

CHAPTER: SIX

ETHNO LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF THE MOVEMENTS

Language is the identity of the race. Language is the strongest weapon of the movement. Language generates the emotion. Language brings the idea of collectiveness. Language gives the sense of unity among the members of the community or the race. This language, again, may promote the sectarianism in the feeling of one to the others.

Language always plays a major role in establishing the identity of ethnic group or community. The newly emerged educated middle class of the Rajbanshi community defied the demand of the Bengali intellectual that Rajbanshi language is a dialect of Bengali language and claimed it is a standard independent language like Bengali . Notwithstanding the fact, that there is no commonly accepted definition of being termed as dialect and standard language the Bengali intellectuals tried to remain their dogmatic attitude to claim it is a dialect of Bengali . As this nonissue became the issue of conflict which ultimately turned in to the demand for the creation of state recognizing of their own language. .This chapter felt to look in to the textual explanation to recognize the principal or standard language of the country . It also examined the riddle of the 8th scheduled to recognize the principal or standard language of the country .

6.1 ROLE OF LANGUAGE

In this research study I have included language to understand the fathom of the gravity of the present crisis and root of the unrest. In this context I feel that it needs to give an explanation about the language and its role. The present ethnic unrest initiated from the recognition of the Kamtapur or the Rajbanshi language as the Standard language. The history of the different ethnic movements revels the fact they had been originated initially from the demand of the recognition of the mother language. I do not like to go out of the boundary of India I like to remain within the limit of the boundary of India.

To establish the racial identity a movement can give birth of a language or a language can appear again in the new form. A language which was thought to be dead may be rejuvenated through the ethnic movement. Alphabets, literature, folk culture again may thrive into the new life through the movements. The examples are here. Kurmali, Santali or the Gorkahli and Kakbarag language. The Kurmali language, inspite of the fact that it was one of the oldest languages of our country it was a colloquial language. With the influence of the Jharkhand movement this language has appeared as the language of literature and gave birth its grammar. Through this movement the Alichiki of the Santal Language has becoming popular.

In the Darjeeling Hills region the Nepalis were to establish their separate identity as the Indian Nepali. So a section of Nepali, specially under the leadership of Subas Gishing the Chairman of G.N L.F. and the pioneer for the movement of Gorkhaland state until the new king replaced him from his chair demanded the original Nepali language ‘Khuskura’ to be renamed as ‘Gorkhali’ so that the Indian citizen Nepali should be differentiate from the Nepali speaking citizen of Nepal.

In my study of research to find the impact of the language on the ethnic movement specifically on the demand of Kamtapur state is to be examined. Although my study is not language but as the controversy has become very sharp whether Kamtapuri or Rajbanshi language is the standard language or it is a dialect of Bengali Language as claimed by a section of Bengali intellectuals became an important part to be included in the study.

As it has been said earlier that this study is not on language so there is no need or even scope to discuss about the language in details, my study is thus remain confined within the space which is related to the Kamtapur movement. In the opinion of linguistic expert, Whitner said ‘language is a social institution’.

Again, according to Edger, H Suretvant stated in his book ‘An introduction to Linguistic science ‘a language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which members of a social group cooperate and interact.

In order to search the roots of this ethnic unrest it is needed to look at a glance about the language, as here again the conflict between Bengali and the Kamtapuri is playing the pivotal role in the ethnic unrest of North Bengal. From sanskrit, regional, Prakrit languages grew and from there, present Indian languages come in to being.

Most of the eastern Indian major languages originated from Maithali which developed its entity from Magadhi Prakrit’. So it is expected that there is symmetry and similarities among these languages in various directions. The language of North Bengal which was a part of old Kamtapur bears a mark of great similarities with that of western part of Assam.

Dharma Narayan Burma, the strong advocate of the opinion that the Rajbanshi and the Koches are different identity said in his book ‘A Step to Kamta Bihari Language published in 1991 from Tufanganj stated the fact that ‘at the first stage, a sharp distinction between the Rajbanshis and the koches could be seen. But hundreds of years passed on, Koches in the throne was accepted by the Rajbanshis and in such a way matrimonial connection was made. And in course of time Koches and Rajbanshis admixture themselves culturally and socially and their separate identity was lost. As a matter of fact on such an admixture, the cultural and linguistic development took a new shape and we get this present language and culture. This language which dates its origin

from the Charuya Pada of between 8th to 12th centuries was the administrative and educational medium in the reign of Kamtapur king—from the 13th century to the 19th century.'

The letter of Maharaja Naranarayan wrote in 1555 A.D to the Ahom king Chukhampha (Sarggadev) represent well the Kamtapuri language. Here lie the complex problems. What is the identity of the language of the letter that is written by Maharaj Naranarayan to the Ahom King? Calcutta University stated that this letter is the first specimen of Bengali prose literature. If it is so, Dharma Narayan Burman claimed, that Bengali prose literature generated from the womb of Kamtapuri language.

