

Bell Metal Industry in Colonial and Post-Colonial Bengal –Its Origination, Development, Problem and Future



Original Research Article

ISSN : 2456-1045 (Online)

(ICV-AH/Impact Value): 63.78

(GIF) Impact Factor: 4.126

Publishing Copyright @ International Journal Foundation

Journal Code: ARJMD/AH/V-27.0/I-1/C-3/JULY-2018

Category : ARTS & HUMANITIES

Volume : 27.0 / Chapter- III / Issue -1 (JULY-2018)

Journal Website: www.journalresearchijf.com

Paper Received: 25.05.2018

Paper Accepted: 01.08.2018

Date of Publication: 05-08-2018

Page: 10-13



Name of the Author :

Dr. Sumit Kumar Mondal^{1*}

Assistant Teacher, Chakdaha, Nadia, West Bengal, India

Email : [mondalsumit201617\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:mondalsumit201617[at]gmail.com)

Citation of the Article

Mondal S.K. (2018) Bell Metal Industry in Colonial and Post-Colonial Bengal –Its Origination, Development, Problem and Future ; Advance Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Discoveries.27(3)pp. 10-13

ABSTRACT

The emergence, development and expansion of this bell –metal industry is unanimously a creation and fabrication by Kansa Banik Community that has enabled this industry to its pinnacle of success. Conclusively, it can be said that the social political and economical importance of this industry were felt among the people of rural pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Bengal [1].

KEY WORDS :

bell metal industry,
Kansa Banik Community
Colonial Bengal

I. INTRODUCTION

Bell Metal industry from its earlier origination involving Kansa Banik Community its traditional and important. With the gradual development of this metallurgical industry, there emerged an upward surge in the socio economic, cultural domain of Bengal under British Colony [2].

II. DISCOURSE

From historical view point, if any point of matter is to be discussed in its particular the point of discourse becomes more and more broader. The present discourse regarding the origin and gradual development is no exception. Various queries curiosities and inquisitiveness have emerged out of the discourse in which industry itself and persons engaged in this long path of evolution of this rural industry have come into time light. As we came see the emergence of rural economy of Bengal based on agriculture and also agro based products [3]. Similarly we can visualize the development of this industry based on the Industry, itself depending on this rock based materials.

The rural economy of pre-colonial and post-colonial Bengal was interdependent on agricultural products as well as industry and industrial produces. A large chunk of production people were also engaged in various industry in the rural Bengal economy [4]. Some of them are engaged still now, out of all these industries, some are regarded as modern industry and some are regarded as indigenous industry but it is admitted that there was an important role of economic aspects while there occurred a discourse about the social, economic, cultural and political history of colonial Bengal [5].

The impact of such a industry which flourished depending on the industry. As the political super structure of a country develops relying on agriculture of that country likewise ,the same develops taking industry along with however industry & economy plays a pivotal role in the spheres of society, polity, culture and heritage [6].

In the history of Bengali culture the bell metal industry takes an important place like then other small industry from pre-colonial period to modern days. Although in the present days of our civilization its important of the industry itself has got a gloomy scenario from the pre-colonial period [7]. The Bell Metal industry has popularly been regarded as handicraft in the psyche of Indians vis-à-vis Bengalee's involved in the Industry [8].

But in the colonial period a gradual is observed in the growth and development of this industry on account of administrative rigidity oppressive policy of the pre-colonial contemporary government. The eminence of this industry is mainly observed in the districts like Nadia, Murshidabad, Hooghly, Burdwan and Midnapore. The Kansa Banik community has got involved in this bell –metal industry from its time of origination down under generation after generation [9]. Besides the persons belonging to other community, became involved in this industry to make a living out of it, consequently the social and economic importance was felt through out the Bengal during the heydays of the growth and development of this Industry [10].

The Industry itself was acknowledging an eminent place in the pre-colonial period. Later in the Colonial period, the importance of this industry takes an upward spiraling trend because the contemporary Bengalee's used to grace the auspicious social occasions like Marriages with the materials manufacture of this metal [11]. On the contrary mortgage of utensils of bell metal was taken in the earlier days of poverty stricken Bengal economic scenario under the hands of British rule. In the writing of the Bengali writers Like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay [12]. We can get glimpses of such story.

In the social domain of that period, this bell metal industry flourished due to its manufacturing flexibility it was ingrained in Bengali psyche due to resale value of the products, which they can easy make in their homes [13]. The demand of the industry was greater than the others contemporary handicrafts and it is existing still now. Due to excessive demand side of this metallic industry, the big business person's entrepreneurs industries and other economically rich persons invested a huge sum of money of this industry and as a consequence this industry spread to greater extent to the other areas [14].

