interfered with the arrival of delegates, refusing to allow the train to stop and prohibiting ferry boats from plying. Despite this, about four or five thousand people, according to police reports (ten to
twelve thousand according to Congress and local estimates), gathered at Tehatta… The crowd was non-violent;… The Police now opened fire and wounded about twenty-five people and killed Satish Sardar …

“Satish Sardar was not a Congressman but a spectator, He leaves a widow and five children between the ages of one and twelve. A number of people, including the wounded, were later on tried and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment each. During the trial the police alleged that brickbats were thrown at them, but no independent witnesses were called…. A woman, Nital Chand Biswas, who received a bayonet wound in the hand on this occasion was acquitted at the trial… She was threatened with instant death.

“We also interviewed a Muslim lad, Fazalulla who had been shot through the thigh. He had nothing whatever to do with the rioting, but had come into Tehatta to buy oilcakes for his bullocks.”

This is the report, regarding the ‘Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha,’ of the ‘Indian League Delegation’ consisting of Mr. L.D. Metters, Mr.V.K.Krishnamenon,


56. Interview with Sri Salil Paul on 6.5.1985.


61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. See Naresh Chandra Chaki, op. cit., p.127.

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