



Journal Homepage: www.katwacollegejournal.com



August Revolution in Midnapore: A Case Study in Tamluk (1942-1944)

*Sanjib Bera & Subhas Chandra Sen**

Department of History, Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, Birbhum, West Bengal.

*Author e-mail: sanjibbera160@gmail.com

Article Record: Received Sep 21 2022, Revised Paper Received Jan 13, 2023, Final Acceptance Jan 15, 2023
Available Online

Abstract

The present work attempts an analytical narrative detailed study of the India's Freedom Movement; two-year periods in Midnapore in South-Western District of Colonial Bengal in 1942-1944, during the World War-II. The advent of Mahatma Gandhi's (Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi) leadership in the Nationalist Movement made a turning point in the Freedom Struggle in India against the British rule. Worldwide economic depression in between the two World Wars and the oppressive colonial rule intensified the rural base of the Freedom Struggle in Midnapore, the largest District of Eastern India. It will analysis how the people of this District joined this activities absence of eminent Congress leaders of India, the temporary setback of the radical phase of the Movement during World War-II, roll of huge number of Women and Students, Hindus and Muslims simultaneously.

Keywords: *Quit India, Denial Policy, Food Crisis, Danipur, Tamluk, Midnapore*

1. Introduction

In 1939, British Government had brought India into the World War –II, without any consultation with the India's National leaders. Congress leaders were opposed this decision. Also, the failure of Cripps Mission March, 1942, brought about a distinct change in the attitude of the Congress. In 1942, inaugurate of Gandhi's leadership in the Nationalist Movement made a turning point in the Freedom Struggle in India against the British rule. The Congress Working Committee passed the 'Quit India Resolution' on 14th July and on 8th August at Bombay the Congress leaders finalized the 'Quit India Resolution'. Mahatma Gandhi indicated in his public speech (Quit India Speech) that the impending Movement was the final Struggle for Freedom. On this day Gandhiji made a call to 'Do or Die', 'Nothing less than Freedom' and 'Open Rebellion'. On 9th August, after the arrest of top-ranking leaders in all over India, local people of India took the movement own hand as well as Midnapore District in Bengal Province. Especially, the role of Midnapore District was the most in August Movement because in the Tamluk Sub-division of this District formed a Parallel Civil Administrative System against the ruthless British rule formed self-Government on 17th December 1942, which was called "Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar" (Tamluk National Government) in 17th December, 1942 to 1st September, 1944. On 26th January 1943, Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar announced formation of "Thana Jatiya Sarkar" in four Thanas of Tamluk Sub-division. In this time, in 16th October, 1942, there occurred devastating Cyclone and high tidal bore in Midnapore District basically entire Tamluk and Contai sub-division and it

caused huge damage, food crisis and just the year after in 1943 in Bengal there spread famine epidemic form and this Self Government able to save the life of the people against it and to materialize it. In the Freedom Struggle the contributions of the different Districts of Bengal was varying nature and degrees, but it must be conceded that the District of Midnapore deserved the honor of the first place.

2. Research Methodology

Quantitative and Qualitative methods are applied to study the subject matter. The objectivity will be taken as tool to represent the subject matter. Both the primary and secondary sources will be tapped to study the Quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research work. Private papers and personal interviews of the respective revolutionaries will be consulted. Side by side personal interviews will be taken to make a cross checking the information to be collected from the primary and secondary sources.

2.1 Japanese Advance to the South Asian Region:

Japan entered the World War –II on 27th September 1940, by signing the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, but though it wasn't until the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7th December, 1941 and then England enter the conflict. The war situation in Bengal took a more serious turn when Japan started commanding the Indian Ocean after having got the possession of Singapore and the Bay of Bengal. The whole of the eastern provinces of India came within the range of war strategy of the Axis Powers. When the German army took into Caucasus and erupted into the Eastern Mediterranean, threatening Egypt and the Red Sea life-line, the Axis powers had to draw the ring of their repressive machine more lightly round the Indians' rebellious spirit. Strategists began to talk of a link-up between the German and Japanese forces, flushed with easy victory in Malaya and Burma and poised for an attack on Bengal. The experiences of the Burmese collaboration with the Japanese invaders imparted a new dimension to the difficulties of the situation as perceived by the Allied Powers in the context of a possible invasion of India. On Eastern Front, the Japanese were rapidly advancing in Burma and it was only after the fall of Rangoon on 8th March, 1942, that the British Government made a conciliatory gesture. In this crucial period, Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the British Cabinet, came to India with some proposals, but he could offer nothing definite except a promise of Dominion Status after the war was over. Neither Congress nor Muslim League could accept it.

