

Pages from the Old Records

Constructing a Different World

Pages from the Diary of Raisaheb Sashi Bhusan Sarkar¹

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A scholar engaged in reconstructing tribal history encounters the problem of paucity of information. This is mainly due to the traditional dependence on archival materials. But this statist source has embodied a discourse, known as Orientalism or lately South Asian Studies, which suffers from a certain limitation about which E. Said, Bernard S. Cohn or Ronald Inden have had been very critical.² This being the growing concern of researchers, various other sources such as oral tradition, unused official sources and private papers are being increasingly invoked so that tribal studies become more informed and dependable. With this aim, I have recently made a critical corpus-study of a British-day Official Tour Diary to unearth a large body of valuable information.³ I now take the opportunity to introduce a source of different genre, the Private Diary containing the family history of the Sarkars of Amlatola in Chaibasa, presently the district headquarters of West Singhbhum. While portraying the family history this Diary traverses a past that peers into the entire sweep of British rule in Singhbhum.

Inclusion of the family account of a Bengali in a Journal of Tribal history may offend those who define tribalism as a documentation of the tribe alone. But as we launch this Journal it is perhaps pertinent to delineate the area we seek to discourse. Setting this limit, I intend to follow Wittgenstein who evocatively suggests ‘we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable’, that is, to approach a phenomenon from both inside and outside.⁴ In that sense, the author of this Diary, an immigrant Bengali, was spatio-ethnically an outsider, a *Diku* for the tribe. But the irrevocable reality was that with the onset of British rule these *Dikus* had been slowly but steadily entering into the Ho land,

¹ Reproduced from *Manwa Katha* (A Journal of Ashin Das Gupta Institute of Tribal History, Kolkata), Vol. I, No. I, October 2007, 33-41.

² E.W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage, London, Introduction; B.S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997, Foreword, p. 5; R. Inden, *Imagining India*, Hurst & Company, London, 1990, pp. 7-48.

³ A. K. Sen, Raisaheb Rai Saheb Ratnesvar Rayer Sarkari Safar Diary O Singhbhum 1927-30: *Aitihāsik*, Vol.5, No 1, Kartik – Chaitra, 1402BS.75-88. A revised English version titled, ‘Singhbhum 1927-30 and the Tour Diary of Ratneshvar Roy’, *History*, (A Journal of Burdwan University), Vol.VI, No.I, 2003.

⁴ Cited in R. Guha, *History at the Limit of World-History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, pp.8-9, 16.

which was both administratively and culturally known as Kolhan. Their presence was very totalising when a different culture was transplanted in a tribal land. It was metaphored by a more materialistic vision of life, style of living, socio-religious ideas and institutions. Sarkars represented one among them. The author believed that following this cultural pattern glorified the family and gave him reason enough to author this history. Glued to this pattern, the family seemed to be oblivious of the tribal surrounding, signifying the marginality of the Adivasis in the mental world of a section of the *Dikus*. This may provide us with the reason for the hiatus between an Adivasi and a *Diku*. But one cannot also ignore that even the exclusionist ambience could not stem the steady percolation of the exotic culture among the Adivasis to set the stage both for conflict and collaboration. This was equally true that in the greater world a non-tribe was gradually staging a communication between the communities in the courtrooms, the government offices, the Municipality and public life. Though this did not find passage into the inner world of a *Diku* as represented by this Private Diary, the change in attitude may be corroborated by a different source.⁵ This is the ambience in which both the agents, tribe and non-tribe, acted, and this activity is equally engaging as we reconstruct Adivasi history and so non-Adivasi history also in an Adivasi land.

Written in an exercise book, this hand written Diary, originally in Bengali, contains in all fifty-five pages, from which the small chapters on the brothers and relatives have been excluded for lack of space. I am thankful to Saktipada Sarkar, more popularly known as Ujjal Sarkar, for preserving this Diary, getting it translated by N.R. Mohanty, Advocate, Chaibasa Bar, and allowing this presentation. I have added notes and references both to make it spatio-temporally relevant so that a family history may become a more historically significant source material and merge into mainstream tribal historiography, both to replenish it and be replenished by it.

