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Namah, Shudra, Reservation and relevance of Guruchand Thakur Tejen Mandal

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Abstract

'Namah' is an oxidizable 'lion' Caste, at least in the past it is obey. But in ruthless state conspiracy, they have become a 'Sheep', 'Shudra'. Until the appearance of Hari-Guruchand Thakur from faraway, undivided India has not seen such a significant role in the centuries of religion, society, education, industry, literature, culture, economy and politics. Even today, they do not know their glorious tradition or they are not allowed to know about them. However, after the emergence of Hari-Guruchand's Matua religion (about 200 years ago), they began to take a little bit, but still they were drenched like a sinking ship, due to the lack of proper sailors in different Castes-Varnas.

Key words: Namah, Shudra, Namahshudra, Reservation, Guruchand Thakur.

'Namasudra' is one of the 60 Scheduled Castes of which the official list of Scheduled Castes of the government of West Bengal is composed. 'Namah' and 'Shudra' are contradictory terms.(1) Although there is no 'Shudra' words in the case of other Scheduled Castes, but this juxtaposition takes place in the case of 'Namah'. 'Namah' is written in 'Namasudra' on Caste certificate, it is not sub-portion of Hindu religion or Hindu Caste. They are a only neglected special Caste listed by the President. In the year 1870 the census was made and an enlistment of different Castes was also done. At that time the British government officials gave importance to the opinion of the Brahmin scholars. Some of there scholars gave verdict in exchange of money. (2) As a result confusions arose as regards the castes, Shudras, Namah, Chandal, Varna etc.

In the census of 1881 'Namah' were called 'Chandal'. In 1891 they were called 'Namashudra' or 'Chandal'. In 1901 they were called 'Namashudra (Chandal)' and in 1911 they were called 'Namashudra'. Thus the term 'Chandal' was removed, but untouchability remained. (3) Guruchand Thākūr wanted 'Namah' in place of 'Chandal'. In 1881 Namahshudras burst into protest in Faridpur for being called 'Chandal'. They said that they would boycott the invitation of the upper Caste Hindus if they did not come to the houses of the Namahshudras and eat with them. (4) The elite Namahshudras adopted the "Sanskritayan" method and demanded the honour of the Brahmins. They began to use the symbols of Brahmins. But the Matuā leadership refrained from doing this. (5) Guruchand Thākūr was dissatisfied with the supporters of Casteism and exploitation. In 1907 he told to

separate Matuās from Hinduism. In spite of that, through different conspiracies, later on it was found that 'Namah' had been called 'Namasudra'. (6) Hence, all Namahsudras are not Matuās and all Matuās are not Namahsudras. Many followers of Matuāism have come from the others Dalit, backward class communities like Hindu upper Caste, lower Caste and even from Muslims. (7)

The word 'Namah' has come from the name of the 'Namas Muni'(8) and also from the Sanskrit word 'Namas'. It means to pay respect, but only 'Namahshudra' means the 'respectable Shudras'.(9)

The 'Kaulinya' system used in Bengal during the reigns of the King Ballal Sen (1158-1179). According to sage 'Manu'(Manusanhita), King Ballal Sen described the Namahshudras are 'Chandal' in the place of 'Namah' in the sense that the child of Shudra father and Brahmin mother, that means they are untouchable, low Caste people, it is a bad name, obscenities. 'Chandal' means ---1. Live in forests with animals, 2. Will have no water pot, 3. Eat from separate pot, 4. A Brahmin must not see him while eating, 5. Must not attend social functions, 6. They must confine their social relations (marriage, any exchange) to their own community, 7. Must wear ornaments of iron, (10), 8. Must wear the dresses thrown away with dead bodies, 9. Must adopt the profession of burning of corpses, 10. Work as hangmen, 11. They will refrain from going out during the day and if they go out, they will wear special badger, 12. They will go out only at night, 13. Live as vagabonds, 14. Will be marked as untouchables, 15. They must not have personal property except dogs and donkeys.(11)