On the other hand, the scholars of Assam demanded that this letter of Maharaja Naranarayan to be the first visible sign of Assamia Prose literature. Between this opposite demands Sri Burman naturally asked the pointed question: 'This awakens very naturally our contention where Kamtapuri will go then?' His further question, 'an organized kingdom without any linguistic medium or did do its function with a Lingua Franca of so called scholar's imagination? Of course not. Evidently it stand that when there was a complete darkness in linguistic stability in the east and in the south, Kamtapur glew with its own unparalleled radiance of culture and ideal administration' (Barma)¹

Let it admit, the letter that was written by Maharaja Naranarayan to the Ahom King is the first specimen of Bengali prose. If such letter could be written by the king to another king it should be taken in to granted that during that period the practice of literature in Kamtapur kingdom was greatly developed .There were such other manuscripts and books must have written during this period otherwise such kind of letter could not have been written all on a sudden. These literature known as Kamtapuri literature has been included in the Assam Burunji i.e. in the history of Assam literature which ought to have place in the History of Bengali Literature.

6.2 DEBATE ON KAMTAPURI AND RAJBANSI LANGUAGE

A large section of the Rajbanshi-Koch community strongly argued that this language should be termed as Rajbanshi language. Most of them argued that the Rajbanshi and Koches are same and by naming the language as Rajbanshi the psychological division if any among the Rajbanshi community will be eliminated. Dr. Grierson also called it Rajbanshi dialect. While an interview was taken, Dr. Giraja Shankar Roy, ex principal of a college and author of several books, belonged to the Rajbanshi community strongly supported the name Rajbanshi Language.

The other school of thought strongly opposed it. Dharmanarayan Burman, ex head master belonged to the Rajbanshi community and consider that Rajbanshi and the Koch are different in their origin and as such they are not identical, argued that, Rajbanshi language is not only the

court language of the Rajbanshi King but it was also the court language of the Koch kingdom and this was more developed in the hand of the Koch kings. It was/is the mother tongue of Muslims, Rajbanshis, Kayasthas, Brahmins, Khens, and other people of old Kamtapuri kingdom. So in his opinion the language should be Called ‘Kamta-Bihari’ language.

Let me examine the argument of the Bengali intellectuals like Dr. Das of Biswa Bharati University where he argued that the construction of the language of the letter of the Maharaja was the same that was used in the Bengali prose. It is therefore, to his opinion a specimen of the oldest Bengali Prose. But in that context the reply of the Ahom King ought to be taken in to the consideration. That letter contained the same construction and very similar words that were used by the Maharaja Naranarayan.

If I placed or accept the argument to consider the letter as the specimen of the old Bengali prose by applying the same argument it can be claimed the answer of the Ahom king to the Maharaj also another unique specimen of Bengali Prose. It is therefore can be claimed that Ahom Language is also a dialect of Bengali language. But taking into the consideration of the vastness of the population of Assam and their political power no body dare to raise that claim.

Here comes the question of the dominance from the centre of power over the others. This centralization of power appeared during my study and the interaction of so many cross sections of peoples that centralised power is one of reason for this demand for a separate state for the Rajbanshi People. Of course many of the members of the Rajbanshi community extended their support to recognize their language as an independent standard language but are reluctant to subscribe the view to have a separate state either in the name of Greater Cooch Behar or the Kamtapur State.

The culture and literature of the undivided Bengal was not only Kolkata Based. The districts of East Bengal like Dacca, Maymansingha, Kumilla, and Sylet at that time almost at par with Kolkata. After the partition of Bengal the divided Bengal became one centred state. Kolkata is not only the political capital of the state but Kolkata is the guardian of the culture and literature of the state apart from her political and economic supremacy. Without the blessing of the Kolkata no Bengali could be noble Bengali to be called.

6.3 THE ILLS OF ONE CENTERED STATE

It is not the issue between Kolkata and Cooch Behar or any other district. The issue is one centred urbanization verses decentralization of economy and culture.

West Bengal only one centred state. Except a portion of Howrah, Hooghly, and 24 paraganas West Bengal is only Kolkata. But in the Punjab no district has such monopoly over the other. But the interesting point is that the ratio of the urban population is more or less same of the two

states. It is 26.49 % in west Bengal and 27.72 % in Punjab (1981 census). The basic difference between the Punjab and West Bengal laws when the guardian of the Punjab state tried to distribute their population in creating number of urban centres by decentralization of their economic projects the political guardian of West Bengal preferred to concentrate whatever their resources in and around the capital, Kolkata. The population of the biggest urban centre of West Bengal, Kolkata was 91,65,650 (1981) and in the same year the population of Ludhiana, the largest urban centre of the Punjab was 6,06,250. This reflects the fact 63.5% of the total urban population live in Kolkata and 13.5% of the total urban population lived in Ludhiana. The numbers of small towns are increasing rapidly with decentralization of their economic programmes. As a result the people of the Punjab are not migrating from their native village to one urban centre if they feel it necessary to move .With the more towns the more civic service to the citizens on one hand, and on the other hand, it will release the pressure upon the particular town. The political parties are forced to extend their civic service to the more peoples. As the development works are distributed among the so many urban centres other districts will not feel that they are the colony of the particular city as it has been raised by the districts of West Bengal against the dominance of Kolkata.

A discontentment was accumulated through the long period against the monopolistic position of Kolkata in the field of culture. Most of the intellectuals were not in a position to pay any attention to the sentiment of the peoples of the districts. They looked upon them in indifferent attitude. As a general rule of the social science a movement has been started against the monopoly position of a centre. It is not rebellion but it is a response to the call of the history.