The Diary of Raisaheb Sashi Bhusan Sarkar

Preface

This family history is written for information of our descendants. The good name of this family spread on account of the greatness of my revered father, Late Ram Jeevan Sarkar. Whatever this family could achieve were possible due to the nobility and piety of this greatman.

I bow down and express my countless *pranams* to the memory of the departed soul.

Sd/- Sashi Bhusan Sarkar

FIRST PART

Chapter I

Genealogy and family description

This family was the permanent resident in the district of Manbhum. Many centuries ago, the ancestors of this family used to live in the district of Murshidabad and Birbhum. One of the ancestors came and settled down permanently in the district of Manbhum some centuries ago. No trace of our ancestral descendants could be found at any place either in Murshidabad or in Birbhum district.

⁵ Sen, 'Raisaheb Ratneshvar Rayer Sarkari i Safar Diary O Singhbhum' 1927-30.

At many places in the district of Manbhum, they had their houses. At last my grandfather late Utsabananda settled permanently at village Ketika in the vicinity of Purulia, the main town of Manbhum more than one hundred years ago. This village now forms part of Purulia Municipality.

At that time, the family of my grandfather consisted of five members, namely Utsabananda, his wife, his full brother Yadav Chandra, wife of Yadav Chandra and my father, the only son (issue) of my grandfather.

Nehal Chandra, the elder brother of my great grandfather late Khosal Chandra, used to live at village Balarampur one mile away from Ketika.⁶ He died in the year 1829 A.D. equivalent to 1237 B.S. or near about the time. His wife Joymoni became a 'Sati' on her husband's pyre. The females of our family used to attend the place of 'Satidah' every year till the life time of my mother and used to apply vermilion at that place in honour of the 'Sati' This practice is still continuing.

Chapter II

About my Father and Mother

My father lost his parents at the early age. As such the responsibility of his upbringing and maintenance fell upon his uncle, Yadav Chandra. Yadav Chandra was issueless. When my father attained the age of 10 or 12 years, or even lesser, he used to be in touch with the educated people at Purulia court and in the offices. In this way, he acquired considerable working knowledge in Bengali and Arithmetic within a few years.

My father was born on 20 Falgun 1239 B.S. corresponding to 1833 A.D. in an auspicious moment (*lagna*). When he was seventeen years old, he set out for Chaibasa in 1850 A.D. leaving his home in Ketika in search of fortune. At that time, the new township of Chaibasa was in the making.⁷ It was no doubt an act of great courage and fortitude in those days to cover a distance of 72 miles on foot, going through hills and jungles infested with wild animals.⁸

⁶ Ketika might have been a distant place for a Kolhan Ho. A closer incidence of *Sati* may also be cited from Kharsawan estate where the wife of Thakur Chaitan Singh attempted to be a Sati on 11 August 1829. Lt. Tickell, the Assistant Political Agent, dissuaded her. C. K. Paty, *History of Seraikella and Kharsawan States (1620-1956)*, Classical Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2002, 40-41. Significantly the Ho society did not consider *Sati* to be worth emulation as their creation myth decried both *Sati* and *Charak puja* as anomalous. See, A. K. Sen, 'Gleaning Historical Materials from a Myth: A Study of Kole History of the Creation of the World'. Paper presented at the Research Colloquium, Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, 29 October 2004.

⁷ The town was founded in 1837. It began as the administrative headquarters of the district of Singhbhum after the conquest of the tribal areas of southern Singhbhum. Soon Chaibasa became the centre of trade, health service and education. In 1837 a weekly market and a charitable dispensary were founded and in 1841 the first centre of modern education. All these were done at British initiative. Naturally, the town gradually developed to be the centre of attraction for those who chanced a career in government service, trade and profession.