But this custom was not widespread in Bengal and no similarities with 'Namah' where there were mainly two classes of people, the Hindus and the Muslims. (12) Samarendra Baidya, a researcher says that 'Chandal' and 'Chaandal' are not the same words. According to Harichand Thākur, 'Chaandal' means as strong as lions. The entire history of India owes much to the Rajput Kshatriya clan 'Chaandal'. Their empire existed till 1564 A.D. when they succumbed to the emperor Akbar. (13) The army of liege lord/ Zemindar Pratapaditya Ray of Bengal (born in 1560) was composed mainly by the Namahshudras 'Dhali' (Army).(14) They are descendants of Chandra dynasty, Raja Chandra Varma.(15) Namahshudras are heroic breed. In front of their valor of semen, the mighty power of the Marātha clannish force was forced to return and overcome once. During the rule of Alibardi Khan, the Bengal repeatedly tortured and plundered by the clannish force. At that time, liege lord Pratapaditya's army of 12 liege lord, 52,000 Dhali army, was also Namahshudra. In front of the very powerful Dhali army, the clannish force flew like a straws. (16)

Namahshudras were called low Caste people in the works of the Hindu scholars of the 12th century. (17) Still there is no indication that they were looked upon as untouchables and mixture in 13th-14th century. (18) Rigid division of Castes was made in the 13th century by the Brahmins. The social rituals and culture of Bengal were different from those prevailed in North India. The Hindu society was divided into two classes, Brahmin and

Shudra. There was no mention of Kayastha and Baishya in 'Brihad Dharma Puran'. (19) The scholar Raghunandan advised no to establish relationship (get together, eating, marriage etc.) with the Chandals in the 16th century, but always he did not advise to treat them as 'untouchables'. The Mangal Kavyas were written in the 16th and the 18th century, at that time Chandals lived in villages or towns with other Castes. But, 'Manu' told them to live outside the villages or towns, but they did not do so. Even at the beginning of the 20th century the so called untouchable people of Bengal suffered less than the 'untouchables' of the other provinces of India. That is why, the social movements of depressed castes were comparatively weaker. Yet the Chandals had to suffer injustice and maltreatment. (20)

Ananda Bhatta, the author of 'Ballal Chait' and Nalinikanta Bhattashali, the author of the author of 'The History of India' think that the King Ballal Sen (1158-1179), in spite of being a married man, took a 'Dom' girl named 'Padmini' in marriage at an old age. He was addicted to wine also. As a result he was not in the good book of his subjects. He organised a royal feast with a view to appear them, but the feast was boycotted by the 'Namah' and 'Parshobs'. Insulted and infuriated at this, the King wanted to average his insult by making these subjects social outcasts. He dismissed them from all government posts and order to destroy all holy books, some of these subjects began to fight against the King, some others retired to forests and hilly places. At that time the Namah and the Parshabs mixed together. Those who supported the King at this juncture were made Brahmins, Kayasthas, Vaidyas and Chandals as per the wish of the King. New holy books dealing with religion were written 'Namah' were pushed back. At that crucial juncture only one sacred religious book named 'Shaktisangamanttra' somehow survived in the house of one Shyamacharan Tarkalankar of Faridpur. It is stated in this book that the Namah are actually Brahmins and not Shudras.(21)

Vivekananda, the world famous preacher of Hinduism was impressed by the physical strength and the efficiency in martial art of the Namahshudras and called them Kshatriya. (22) Gurunath Sengupta, the preacher of Satya Dharma says that the community which has produced a man like Harichand Thākur is by no means a low community. (23) Prof. Dr. Ashutosh Bhattacharya, the former Head of the Dept. of Bengali Literature of Calcutta University called the Namahshudras a community of strong, faithful and patriotic people on 16/11/1975 in the Mahabodhi Society Hall in a discussion on Matuās. They hold woman in high esteem and know how to protect their own property.(24) In this meeting Prof. Dr. Asit Kumar Bandopadhyay said that the Namahshudras came to this country as destitutes at the time of partition, but fought for survival with surprising self-confidence. Who are the strength of Kshatriya in arm, the devotees in the heart and the awakened humans, they are insulting means humiliation of humanity. Namahshudras will represent new India envisaged by Swami Vivekananda. That is why the followers of Matuāism are on the increase. (25)

