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Political Philosophy of Panchanan Barma: A Brief Study on Historical Perspectives

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Abstract:

The political philosophy and political thought are formed by the ability of the state and state-related issues. Politics is one of the strategies for its management and administration. Politics is not the political thought. Political thought is a political process which followed for the administration of a state. The political thought is closely associated with history or the past events. Panchanan Barma was not a political philosopher in formal sense. He was not designed of any structured politico philosophy. But his thoughts and actions have conferred immortality to him. Some elements of the political doctrine are found through his various socio-economic and political programmes of Panchanan Barma. The colonial attitude and thinking of the British loyal Indians were severe injured to him. His basic concept of the state was social equality. He always protested against the social discriminations. His real-life experience gave him about the idea of the state. He has seen through his own life, how the backward class people were exploited, humiliated and deprived by the colonial Government.

Keywords: Political Philosophy, Panchanan's Ideas, Contemporary Society, Colonial Motive, Natives Attitude, Backward Society.

1. Introduction:

Panchanan Barma was a prominent Indian personality of the twentieth century. Although he is known as the Father of the Rajbangshi community (Barman, K.C.2015, 111), yet he is not just for north-east of India, also influenced to the deprived and disadvantaged communities all over India. Though he debuted as the representative of the Rajbangshi community, yet the every backward communities of the Indian society have benefited in some way his social activities. He is alive in the midst of his works today. Keep in mind; he had appeared in North-Eastern India at a critical period of British India (Barman.Ch.K.2015, 55). But the colonial cycle could not hold him. He became Panchanan Burma through his efforts and dedications towards society. He did not consider about himself, he always thought for others. He dedicated all his comforts of life and fought for the improvement of backward class people. His various activities towards society undetected on the contemporary mirror. His fame would have spread outside India, in today's media age. But his works for the society as a backward class people has shown small feat on the colonial mirror. Some of the enlightened scholars under colonial rule had promoted to Panchanan Barma as a representative of a particular class, i.e. only the community of Rajbangshi. But his efforts towards contemporary society had been affected to all classes of people more or less. Therefore, the shadow of Panchanan Barma is seen to any movements after his age in the north-east of India.

North-east India was unknown to the scholars of Calcutta until the pre-British period. This region became illuminated on the Map of India by the favour of the British after established their rule. But the glorious past History of Bengal was built in this region and gradually had spread in different parts of Greater Bengal. Yet, this region was totally unaware to the people of Greater Bengal for a long time. So, there was no complete history for this

region. Naturally, the most prominent personalities of this region did not get proper dignity for their actions of the society. Rather, their actions towards society have focused in limited space. This case was happened for Panchanan Barma. During the first half of 20th century, Panchanan Barma was the only faithful representative for the entire backward class people in north-eastern India. (Barman, Ch.K.2015, 389) At that moment, Calcutta-based scholars were too busy with the problem of its adjacent areas. They did not keep any information about the residents of North Bengal. North Bengal was to him as separate region of Greater Bengal. So, the social activities of Panchanan Barma did not evaluate in the light of colonial affairs. A few educated groups of scholars were only subordinated to the British for their own interest at the contemporary period. They have raised their own socio-economic status after given more facilities from the colonial ruler. The backward class people were untouchable to him. The classification in the society became created according to the economic status and professions. (Chattopadhyaya, S, & Choudhury, A.2010, 129) Jyotibao Phule of Maharashtra was first realized about the impact of humiliation and oppression upon the lower caste people and Panchanan Barma in Greater Bengal.

Nationalism is a significant part of the political thought of India. The significant effect of nationalism upon different movements in British India. Thus the nationalist leaders were able to unify the Indians. Panchanan Barma was a realistic politician. He did not see the society and state in separately. Traditional Indian society according to the vision that each caste and communities have a distinct and important role. A healthy social life is depended by the equal role of different caste and communities. But if the caste and caste system has remained in the political thought, then the healthy and normal life is disrupted. As a result of caste discrimination will grow in the society, and that society was divided into two parts, it was deeply witnessed by Panchanan Barma. He has realized the scenario of contemporary social system through his own life. The contemporary state system did not give him value to his education and qualifications. The major disadvantaged people were exploited in several ways in the light of colonial platform during the first half of the twentieth century. Although, the reformer was available for remediation in big Calcutta area, but there was not a single person or reformer for the disadvantaged people of the North Bengal. Panchanan Barma had searched many schemes alone to rescue the backward section peoples of the contemporary society.

