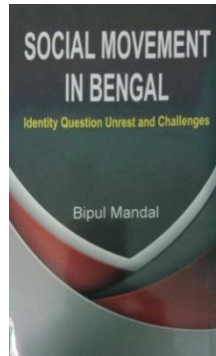


Book Review



Bipul Mandal: *Social Movement in Bengal Identity Questions, Unrest and Challenges* (Kolkata, Progressive Publisher, 2021, pp.192, Price: 180/pINR)

Dr. Ananda Bhattacharya¹

The uniqueness of the Indian society lies in its heterogeneous character. Constituted by a myriad of social groups and communities, each of them claims allegiance to a distinct identity and historicity. Unfolding in terms of identities related to caste, tribe, gender, religion and language, an Indian's daily life revolves around the interplay of such identities embedded within the social structure. A number of major and minor social movements had been taken place in the closing decades of nineteenth century and first

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half of the twentieth century in Bengal. But those movements failed to get due recognition to the historians. Now the time is ripe to reveal the importance of those social movements for understanding the social current of the region. Actually the caste system and its adverse effect had grasped the whole Indian society. Bengal was no exception. The social reforms though tried to uproot the social evils, superstitions, religious fanaticism, and untouchability; still they failed to abolish them from the Indian soil. So major sections of population are in a degraded position. They started movement against the rigidity of caste distinction. In such a background Dr. Mandal has constructed a history on social movement in his recently published works titled ***Social Movement in Bengal Identity Questions, Unrest and Challenges***, (Kolkata, Progressive Publisher, 2021, pp.192, Price:180/p INR)

Social Movement in Bengal Identity Questions, Unrest and Challenges, is a good attempt of Dr. Mandal to present the crisis in each and every communities specially backward classes or dissident groups from the period of 1872 to 1971 whose influence is still present in society. Forwarding of the book has written by Professor Anil Bhumali, former Vice Chancellor of Raiganj University.

This book has five chapters. **The first chapter** deals with the history of the movement for social uplift of different nations and communities. At the time in question, different communities were skeptical of their own ethnic identity. What is their social identity? Various debates and criticisms have been discussed in this chapter. **The second chapter** deals with history, how Harichand Thakur and his son Guruchand Thakur dedicated for Matua community to their lives for the betterment. **The third chapter** deals with the history of conversion of different communities to each other, which created a kind of problem in the society. **The fourth chapter** deals with inter-ethnic relations and conflicts which result in new problems and concerns. Controversy has arisen out of concern for the social and financial security and interests of different communities, which has given rise to racial conflicts and protests. **In fifth chapter** Dr. Mandal has written about the position and social status of the non-institutional class (Baul Community) in society.

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This study investigates the emergence of various castes as separate identity from various ancient scripts, colonial and indigenous ethnographers and the problem associated with them and also examines to what extent there was an uneven development and social deprivation among the castes and races vis-a-vis the upper caste Hindus and how did these communities face the challenges.

I am very optimistic that this volume fills the void left by the unwritten history. The rest is left to the readers.