⁸ It was indeed very courageous because there were no proper roads at that time. So he must have treaded the forest roads at a time when large parts of the area were forest-clad. This may give us an idea about several such adventurous journeys of all those who were then seeking a career in the tribal region from adjacent districts of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

On coming to Chaibasa, he started serving in the office of the Deputy Commissioner,⁹ posted at Chaibasa on a temporary basis and within a short time he learnt reading and writing Hindi which had then assumed special importance in this district. At first, he was appointed *mukhteer*¹⁰ and within 3 to 4 years, he was made a lawyer.¹¹ In order to become a *mukhteer* and lawyer during that time, one had to appear at an examination, which used to be conducted under the supervision and control of the Deputy Commissioner. The headquarters of the Commissioner was at Ranchi. During that period, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, which used to be governed by the Lieutenant, were under the High Court of Calcutta. The Lieutenant Governor used to be called 'Chhota Lat'. Both 'Bara Lat' and 'Chhota Lat' used to stay in Calcutta.

My father was tall, well-built and handsome to look at. Sometime after coming to Chaibasa, he took settlement of a place of homestead land within Chaibasa town Khasmahal from the British Sarkar and constructed his residential house, which still continues to be as such for this family.¹²

Within a short time, my father became the top-most lawyer in this district. He became the lawyer for almost all the zamindars and Rajas of this district. He was the lawyer for the independent rulers of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Bonai and Kharswan states as also of the zamindars of Icha, Dugni, Banksai, Kera and Anandpur. As a non-government person, he helped the administration in various ways. From the time of formation of District Board Committee, Chaibasa Municipality, Chaibasa Zila School, Chaibasa Dispensary he became a member of all these bodies.¹³ He endeared himself very much to the officials of the department of administration. He received the '*Manpatra*' viz. certificate of honour in the year 1877 A.D.¹⁴ He was appointed Notary Public for the district of Singhbhum in the year 1884.

He was a charitable man. He used to help the poor and the needy considerably. He also used to help many others by maintaining them in his house and by making arrangement for their education. My grandfather was blessed with four daughters and five sons. He gave all his daughters in marriage with suitable grooms of well-to-do and noble families. He also

⁹ The office was then of the Assistant Political Agent. He as the head of the district was under the Political Agent to the Governor General who was the head of Chotanagpur Commissioner.

¹⁰ As the headquarters of the Kolhan Government Estate Chaibasa was then under Wilkinson's Civil rules which allowed only the *mukhteers* to function. A.K.Sen (ed.), *Wilkinson's Rules: Context, Content and Ramifications*, Tata College Chaibasa, 1999.

¹¹ The exact date of Ram Jiban's enrolment as lawyer at the Chaibasa bar was March 1855. Following the establishment of British administration in Singhbhum the courts had been started. Hari Prasad Ghose was the first pleader registered in December 1846. Out of four of them Ram Jiban was the junior most when he entered Chaibasa bar. General Administration Report for 1878-79, No. 678, Chaibasa, May 1879 (No further details available), Appendix, Return of Pleaders of the Senior or higher grade for the District of Singhbhum for the year 1878. District Record Room, Chaibasa. (DRCC).

¹² Of the plot nos. 221-24 in Vakil Tola (presently included in Amlatola which was in the vicinity) one belonged to Ram Jiban. Chaibasa Municipality, Khasra Measurement Paper, Book I, Serial No.1-400, August 1896.DRRC. Sashi Bhusan inherited this house from his father.

¹³ This was how in the urban quarters of a tribe-dominated district a member of the educated middle class charted his career and gained reputation. Becoming a lawyer or Headmaster of the local Zila School qualified the literati to this situation. We can easily visualise Ram Jiban's steady social ascent as being the top most lawyer.

¹⁴ In 1877 when Queen Victoria assumed the title of Empress of India Dr. Hayes, the head of the district, distributed certificates to 47 distinguished personalities. Two among the recipients were Chaibasa lawyers, Hari Prasad Ghose and Ram Jiban .

got me and my younger brother Chandra Bhusan married at the same time and in the same *Lagna* with the two full sisters of the famous ‘Ghoshs’ of our village on 27 of Baisakh 1290 B.S.¹⁵ At that time, I was thirteen years of age and my wife who was born on 23 Bhadra, 1280 B.S. was aged nine and half years. He spent sufficient money in those marriages. His main aim was to establish marital relationship with the noble families of the society.