Acharya Mahananda Haldar thinks that Namahshudras are actually Brahmins, but almost all Hindu sects deny it, they envy the Namahshudras. He has said in the book 'ShriShri Guruchand Charit' that all the upper Caste of Hindu envy Namahshudras and want to oppress them.(26) In the same book Dr. C. S. Mead, an Australian Missionary said that

Namahshudras originated from Brahmins. They had been degraded as a result of envy and social injustice. (27) It is also written in the same book that once a Brahmin called Namahshudras 'Parashar Brahmins' in order to increase his followers. (28) Anukul Chandra Thākur, the founder of the Sat Sangh has called Namahshudras as a 'Parashab Caste'.(29) Surendranath Thākur, the younger son of Guruchand Thākur in his article 'History of the Namahshudra' has written that there is no Caste which can be called 'Namahshudra'. But from the rituals which they observe, it appears that they may be a different Caste. There are ample proofs which indicate that Namahshudras originated from the Brahmin of the Aryans clan, but they have somehow lost their Brahmin hood. Many people imagine that Namahshudras are a fallen community and for this reason upper Caste people do not drink of their water. So they will any polluted Caste. But they belong to the clan of Kashyab Muni who was a Brahmin. Hence it appears that Namahshudras originated from the Brahmin. Their rituals are same as those observed by Brahmin people. Had their mothers not hailed from the Brahmin, their rituals would have differed. So they must have been originated from Brahmin mothers. Hence it is proved that both the mother and the father of the Namahshudras were Brahmins and as a result they are Brahmins too.(30) Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray in his book 'Banglar Itihas' (Adi Parba, p.50) has said that Namahshudras of Bengal and the Brahmins of North India belong to the same clan. In his opinion Namahshudras bear closer resemblance to the Brahmins of North India. Considered anthropology, Namahshudras differ from the Bengali Brahmin, Kayastha and Baidya. But in Smriti books Namahshudras have been called low Caste people. (31) Which is anthropologically wrong. Recently the department of anthropology of the government of India has tested the blood of men of different groups. In this test it also appears that the blood of Namahshudras bears resemblance to that of the Brahmins of North India. (32) The researcher of Risely and Harton, two famous anthropologists also indicate it. Scholars like Gaité, Fischer, Dr. Sitanath Vidyaratna and Digindra Narayan Bhattacharjee also think that Namahshudras are an aristocratic race, but lack of education has degraded them. Their remark is based on anthropological research.(33) Those who have been called 'Parshab' by Manu, the great sage are actually Namahshudras with 'Dwijachar' of Bengal. (34) Sukhamay Sarkar, the author of the book 'Namahshudrarai Parshab Bipra' thinks that though the Brahmins of this region do not regard the Namahshudras as Brahmins, they indirectly admit that they are 'Parshab Bipra'.(35)(Bipra means the ability to fill something special, that is 'Bipra'. Bipra = Bi + Pra. Bengali 'Bi'= special and Bengali 'Pra' = fill up/ need; the person who meets the special needs: Sukhomay Sarkar, p.84). Abinash Chandra Kavyathirtha of Krishnanagar recovered a paper signed by the principal scholars of Nabadwip, Burdwan, Hooghly, Murshidabad etc. This paper contained the explanation of the 8th sloka of the 'Manusmriti'. According to that explanation Namahshudras of today are Parshabs,(36) which means children of Brahmin fathers and their Shudra wives.(37) The word Parshab = Par + Shab. Par =Anulom (Morganatic) system. The root word 'Shri' (Dhatu) means envy. Shri > Shab = envy. Those who are envied to Morganatic system by the Aryans, they are Namahshudra. (38) They also insulted to Pratilam system. Because Pratilam children can not stick to something good nor can they overcome obstacles. (39) Dwarakanath Mondal Kaviratna, in

his book 'Namahshudra Jati Katha' states that the rituals of the Namahshudras and those of the Brahmins are identical. So the Namah Brahmins are Parshar 'Dwijas'. According to Sitanath Biswas Bidyaratna, the author of 'Jatitwa O Namasyakula Darpan', the Namas belong to the clan of Brahmma and they are as respectable as the Brahmins. (40)

The word 'Brahmin' means 'to know Brahmma (ie God) and the world. Those who know God are entitled as Brahmins. (41) Then the question arises: why don't the Namahshudras wear the sacred thread? According to Acharya Mahananda Haldar, Namahshudras were Buddhists during the reign of Pala Kings and the rite of wearing the sacred thread was abandoned by them at that time. (42) There is another reason, it is said that the sage Namas (the son of the sage Kashyap) renounced the family leaving his pregnant wife named Sulochona (daughter of Ruchi of mental son of Brahmma). When he came back he found that his wife had died (by disease of Sutika) leaving twins son, Kirtiban and Uruban, they were above 14 years of age at that time. As a result they could not ceremonially wear the sacred thread and were not regarded as Brahmins. (43)

Namahshudras are oppressed at present. So there is reservation for them. Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar started the movement for reservation for the education, service and politically. But Guruchand Thākur started the movement for this purpose much earlier. But on 26/07/1902 a reservation of 50 % in the government services was made in the native state of Kolhapur as a result of the movement on 1873 of Jyotirao Phule.

In 1901, only 3.3 % of the Namahshudra population was literate in Bengal. But they were deprived of government services. Other low Caste people remained in the same state. Panchanan Sarkar, a Rajbangshi of North Bengal passed the B.A.(H.) in 1896 and M.A. in 1897, yet he did not get any government job. Raicharan Sarkar, a PaundraKshatriya of Diamond Harbour passed the B.A. in 1901. He was also reprimanded by the upper caste Hindus remaining in the Railway service.

In the year 1881 Guruchand Thākur organised a conference at Duttadanga for the discussion of the issues like the spread of education, service, self-dignity etc. among the Namahshudras. He thought that spread of education among the Namahshudras would enable them to get government jobs and they would get rid of poverty. They will also be able to understand the socio-economic and political condition of the country in this way. His movement resulted in the employment of the Namahshudras in the government sector, particularly in Bengal. In 1907 a deputation was submitted to Lancelot Hare, the Lieutenant Governor of 'East Bengal and Assam' under the leadership of Dr. Mead, an Australian Christian Missionary and in the same year 'Proportional Representation of Communities in Public Employment Act, 1907' was passed. As a result the youths of the lower Castes and Muslim community were provided with the opportunity of getting government jobs. In 1907, Shashibhushan Thākur, the son of Guruchand Thākur was appointed as a government Sub-Registrar. He was the first so called Namahshudra to get a government service. In 1908, Dr.Tarini Bal was employed as the first Namahshudra doctor in the public sector and Kumud Bihari Mallick was appointed as Deputy Magistrate, Radhanath Mondal and

Siddheswar Haldar were employed as quanningoes and Mohonlal was employed as a police officer.

In 1912 'Bengal Namahshudra Association' was established and the movement for education continued. In 1912-13, a sum of Rs. 9,42,200/-was granted for the spread of education and construction of hostels(for the Orakandi, Jhanlokathi, Pirojpur, Barisal areas).

In the meantime Guruchand Thākur felt the necessity of sending representatives to the legislative assemblies for the protection of political rights of the Namahshudras like Muslims society. He began to pressurize the British government for this and the government yielded in 1919. In 1921 there were 2 depressed Caste representatives among the 139 nominated representatives in the assembly of Bengal. They were Bhiswadev Das and Nirodbihari Mallick. Both of them were dear to Guruchand Thākur and Bhiswadev Das was associated with Matuā movement.