He has made a protest against discrimination and the caste system through his writings in several periodicals. But the British government did not priority to his language of protest. In fact, British loyal educated Indians of the contemporary society were led campaigns towards his thoughts and ideas. But he did not stop his voice at all. He felt, it was impossible to make a protest against them from outside without participation in administration system. So he was seeking to unite the majority people of the Rajbangshi community. He tried to unite the Rajbangshi community and enter the administration. In this context, he founded Kshatriya Samiti (society) in 1910, Rangpur. He gathered all the Rajbangshi ksatriyas in the Samiti (society) and tried to protest jointly against the colonial government. Already, he was appointed there as editor of the Rangpur Sahitya Parishad. The disadvantaged people became aware about their legal rights and freedoms through those issues. At this stage, it is not only the families of Rajbangshi Kshatriyas, but several disadvantaged people in different communities were joined in this action of sacrifices. Keep in mind, that there were many people in north-east India who had not their own identity. At that moment they joined in the Kshatriya movement and able to gain their own political right, as well as own identity (Barman,Ch.K.2015,55). In fact, many people in the Muslim community were assembled with the social activities of Panchanan Barma. At the same time, most of the families of the Muslim community in the region were assaulted, deprived and

disadvantaged like the Rajbanshi community. So, they did not hesitate to support the social movement of Panchanan Barma.

2. Ideas of Political Thought

Before going to analyses the background of Panchanan Barma's political thought, then will go back to the days during the second half of the nineteenth century Bengal. The British government's absorption and exploitation had reached in extreme level before and after the Rebellion of 1857. After gained the ability of exclusive rule in India, the British East India Company had chosen India as the field of their monopoly exploitation. All developmental programmes attempt by the British Government not for this land, only for their land of England and they did not notice to improve the country. At the same time, the dominant groups of the society were busy to increase their influence and property and opportunist groups were engaged themselves busy for additional benefits from the society. On the other side, backward class people were exploited and deprived by them day by day. The entire society was filled by the speculators.

In a situation like this, Panchanan Barma was born in 1866 in a middle class Jotedar family at a nameless village of Mathabhanga. He was born in a cultured family, so would not difficult to put a foot on higher education. He returned to his native village at Khalisamari by the end of his higher education on time. It is to be note that he was only the highest educated man among the Rajbanshi community at the same time (B.Ch.L.2008,82). But the princely state or the colonial government did not value to his academic degrees. He did not get any Govt. job according to qualification by shaking door to door of the government offices. So, he felt, if I do face these difficulties as a higher educated man, then how the status of the backward classes people of the society today. He could not still to see the harassment of common people in the society. He decided to dedicate his life to serve for the common people of the society. The mission of my life will have to work for all disadvantaged peoples of the society. His idea about the state had been changed and the real character of the British state became clear to him. He planned to form an exploitation and corruption-free society where all classes of society will have to enjoy social justice. In this way, his political idea was formed by the motive of the contemporary approach.

He decided to serve for the society. But, both money and time are necessary to perform any social welfare. In those days, the law was quite a profitable business. So he decided to practice advocacy in order to earn more money. In the year of 1888 the Victoria College was opened and arrangements were made in the College for the schooling of M.A. and LLB classes and the degrees were awarded under the Calcutta University (Debnath,S.2008, 103). So, he passed Law degree from the Victoria College under the Calcutta University. After completion of his Law degree, he started his advocacy business at Rangpur court in 1901 and there he faced some troubles and guessed reality of the classification society. Not only the British, a large proportion of educated co-called upper class Indians were opposed and assaulted to him. The guilty of Panchanan Barma was that he is a man of Rajbanshi community as backward group of the society. Then the social status of the Rajbanshis was not so good. The colonial government and a few groups of vernacular scholars have expressed their different views and opinions in different census reports about the people of the Rajbangshi community. Sometimes they opined that the Rajbanshis were Kirata, sometimes untouchable etc. as their own view. But the Rajbanshi is a distinct caste and the roots of their glorious traditions entered in deep of the past, but they avoided that fact (Barman,Ch.K.2015,327). Not only the government's apathy, opposition and flexibility of the native educated class people were responsible for the distress conditions of the backward class people as well as the Rajbanshi community. This will bring out the plight of the disadvantaged class specially the people of Rajbanshi community. He had expressed his