2.2 Quit India Resolution:

The Quit India Movement was Gandhi's last All India Satyagraha on the Indian soil. 'Quit India', a simple but authoritative slogan was given during the World War–II. Perhaps the movement can also be called as a by-product of the war situation. The movement was honestly multi-dimensional, all embracing and broad-based; it cut across the blockades of casts, creed, community, religions, and sex produce mass struggle overwhelming the entire country. The elites, the intelligentsia, the middle and lower classes, lawyers, women's students, workers, artisans, craftsmen and peasants all participated in the mass movement. On 14th July, 1942, Congress Working Committee passed a long resolution generally known as the 'Quit India Resolution'. It renewed the demand that "British rule in India must end immediately", and reiterated the view that Freedom of India was "necessary not only in the interest of India, but also for the safety of the world and ending of Nazism, Fascism, militarism and other forms of

imperialism and the aggression of one nation over another....should, however, this appeal fail ...the congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilize all the Non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920....”.

2.3 Struggles in India:

The All India Congress Committee met at Bombay on 7th to 8th August, 1942, and ratified the ‘Quit India Resolution’. On 8th August, Gandhiji made a call to ‘do or die’, in his ‘Quit India Speech’ delivered in Bombay at the ‘Gowalia Tank Maidan’ (August Kranti Maidan). But early morning at 2nd O’clock of 9th August, 1942, Mahatma Gandhi and all others eminent leaders were arrested by the British Government under the Defense of India Rules (D.I.R.). The arrest of leaders of the Congress was a clear indication for the outbreak of an ‘Open Rebellion’ against the British Government almost in every nook and corner of the country. As soon as, news of large scale arrested was immediately followed by Non-Violent popular demonstrations – protest meetings, streets processions, hartals (strikes) carried with National Flag were held all over India. On 9th August, morning it first started in Bombay, gradually the fire spread all over British India and the whole Nation cried with one voice–“Britishers, Quit India”. Not only in Bombay, there were also disturbance in Ahmadabad, Poona and simultaneously in widely spread in the provinces of Madras, Bombay, Bihar, Bengal, Central and United Province. Thus, while the rampage of 1942 went on unabated throughout India until November, the Congress leaders of Midnapore were busy in organizing meetings, ‘hartals’ (strike) and processions with a view to educate the people for their spontaneous participation in ‘Quit India Movement’.

2.4 Price Rise in War Period:

Japan joined the World War –II in 7th December, 1941 and they occupied Burma in 1942. In the meantime, Bengal became a major point for war activities for the British. The increasing demand from the Military and Government agents forced prices up in South Bengal. Lack of rice imports from Burma contributed to the price rise. Rice peasants and landlords traders continued to enjoy profits as prices constantly rose due to demands of war. The official policy remained one of non-interference in the market on the plea that agriculturists realized benefit from any rise in the prices of food-stuff. The poorer section of Midnapore thus suffered from this rise in the prices of basic necessities in the world war context.

2.5 Government’s Denial policy:

In the Eastern Front, the Japanese were advancing rapidly towards India and from all indications it was clear that the Britishers were also getting themselves ready for another successful retreat. The district of Midnapore is skirted by Bay of Bengal in the south, whereby it gained some strategic importance for the British Government. It was apprehended that if the Japanese chose to come by the sea route, they may select the coastal areas of the district as a most favorable landing ground. Therefore, southeastern part of Midnapore district, including the Tamluk Sub-division was declared as an emergency area.

Apprehending a Japanese attack in India through the Coastal areas, the British administration had adopted a drastic denial policy which was rigidly followed in Midnapore probably because of its well-entrenched anti-British tradition. As well as Midnapore District Congress Committee preparation for the final battle, however, began in April, 1942 with an opposition to the Government’s ‘Denial Policy’.

2.6 Food Denial:

In a total war food could be made to act an explosive to the Japanese enemy or to the people who were regarded as potential enemies. On such an assumption food grains were ordered to be surrendered by the people of the coastal districts at the head of the Bay of Bengal. Government's agents were let loose over the countryside to make purchases of the commodities for removal to 'safer custody'. Due to the failure of 'aman' paddy in the year of 1941 in south-eastern Midnapore the economic distress of the people had set in even before, but the Government considered Midnapore a surplus district and began to purchase rice for building up stocks for the army. Procurement was entrusted with Ispahani and Company, known for its commitment to the Muslim League. The agents of the said company began to buy up paddy and rice by force since the middle of 1941 throughout the sub-division of Tamluk with a minimal token price.

Against such a repressive policy, the people of southeastern Midnapore protested. The Tamluk sub-divisional congress committee protested against the procurement to the district magistrate and urged for an immediate stoppage of procurement so that the people could be left with reserve to meet possible distress. But the authorities refused to pay any heed to the protest. The congressmen in south-eastern region of Midnapore began to persuade the villagers not to sell rice and paddy and to offer 'Satyagraha' on the roads through which the procurement carts passed. Many congress workers were arrested under the D.I. Rules. The efforts made by the congress to stand up to resist oppression since the outbreak of the war, particularly the drive against procurement, made in the focal point of resistance to the government and the people began to rally round the congress in increasing numbers. The congress workers protested against the procurement policy enforced by the district authorities, but they found themselves in jails on various pretexts.