Steadily but surely , the industry grows throughout rural India and reaches to cross-border, countries .During the eighteenth century, wars and economic slowdown ,there emerged and over whelming unemployment scenario through out of the world, and the people lost their words and ways of livelihood, they resorted to this industry to, save them from the joblessness. The jobless persons got a silver lining for reemployment and obtaining their living [15].

The bell metal industry not only altered the rural Bengal economy but also strengthened it, as a consequence other contemporary industry were deeply affected by this, virtually the origination of the bell metal industry was heralded by the Kansa Banik community based in Modern Bangladesh and the community clung to this industry generation after generation.¹⁶

The impact of such industry which flourished depending on the social and political factors affecting the economic scenario to a greater dimension. As the political framework of a country develops relying on agriculture of that country like wise,the industry of a country develops upon the socio-political patronage affecting the economy of a country.¹⁷ However, industry and economy plays a pivotal role in the social, cultural and political domains of a state.

There exists a cluster in Dharnada-Muragachha-Sadhanpur where Business service providers are not available. In absence of Management institute R&D laboratory testing center and design development institutes, the future of the industry is at stake [18]. So the persons involved in this metallurgical industry strongly feel the need to have networking and consortium among the stakeholders of the cluster. Two it is one Poly-technique and two Engineering colleges located may provide different services in this respect. However the metallurgy department of Jadavpur University has agreed to share the quality control, innovative designing and cost effectiveness of the brass/bell metal products with of the cluster [19]. Besides recently-set-up metal handicraft service center (MHSC) at Moradabad in U.P. has been rendering professional and technical advices to brass metal manufacturing unit to upgrade their production technologies for enhancing productivity and export was thinness [20].

Un till now 15 nos. of groups have been formed under SGSY within the cluster that are working on bell-metal industries Two NGOs namely all backward class Relief & Development Mission and Bandhan are at work [21].

The production process of small firms consisting of melting, casting scraping and that of large firms in addition to that includes polishing by grinding and buffing. The production process is out dated and obsolete due to depreciated conditions of machines involved in production. Particularly, the casting process followed there is too old [22]. The dye made of alluvium soil is being used here. The dye becomes fully gutted after the first preparation so, the wastage is too higher. The costs of products become higher due to this wastage @ 4 per unit cost of production.

Activities is carried on without power. Yet this problem poses a stumbling block to the development and manufacturing of this industry [23]. Although in the existence of cluster Development programme having access to NH-34, the villages have accesses by metaled road to NH-34 DUE TO ITS CONNECTIVITY. This is a silver lining to the workers and manufacturers of the cluster on account of being undertaken the work of electrification the route Sealdah –Lalgola rail services which may have secondary role in cluster The inadequate power supply is the main infrastructural bottleneck suffered by the industry. Through majority of manufacturing Development [24].

Pollution control measures adopted by this industry are too much shanty for the workers and labourers working in this industry. No production unit has chimneys and exhaust fans. The workers inhale smoke and metal fumes. Naked faces hands and eyes of the workers are exposed to due to non-wearing masks and gloves [25]. A lot of black dust and metal particles are inhaled by the works during the buffing and scraping operations.so I think workers should wear masks and gloves during working hours. Chimneys and exhaust fans need to be installed at each unit of productions to restore normal and healthy atmosphere among the workers [26].

III. CONCLUSION

From pre-colonial period the bell-metal industry in Bengal acquired its fame and heritage and conventionality. The industry also expanded its paradigm in our country and the countries cross-border in colonial period. But, gradually the fame and futurity of this industry began to dwindle in post independent India. There also emerged a few problems out of this situation [27]. The various types of problems and hurdles throttled the development and onward progress of this industry.

The industry being a labour intensive one firstly faced a serious shortage of laborious workers. The physical problem of labours, the production and manufacturing, the problems/diseases of skin affecting the labours under mining the development of the bell-metal industry/lack of minimum support price, the antipathy and an atmosphere of disappointment among workers. Non co-operational of land lords and the lack of Government’s initiatives towards the development of this industry [28]. The emergence of alternative materials are decreasing the importance of this industry, gradual decrease in purchasing capacity among the common people due to increase in prices of all materials. Despite, all of these hurdles on the way towards the process of this industry, the industry itself also suffered a serious setback that has to be overcome immediately with the help Government’s co-operation and patronization with monetary help/capital support for its more and more good and bright future [29].