desire to represent himself for the backward class, but when he had gone to work for distress, he discovered the degraded status of the Rajbanshi community, and then he considered that it should be rescue the community. First he went to do work for Rajbangshi community, but he involved with the works for all classes people of the society in undeclared way. Keep in mind, a social worker is going to work for the particular society through a particular issue; but they did not stay on that certain issues. Gradually, he involved with collective issues as well as greater problems of the society. Certainly, it was happened for Panchanan Barma. He realized, it is impossible for me as a single man to do develop for the backward classes of the contemporary society. So he decided to dedicate himself to the national movement. Becoming a part of the national movement and he will improve for the backward society.

Already, the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885. Kolkata-based leaders had been campaigning against the British to receive their miscellaneous demands for the nation. But the Muslim community was not satisfied to the activities of the National Congress. They devoted to all their amenities towards the British to get more privilege from the British Government without doing oppose. Muslim leaders were seeking to secure their political rights through the formation of a separate party and intended not to attend the meeting of the National Congress.

As a result, Muslim leaders were formed Muslim League in 1906 at Dhaka, to defend the socio-political and economical interests for Muslim Communities. Though, the Muslims of North Bengal were associated with the political organization, like 'Central National Mohammedan Association' of Calcutta (Ghosh,G.A.2013,33). As well as 'Dinajpur Land Holders association' was established in 1905 at Dinajpur. At the same time Rangpur Zamidar Association was formed in 1907 at Ragpur, subsequently the Association took the name 'Uttar Banga Zamidar Association'. [(1923,35).At the same time, Varendra Anusandhan samiti was formed in 1910 led by Akshay Kumar Maitra (Rahaman,M.1998,1312).Marwari community were formed 'Merchant Association' led by the upper caste Hindus in 1910 (Maniruzzaman,M.2015,246).Actually, Marwari and other caste Hindus were exploited to the backward class specially the people of the Rajbanshi community in different ways. Thus, several Associations were formed by groups or communities to protect their own interest. Meanwhile Panchanan Burma became worried for his own society. He came in contact with the Indian National Congress for the development of the backward class community of the society. For this purpose, he joined provincial conference of the Indian National Congress in 1906 at Barisal in present Bangladesh. He had come to the attention of national leaders there. A few congress leaders were preferred to him for some contemporary social problems. Thus, he associated with Surendranath Banerjee and Shibnath Shatri for the purpose of social works. During the days of his visit to Benaras for Kshatriyanisation of the Rajbanshis, he introduced with Gopal Krishna Gokhale and praised by him for social works. He discussed with national leaders about the problems of the backward community as well as more problems of the Rajbanshi community. But Panchanan Barma realized towards the rigid attitude of the so-called high caste leaders of Calcutta that understood, they never will think for the development of the backward peoples of North Bengal. Actually, the Calcutta-based intelligentsias under the National Congress, ever and never did not want to Panchanan Barma will raised as a leader for the backward community. They did not want that the backward class people to be aware in socially. Because, the mass backward community of the society was their biggest political capital. Therefore, the social works of Panchanan Barma for the backward community did not take it well. Even, after the end of the First World War, the congress leaders became worried to seeing the social activities of Panchanan Barma in entire North-Eastern India. Panchanan Barma understood, alternative arrangement will have to make for those backward people.