The language has also one kind of imperialistic character. The dominating language wants to swallow the weaker language. The dominating attitude of the community over the others remains behind the imperialistic character of the language. The western concept for the formation of a nation or the state has been accepted by the policy makers of our country. Gaelic of Scotland and Welesh of Welesh were obliterated to English or by obliterating Bret language of west France to give the place of French language is the example. Russ language also tried to suppress the marginal languages of their country like Let, Estaniya, Polish, and Fin etc. The result was not good. The imperialistic attitude of the Russ language to suppress the other languages may be considered as one of the reason for the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The basic question is what is the gain from this conflict on the question of dialect and the standard language? The attempt to prove that Rajbanshi is the dialect of Bengali language the integration of West Bengal will not be strengthen. Specially, when the difference between the dialect and the standard language is very thin then what is the use of being at daggers drawn against each other over this issue should be the point of discussion. . If the Rajbanshi community demands that their language is not the dialect of any language the Bengali community has no reason to jump into the field to oppose it. If the Rajbanshi claim that Bengali is the dialect of the

Kamtapuri language it does not mean that Bengali will lose its importance. When I put that questions before so many peoples of both the communities most of them gave their answer, it does not carry any matter for them. Rather, they want to flourish both the languages through more and more development projects.

Before conclude let me place my observation on that study where the language is playing a vital role in the ethnic movement of North Bengal. Government has already formed the Rajbansi Sahitya Academy in Cooch Behar town. Prasenjit Burman, Ex M.P. and a well known writer and respected personality of the Rajbansi Community has become the Chairman of the academy. But a large number of Rajbansi Community who considers that the name of the academy ought to have been by the name 'Kamtapuri Sahitya Academy'.

The Rajbansi or the Kamtapuri language whatever may be the name of the language it is the language of both the Rajbansi and the Koch although the most veteran personalities among the Rajbansi community, Dharma Narayan Burman himself admitted that throughout the processes of time and through the social interaction the difference between the Koch and the Rajbansi is no more. So the question of the name of the language whether it will be termed as Kamtapuri language or the Rajbansi language would be settled within themselves. But the situation becomes complex when the other community intrudes in to the internal disputes in order to show their supremacy of their thought and claim that they are the final authority to say over the matter then the situation turn otherwise. That has happened on the issue of the Kamtapuri/ Rajabansi language. When I met several cross section of peoples, mainly Rajbansi community during my field study they expressed the same feeling. They told that it is their internal matter and the dispute will be settled among themselves like the family matter settle within the family.

When I met some Bengali intellectuals who not only believe that Rajbansi is a dialect but also expressed their opinion in public. They put their argument when it is pointed to the depicted letter to them that was written by the king from Cooch Behar and none demanded the presence of any Bengali prose writer in the court of the king. Still, how they could deny that it is then proof of Kamtapuri language? They replied that only a specimen like this cannot be the conclusive prove that Kamptapuri or Rajbansi language has been originated from their own source and it is the specimen of that language. The counter argument came from the Rajbansi community; if it so then the Bengali intellectual could not claim from the few stanzas of the 'Charjya padh' that it is the source of the Bengali literature.

I repeat the same as it appears to me that a section of Bengali intellectual were the one of the root to provoke the sentiment of the newly emerged educated middle class of people by raising the unsolicited controversy in demanding Rajbansi is a dialect of Bengali language. Almost all of them live in Kolkata, seldom come to North Bengal to feel the pulsation of the soil of this

region before framing the contextual theory on the sensitive issue of the this region . I am not suggesting that the fact will depend on the sentiment but not on the fact. But when the question comes on the issue whether it is a dialect or independent language one should take all the possible cautions as well as every relevant facts ranging from historical, social, anthropological, linguistic and the ethnic sentiments of the concern people. The question echoed by the Rajbanshi community as a whole including a large section of the Bengali Community what prompted those intelligentsia to jump all on a sudden to beat the drum to declare that Rajbanshi is a dialect and even one of them wrote in the pamphlet of a political party that it is sub-dialect of Bengali language.

They forgot the social science. In order to continue my field study I made my station at Tufanganj a Rajbanshi dominated semi urban area. There I met several peoples including two times members of the West Bengal Assembly, Jiban Dey (Bengali) now 80 years old, writer of several books on Cooch–Dynasty. From their observation it is found that Rajbanshi language was the original language of this locality and was spoken locally by the ‘Aboriginal ‘Rajbanshi’ people. It had no any status in the education as the medium of instruction and the books were written in Bengali and many of the teachers were Bengali and some of them of course Rajbanshi. Jiban Dey told in an interview that they never made differentiation between the Rajbanshi and the Koches as it is not possible to differentiate among the Bengali who are carrying the pure blood of the Aryan and other who carrying non Aryan blood. He also supported the statement of Dharmanarayan Burman that Rajbanshi is the language of both the Koch and the Rajbanshi community (if the Koch and the Rajbanshi are taken as the separate identity). Once the great language and a source of great literature lost his status and confined within their colloquial language at their home, now with the emergence of educated middle class in the Rajbanshi community it becomes the strongest weapon to establish the ethnic identity.

6.4 THE SEARCH FOR SELF INTROSPECTION

The educated Rajbanshi youth deeply felt this tragedy, and they were trying to rehabilitate their language and culture as best as they could.

Naturally it was not only for him but also for the whole of the community without their knowing it, become a case of frustration and indeed a tragedy.

After the formation of the middle class in the Rajbanshi community began to feel this tragedy and they were trying to rehabilitate their language as best as they can do. At that juncture it was needed the help of the Bengali middle class to render their help to restore their past glory including their literature. But the Bengali showed their attitude to the local people specially the Rajbanshi community without any sympathy with a thoughtless apathy. This process meant the slow acculturation and assimilation of the Rajbanshi and their admission first into the lower ranks in the Hindu Bengali community and then absorption of their language and culture.

The conflict between the home and the outside world in this unequal battle was certainly a tragedy for the language and culture which went to the wall – a tragedy which might actually have struck the newly formed middle class and they came forward to establish their culture. Language is the strongest weapon to establish the identity and the glory of the past.

‘But while it was passing away, the old speech and the culture behind it had its revenge. The pre Aryan speech and culture formed a very strong established substratum, and acted as a powerful weapon in the formation of the present day composite Hindu society, culture and religion and in the evolution of the Aryan language on the soil of India for the last 3000 years. This fusion of the Aryan and the non Aryan changed the character of the Aryan speech and culture of India and made it acceptable to all and sundry and supply to it its irresistible and in exhaustible force. (S.K. Chatterjee; Conflict of Speeches in India)²

6.5 DIALECTS AND STANDERED LANGUAGE

The language is not static. Its dynamic nature provides it a constant change from one form to another. Some grow more vigorously some lost. So there is no permanent definition about the dialect and language.

The process is still at work in those areas of India where an earlier pre Aryan with its own cultural milieu is confronted with one or more Aryan speeches. There the home language is confined to the narrow limit of the group or the family. As a result, the language lost its use in the out world .Such the bilingual or Bengalised Rajbanshi community inevitably absorbed in a wider Bengali speaking Hindu community. That does not mean they forget and left their language and culture forever, rather they will try to re-establish their lost glory of their language and culture to establish the identity.

There was no any appreciable resistance or attempt from the community like Rajbanshis as at that time they were not organized politically and culturally in absence of the middle class intelligentsia and they had to submit to the advanced Bengali community in the field of language and culture. But now the situation has rapidly changed with the emergence of strong educated middle class in the Rajbanshi community. As the question related to the status of the language which is playing a very important role in the establishment of the ethnic identity I made an direct communication with the cross section of the peoples of this locality ranging from the intellectuals teaching community in the university, colleges and schools to the social workers and the very commoner of the society belonging to both the community of North Bengal.

I visited to the residence of Prof. Ashuru Kumar Sikder of Bengali department of North Bengal University and writer of several books. He admits that the commonly accepted difference

between the language and the dialect has not yet defined. ‘A Dictionary of Linguistic’ stated regarding the dialects; ‘A specific form of a given language, spoken in certain locality or geographic area, showing sufficient differences from the standard or literary from that language, as to pronunciation and idiomatic usages of words, to be considered a distinct entity, yet not sufficiently distinct from other dialects of the language to be regarded a different language’.

From this explanation an idea about the difference between the dialect and the language may be obtained but it still remain unsettled of number of questions. Because the difference between the dialect and the language is not the absolute but only relative. It is told that different form of the same language with the regional variation is the dialect of that language and when this line of difference cross a certain limit it will not remain as the dialect then it will be converted into language. For example, Bengali and Ahom once the two dialects of a language, now they are an independent standard language. But there was no standard formula that could be given what extent of the border of the difference that should be crossed to become a language.

Again, in the opinion of some expert that when the regional form of a language becomes the media of expression of the two distinct communities of peoples then they would be termed as the separate language. It is on that ground Ahom and Bengali who were the two dialects of a language now recognized as the two independent languages. But what would be then in case of Bangladesh and West Bengal. The citizens of Bangladesh and the citizen of India (West Bengal) are two separate group of population. In that case two languages of Bangladesh and West Bengal have to be taken as two separate languages. Another explanation was given; if the two groups of population are separated from each other culturally their regional languages would be treated as the independent standard language. On that explanation Ahom and Bengali language are no doubt two independent standard languages but accepting this argument the Rajbanshi community can easily claim that their language should be considered as the independent language because the culture of Rajbanshi and Bengali are quite different from each other. Again, if one accept the culture as the index for the differentiation between the dialects and the language that would be unable to give the answer to the very basic question also. There are so many similarities among the dissimilarities between Ahom and Bengali languages, on the other hand, same similarities and dissimilarities are found between the Bengalis of West Bengal and East Bengal still the language of Bengal is same. Even the understandable of the language is not the solution of that controversy. So long one community is in a position to understand the meaning the language of the others it may be termed as the dialect of the standard languages. But in that case if a Bengali visits Assam or Orissa he can understand most of the words of Ahom or Oriya. But if one Bengali of Kolkata tries to follow the conversation between two Bengalis either Sylhet or Chittagong in most cases he will fail to understand their conversion. I got the same experience.

I met several personalities of the Rajbanshi community for my study of research, like Premananda Roy, author of ‘*Ekush Shataker Rajbanshi Samaj O Manishi Panchanan*’ Dr

Dhirendra nath Roy teacher, and resident of Dinhata, Nagendra Chandra Ratta and Sujan Burman, both are teachers editors of ‘Sotal *Chauli Path*’, the elementary grammar book of Rajbanshi language, Prof. Arup Jyoti Das and writer and film maker residea at Guwhati and Bodo – Rajbanshi origin and many others. Every one told that if some of the Bengali intellectuals would it not have been claiming that the Rajbanshi is the dialect of Bengali language it would remain as a non issue and it would not find any avenue to ignite the fire of the ethnic unrest in the name of the language.