Bhiswadev Das raised the demand of 6 % reservation in the government services through the 'Bengal self-government' and 'Bengal Village Self-government Act, 1919'. In August 1930 the government declared that in the areas of Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur and Bakherganj 1 non-Muslim government post out of 3 non-Muslim government posts will be reserved for the depressed Caste youth. There were ratios 2 : 1 = 3

In 1932 Ramsay MacDonald declared the 'Communal Award' and as a result different election systems were adopted in the Muslims and depressed Caste Hindus. But Gandhiji objected to it. So the decision reversed in the 'Poona Pact' and 'Common Election System' was adopted. 'The government of India Act' was passed in 1935, and in this Act seats in the Assembly of Bengal were reserved for the depressed Caste people. In 1919, one selected and five nominated in the assembly council, which is in 1935, 30 nominated. That is a revolutionary victory for the depressed Caste people.

But from 1933 on complaints of non-co-operation by the government officials began to arise. In March of the same year Saratchandra Bal (Faridpur) and in April of the same year Amulyadhan Ray (Bakherganj) lodged complaints towards the district authority regarding the appointment of the depressed Caste people in the service and the district council. On 24/07/1933, P.R. Thākur of Faridpur raised the demand to the district Magistrate for the appointment of at least 10 % reservation among the judges of the district courts and at least one reservation among the high judges. In 1935 the 'Bengal Depressed Class Association' raised the demand of 20% reservation. In April 1935 the 'Namahshudra Conference' raised the demand of setting up a 'Service Commission', through which reservation for the Scheduled Castes was mentioned. In September 1936, the 'Depressed Class Association' raised the demand of 15% reservation in Dhaka, Faridpur, Jessore, Khulna, Bakherganj, Birbhum, Burdwan, 24 Parganas and Murshidabad. It therefore appears that the demand for reservation first raised by Guruchand Thākur in 1907 only in the districts of Faridpur and Bakherganj spread all over Bengal in 1930 decade. (44)

At present the reservation has increased, but Namahshudras or depressed Caste people

are still looked down upon by the upper Caste people. Historian Ramesh Chandra Majumdar said in the book, 'History of Indian essay system' 1979, India's historic group has failed to fulfill its responsibilities. Because of this, lack of honesty, ego-free and material meditation. In Hindu society, efforts are being made to tame the hardships, abuse and oppression of the depressed people. (45) Ajit Banik, Chairman of college service commission comments that reservation will paralyse the education system. (46) Naturally, contradiction between the upper Caste and depressed Castes does not stop. Continues the action verses reactions. In this construction the demands raised by a few richer and more educated Namahshudras in 1870 are still on the move. They are mostly farmers. The literacy rate among the Namahshudras were only 3.30% in 1901, it became 4.92% in 1911, 7.50% in 1921, 6.63% in 1931, 21.02% in 1941, 21% in 1961, 26.85% in 1971, 35.87% in 1991, 71.93% in 2001 and continue has increased, (47) and their self- respect has also enhanced. They roared against any adverse comments and a new dimension is created on the clear division line between the words 'Namah' and 'Shudra'. They want to say that they have been exploited near 850 years, since the period of Ballal Sen, they do not want to reservation, but they say—'Give back the forest, take the city.'