At the same time, Leagues leader were adulated to the British for the development of Muslim communities, on the other, high caste Hindu leaders opposed the British led by the National Congress to do fulfill their demands through several movements. But the larger portion people of the society, who were drowned in the midst of uncertainty and underdevelopment, there was no personality for them, who will rescue from distress. The first decade of the twentieth century, when the whole world was preparing for the 1st World War and its impact had fallen on society the British India. British Government participated to the World War and peoples of British India also compelled to participate in the First World War. The socio-economic and political exploitation by the colonial government from the pre-war era over the whole of India. Meanwhile, the classification of the society and race-hatred by the Britishier had increased in acutely. Even, the society became divided into two groups i.e. Hindu Zamindar and Muslim Bargadar in North-Eastern Bengal. Muslim Bargadars were not agree to cultivate the land of Hindu Zamindars (Mukhopadhyaya,S,K.2011,67). Most of the Hindu Zamindars were engaged as the president of Union Board under the leadership of the National Congress. After established the Companies rule in India as well as North-Eastern Bengal, most of the old estate of the Zamindars were abolished and there placed new Zamindar, who was loyal to the British (Taniguchi, S. & Togaoya, M, 2007,27).This was happened in the native state of Cooch-Bihar. (Bandopadhyaya, S. & Das, A.,1998,177).The life of the backward people of the society was not value to the colonial British Government. They were the only suppliers for the high caste people of the society. The education of the common people did not value to the British. Underling the British colonial affairs a few native educated class people were so busy to stable their own higher position in society. Thus, upper class Hindus and colonial rulers both were created classification in the society. The relations between the Hindus and the Muslims became deteriorated at the same time. Underdevelopment and backward class people of the Hindu community as well as the backward class Muslims were attracted to all the activities specially socio-economic and political of Panchana Barma. As a result, all of them supported to Panchanan Barma in the next election in1926. One class elites were devoted to the British to increasing his own influence in the society. But in terms of economic and social backwardness of the majority people of the society were confined by the Colonial bondage. No alternative was open to them to release from that bondage.

Meanwhile, Panchanan Barma had decided to found a Samiti (society) to recover the lost glory of the Rajbanshi society. Thus he established Kshatriya Samiti for the overall development of the Rajbanshi community. Already, Harmohan Khajanji, landholder of Shyampur, 'established Brattya Kshatriya Bidhayani Samiti' at Shyampur (Nag, Hiten, 2010,62).He demanded that the Rajbanshis are Kshatriya through his Bratty Kshatriya Samiti. But the Brattya Kshatriya Samiti did not exist then. Panchanan Barma prepared a plan to propose their demand to the British in parallel way as well as the Congress and Muslim League after complete the unification of the Rajbanshi community. Finally, he established Kshatriya Samiti on 1st May in 1910 at Rangpur Natyamandir for the socio-economic development of the Rajbanshi community. It can be noted that he was not only the founder of Kshatriya Samiti but also its lifetime member (Barman, Binay, 2011,146).After putting the Kshatriya Samiti on a firm footing Panchanan Barman began to look out for making contact with Rajputs and other Kshatriyas of North and Western India. In 1326 BS he was successful in establishing contact with them through one Krishn Mohan Sinha, a Rajput Kshatriya descendent whose family ha`d been residing in Cooch Behar for a few generations. In the mean while, under the leadership of Rajputs the 'All India Kshatriya Mahasabha' was formed on all-India basis for the purpose of uniting the Kshatriyas scattered throughout India to improve their conditions (Barman, Binay & Barman, Ch.K.2015, 32).Objectives and goals are: I. To recovers past glorious heritage of the Rajbanshi Kshatryas, II. To develop the

Rajbanshi Kshatriya by the common help as well as money for well-being. III. The overall development of the society, education, social services, science, literature and the history of the practice, religious knowledge, improving mental and physical abilities. Kshatriya Samiti led by Panchanan Barma in order to develop as a platform for social reform. In 1913 at Porolbari in Debiganj on the bank of the river Korotaya, the Rajbanshis took secret thread through a Mahamilan Ceremony. The Rajbanshis were took Kshatriyatwa in the presence of some renowned scholars came from different parts of India such as Nabadwip, Kolkata, Mithila, Kamrup, Gouripur and Khagrabari of Cooch-Bihar regions etc. Panchanan Barman, their leader declared that unless the 'Kshatriya Samaj' could stand on its own feet, nobody would accord them Kshatriya status and that they must achieve it by their right and merit. He also reminded them of their historical past and traditions and asked them to shake off inferiority complex. The movement inevitably broad about face to face confrontation with other castes particularly the so-called upper castes of Hindus who were not prepared to accept these men as Kshatriyas. Many Brahmins began to refuse to serve these people as their priest in religious and social ceremonies and some officials refused to record the caste of these people as Kshatriya. But fortunately, Maithili, Kamrupi and local Brahmins continued to support their cause and even participated in the movement (Barman, Binay & Barman, Ch.K.2015, 28). At that time, the landlord, lawyer, attorney, scholars, Cooch Bihar royal court of the high royal officials were opposed to them (Barman, Binay.2012,76). But the process to receive Kshatriyatwa among the Rajbanshis did not fall among the general people. Note that, at this time as a protest towards the oppression of the higher caste, other community peoples were took some titles like Singha, Roy, Barman etc and took secret threat for obey the customs of Kshatriyatwa. Keep in mind that a few community people of the Hindus were so converted to Rajbanshi Kshatriyas as well as the converting process among different communities was running. As a result, the Hindu Community of North Bengal had saved by the efforts of Panchanan Barma towards the activities of Kshatriyanization.