The Government of West Bengal has taken an initiative to sustain the industry through training of skilled labours at Moradabad in U.P for qualitative and cost-effective manufacturing of bell-metal products, that can face the competitive market [30]. The Government has also provided a commendable capital investment for the manufactures of bell-metal products [31]. From colonial period a close proximity between Indian culture and European culture, this industry has for time being has influenced greater chunk of British People who were very interested to assimilate and accommodate this industry in this country [32]. Consequently ,the importance of this industry felt among themselves for another reason the resale value of products that attracted their attention.

It is an in deniable fact that if this industry gets a qualitatively developed technology and monetary incentive from all quarters support of our society, especially, from Government sector them it can be flourished again as before, thereby making a new sunrise in the fate of this once famous industry of rural colonial and pre-colonial Bengal and post-colonial Bengal under the rule of Indian Government.

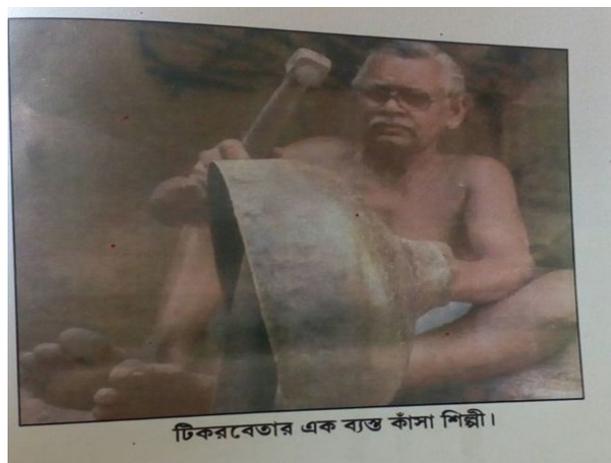


Fig 1 : A busy bell metal artist at Tikarbata



Fig 2 : Cutting & Polished machine of bell metal

REFERENCE

[1] **Mallick, kumud-** Nadia, Kahini,Pustak Bipani, Kolkata, 1986, Page No-55

[2]. **Datta, Ashutosh-** Kansa Banik Patrika,3rd edition,1313, Page No-122

[3] **.Ibid-** Page No-124

[4]. **Ibid-** Page No-126

[5]. **Mallick,kumud-**Nadia Kahini,Pustak Bipani,Kolkata,1986,Page No-62

[6]. **Ibid-** Page No-65

[7]. **Interview-Jiban Banik**,15.06.2016,Dokan Malik,Dharmada,Nadia

[8]. **Interview- Ratan Banik**,15.06.2015, Shilpa Shramik,Nabadwip,Nadia

[9]. **West B10. Ibid-** Page No-115

[11]. **Opcit-** Page No-68

[12]. **Ibid-** Page No-78

[13]. **Ghosh,Swapan-Banglar Kutir Shilpa**,Deys Publication,Kolkata,2011, Page No-118

[14]. **Datta , Ashutosh-** Kansa Banik Patrika,3 rd edition,1313, Page No-135

[15]. **Bhattacharya,Amit-**Adhunik Bharater Arthanaitik Itihaser Ruprekha,Progressive Publishers, Kolkata, January 2009, Page No-209

[16]. **West Bengal District Gazetteer**,1910, Page No-130

[17]. **Ibid-** Page No-135

[18]. **Brass and Bell Metal Cluster of Dharmada, Muragachha, SadhanPara under Nadia District Shilpa Nigam, Krishnanagar- prepared by DIC-Nadia, Page No-132**

[19]. **Ibid- Page No-132.**

[20]. **Ibid- Page No-134**engal District Gazetteer,1910, Page No-11221.Interview-Swapan Biswas,22.04.2016,Shilpa Nigam Adhikarik ,Krishnanagar,Nadia

[22]. **B.K.Das-**Kansa Banik Jati and his Shilpa Business,K.P.Bagchi Com,Vol-5,1334, Page No-35

[23]. **Ibid-** Page No-36

[24]. **Interview,Ratan Paul**,22.05.2015,Kansa Shilpi, Muragachha, Nadia

[25]. **West Bengal District Gazetteer Nadia**,1978, Page No-222

[26]. **Ibid- Page No-225**

[27]. **Brass and Bell Metal Cluster of Dharmada, Muragachha, SadhanPara under Nadia District Shilpa Nigam,Krishnanagar-prepared by DIC-Nadia, Page No-148**

[28]. **Ibid- Page No-152**

[29]. **Ibid- Page No-155**

[30]. **Interview-Haridas Datta**,16.06.2014-Kansa Business Man ,Nabadwip,Nadia

[31]. **Interview-Goutam Paul**,18.06.2014-Kansa Shop Malik ,Nabadwip,Nadia

[32]. **Majumder,Durga Das-** West Bengal District Gazetteer Nadia,1920, Page No-215

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOUNDATION