

CONCLUSION

So, from this study the first thing which has to be considered that heterogeneity is the noticeable characteristic of the society of this region. But the predominance was maintained by the Rajbansis. The region is basically inhabited by the non-caste, sub-caste low-caste and tribes' people. Another interesting point is that the northern part of North Bengal including the hilly tract is basically the settlers' zone, though indigenous inhabitants were there. The migrant people actually became dominant in all aspects of life. At the same time northern part of North Bengal bears the feature of divers linguistic, socio-cultural and ethnic entities. Here we found that in the plain areas the language of the indigenous people are Rajbansi, Rabha, Bodo, etc. and the language of the migrants are Bengali, Hindi, Sadari etc. in the hill the indigenous Lepcha, Bhutia and Tibetan had their own languages. After the increase of the migration of the Nepalis the Nepali language became dominant and it has become the communicative lingua-franca of the people of all the hill people. In the southern portion Bengali is the dominant language though the tribes mostly Santals use their own language in their day to day life, yet the medium of instruction is Bengali. Therefore, the linguistic diversities are comparatively lesser.

Social awakening and social reform movement of southern part of Bengal had an influence over the people of this region. In course of our study it has been noticed that the nineteenth century was the century of reform movement by a number of groups and communities for desiring Kshatriya status throughout the country and particularly the western part of India was the pioneer in this respect. So, from western India the wave of the movement

came to southern part of Bengal and from southern Bengal it had come in northern Bengal. It is interesting to note that most of the lower caste groups' people demanded Kshatriya status when they became aware of their numerical strength and condition after the publication of the census report in 1881. In North Bengal the Rajbansis (the single largest community of the region) initiated their social mobility movement. It has found that they have endogamous society and no caste based stratification is there in their social system. Moreover, unlike other parts of the country there was no tradition of Kshatriya kingdom in Bengal. But the leaders of the community had proved of their Kshatriya origin citing examples from the ancient scriptures. Therefore, opposition came from the caste Hindus of Bengal and the Rajbansis considered this opposition as hindrance towards the way of their re-installation into the Hindu fold and revivalism for social uplift. This problem, however, was considered by the leaders of the community of later generation, who launched several movements for separate state, as non-recognition of them as well as their historic past a part and parcel of the history of Bengal and society. Although the Rajbansis first started the movement, other minor groups of people also got influenced by the movement of social uplift in the same line. For instance, the Rabhas of North Bengal initiated their movement to recognize their place in the Hindu social structure.

The social awakening movement of the Rajbansis ended with a bewildered consequence where they found themselves in an unending controversy regarding their identity. The present status of the Rajbansis residing in various parts of India, Assam, Nepal and Bangladesh is different from each other. Moreover, with regard to the language and script also diversities are

found, for instance, in West Bengal and Bangladesh they use Bengali, in Nepal they use Devanagari script, in Assam they have adopted Assamese script. So, a group of scholar in this field argued that had the colonial government not separated Goalpara district from Bengal in 1874 and Rangpur remained part of West Bengal after partition (1947), such kind of identity crisis would not have emerged. It has also been argued by scholars that the economic crisis that is the gradual marginalization of the community was responsible for an in-depth enquiry into their condition since past till present.

It is interesting to note that in the society of the hill areas of Darjeeling a peculiar consequence of colonial administration is noticeable. Though the social structure of the Nepalis is as same as the Hindu social stricture of India, yet the caste system in Darjeeling has become lucid. Perhaps the structure of colonial administration had a role for reducing the caste rigidity as it was in Nepal amongst the Nepalis in Darjeeling. Instead, the colonial administration had made them much more westernized than other caste and communities of Bengal nay India. Moreover, the separate administrative system also played a crucial role for which no assimilation of the society of the hill with that of the plain took place and the people as well as the society in the hill area remained separate from the plain Bengal. With regard to the courses of activities and consequences, it can be said that the indigenous people of the plain and those of the hill area were different. For instance, the indigenous people had started fighting for reservation facilities whereas the indigenous Lepcha, Bhutia etc. had not voiced for fighting for such facilities during the period under study.

Apart from the Rajbansis of this region, a number of other minor groups and communities also got influenced by the socio-cultural reform movement of the time. Moreover, in addition to concentrate on the socio-cultural uplift of their respective groups and communities, some of their leaders participated in the broader activities, viz. Indian national movement. They contributed a lot for the spread of national spirit amongst their fellow countrymen. So far as the migrant tribes are concerned, who migrated during colonial period as labourers in the Terai, Duars and as peasant cultivators in the southern districts viz. Malda, Dinajpur, have made themselves part and parcel of the region and gradually took part in the electoral politics. Thus they have become empowered. Moreover, a Cosmo-culture has been developed with all India characteristics in this region. Another interesting point is that, amongst the tribes both in the hill and plain areas, the Christians became more beneficiaries than their counterparts of their traditional religion. Though it is true that the language and culture of the majority group of people dominate over the minority communities, yet since the late seventies a number of minor groups and communities, both indigenous and migrants, have become conscious of their own culture, language etc. and started movement for restoring and developing of their own languages, cultures et., for instance, the movement of the Suryapuri, Bodo, Rabha etc.

We saw that unlike other parts of Bengal, here in North Bengal, reservation policy of the government has created a complex social relation among the inhabitants, both indigenous and migrants. Grievances regarding the sharing of reservation benefits resulted in an unprecedented social tension in the region which is still a continuing phenomenon.

It is interesting to note that in spite of such socio-economic tension the under current of cultural fusion and assimilation is simultaneously working in the region, for instance, the Bhaiya of the Rajbansis and Bhatiyali of the refugee migrants from east Pakistan, now Bangladesh have become part and parcel of the life of the people in this region.

A unique feature of the politics of post-partition North Bengal particularly of the post-panchayat reforms of 1957 period was the introduction of the reservation of seats for the tribal communities in the panchayati system. Since the implementation of the said system the entire scenario has rapidly changed. It is interesting to notice that those people, who were not at all the inhabitants of the region before 1947, now they are in a dominant position in the politics of the region and the makers of the future politics and political groups. We see the similar instance of some overseas Indians of South East Asia, South Africa and some Caribbean Countries. The fore-fathers of today's statesman, political leaders of those former British colonies went as labourers and their offspring within a few decades became the makers of the future of those countries and a good percentage of the citizens belong to Indian by origin.

Surprisingly we found another kind of dichotomy, the migrant tribes, the Nepalis have now been dominating in the politics of the region where they are in majority, but the migrants from East Bengal, thereafter the 'refuges' from East Pakistan, thereafter 'infiltrators' from Bangladesh particularly the caste Hindus could not find any opportunity in the land to represent their caste and community. It is true that both the group of migrants viz. the tribes and the caste Hindu Bengalis had come into this region at the same time,

and the lands were made cultivable not only by the tribes but also by the migrant Bengalis. But history is so unkind to them that they could not find any place in the political atlas of India nay North Bengal.