2.7 Boat Denial:

On 8th April, 1942, the irresponsible authorities wanted the removal of all types of boats, lest the Japanese should use them. The District Magistrate issued an order that all types of boats of the entire Contai sub-division, the Nandigram Thana and Moyna Thana of the Tamluk sub-division must be removed within 3 hours to Ranichak in the Ghatal sub-division, the distance of which varies from 30 to 90 miles from the prohibited areas. As that impossible order could not be executed, so the remaining hundreds of boats were burnt and destroyed and thousands of rupees worth of valuable property were also destroyed. The situation opened the gates of corruption for the petty Government officials who were to implement the order. This act deprived innumerable people of their only means of subsistence. A normal compensation was offered which, in most cases was not paid.

Tamluk and Contai Sub-divisions along with other parts of Midnapore were declared an emergency area in anticipation of probable Japanese invasion. In Midnapore, boats were the most important means of communication and transport where roads were few and far between and that too were frequently broken by the numerous water channels. Exports of paddy, rice and hay were the basis of the region's cash economy which depended on boats for transport. Both rich and poor people in the region depended on agriculture and trade with the adjoining areas of Twenty-four Parganas and Calcutta by boats. South-eastern Midnapore had and even today has a large population of fishermen solely depending on boats for their livelihood. Without boats it was impossible to get supplies of essential commodities like kerosene, medicine and

cloth from outside. There is no doubt that the livelihood and prosperity of the people of Midnapore were severely affected by the 'boats withdrawal policy' of the Government.

2.8 Bus and Bi-Cycles Denial:

In addition to water route communication, the Government imposed control on land route communication. The authority withdrew motor buses from the roads and few permitted to ply were allotted very little amount of petrol in view of war crisis. The panicky authorities in Midnapore callously disregarded the interests of the people who were put to endless sufferings for demanding bus services.

Then there came still another order, equally oppressive, for removing bi-cycles. The entire area covered by Nandigram, Sutahata, Mahishadal and Moyna and a substantial area of Tamluk and Panskura Thana were denuded of bi-cycles. Nominal compensation was paid. Twenty-five percent of the owners of the Bi-cycles got Eight annas to Rs. 5/- and fifty percent got Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 as compensation. Many people refused to accept the low compensation which varied between Eight annas to Rs. 10/-.

2.9 Government Food Policy:

Food policy of Colonial Government was anti-people in Midnapore District. The year 1941 would be deficit year so far as the food-situation of the sub-division was concerned, local leaders of Tamluk suggested to the District Magistrate to import rice from abroad and to take measure to stop export of rice from this region, but the bureaucratic head of the district did not listen the advice. So, congress workers protested, but they found themselves in jail on various pretext, empowered by the Defense of India Rules. Government on the issue of exports of paddy and rice reached its climax at Danipur in Mahishadal Thana.

2.10 Danipur Police Firing:

At this stage, on 8th September, 1942, just one month after the August Movement had started at Danipur village, on the banks of river Rupnarayan, under Mahishadal Police Station, the owners of a Rice Mill, situated at Danipur Village, had been exporting rice and paddy out of the Midnapore District in collusion with Government officials. The local people apprehended that if such clandestine deals were allowed to continue, very soon they would have no food-grains left in their homes. Thus, two thousand five hundred villagers assembled near the mill and demanded an assurance from the mill-owners to stop further export of food-grains. On receiving this information, Sudhir Kumar Sarker, a police officer of Mahishadal Police Station, arrived with a police party to help the owners of the rice mill to export rice by Rupnarayan River at Danipur. To stop this protest, police open fired several rounds to disperse the unarmed crowd, as a result three villagers were killed and hundreds of villagers were injured. This was the first shooting incident in the sub-division of Midnapore in 1942.

3. Struggle in Bengal:

The Congress volunteers succeeded in creating an anti-British feeling in early 1942. Thus, while the 'Quit India Movement' in the rest of Bengal began as a movement of the educated middle class 'bhadraloks' (Gentlemen), it was Midnapore that exhibited the distinction of mass involvement in its crucial struggle against the British Rule. Midnapore district was mostly inhabited by Mahishayas cast. The Mahishayas through the ages are a hardworking people and their physique is quite sound, they possess a spirit of Independence and a strong

sense of discipline. They cannot stand humiliation or injustice to themselves or to others. The people of Tamluk Sub-division live mostly on land and such they have an independent bent of mind which is not common with employment seekers. Their leaders are also of a different mettle. They work with the people and live with them, fighting shy of the politics of the metropolises. The silent work which they so do among their own people bears fruit when they call comes for action. So, in every national movement of the recent times Midnapore has given the lead.

