

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACTS OF A PEASANT UPRISING (KISSANI MOVEMENT) IN CHARSAZZA DISTRICT

NIAZ MUHAMMAD* and ALI ASKAR**

* *Department of Sociology, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan*

** *Department of Anthropology, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan*

ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to ascertain social, economic and political impacts of the Kissani Movement on the living condition of the people inhabiting Northern Hashtnagar, part of Charsadda district. The Kissani Movement was launched under the banner of the Mazdoor Kissan Party (MKP) with its different factions in the field aiming at the central theme of struggle against the multifarious atrocities of the landowners of the sample area. Data was collected from 100 respondents in two big villages of the target area i.e. Shakoor and Mandani. A remarkable break through was seen in a transition of the mode of thinking of the local people, which resulted in them accepting family planning programme up to a considerable extent, sending children for attainment of education irrespective of gender discrimination, allowing educated women for employment preferably in near stations, not strictly complying with the rigid contents of the traditional social structure, marrying outside family, nuclearizing families from joint ones, increasing agricultural productivity, enhancing monthly income, accommodating women in their property, inculcating political awareness, promoting democratic leadership and developing voting behaviour. However, Relations between peasants and landowners did not remain congenial. The paper concludes that the enlightenment of local mind can further be glimpsed from developing the thought that education and freedom of expression are the bases of development.

Key Words: *Kissani Movement, Charsadda, Mazdoor Kissan Party*

Citation: Muhammad, N. and A. Aksar. 2009. Socio-economic and political impacts of a peasant uprising (Kissani movement) in Charsadda District. *Sarhad J. Agric.* 25(2): 333-337.

INTRODUCTION

Northern Hashtnagar is an area comprising numerous villages and hamlets with traditional structure of housing pattern. This belt is famous for its lavish greenery and agricultural fields contributing in the revenue head through various major and ordinary crops. The Majority of the people inhabiting the area are tillers and called Kissans in the local language. They cultivated the land owned by the feudal lords (Khawaneen) for generation after generation. Over the years, a bitter situation that destroyed the working relations of the two classes was experienced and the lower class stood complainant of the exploitative attitude of the upper class. Such a situation compelled them for developing hatred impression against their bosses, which I turn resulted in sowing the seed of agitation. As a result, the Mazdoor Kissan Party initiated Kissani Movement on 19th April 1970 in Northern Hashtnagar with the conviction to (i) ensure that land under the plough of Kissans belongs to them, (ii) establish the Kissan Raj (ruling by Kissan) at the cost of any sacrifice, (iii) resist any effort to eject them from land, (iv) occupy land under their cultivation and (v) boycott to participate in the election till their rights are accepted.

This movement got momentum in the entire Northern Hashtnagar and led to a revolt against the feudal lords, which resulted in bloodshed from the two sides. The idea of peasantry is not new but it permeates to mind since the term agriculture has been originated. Eric Wolf (1966) has defined peasants as rural cultivators whose surpluses are transferred to a dominant group of rulers. According to Ghanshyam Shah (1990), those agriculturists are called peasants who are homogeneous with small land holdings operated mainly by family labour on the one hand, and all those who depend on land including landless labourers as well as supervisory agriculturists. When the landless labourers lamented at the exploitation of land owning section, their cry resulted in uprising against the atrocities and ultimately a movement got its generic in different parts of the world such as France, Russia, China, Brazil and Peru. Karl Marx highlighted the injustices towards peasantry and through the idea of corporate class consciousness, he argued that it was necessary to forge unity in people engaged at different workplaces in all capacities of labouring. He bifurcates the society into two broad categories of bourgeoisie and proletariat. The former class includes landowners, industrialists, entrepreneurs and all others with upper hands whereas the latter

includes people serving in the capacity of workers at various workplaces. His dialectical materialism concerns exposing the state of tense relation in the two classes and on the basis of that his idea of workers' triumph over bourgeoisie has come into being, which has greatly inspired the Kissani movement as well as the manifesto of Mazdoor Kissan Party.

Pakistan also experienced such movements first in Sindh province under the banner of Sindh Hari Committee followed by different parts of the North West Frontier Province through the efforts of Mazdoor Kissan Party. Agricultural reforms announced in the era of then prime minister (Late) Z.A Bhutto further strengthened the struggles of Kissani Movement aimed at radical economic changes in the status of its members. For the achievement of goals, Mazdoor Kissan Party (MKP) also launched groups such as Tanzeem-e-Naujawan (Organization of young people), Janbaz force (Militant force) and Children Organization. It resulted that the majority of the Kissans overthrew landlords and they are now enjoying the proprietary rights over lands under their cultivation. In some cases, a nominal amount of lease is given to owners. This uprising has brought prosperity to Kissans. The aim of this paper is to seek the socio-economic and political impacts of uprising on their life, and was designed with the following objectives.