My father acquired some ‘*Mouzas*’ and landed properties in both the districts of Singhbhum and Manbhum, which are in our control and enjoyment.¹⁶

My father was a protagonist of female education. He got his daughters educated in Chaibasa Girls School.¹⁷ He used ‘*Palki*’ as a conveyance for going to far and nearby places. He used to maintain a rich and aristocratic standard and attitude in the matter of food, manners and in social and family functions. His profound faith in God was noteworthy. Religious acts were part and parcel of his life. Worship, meditation and reading of religious books were his daily routine works.¹⁸

In 1285 B.D. he had started the worship of Laxmi Narayanji everyday by establishing the deity of ‘Saligram Sheela’. The worship used to be performed by a Brahmin who was provided with arrangements of his living. Although a pucca temple was built at his native village, Ketika, he used to keep the deity at his Chaibasa residence with him for the most part of time in order that he could himself attend to the worship. The inmates of his family used to stay at Chaibasa sometimes and at Ketika at other times. There were extensive cultivable lands at Ketika and almost all kinds of foodstuffs used to be cultivated on these lands.¹⁹

Regular worship of the deity was being performed in the temple at Ketika till this day as before in accordance with the arrangements made by our revered father. In order to meet the expense of regular day-to-day service of worship to the deity, considerable landed property was given away by an endowment of permanent ‘*Debottor*’.

¹⁵ The repeated mention of *Lagna* along with date is a pointer to almanac-centric Hindu culture that Ram Jiban and his kin imported and lived in a tribal land for which the notion of almanac was unknown.

¹⁶ Reinforcing family status through marriages and acquiring large properties marked the fulfillment of life for the contemporary Bengali educated middle class. Such materialism was however totally exotic for an Adivasi. Thus an island of cultural exclusiveness was being slowly evolved to which a different style of living, as listed below, was added. This proliferated further with time to constitute a distinct world.

¹⁷ Probably the school was established in 1874 to cater to the growing need of girls’ education for the urbanised and also Adivasis. It is not possible to say whether the Chaibasa literati had any role in its foundation. Ram Jiban was however promoting female education by admitting his daughter in an otherwise conservative urban setting where ladies had to move in a *palki*. A contemporary Report observed that the conservative habits of the people posed ‘an insuperable barrier’. General Administration Report (GAR) 1883-84, Singhbhum district (Top cover missing, no further information), para.145. (DRRC) There was, however, greater freedom in tribal society.

¹⁸ Religious practices constituted other metaphors of cultural difference through family practices as well as such public shrines as the Kali, Durga, Siva temples and annual religious festivals of which the annual Durga puja of Amlatola was the oldest. As the memory goes it was during Ram Jiban’s time that it had started in 1869.

¹⁹ This double link, both physical and emotional, with *desh* (original village) and *basa* (present habitat) constituted the world of the immigrants. This required their periodic visit to the village during festivals and family functions and caused a split in their affiliation, cherishing however the fond hope of a going back to the place of origin. As we find here and elsewhere the link was progressively loosened when the families remained confined to the second home which gradually became their only home or in select cases they were released into a different world when homes in their new places of work were set up.

My revered father suffered two serious shocks (tragedies) in his life, the death of his eldest daughter Baradamoyee and secondly, widowhood of his second daughter at a very early age. He had gone to Ketika from Chaibasa in 1295 B.S. in the month of 'Poush' for the performance of the *sradh* ceremony of his uncle Jadav Chandra. He performed the ceremony himself but thereafter he fell ill. My father breathed his last on the 30 Chaitra 1295 B.S. in the evening on the day of *Ekadoshi Tithi* (growing moon fortnight) corresponding to 11 April 1889. He completed his 56 years of age.

I had come back to our native home, Ketika from Calcutta, about more than a month prior to that time after having appeared at my F.A. (First Arts) examination (I.A.),²⁰ and I was disturbed for arranging his treatment and nursing by remaining by his bed-side. On the sudden demise of our 'Mahaguru', the great preceptor, we all fell into the deep sea of trouble. We, his five sons, were all of tender age, I was the eldest son aged eighteen years and my other brothers were aged 16, 14, 12 and 10 years respectively.