3.1 Struggle in Midnapore:

Midnapore district had always been in the forefront of all previous struggles for National Independence. In August, 1942, however, it did not plunge itself heading into the Movement but pause, as it were, for a moment to ponder over the course of action to be followed. Procession, meetings, hartals (strikes), student strikes etc. in protest against the heavy-handed action of the Government, however, went on as usual. Kumar Chandra Jana, President of the Midnapore District Congress Committee, was arrested in the early stages of the August Movement. A few days later, Rajani Kanta Pramanik was also arrested. Then, Nikunja Behari Maiti, president of Contai sub-divisional congress committee, Rash Behari Pal, secretary of Contai Sub-divisional congress committee, Iswar Chandra Mal (M.L.A.), Satish Chandra Samanta, Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee and Sushil Kumar Dhara decided to move to the villages to organize the movement amongst the people. Instructions were sent to other leaders to leave their residences and remain underground to lead the movement.

During the middle of September, 1942, the Congress leaders of Midnapore met at residence of Manmatha Nath Das, an eminent pleader of Midnapore Town, in Calcutta to chalk out the strategy of the movement in the district. It was decided, in the meeting, to wage raid simultaneously on British law courts, Government offices and Police Stations on a particular day throughout the district. The day of 29th September, 1942, fixed as the 'Action Day' for the mass attack on the Government offices.

The district administrators were quick to understand the explosive potentiality of political Movements in Midnapore District. Immediately after the outbreak of the World War-II, Defense of India Rules was promulgated in Midnapore abrogating due process of law. All public meetings and processions without official permission were banned.

The aforementioned observations of the 'Biplabi' bulletin of Tamluk Sub-division ignited the patriotic feelings of the people of Tamluk Sub-division who rose to the occasion and fought for Bengal's honor. The movement of 1942 carried on in Bengal was largely a movement of the people of the Tamluk and Contai Sub-divisions of Midnapore district.

3.2 Formation of War Council in Midnapore:

In the middle of August, 1942, a 'War Council' was formed in Contai and Tamluk Sub-division in Midnapore District. Contai 'War Council' founded by senior congress members of Contai Sub-division likes Rash Behari Pal, Nikunja Behari Maiti, Sudhir Das and Balailal Das Mahapatra. In Tamluk also the Sub-divisional Congress Committee of Midnapore transformed itself into a 'War Council' before the execution of the specific plan of Quit India in the area. By the end of August, the leaders of the 'War Council' came into contact with Annada Prasad Choudhuri, a member of Central Directorate of Quit India Movement. After this contact, the 'War Council' of Contai and Tamluk began to make specific preparations for fulfilling the task of Quit India in Midnapore. By early November, 1942 the Contai 'War Council' converted itself

into a 'Swaraj Panchayat' and continued its activities for a few months. But, the Tamluk rebels with their 'Parallel Administration' continued their work and agitation till September, 1944.

3.3 Volunteers Corps:

The actions taken by the Government were to say the least, repressive and gave rise to resentment accompanied by a revolutionary upsurge in Midnapore. The panicky activities of the British Officials in south-eastern region of Midnapore led the people to apprehend that "they would run away at the first sight of the Japanese, leaving us to our fate. So, it was thought necessary to make preparation to cope with the anarchy which might otherwise overtake the country." The people of the region organized the whole of the area in 1942 for self-protection against the Japanese, should they arrive and British withdraw, not by joining hands with the local official authority but by appealing to the people to be fearless, to depend on their own resources, to resist oppression, to produce for their own needs and retain food grains within their sub-division and not allow them to be exported. The people of the region also raised a large army of volunteers numbering five thousand in course of a few months and several camps were started to train them. The whole population was carefully trained and kept alert and organized.

Partly to resist possible Japanese aggression and partly to face the Government atrocities, local Congress leaders was thought necessary to make preparation the Volunteers corps. So, in Tamluk Sub-division a large number of volunteers were founded two well-trained 'Volunteers Corps'. Sushil Kumar Dhara conceived the idea of well-trained volunteer corps and it was due to his untiring zeal and organizing capabilities that the volunteer corps was formed some time before the 'August Revolution'. The volunteers had to sign a declaration before they could get admission to this corps, after which they were imparted training in military tactics and discipline.