Rajbanshis were obtained Kshatriya by the ceremony of *Upanayana* in 1913. The Great War was begun in 1914 and the British Government appealed to the Indian to join the War with the British. At that moment, some vital problems raised strongly, like food problem, the problem, women abuse etc. (Roy, Dhananjoy, 2010, 141). During the crisis period, the general peoples became helpless. At that moment not a single nationalist leader has come forward to help the British in the battle field. Panchanan Barma appealed to the youth of the Rajbanshi community to join the battle field with the British to show their heroism of Kshatriyatwa. In the context, Panchanan Barma communicated with the Commissioner of the Presidency Division and appealed to him to join the Rajbanshi youths in the First World War. Mohnahan Saheb said to Panchanan Barma through a letter for taking his initiative to the British by sending Rajbanshi youths in the battle field "A Separate Company Composed of Rajbanshi (Kshatriyas) of the upper and middle Classes might be formed if suitable candidates are available." Being compelled Panchanan Barma, associated with the British in helping purpose. He had watched the motive against the Rajbanshi community of the congress leaders as well as the separate activities of the Muslim community. Meanwhile Montego Chelmsford announced to launch some of the reforms towards the Indian society during the war period in order to encourage the Indians to join the war. In the circumstances, on 5th February in 1917, Panchanan Barma, a letter was sent from Kshatriya Samiti to the Governor for the reformation of Bengal.

After receiving that letter of Panchnan Barma, the British Government became alarmed. On that period, he was more emphasis on education reforms as well as other social reform activities. (Barman.Ch.K,388). He realized, the progress of the Rajbanshi community is impossible without improving their education. At the same time, M.K. Gandhi appeared in the screen of the National Congress by the inspiration of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, his political

guru (superior man). At the same time Panchanan Barma has formed a protest for the 'landless' and 'borgadars' against the land holders in Rangpur and Gandhiji organized Champaran Satyagraha for the indigo peasants. Both of them were works for the peasant's in parallel way. After the end of the First World War (1914-1918), then the Secretary of the State, Mr Montagu Chelmsford and the Governor General of India, undertook a study of the reforms in Indian administration. The reforms recommended and ratified by the British Parliament in 1919. (Barman, B. & Barman, Ch. K. 2015, 63).