They further argued, if the Kamtapur or Rajbanshi literatures which were reached to its pinnacle during the 14th and 15th century should have been placed in the history of Bengali literature. The great writers of Kamta literature like Hem Saraswati, Haribar Bipra, Madhab Kandali and the famous poets of Koch, Kanshari Deb should have placed in the History of Bengali Literature. They asked why their sons will search those creations and the creator in the Assam Buranji?

The counterpart of the Koches in Tripura are now also in war path. Here the Kokbarag has been using Bengali alphabet for long centuries. Now a section of the Tripura community demands that they like to use Roman alphabets replacing Bengali. How far this demand is aimed at the development of the language that require to be examined. One probable reason lies behind this that this section of the Tripura community think Bengali is the main obstruction in establishing their independent identity. So a section of Tripura community has chosen the Roman alphabet for Kakbarg, as the Rajbanshi has been using the Rajbanshi language for establishing of the ethnic identity.

6.6 THE RIDDLE OF 8TH SCHEUDLED

At the time of independence there were fourteen languages that were included in the 8th Scheduled. Those languages were, Assamia, Bangla, Gujrati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kanara, Marathi, Malayam, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu and Sanskrit. After that more and more languages have been added in the scheduled. At present there are 22 languages in the Schedule. It has already been stated that India is not a monolingual state. It is a multilingual country having 1652 languages as per census report of 1961. Nobody knows what are the index that were fixed to select the language to be included in the list of 8th Scheduled. The Sanskrit language has been included in the 8th schedule. But the number of Sanskrit speaking peoples that were recorded in the census mere a few hundred that means if there is any Sanskrit speaking people really exists in the country they needs to search thorough the microscope. The number of Santali linguistic community was 36 lakhs, Bhili 12.5 lakhs could be considered for the 8th schedule. Again, Kashmir having 24 lakhs and Sindhri with 12 lakhs of population could find their place in the 8th Schedule. There should have been a index like the population, or any other items that would be consider in giving a place in the Schedule. In absence of such index there is an ample scope for

the misunderstanding among the different section of the community. Those community had the political power could manage not only their language to be placed in the 8th Schedule but also the respective state on the linguistic consideration. Even after that the province were fragmented under the pressure of the other linguistic community for the formation of the respective linguistic state. Now the other linguistic community coming forward with the same demand taking the advantage of the absence of such index for the formation of the state and giving the recognition of the language in the 8th Schedule.

The domination of one language over the other invites the catastrophic effect. The Russ domination disintegrated the very existence of the Soviet Union. The attempt to dominate over Bengali by Urdu language is one of the prime factor for the disintegration of Pakistan. One should take the lesson from the history in order not to allow it repeat in case of them. The dominating attitude of Hindi already created a sharp division between the South and the North of our country. Further, in the 1981 census 48 languages assimilated in Hindi eliminating their linguistic existing in the official record .In a multilingual state every language should have their own identity and position in the state. No community will accept his language as a sub language of any other language in the long run.

When the states were formed upon the linguistic consideration it was not thought about the other linguistic groups. As a result ethnic conflict finds the scope to raise their head as a general rule with the emergence of the educated middle class within the respective community to make the demand for the creation of the said linguistic state. Those linguistic community who could show their political power and the capacity to influence the votes were able to have a separate state. One formation of the state on the linguistic basis encouraged the other to come forward with the same demand.

One should keep in mind that the Bengali speaking peoples got their state where the state official language is Bengali, but the other linguistic groups who live within the boundary of West Bengal have the equal love and respect towards their respective language. Nobody can deny the fact that, we are told, that be Bengali than Indian, be Marathi, then Indian and so on. I can re call the call of the merger of Bengal and Behar. Anthropologically and historically the Bengali and the Behari are same. Shasanka, the king of Bengal established his capital in Pataliputra, now Patna. If Bengal and Bihar were merged together it would be good example of the national integration. But it is the Bengali who opposed it, because they had a fear that they would be minority in question of their demographic position. But if the merger would have taken place at that time all the administrative posts would be occupied by the educated Bengali in absence of the educated middle class in the Bihari community. The natural resources of Bihar would be the raw materials for the industrial hubs situated in Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, and by the side of the Hooghly River. But if such proposal for the merger would have been placed now the strongest opposition will come from the Bihari community .Because the strong educated middle

class has emerged in their society and the feeling of the Behari nationality has finds its strong foundation in Bihar.

Rabindra Nath Tagore, the dream and hope not only for the Bengali community but for the mankind of the world. Rabindra Nath Tagore in his essay '*Bhasa Bichhed*' wrote both Oriya and Assamia language are the dialects of Bengali and advised Bengali alphabets would be the ideal for them. Prof Sukumar Sen, a notable linguistic told, these three languages have been originated from the same source so they were the same language at one time. Nobody can think that Rabidra Nath Tagore suggested that suggestion from the throne of egoistic thinking. He told it taking into the account of the historical facts that these three communities were sisters coming out from the same seeds. Inspite of the fact both the Oriya and the Assamis expressed their strong resentment over this suggestion because it appeared to them it would abolish their independent identity.