3.4 Bidyut Bahini:

'Bidyut Bahini' a volunteer's crop, which was formed according to the model of the Blitz Krieg of Hitler's Germany, was first formed at Mahishadal Thana and was inaugurated on 26th September, 1942. Sushil Kumar Dhara as a General-officer-commandant (G.O.C.) and Gopi Nandan Goswami as a Commandant in this crop, later on, were formed at Sutahata, Nandigram and Tamluk Thanas. Bidyut Bahini's was comprised of three wings: (i) War Department (ii) Intelligence Department (iii) Ambulance Department. The Ambulance Department has well-trained doctors, compounders, nurses and stretcher-bearers.

Members of Bidyut Bahini were given training in parade, Guerilla warfare and nursing. Sushil Kumar Dhara main architect of this 'Bahini' was the trainer. Moreover, an effective warning system and elementary technical education were imparted during the training. All the members of the 'Bidyut Bahini' wore khaddar clothes and all of them barefooted. Every unit of the 'Bahini' was headed by a General Office Commandant and a Commandant.

3.5 Sisters' Army Camp:

The women of south-eastern Midnapore did not only participate in the Quit India Movement, many of them felt an instinctive attraction for Subhas Chandra Bose's brand of militant politics. After the establishment of a Parallel Government in Tamluk there was simply no dearth of women volunteers who were prepared to defy death for the sake of the motherland.

In Tamluk sub-division took lead role 'Bhagini Sena Sibir' (Sisters' Army Camp) was also started at 'Sutahata Thana' with the trained women volunteers. As time passed, training of the women cadres intensified and like men, they had to undergo physical training, drill and parades.

In fact, Sushil Kumar Dhara, the rebel leader of Tamluk, admitted that the congress success in sustaining the movement was principally due to the co-operation of the women with no political training, no formal education but inspired solely by love for the country. Once the Parallel Government of Tamluk went underground, women volunteers played a decisive role in maintaining links among the desperate congress activities. Without women's co-operation the movement in south-eastern Midnapore, as Gopi Nandan Goswami confirmed, would have an early death.

To this, 'Bhagini Sena', the girl volunteers, was added. They had given a good account of themselves not only in the face of confrontation, but in nursing the wounded as well as in protection the honor of the village ladies from the 'barbarous clutches' of the police and military personnel.

3.6 Direct Action in Midnapore:

On 24th September, 1942, the Congress leaders of Tamluk sub-division, following the path of 'Direct Action' in contravention of Gandhi's call for Non-Violence, decided in a secret meeting, to raid all the Government Offices there would be simultaneous attacks on 29th September, 1942, the Police Stations, Courts and other Government Centers, about one lack of persons, both Hindus and Muslims participated in this fight. Also, as well as Contai sub-division characterized the movement in Midnapore.

3.7 Raided of Police Stations:

Frontal attacks were made on police stations of Tamluk, Mahishadal, Sutahata and Nandigram in Tamluk sub-division. It is significant to note that Panskura and Moyna Thana of the same sub-division were excluded from the Congress program of raid on Police Stations and other Government Offices owing to the weak organization of the Congress volunteers in these two Thanas. On the night of the 28th September, big trees were felled to block the important roads towards Tamluk town. Thirty culverts were broken and twenty big holes were dug on the road. Twenty seven miles of Telegraph and Telephone lines were cut off and 194 Telegraph posts were broken. The ferry boats of Cossye and Hooghly rivers were sunk.

3.8 On 29th September in Tamluk:

On 29th September, 1942, three police stations of the Tamluk sub-division as Tamluk, Mahishadal and Sutahata were simultaneously frontier attacked and Nandigram Police Station was attacked on 30th September, 1942. On 29th September, and during the next seven days, the following were burnt and destroyed: one police station, two police outposts, two sub-registrars' offices, thirteen post offices, nine Union Board offices with their papers, ten Panchayet offices with their papers, twelve liquor shops and four Duk Bungalows, and thirteen offices of the Mahishadal Raj Estate. On the same day, at 3 p.m., previously settled, five big processions approached towards the Tamluk town from different directions. The processions consisted of Hindus and Muslims and there was large proportion of women in each procession. A procession of twenty thousand people, all unarmed and non-violent, approached towards Tamluk

town to seize its police station where it met with indiscriminate firing resulting in deaths of some persons.

3.9 Women Procession:

Matangini Hazra, who was 73 years at the time, led a procession of six thousand supporters, mostly women volunteers, with the purpose of taking over the Tamluk police station. 'Biplabi' newspaper of the "Tamralipta National Government" commented, "Matangini Devi led one procession from the north of the criminal court building; even after the firing commenced, she continued to advance with the tri-color flag, leaving all the volunteers behind. The police shot her three times. She continued marching despite wounds in the forehead and in both hands. She died chanting 'Bande Mataram'." Matangini Hazra of the women volunteers who fell to police bullet was identified in Biplabi as 'the most heroic woman deserve praise for her devotion to the cause of freedom, self-sacrifice and zeal to keep the national flag flying. Ten persons were killed and twenty others were seriously injured at three places in Tamluk Town on 29th September, 1942. Twenty persons were killed and two hundred and fifty others were seriously injured both at Mahishadal and Tamluk town on 29th September, 1942.