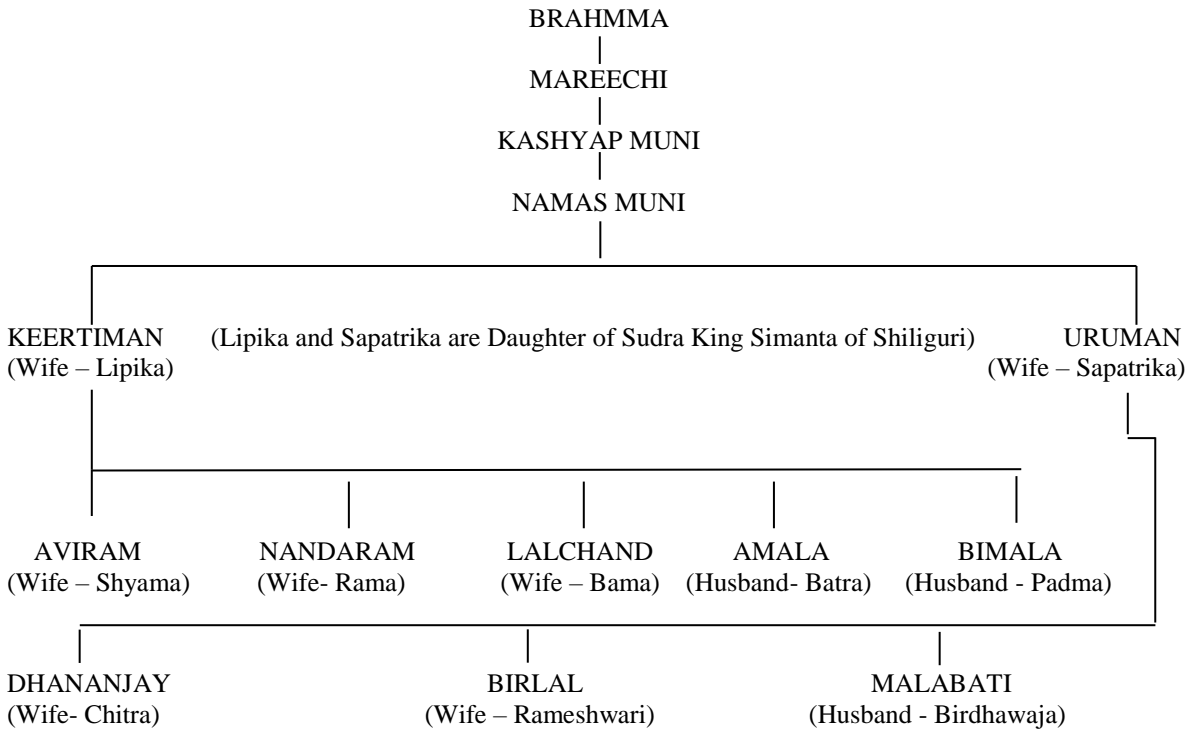
Percentage of the benefits given to different communities—

Source: Ranjit Kumar Sikdar, Report of Mandal Commission, 1990, Dr. Ambedkar Prakashani, p.16.

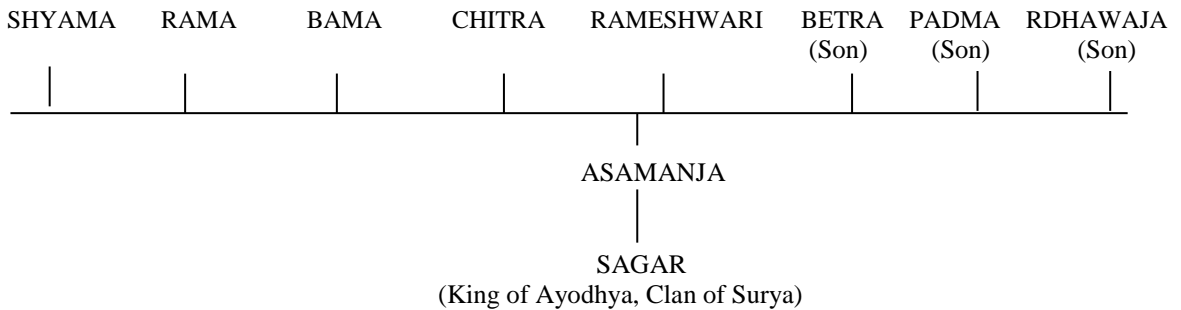
Sl. No.	Caste / Class	% of Population	% of Politics	% of Service	% of Business	% of Land
1.	BRAHMIN (Without Bhumihaar)	3.5	41	62	10	5
2.	KHSATRIYA	5.5	15	12	24	80
3.	BAISHYA	6	10	13	60	7
*	RULING CLASS	15	66	87	94	92
4.	OBC	52	8	7	2.3	5
5.	S.C. / S.T.	22.5	22.5	5	0.2	1
6.	MINORITIS	10.5	3.5	1	3.5	2
*	DALIT CLASS	85	34	13	6	8

Clan of Kashyap Muni:

According to “Shaktisangamtantra” the descendants of ‘Namah’



Kirtiman, Uruman and Asomanjay’s sons and daughters are married each other.



Source: Jamuna-Mati Patrika, Editor -Saroj Chakraborty, p.3.

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