A number of the Bengali intellectual when claimed that Kamtapuri or the Rajbanshi language is the dialect of Bengali they did not bother to think that such uncalled claim may hurt the sentiment of the Rajbanshi community. Now nobody dare to call Assamia and Oriya are the dialects of Bengali language whatever may be the historical support behind that because of their political strength. Such claim of the Bengali intellectual drove them to feel more isolated and they are now trying to establish the relationship with the people of Assam where they find more near relationship in respect of language specially the Rajbanshi community of Goalpara who were separated from them during the period of 40s. In my study and the interaction with the peoples associated with the demand of Greater Cooch Behar state I found this is one of the strongest factors of demanding for the creation of Greater Cooch Behar state. They felt that the relationship with the Ahom community cannot be restored as it was in the past due to the isolation for so many years so it is better for them to have separate state in the name of the Greater Cooch Behar for the Rajbanshi as a whole.

Before concluding about this chapter let have look over the role of the sentiment circling the Rajbanshi community again in the ethnic unrest of North Bengal.

Dr. K.L.Barua in his '*Early History of Kamrup*' opined as following:

‘The old Kamrupi language was a variety of eastern Maithali and that is why Huen Tsang remarked that the spoken language of kampurupa differed a little from the language of Kamrupa differed a little from the language spoke in Moid-India i.e. Magadha and Mithila.’³

‘The Prakrita languages of different regions were identical but on association with non Aryan languages of the respective places assumed different shape and entities. Kamrupi Prakrita language accordingly assumed distinct character and so it was independent of the eastern Prakrita languages ‘(Burman p 213)⁴.

Some of the Pan-Bengali scholars desired proto-language to be sub-dialect of Bengali language. In the same time, Assamese Scholars also echoed the same Pan-Assamese theory. The Rajbanshi scholars like D N Burman, Prof. Girin Roy opposed both the views and opined in the interview in saying that both the theories of the scholars of the respective states are far from the truth because this Kamrupi which is lately known as Kamtapuri/ Kamta-Bihari, linguistically is equidistant from Pan-Bengali and Pan-Assamese realities.

6.7 THE HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF KAMTAPURI LITERATURE

It has already been stated that in the 13th century the name of the kingdom Kamrup was changed on shifting the capital of Kamrup to Kamtapur. Fifteen miles south to present Cooch Behar. This was ruled by 15 native kings successively beginning with Sandhya Roy in 1225 A.D. to Nilamber 1482A.D. Pathan Chieftain conquered Kamta but could not retain it for more than 12 years. Within a short period Biswa Singha captured the throne. Markendeya Purana, in 35th pada says:

‘Kamata Nagare Biswasingha Narabar.
Prochanda Protap Raja Bhoge Purander.’

Twenty two kings of this line ruled over Kamta and lately Cooch Behar, for 454 years continuously from 1496 to 1950 which is the longest dynastical rule in India.

I like to mention the literature of Kamta Cooch Bihar which I collected from the different libraries of Cooch Bihar and Jalpaiguri and from the individual collections of different peoples during my field studies.

From this collection it is found that the kamta-Cooch ruler was the patron of literatures. Several distinguished, authors, and religious preachers enriched the literary treasures of the Kamta language. The letter of Maharaja Naranaryan of Kamtapur, written to the Ahom king has already been mentioned. When the Rajbanshi scholars demanded it is the first visible sign of prose literature of Kamta Language, the scholars of Bengal and Assam univocally demanded this is visible sign of prose literature of their respective languages.

It is no doubt that when there was a darkness in the field of literature in the east and south due to the political instability during that period. Kamtapur glew with its own unparalleled radiance for language, culture and ideal administration.

Table 6.1.1
List of the Kamtapur Literature

1) Gopicandrer Gan of 13 th century
2 Gornather Gan
3) Prahllad Carita; Haragauri Sambad, by Hem Saraswati During the reign of Durlav Narayan)
4) Joginitantra written in the period of Maharaja Durlav Narayan
5) Padma Puran by Surnani.
6) Translation of Aswamedha Yajana of the Mahabharata by Harihar Bipra
7) Daker Bacan by the poet Dak
8) Padamapuran by Durgabar
9) Padma puran by Mankar

Sankar Deva, the court poet of Maharaja Naranarayan (1533-1587) wrote many books. So far I have gone through those books I mentioned bellow:

Table 6.1.2
List of the Kamtapur Literature

<u>LITERATURE</u>		<u>DRAMA</u>
I) Ajmel Upahyan	VIII) Balichalan	1) Kali Daman
II) Adidasar Bhagabat	IX) Bhakti Pratap	2) Parijat Haran
III) Utakalmala	X) Bhakti Ratnakar	3) Rasa Krida
IV) Uddhab Sambad	XI) Ramayan (uttar kanda)	4) Rama vijay Nath
V) Gunamala	XII) Rukmini Haran	5) Sita Sayambar
VI) Niminabasidha	XIII) Harishchandra Upakhyan	6) Patniprasad
VII) Premkalasi Ghosa	XIV) Barisa Barnana	7) Kele Gopal
		8) Sitaharan

‘Rama vijay Nath’, was staged in the court of Maharaja Naraynaryan with the patronization of Cila Roy, the famous general of the king. Sankar Deva acknowledged his help by composing poems in praising Cila Ror for his help in staging the drama:

‘Ramak Param Bhakati Rasajnan
 Shrisukladhwaj Nripat Pradhan
 Ramaka Vijoy yo Karayali Nat
 Milahu Taheka Baikanthak bat.’