3.1.0 Sutahata Thana:

'Bidyut Bahini' (Lightening Armies) members in uniform and also members of the 'Bhagini Sena Sibir' (Sisters' Army Camp) were took part on 29th, September 1942, in front of the big processions consisting of about 40,000 people from Sutahata Thana, which was set on fire and two Aero planes at this time flew at the low height over the gathering and dropped at least one bomb, which fell into a tank and did not cause any damage.

3.1.1 Nandigram Thana:

On 30th September about ten thousand revolutionaries attack the Nandigram police station, the police opened fire, four persons were killed on the spot and one succumbed later on Tamluk Government hospital. Sixteen persons were wounded. Then they burnt and destroyed the opium and hemp shop, the debt settlement office, the 'Katchari House' (Rent Collection Office) of the Mahishadal Raj at Reapara and the post office there.

3.1.2 Government activities in Tamluk sub-division in 1942:

<i>Death form police firing</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Wounded in firing</i>	<i>199</i>
<i>Injured</i>	<i>142</i>
<i>Rape on women</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>Molestation on women folk</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>House burnt</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Arrest</i>	<i>1868</i>
<i>Assaulted by Lathis</i>	<i>4226</i>
<i>Bombing</i>	<i>One time at Sutahata Thana.</i>

3.1.3 Role of Students and Women:

Students and Women were not separate from this movement, they also took active role simultaneously. The students of Tamluk Hamilton H. E. School joined the hartals (strikes),

organized meetings and processions. About 500 students and teachers of high schools of the sub-division had joined this revolution. Prafulla Kumar Bag was the student of class- VII in Mahishadal H. E. School joined this struggle. Sixteen years old Upendra Nath Jana also joined and he was died by police firing on 29th September, 1942, in Tamluk. Huge number of women also joined this struggle like Smt. Kumudini Dakua, Smt. Giribala Das (Jyotsna Das), Smt. Laxmimoni Hazra, Smt. Giribala De (Usha Choudhury), Charusila Jana who were the member of ‘Bhagini Sena Sibir’ (Sisters’ Army Camp). They were also the members of ‘Garam Dal’ (Militant Group) associated with the Revolutionary actions. Matangini Hazra also joined and she took heroic death handed with the tri-color National Flag and chanting ‘Bande Mataram’ on 29th September, 1942. Her 12-year-old grandson was also killed by the police firing. Charusila Jana, Susilabala Debi, Giribala De member of ‘Sisters’ Army Camp’ in ‘Sutahata Thana Jatiya Sarkar’ also took jail in 5th May, 1943.

3.1.4 Terrible Cyclone in Midnapore District:

With police brutality for the August Movement, Midnapore witnessed unprecedented natural calamity which was never experienced within living memory. The terrible cyclone of the 16th October, 1942, wrought indescribable havoc on the entire Tamluk sub-division in Midnapore. According to local estimate about Ten Thousand (10,000) people and Seventy Five Percent (75%) of the cattle died.

3.1.5 Cyclone in Tamluk Sub-division:

S. D. O. of Tamluk refused to suspend the curfew order for a short period in that terrible night of the cyclone. Boats were not allowed to be freely used in the denial areas for saving the lives of persons who somehow escaped their doom by sitting on a tree or the house top at the time of tidal bore. Not only no relief was given for weeks, but no non-official relief organization was allowed to come and operate here for about a month, during that period, hundreds of villagers died for wanting effective relief. Even, a worker of the ‘Marwari Relief Society’ came to ascertain the need of relief, but he was arrested and his stock of rice and other things brought for the purpose of relief taken away by officials.

3.1.6 Report by the S. D. O. of the Tamluk Sub-division effected by the cyclone in 16th October, 1942:

<i>People Died</i>	<i>3,837.</i>
<i>People Injured</i>	<i>1,072.</i>
<i>Cattle Perished</i>	<i>68,193.</i>
<i>Houses Totally Collapsed</i>	<i>1,10,346.</i>
<i>Houses Partially Damaged</i>	<i>76,958.</i>
<i>Crops Destroyed</i>	<i>21,511,49 Acres, 50% of Total Land</i>

3.1.7 Postponed the Revolution:

Caused of the Cyclone, Congress workers of Midnapore, stopped revolutionary activities and took up relief works as cremation of dead bodies, clear the dead body of cattle, giving first-aid to the injured, clearing the roads and tanks, arranging supply of food and medicines. Sixty miles embankment was repaired, surplus paddy of the well-to-do was distributed among the needy Villagers. Repair of roads and others sanitation works remained

under their purview. Many others constructive works were undertaken by the Parallel Government.