The task of taking care of the children, managing all the work of the house-hold and of supervising the daily worship service of the family deity fell upon my mother, who had unbounded unflinching regards for the gods and the Brahmins. She used to serve the guests, relations (near and dear ones) and the poor with eagerness. To give away food and clothes was her dear works. Right from *Sasthi Puja* (worship of goddess *Sasthi*), she used to observe all 'Bratas' throughout her whole life. She was ignorant of reading and writing. It was her routine duty every day to hear reading of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Being in touch with the religious books throughout her life, she learnt by heart vivid description of those scriptures. In spite of availability of servants and maidservants, she used to do many works of the household by her own hands. Idleness was foreign to her, as she always used to keep herself engaged with some works.²¹ After the death of our father, she had lived for 28 years more. She left her eternal abode at the age of 75 on 18 Agrahayan of 1324 B.S. corresponding to the 4 December 1917.

Chapter III

My Own Tale

I was born at Chaibasa on the 20 Falgun 1276 B.S., which corresponded, to 1 March 1870 at 11 A.M.

My father was very much in favour of education. He always used to remain alive to making efforts towards making arrangement for the wholesome education of his children. When I was four, he began my education by engaging a tutor for me at our residence at Chaibasa. At that time there was no school and pathsala according to his choice.²² Private

²⁰ Chaibasa provided no collegial education. The trend among Bengalis of Chaibasa was to send mainly their sons to Calcutta for higher education. In another case a few years later we find Ratneshvar Roy, a Chaibasite, being admitted in Ripon College, Calcutta. Sen, Raisaheb Ratneshvar, p.76.

²¹ This is perhaps an example of the determining role often played by the *Kartri* or lady of the house, who was often required to lead not always from the front and steer a family clear of adversity. We have another instance in Tarangini, the mother of Ratneshvar. Sen, Raisaheb, p.76.

²² There was however the Chaibasa Zila School and Missionary schools not very far away from his house. That Ram Jiban did not find them attractive was due to the unsatisfactory state of the school. A contemporary Report pointed to both the inefficiency and paucity of teachers causing the reduction of classes. General Administration Report for 1878-9, No. 678, Chaibasa, May 1879 (No further details available. DRRC) p.32. Perhaps it was because he wanted his son to be privately groomed under his eyes and learn as well as be taught in Bengali before he was ushered into non-Bengali medium local schools.

teachers knowing English and Bengali were hardly available. Such teachers used to be brought from Purulia or Bankura.²³ My revered father kept me with him in like manner till I was seven. During this period he got me admitted for study in the Zila School, Chaibasa for two years. The school was just then started nominally. The few of the teachers available then hailed from outside. Other than the Head Master, there was no other Bengali teacher. A few Adivasi teachers professing Christianity used to teach English, while some Hindi knowing persons coming from the Bihar area used to teach Mathematics and Hindi. I had also learnt Hindi at that time, since Bengali was not being taught then in the Zila School. On seeing that there was no facility for education at Chaibasa, my father decided to give me education at Purulia.

At that time the inmates of our family used to stay at Chaibasa and that was the reason, my father sent me to Purulia for staying with my elder brother-in-law late Shiba Prasad Mazumdar for two years. My brother-in-law was then the Post Master at Purulia. There was a Bengali school very close to the post office and was known as Students' Scholarship School, where I had studied for a period of two years.

I was admitted in Purulia Zila School at the age of ten. Our family members used to stay at Ketika at that time and I used to attend school from our house. After two to three years, my father took a house on rent in mahalla Nadiha adjacent to Purulia and put me there. The Zila School there was very close to my rented house. I came out successful in the entrance (Matriculation) Examination in the year 1887 at the age of 16. Thereafter, I was sent to Calcutta (now Kolkata) for the University education.

At that time, the nearest railway station was Sitampur, 50 miles away from Purulia. Ordinarily bullock-cart was the only means of conveyance in those days. After five months of stay for study in Calcutta, I returned to our native house at Ketika during the Durga Puja vacation. My revered father had also come to our house from Chaibasa. He enquired of me about my college education. He heard eagerly what I had stated in reply. He had expressed his only desire that I should start practicing as a lawyer at Chaibasa after completing my legal education.²⁴

From April 1889 when our revered father had breathed his last till the year 1894 when I passed B.L. Examination i.e. for five years the heavy burden of work emanating from various complex problems in relation to domestic, social and the property fell upon me. At that time, I was between 18 and 23 years. During these years I used to perceive that the soul of my departed father used to show me the path and to help me accomplish those works completely with ease and without difficulty.