Table 6.2
List of other Kamtapuri ancient books

Nam Ghosa by Madhav Deva
Bhakti Ratnabali by Madhav Deva
Bhattima Madhav by Deva
Barageet Madhav by Deva

Ramsaraswati was the court poet of Naraynarayan. He at the request of the king translated the Mahabharata in to Kamta language. He also wrote Bagasur badh, and some other books which I heared the names but could not see. Bhatta deva translated Katha Gita and in this language. Puradsatham Vidyabagusa wrote Pryaga Ratnamala, Pitambar Sidhanta Bagis wrote Markkendya Candi, Nal Damayanti and Usha Parinaya. There were others books also written during that period which clearly speak about the remarkable progress in literature. It is equally true that during those periods Bengali and Assames languages had not taken a definite shape. It is only during the 18th century both the languages took the definite shape especially in the prose literature.⁵

6.8 RACES AND LANGUAGES

Many linguists have made an ardent search for the common ancestor from whose language similar European languages developed. At one time it was thought that scholars had found this ‘first language’ in Sanskrit the language of the ancient Indian manuscript’ (Nesturkh; p 90).

It is true that a number of Indian languages and the Persian languages had some resemblance to the European languages which gave rise to the name of Indo- European for the whole group of languages.

It is also believed that in the distant past India and Iran were invaded by tribes from some other part of the world, tribes that spoke Indo-European Languages who conquered those countries. This conquerors declared themselves a “higher race than the local population whom they had enslaved; they gave themselves the name of the Aryan from the Sanskrit word, ‘Arya’ meaning noble-born. Later the name Aryan was applied to certain racial groups and the findings of the linguists were given an unscientific, racists colouring. Many racists regards only the tall, blue- eyed blonds of modern north Europe as being true Aryans –these peoples have given the name of the Nordic race.

If language is the offspring of the race spirit, the peoples speaking Indo-European languages should possess the features of the northern Aryan races. But this not so. The kurds and many other peoples, who are Indo- European in languages, have skin and hair that is much darker: light-eyed individual are rare among them. Aryan languages are typical of south Europe where the majority of the people have dark eyes and hair do not in any way resemble the mythical Aryans.

Thus the theory of an Indo-European or Aryan ‘first language’ and common ancestor with all the features of the Aryan race is refuted and at the same time it is obvious that no race has the right to call itself ‘Aryan–Noble’.

It is clear, peoples speaking the same language are not racially homogeneous and as rule, consists of representative of a number of anthropological types (Nesturkh). In Africa the Negroid peoples speak their own languages, in North America they speak in English and in South America Spanish. Thus groups of one race that enter in to the composition of various peoples and nations, speak different languages.

From the above discussion it goes to show that language is independent of races and disproves the unscientific theory that language is the off spring of a mysterious race-spirit, in some way “biologically inherent “in a race. Language depends entirely on the development of society, it emerges, lives and dies as people develop’ it has no casual relation with the race as biological group.

No doubt, language is the basic mental process such as thinking, understanding and even dreaming. Linguistic rights can be classified into three broad stream; 1) identity based, 2) justice based, 3) diversity based.

My aim to understand the basic root of the present unrest in North Bengal with reference to Rajbanshi/ Koch I like to see the role of the language in question of the identity first and then its role in diversity .

‘Language is not simply a tool for communication but is a central and defining feature identity as all human thought are conceptualised through a language and all the human values are pronounced and perceived through it. It follows that since language is a significant factor in building one’s identity it must be preserved. People identify with the (local) community of speakers of their language , recognise one another as members of the same groups on the basis of language, and have a more or less settled desire that the group should survive and flourish in to the indefinite future’ (Sengupta ;2009. 17 The Economic and Political weekly)⁶

Language is a constitutive and significant factor in one’s identity formation and provided their speakers with a sense of individual as well as collective forms of linguistic identity.

6.9 JUSTICE-BASED

Language is the strongest tool of participation in the polity of the state. If one has no scope to speak in their mother language can have a serious impact on an individual’s employments, educational, and recreational opportunities. This leads to gross injustice and discrimination. Supporting the policy of official multilingualism is based on egalitarianism. ‘The same kinds of valuable institutional space and resources that are made available to speakers of one language in the community ought to be at the disposal of speakers of other language as well (Patten 2001; 710)⁷

Unequal linguistic endowment in the form of ability to speak the dominant language can be the source of interpersonal injustice and every citizen should possess the right to mobilise support for a language community or policies that he or she considers a collective or public good (Latin and Reich 2003;103)⁸

6.10 DIVERSITY BASED

The preservation of linguistic diversity is that diversity is a value and provides alternative to choose from different culture representing different system of meaning of good life as none can claim to have achieved in totality (Parekh1995;205)⁹. It can further said that each language is itself a manifestation of human creativity which has value independent of its use and also that it is human accomplishment and end in itself (Reaume2000;250).¹⁰

It thus gives to make the conclusion that linguistic diversity is therefore essential to the human heritage with each and every language embodying the unique cultural and historical wisdom of people. The loss of any language is an irrevocable loss for all humanity.

From the above discussion it is evident that a large number of the smaller minority languages are threatened and these include scheduled and non scheduled languages as well as the official languages of some states. In India 196 endangered languages have already been identified. Surprisingly, inspite of the fact that the two languages namely Manipuri and Bodo incorporated in the Eighth Scheduled of the Indian constitution are now in the category of endangered list. Among the official languages of the states of seven-Ao, Angami, Chang, Khasi, Khiemnungan, konyak, and Manipuri are recorded as endangered languages. So it need for re-evaluation and revamping of the existing policies in India towards non dominating languages.