3.1.8 Parallel Government in Midnapore:

On 9th August, the Quit India Movement spread all over India as well as Midnapore District in Bengal Province also joined. In the time of August movement, sub-divisional Congress Committee has set up a Parallel Government against ruthless British rule as “Tamralipta National Government” under the Republic of Greater India or in short, “Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar”, was established on 17th December, 1942, (1st day of Pous, 1349 B.S.), will introduce in full fledged democratic Government in future, especially Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee, Satish Chandra Samanta, and their young lieutenant Sushil Kumar Dhara, the three principal architects of “Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar”, had been very strongly imbued with the ideals of democracy and liberty. Following proclamation was published in the subsequent issue of ‘Biplabi’ bulletin, published on 26th January, 1943. It will form part of the Great Indian Federation and will introduce a full-fledged democratic Government in future. All executive powers of the Government have been vested on a ‘Sarbadhinayaka’. Also, he has formed his council of ministers and has been conducting the business of the Government, similarly, ‘Thana Jatiya Sarkar’ or ‘National Government at the Thanas’ (P.S.), have been set up in the four thanas of Tamluk, Mahishadal, Sutahata and Nandigram from 26th January, 1943 and an ‘Adhinayaka’ has been appointed in each of these Thanas who has been empowered to run the administration with the help of his Council of Minister.

3.1.9 Administrator of National Government:

The Congress workers of Tamluk took a bold stand against the systematic Government oppression and set up a Parallel Government called “Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar”, on 17th December, 1942. “Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar” cherished the fond hope of being incorporated into the body of the All India Federation when the later would be formed. On account of exceptional circumstances of the time in the region, election could not be held but one senior member of the Tamluk Congress Committee was nominated as the ‘Sarbadhinayaka’ (Director) of the ‘Jatiya Sarkar’. The director was empowered to appoint, subject to the approval of the sub-divisional Congress Committee, ministers to take charge of Different Departments. The director would run the administration with the aid and advice of the cabinet ministers. The ‘Sarbadhinayaka’ (Director) himself was the War minister. But elsewhere the director was in charge of External Affairs. Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee was in charge of Finance and Susil Kumar Dhara was in Home Department respectively. Satish Chandra Sahoo, as minister of Finance and Education, Balaram Das, as minister in charge of Industry and Publicity, Binoy Krishna Bera, as minister in charge of Communications and Banga Bhusan Bhakta, as minister of Home Affairs.

3.2.0 National Militia:

After the establishment of the national government when ‘Bidyut Bahini’ was elevated to the status of a national militia, some more sections, like the Guerilla Band, law and order Branch, etc. were added to it. The volunteers working under this Bahini always occupied the front position in all the struggles and again under the National Government they came forward to enforce law and order, basically noteworthy work in arresting notorious dacoits and thieves who had been let loose to create disorder. These dacoits and thieves were produced before the Court of the Jatiya Sarkar and dealt with according to law and to organize relief to the

people in times of flood and famines. The Volunteers Corps was entrusted with the tasks of removing war phobia from the minds of the people, preventing export of rice from the district and to launch constructive works in rural Midnapore. Moreover, the Congress Volunteers exhorted the people to remain calm in the midst of Government repression.

3.2.1 National Army:

The important announcement of the ‘Sarbadhinayaka’ – the volunteers’ organization ‘Bidyut Bahini’ (Lightning Army) which had been the main pillar of this movement, was declared as ‘National Army’ by “Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar”. The ‘Bidyut-Bahini’ was first formed at Mahishadal Thana; later Tamluk Thana (P.S.) and Nandigram Thana (P.S.) also organized their own ‘Bidyut-Bahini’. Each Thana’s (P.S.) ‘Bidyut Bahini’ was one G. O. C. (General Officer Commanding) and one commandant. Later, following branches were opened: ‘Guerilla Detachment, sisters’ army, law and order’. And the cyclostyled Bulletin ‘Biplabi’, became the Official Organ of “Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar”.

3.2.2 Garam Dal:

The violent activities in Tamluk sub-division during the period of Parallel Government was perpetrated by the ‘Garam Dal’ (Militant Group). Bengal Government had declared this association as illegal. ‘Garam Dal’ was an integral part of four Thanas and sub-divisional ‘Jatiya Sarkar’, but it had a separate entity and a different organizational base. But its leaders and members were closely attached with this Parallel Government. Sushil Kumar Dhara, G. O. C. (General Officer Commandant) of the ‘Bidyut Bahini’ was privy to the formation of this group. More than one hundred incidents of such type were committed in the region by the ‘Garam Dal’ and the British Government failed to trace single one among these. Smt. Kumudini Dakua, Smt. Giribala Das (Jyotsna Das), Smt. Laxmimoni Hazra, Smt. Giribala De (Usha Choudhury), Smt. Charusila Jana, Susila Bala Debi, were women member of ‘Garam Dal’ (Militant Group) associated with the Revolutionary actions.