In 1919, it was the time of luck changing for Panchanan Barma. On the era Union Board was formed for rural development by the recommendation of the Act of 1919. (Khan, N. I., 1977, 337). Most of the backward peoples were either Muslim or Rajbanshi communities and on the other hand, the Zamindar or Money lenders were belonged to upper caste of Hindu community. So, all backward classes were supported to Panchanan Barma against the Zamindars. Panchan Barma was able to establish a link between Hindus and Muslims through his social works. (Barman, Binay, 2012, 87). According to S. Bose, "Referring to the Muslims, Panchanan Barma observed that it was not proper to differentiate between the Hindus and the Muslims, as their ancestors were the same. If due to certain circumstances they had adopted him that should not over shadow the fact that every morning they met and ploughed the land together, did the marketing, shared the places and problems and participated in the same social ceremonies. So even though the Rajbanshis had adopted the secret thread, they should not think of their caste alone" (Bose, S., 2003, 106). Certainly, the book, "Dynamics of a Caste Movement: The Rajbanshis of North Bengal 1910-1947", by Swaraj Bose, is a historical source to know the activities of the Rajbanshis of North Bengal (Barman, Ch. K., 2012, 185). On that circumstances, Panchanan Barma worked for the backwards people in the contemporary society. At that time, the National Congress and the Muslim League, as well as Panchanan Barma able to implement the reforms for the disadvantaged communities. Thus he became undisputed leader of north-eastern India for the depressed of both Hindu and Muslim Communities. In 1919, after the Treaty of Versailles, during the delivery of the title at the Government House in November, the British government conferred to Panchanan Barma for social reforms as the title, "Rai Saheb" and the MBE (Member of British Empire) for sending troops in World War I. The name of Panchanan Barma has enlisted in the Bengal Legislative Assembly Parishad as 'Rai Sahib Panchanan Barma, M.B.E.'. This is done to convince the British that he was a novice in the development of disadvantaged communities, as well as Rajbangshi community. So, his thinking about society transferred into the thought of state. At that time, the Act of 1919 gave the franchise towards the lower class family voters. As a result, backward and underdevelopment Rajbanshi or Non-Rajbanshi communities were comes under the franchise and increase the number of supporters of Panchanan Barma. The national leaders of both the Hindus and Muslims became worried for the rise of Panchanan Barma in contemporary political scenario. From the time of Bengal partition in 1905, a mutual rivalry has been continuing between the upper caste Hindus and Muslims. Since 1919, the rivalry began between Panchanon Barma and upper caste Hindus. Panchanan Barma planned to use the Kshatriya Samiti as the political platform for political protest. Accordingly, he determined to devote himself for serving the mankind as political representatives of the government. The first session was held in October 1920. On that election, Rai Saheb, won a landslide victory from Rangpur. He was a representative of the government of the people to continue making reforms. Thus, since 1921 to 1935 for a long time, he participated in politics actively as well as in the Kshatriya Samiti and to improve for the backward communities as well as the people of Rajbanshi community.

Thus, it can be seen that his life from infancy to the end; Panchanan Barma was rejected by the contemporary state and elite society. So, he changed the course of his thought

of state to solve the problem of real life. In front of all the actions, he formed the background of his thought of the socialist state. There are found a lot of similarities about the thought of a state with Sun-Yat Sen of China, Rama Rolla and Indian national leader Surendra Nath Banerjee. Contemporary socio-economic and political situation helped to develop the background of his political thought. How Panchanan Barma was realized his political thinking at the contemporary political circumstances, obviously, it was pioneers than contemporary situations and nobody could not understand his stream of thinking of state. It seemed strange to think those matters today. Though, political thoughts and ideas are not implemented then but most of them had been implemented as a result of the sweeping.

3. Conclusion

Panchanan Barma was born into an ordinary farmer's family and has been established as the father of the Rajbangshi society only through his efforts and expertise of action. He was living to do fight constantly with various adverse contemporary environments. He was an eyewitness to the plight and suffers of the ordinary people. His father Khosal Chandra Sarkar, was sent his son to receive higher education by hopes. After received higher education, Panchanan Sarkar will get a government job and his family will improve in economically. But that hopes of Khusal Chandra sarkar was not fulfilled. His son did not get any government job as his choice, but he became Panchanon Barma. If he got a good government job, than he could not be Panchanan Burma. Contemporary socio-economic and political situation did not allow him to be a good employee. But the government several and natives were helped him from Panchanan Sarkar to Panchanan Barma by opposing through several spheres in his life. He opposed by the controller of the society in every moment under colonial rule in India and learns from it. He is just not only seen visually to other assault and deprivations, he realized those in his own life living. So, he did not expect happiness for himself. He has searched out for others address upto 1935. Thus, his works of philosophy has turned into the philosophy of life. In this way, the political philosophy of Panchanan Barma was formed by both of his philosophy. In fact, he was one of the active social worker. Political realism was not formed by any certain rules, rather, which was formed based on the principle of the problems of real-life and its source of solution. This political philosophy of Panchanan Barma, taught the people to living with constant fight and learned to them to take pail their rights. Barma's Political philosophy helps to the people to live in new live. This is the success of his political thought.

His philosophy of the state and social philosophy were complementary to each other. He wanted to establish the foundation of the political philosophy to solve problems in the society. If Nripendra Narayana was the pioneer of the renaissance of North Bengal than Panchanan Barma was its result. He had been working for the society in uncertain circumstances. He has to do constant struggle against the British and the native state of Cooch-Behar to perform his goal for the society. Finally, he participated in politics in actively and able to receive benefits for the backward class people of contemporary society. No doubt, although there have been many such reformations implemented for the people of Rajbangshi community, but major portion of other backward class peoples were benefited.

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