Objectives

- i. To observe the impact of Kissani Movement on socio-economic and political dimensions of life of the peasants in target area; and
- ii. To ascertain the perception of peasants towards Khans (landlords) after uprising, under the leadership of Mazdoor Kissan Party

Study Delimitation

The study was delimited to the following indicators;

Social Impacts: gender free education, family planning acceptance, women employment, family pattern, compliance to social structure, exogamy, and relations between peasants and landowners.

Economic Impacts: agricultural productivity, monthly income, living standard, shares in property to females.

Political Impacts: political awareness, leadership pattern, voting behaviour and political parties

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Shakoor and Mandani, being centres of political activities of all factions of the Mazdoor Kissan Parties, were selected as area of study. 100 activists and common inhabitants of the target areas were randomly interviewed utilizing an Interview Schedule as tool of data collection. Sampled Kissans regardless of their educational status and age cohort were approached for the purpose of data. 50 respondents each from Shakoor and Mandani were then interviewed.

Most questions were close ended; the questionnaire was written in English, while the respondents were asked in local language *Pashto* to ensure a better result. As for the modality is concerned, it was preferred to have interview of respondents in privacy either at their houses or farms prior to any pre-intimation or appointment for meeting at the place of interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis it was confirmed that the Kissani movement led to many changes in social, economic and political spheres of life of people in target area. Results and related discussion on all major indicators of the study are given below.

Social Impacts

Social impacts are drawn on the basis of data related to before and after Kissani movement situations given in Table I. Questions related to the designed parameters of the social impacts were asked systematically and results were compiled accordingly. Some results are surprising for the reason of greater amount of political awareness of local population. 71 percent of sample respondents were now sending their children to various educational institutions as compared 27 percent in the pre-uprising period. Family planning has not been adopted fully in the

rural belt of the country's population, but the northern part of the district Charsadda was found in an encouraging position, as 55 percent of respondents stated that they proposed to apply family planning devices. In the past such a ratio was 22 percent so post-uprising there is a considerable increase. The employment of women also got importance. 46 families allowed their educated females to work in different capacity at different workplaces against 13 percent of families, which did so earlier to emergence of the political uprising. However, they preferred the nearby stations of posting for them. Family nuclearization process remained speedy and the ratio increased from 35 percent to 67 percent. It is interesting to note here that such respondents determined their family pattern as nuclear for the reported reasons of capital accumulation, better socialization and education of children, and privacy in personal life. The tendency of marrying outside family (exogamy) was also on the increase. The parents did not impose their autocratic decision on their children; rather they very happily surrendered to the consent of children. 58 percent respondents solemnized their own marriages as well as their children's marriages under the form of exogamy. They hold the view that exogamy contains wide chances in mate selection. However, friendly relations between Kissans (Peasants) and Khawaneen (landowners) were not observed in view of already existent tension in the two classes.

Table I Social impact of the Kissani Movement

Social Impacts	Pre Uprising		Post Uprising	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Children Education	27	27	71	71
Family Planning	22	22	55	55
Women Employment	13	13	46	46
Family Nuclearization	35	35	67	67
Exogamy	29	29	58	58

Source: Field Survey

Economic Impacts

Table II shows the economic impacts after the uprising. Agricultural productivity increased because of proper maintenance of lands. The monthly income of the sample Kissans increased by a salient margin and they reported to being much satisfied with their existing condition. 56 percent mentioned their present monthly income as above 20,000 rupees from all sources against the meager 12 percent on the same income circuit in the pre uprising era. They had remarkable bank balances in their names and trend of prize bonds as well. Their living standard was observed moving upwardly in the form of better dress, food, relations with high-class people, hypergamy (marriage in upper class) and business opportunities. 75 percent showed improvement in all these against the number of 32 percent in the past, which is lesser than half of the existing position. One important example of change is provided here. The sharing of property between married couples in the target area has always been viewed with suspicion, but it is quite encouraging to find that the survey identified movement has played an historic role in 'melting the ice' of traditional thinking as 45 percent of respondents now admitted giving shares to their females, a figure that was previously only 6 percent. The practice of bride price was also mitigated as pointed out by the present data. It happened only in 10 percent families in the present as compared with 28 percent previously. Finally, 44 percent respondents mentioned having Pucca houses against 56 percent of muddy/semi Pucca houses (houses constructed with cemented materials) at present.