The act of supervision and inspection of our landed properties situated in a scattered way in the districts of Singhbhum and Manbhum constituted one of my principal tasks. I used to pay visits every year during the summer vacation to my college to supervise and have information about our landed properties. Those situated in the district of Manbhum were in the neighbourhood of our native house at Ketika, but the lands of Singhbhum were scattered here and there. There was no train service at that time and so I used to go by

This was a significant pointer to the mindset of contemporary Bengalis, who wanted to maintain their distinct Bengali identity in a growing Hinduised culture.

²³ This information is significant in reconstructing the history of education in Kolhan.

²⁴ Son inheriting the parental property along with the profession was the culture. This was how a tradition of lawyer families at Chaibasa also evolved.

bullock cart. At present (at the time of writing the Diary), the train services are running close to all our lands.

I started practicing as a lawyer in Purulia Court from May 1894 to October 1894 for six months. After having secured my law degree I applied for registration of my name in the High Court, but I came to learn that it would take some time for obtaining a practicing certificate. Incidentally, the Judicial Commissioner, Ranchi came down to Purulia for holding Sessions court and I obtained a written permission from him to practice law.

I required some experience in conducting civil, criminal and revenue cases during this period of six months. I began practising in Chaibasa Court on the day the criminal courts re-opened after the *Vijaya Dashami (Dusserah)* festival in the month of November 1894 in deference to the wishes of my late revered father.

The Rajas, zamindars and the main businessmen of the district of Singhbhum and of the neighbourhood, who happened to be the clients of my late father, became my clients within a short time.²⁵ They used to say that my late father was not only their lawyer but also he used to make suitable arrangement in the matter of management and supervision with regard to their family, worldly, social and property affairs. I already kept their deeds and documents with due care which were lying in my father's drawing room. They expressed their special delight in having me as their lawyer.

I was elected Commissioner of Chaibasa Municipality in the year 1903, and Vice-Chairman of the said Municipality in 1910 under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner.²⁶ I continued to be elected as such again and again till the year 1919. At last, when the system for election of Non-official Chairman was introduced in 1919, I was elected the First chairman of the Chaibasa Municipality. I relinquished the office in 1921. In this way, I was closely associated with the Chaibasa Municipality for a long time.²⁷ The Government Administration Reports used to speak highly of me every year. In the year 1921, I was elected a member of the Singhbhum District Board. During those years I did various works by remaining a member of the Government Hospital and Education committees. During the famine of 1914, I co-operated with the authority. I was appointed 'Notary public' for the district of Singhbhum in 1916.

²⁵ The Rajas and zamindars seemed to be all those mentioned earlier. The addition of business men among clients both for the father and son pointed to the gradual growth of the town as a business centre along with a centre for administration. So for legal advice some of them depended on Ram Jiban and Sashi Bhusan. The link between a lawyer and clients often extended beyond professional level and became both social and generational as enumerated below.

²⁶ This marked the gradual rise of Sasi Bhusan in public life, which had begun quite sometime before. We find him busy in the famine relief operations. It was here he joined hands with the contemporary public figures of Chaibasa which included Bengali and non-Bengali lawyers, landlords, businessmen besides district officials and the like of Captain Manki, a leading Ho personality. This set the stage for interaction between a tribe and non-tribe. The contact seemed to widen when on appeals some Mankis contributed towards famine relief fund. Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, Bengal Branch, Singhbhum District Committee, Secretary's Note Book, Deputy Commissioner's Office, Fly Leaf 1897, Famine Department Letters, File Serial 51B and 52B. (DRRC).

²⁷ Chaibasa Municipality was one of the oldest municipalities of Chotanagpur division, being established in 1875. Prominent inhabitants of the town, some of whom were Bengali lawyers served in such capacities as the members of education, health-sanitation etc. Sashi Bhusan's prominence as a successful lawyer had earned him that position as it was a case with his father. His election as Vice-Chairman and Chairman was the mark of his distinction in urban life. This way he extended the family tradition of public service.