3.2.3 Police Atrocities:

Gandhiji had said that the British Government had unleashed ‘leonine violence’ to suppress the spontaneous uprising of the people of India in August Movement, 1942, as well as Midnapore District. In this district, indiscriminate firing on unarmed people with the intention of killing them, the most nefarious action of the police had been physically torture, molestation and rape on helpless women, in some cases in a preplanned and well-organized manner unthinkable in a civilized society, as incident on 9th January, 1943. Also, police were raids in any household to looting and plundering of properties, some cases they also raided wealthy households. Even day of the great cyclone and tidal bore on 16th October, 1942 the police had gleefully burnt down houses by sprinkling kerosene and petrol. In some cases, houses were locked from outside before setting it on fire and domestic animals and household pets were burnt alive.

3.2.4 Gang Raped:

On 9th January, 1943, Daroga Nalini Raha and six hundred of Police and Military Forces from Geokhali out post came to three villages – ‘Masuria, Chandipur and Dihi-Masuria’, in union no.11 of Mahishadal Thana. All male members of these villages were arrested under police custody and forces committed raped on a total of 46 helpless women in broad daylight,

some of whom were Gang raped. On 10th January, 1943, the Police of Tamluk, Sutahata, Mahishadal and Geokhali, along with six hundred soldiers were arrested the five hundred villagers and caned them.

3.2.5 Dissolved:

Mahatma Gandhi's statements, published in the newspaper of the 29th July and 6th August, 1944, gave the sub-divisional workers a new light as it terms of suspending the movement. Barada Kanta Kuiti, the fourth 'Sarbadhinayaka' of the Parallel Government, ordered to dissolve the "Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar" on 8th August, 1944 and he was arrested on 9th August, 1944. Sushil Kumar Dhara, secretary of the Congress Committee, by a statement announced the cessation of activities of "Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar" from 1st September, 1944. The 'Thana Jatiya Sarkar' organizations and 'Bidyut Bahini' also stood dissolved. More than one thousand workers had courted arrest during the few days between 9th August to 29th September, 1944.

4. Conclusion

The open rebellion of 1942 was perhaps the only example showing that Indians fought the British in the absence of top congress leadership. It is also true that Gandhi's 'do or die' call acted miraculously and people joined the August revolution spontaneously illustrating peoples' desire to associate with a movement which would force the British to Quit India. Although the Midnapore Congress launched the movement in response to the 8th August Quit India resolution, the continuity of the rebellion for almost two years despite severe police and military torture indicates the role of the local people irrespective of caste and class in sustaining the anti-British sentiment.

References

Tripathi, A. (1974) Bialliser Bidroha O Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar, Smarak Grantha, *Tamluk: Nikhil Bharat Banga Sahitya Sammelan*, p. 21.

Government of Bengal, *Report of the Food-Grains Procurement Committee*, 1944, p. 29

Nandigram Bulletin, 19th October, 1942

Ananda Bazar Patrika, 27th October, 1942

Chakraborty, B. (1997) Local Politics and Indian Nationalism: Midnapur 1919-1944, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, p. 135

Amrit Bazar Patrika, 8th December, 1945

Pramanik, P. K. (1973) Swadhinata Sangrame Medinipur, Calcutta, p.32

Samanta, S. C. and Others, (1946) *August Revolution and Two Years' National Government in Midnapore: Part – I*, Calcutta: Orient Book Co., pp.6-10

Biplabi, 1st issue, 24th September, 1942

Sannal, H. R. (1994), Swarajer Pathe, *Calcutta: Papyrus*, pp.143-153.

Dhara, S. K. (1973) Prabaha part – I, 2nd edition, *Medinipur: Janakalyan Trust*, pp. 116-120.

Goswami, G. N. August Biplabe Kar Ki Bhumika Chhila, Tamralipta, 11th November, 1977, p.03.

Maity, S. K. (1975) Freedom Movement in Midnapur, Vol.–I, Calcutta: K. L. Firma, pp.112-113.

Goswami, G. N. Banglar Haldighat Tamluk, Rajarampur, Medinipur, 1973, p. 42.

Ghatak, A. C. (1964) Nandigram Itibritta, Calcutta, pp. 41-42.

Vide – report on the cyclone and tidal bore on October, 1942 – Vol-1. Memo No. 6363R, dated 30th September, 1943.

Bari, R. K. (2015) National Government of Tamralipa 1942-44, Part – II, *Tamluk: Tamralipta Janakalyan Samiti*, pp. 200-201.

Bhakta, B. B. (1989) Swadhinata Sangrame Nandigram, Medinipur, p. 172.