Table II Economic impact of the Kissani Movement

Economic Impact	Pre Uprising		Post Uprising	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Increase in Agri:Productivity				
Monthly Income (Above Rs. 20 Thousands)	12	12	56	56
Living Standard	32	32	75	75
Women Share in Property	06	06	45	45
Bride Price	28	28	10	10
Housing Structure	21	21	44	44

Source: Field Survey

Political Impacts

Table III depicts the political impacts of uprising in the sample area. 83 percent of respondents endorsed their awareness about basic rights, struggle for rights acquisition and state responsibility in this regard. Participation in political gatherings, discussions and regular study circles has broadened the vision of people, and has oriented them to democratic leadership, a point made by 68 percent respondents. Respondents believed in the spirit of democracy in elections and now voted for those candidates who were committed to the public cause. People knew the role of vote in national development and prosperity. 74 percent admitted their orientation to the voting behaviour in the form of vote value and its approved way of casting. Dispute settlement first used to be made through Jirga (conciliatory council) in multifarious conflicts. Now, the public tendency has moved towards state controlled judiciary. 71 percent respondents held the view that courts were approached in all major even some minor disputes. While only 17 percent had such practice before the Kissan movement. Many factions under the title of Mazdoor Kissan Party came into being as a result of the movement with better services of the concerned community. 65 percent justified the formation of different groups in Mazdoor Kissan Party as a beneficial act towards the solution of problems related to Kissan community. It is pertinent to mention that at present political parties look forward to the help of strong faction of Mazdoor Kissan Party during election campaign to ensure the success of the candidates they field in the electoral arena.

Table III Political impact of the Kissan Movement

Political Impact	Pre Uprising		Post Uprising	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Political Awareness	25	25	83	83
Leadership Pattern	17	17	68	68
Voting Behaviour	18	18	74	74
Dispute Settlement	17	17	71	71
Kissan Parties	-	-	65	65

Source: Field Survey

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the data that the uprising of Kissan has greatly inspired their life patterns from many dimensions like social, economic and political. The mode of thinking of local people has become reshaped providing opportunities to their development as socially accepted beings. Before the Kissan movement the local people had rigid patterns of living and social change in these was looking difficult but the uprising brought about revolutionary changes in their lives. These changes overthrew the structural contents inclined to stagnancy of society. They are now practicing family planning, sending children for attainment of education at different institutes, allowing educated females to work outside homes at different places, living in nuclear dwelling units at maximum and having provision for outside family marriage mainly followed by the consent of youngsters. In addition, there has been an increase in agricultural productivity, which eased all their economic constraints. The income of local people has jumped up by the extent satisfying their maximum needs of life. They are now wearing more expensive and fashionable clothing; have access to foodstuffs that suffice their needs; many business opportunities are in their hands; and the provision of a share in property to female members offers a good measure of the increasingly politically aware Kissan society. The trend towards constructing Pucca Houses has begun and the replacement of hamlet pattern of housing is on the beginning. Political awareness is observed at greater degree in all ages of people.

The inhabitants of northern Hashtnagar talk in such political tone, which shows their gravity of maturity. The leadership pattern has now adopted a more democratic route and local people have got conscious of vote importance and its independent casting without any pressure from any side. Major disputes are normally related to lands and resolution of these is sought at the courts, whereas minor conflicts are disposed of through informal mechanism of Jirga. Different factions, under the name of Mazdoor Kissan Party with identical aim of serving the rights of respective community, are observable. Deviation from the set objectives is a certain reason beyond the fragmentation of Mazdoor Kissan Party.

REFERENCES

- Adam, K. and K. Jessica. 1984. *The Social Sciences Encyclopedia*. Penguin Books, New York.
- Bill, F. 1995. The rise and decline of an Indian peasantry in Natal. *The J. Peasant Studies*. London: Frank Cass. 22(3).
- Ganshyam, S. 1990. *Social movements in India, A review of literature*. Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi
- Hamza, A. 1988. *Peasant and revolutions, peasants and peasant societies*. New York: Penguin Books.
- James, P. 1998. The political and social basis of regional variation in land occupation in Brazil. *J. Peasant Studies*. Frank Cass, London. 25(4)
- Khan, Z. 1993. *Muhammad Afzal Khan Bangash, An Autobiography*. Pakistan Study Centre, Univ. of Peshawar.