I was conferred with the honour of 'Roy Saheb' in the month of January 1922.²⁸ In the year 1926 I was appointed by the Govt. as the teacher in law to the then minor Ruler-apparent of the estate of Keonjhar on a monthly salary of Rs. 450/-. The Ruler of the independent estate of Kharsawan was the maternal uncle-cum-guardian of the minor Ruler-apparent of Keonjhar and on his recommendation, I got the job. All on a sudden, I received his letter requesting me not to refuse the offer, I joined the job on 8 August 1926. That vast estate used to be administered by the British Government, at that time through their political department of the Lt. Governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Calcutta. At that time the heir-apparent to the throne of Keonjhar was aged about twenty years. He then just came after having completed his education from the Princes' college, Raipur in Madhya Pradesh.

I went to Keonjhar and started residing with the minor king. I started advising him on essential matters of law, administration and on other subjects. When the heir-apparent ascended the throne in 1928, I was appointed as his private secretary. I was appointed as the Estate Judge in 1932, which post was then newly created. I used to exercise powers the same powers as were exercised by the District and Sessions Judges and also the Sub-Judges when trying civil suits and hearing appeals under the British India. When the High Court of this estate was first created in the year 1940, I was appointed one of the three judges of that court.

Since I was keeping indifferent health, I secured retirement from service on 1 March 1942 and returned to our residence at Chaibasa. On that day, I completed seventy-second year of my life. I used to serve however, as the Legal Adviser to the estate of Keonjhar from Chaibasa till the year 1946. After a couple of months, the condition of the princely estates in India underwent complete change, since the British left India on 15 August, 1947.

I was at Keonjhar for about sixteen years. I was acclimatised to the climate of that place to a great extent. I spent these years there endearing myself to one and all and lived there with due dignity. I felt that this period was the best in my life. I used to reside there in Keonjhar alone while my family members used to live at Chaibasa, 75 miles away. I owned my car and the distance used to be travelled in three hours.

I considered myself immensely fortunate in having had four dutiful younger brothers. Their love and regard for me was exemplary and unparalleled.

The following events engulfed me in deep pathos:

1. The death of my father took place on 30 Chaitra 1295 B.S. Ekadashi tithi of full moon fortnight corresponding to 11 April 1889 after the evening.
2. My mother's death took place on 18 Agrahayan, 1324 B.S. Tuesday, Tithi Krishna Sasthi Dasha corresponding to 4 December 1917.
3. Death of my eldest son took place on 19 August 1934 (Sunday) corresponding to 2 Bhadra 1341 B.S.
4. My eldest son-in-law Munindra died on the 1 Aswin, 1349 B.S. corresponding to 18 September 1942.
5. My second son-in-law, Satish expired in 1935.
6. My elder sister Barada Moyee died in the year 1282 B.S. at the age of 18 years leaving behind only daughter named Sarojini.

²⁸ Conferring of this title was the recognition of loyal and distinguished service to the Raj. We have other than Sashi Bhusan, Ratneshevar Roy, Nalini Kumar Sen and S. K. Aikat as among the recipients from Chaibasa. The former was a deputy collector and an expert on mines while the two others were lawyers.

7. Suffering widowhood and subsequent death of my second elder sister, Prasannamoyee.
 - a. She became a widow at the age of about 13 years in 1281 B.S.
 - b. Death in the month of December 1926 A.D. at the age of 61 years.
8. My third sister, Kshantomoyee expired in the month of Agrahayan 1338 B.S.
9. My fourth and youngest sister, Shantomoyee died on 14th. Magh (Thursday) 1349 B.S. corresponding to 18 January 1943.
10. My second younger brother Chandra Bhusan expired on 5 Shravan, 1943 B.S.
11. My third younger brother Lakshmi Narayan died in December 1930 corresponding to 1337 B.S.
12. My fourth younger brother Rajani Kanto died in the month of June 1945.
13. The wife of my second younger brother, Chandra Bhusan expired in Jyastha, 1328 B.S.
14. The death of the wife of my fourth younger brother Rajani Kanta took place on 29 July 1947.
15. My son, Nagendra Nath's first wife died in June 1929.