In India, which is linguistically an extremely diverse country, there emerge several issues in respect of evaluating government policies towards minority languages. There exist a lack of definitional clarity between what constitute ‘majority’ and Minority’ language as Hindi, the official language of the Union of India, is the language of only two fifth of the total population of India.’

Here again, it is seen that the number of the speaker of the language is not always determine the stability of the language. For example, according to the census report of 2001 it is seen that the there were 13.5 lakh Bodo speakers and 14.7 lakh Manipuri speakers in India and incorporated in the Eighth Scheduled but still these two languages are emerged in terms of being unsafe. According to the Atlas of the world’s Languages in danger published by UNESCO in 2009 two-thirds of the non-scheduled languages are also under threat to different degrees with half of them being unsafe. There are 50 non scheduled languages facing the threat of danger inspite of their countable number of speakers.

Table 6.3
List of Endangered Language

Adi (1,98,462)	Gondi (27,13,790)	Konyak(2,48109)	Mundari (10,61,352)	Sema (1,03,529)
Anal (23,191)	Hmar (83,404)	Korku(5,74481)	Nissi (2,11,485)	Sherpa (18,342)
Angami (1,32,225)	Ho (10,42,724)	Korwa (34,486)	Nocte (32,957)	Tamang (17,494)
Ao (2,51,387)	Kabui (94,758)	Kui (9,16,222)	Paite(64,100)	Tangkhul (1,42,035)
Balti (20,053)	Karbi (4,19,534)	Ladakhi (1,04,618)	Phom (1,22,508)	Tangsa(40,086)
Bhumij (47,443)	Kharia(2,39,608)	Liangmei (34,232)	Pochury (16,744)	Thado(1,90,595)
Bishnupuriya (77,545)	Kashi (11,28,575)	Lodha (1,70,001)	Rabha (164,770)	Tulu(17,22,768)
Chakru (83,560)	Kheza (40,478)	Lusai/mizo(6,74,756)	Rengma (61,345)	Wancho(49,072)
Chang (62,408)	Khiemmungan (37,755)	Maram(37,340)	Sangtam (84,273)	Yimchungre (992,144)
Dimasa (1,11,961)	Koda(43,030)	Maring (22,326)	Savara (2,52,519)	Zemi(34,110)

The figures in the parenthesis are the numbers of speakers of the languages as per 2001 census.

There are 14 languages in India that have been listed in the Atlas as the definitely endangered languages. They are:

Table 6.4
List of Most Endangered Language

Deroi(27,960)	Kolami (1,21855)
Gangte(14,500)	Kom(14,673)
Juang (23,708)	Konda(56,262)
Khond (1,18,597)	Lepcha (50,629)
Coorgi (1,66,187)	Limbu(37,265)
Kinnauri(65,097)	Malto (2,24,926)
Koch (31,119)	Miri(5,51,224)

The figures in the parenthesis are the number of speakers of the languages as per 2001 Census¹¹

Among the 35 critically endangered two are Gadaba and Parij which as per Census report of 2001, were spoken by 26,262, and 51,216, respectively.

The constitution of India enabled the Parliament to create a new state was no doubt a rational thinking that linguistic minorities be offered adequate opportunities for political and economic growth so that they should not have the feeling of discrimination or neglect. This states have the constitutional right to legislate their own official language. Even the official language as mentioned earlier is facing the danger of oblivion.

From the above fact it suggests that a large number of the smaller minority languages are threatened and these include scheduled and non scheduled languages as well as the official

languages of some states. So it is an urgent need for immediate initiation of policies for protecting, revitalising and promoting the entire range of endangered languages if the linguistic diversity of India is to be preserved.

The demand for the recognition of the Rajbanshi/kamta-Behari language should be dealt with on the light of this specific consideration.

In this context Supreme Court of India on the question of the minority languages decided in 2002 that the operative unit in respect of determining who belongs to a minority within the meaning of article 30 will be the state and not the whole of India.

6.11 THE ETHNO-LINGUISTIC BACK GROUND BEHIND THE HITASADHANI SABHA

As it has been stated in my early submission about the unique demographic distribution in Cooch Behar which has no mach with any district of West Bengal and the same is not required to be repeated. Although there was a strong ethnic feeling between the Deshi and Bhatia i.e. between the Rajbanshi and the Bengali but no communal class has ever taken place. The same is said when the progressive state like Bengal became the ugly field of communal riot the princely state Cooch Behar never indulged the communal forces to show their ugly teeth in the society. During the period of the Muslim regime of the state a considerable number of the Rajbanshi converted in to Muslim, known as Nasya Sekh. But even after the conversion they still follow many of the Hindu practices and laws. In Cooch Behar both the Muslim and the Hindu community follow the Hindu law of inheritance.

The role of the rulers of this princely state should also be brought in to discussion. Although the rulers of the state were Hindu but they never adopted the discriminatory policy to the other religious believers. In the time of publication of the holiday list they considered every religious festival and thus followed a true sense of secular state policy.

The Islamic preachers could not succeed to introduce the strict Islamic ritualistic practices in the villages. One reason may be attributed in that context as stated by Prof Ananda Goal Ghosh on his scholarly article published under the title '*The Hita Sadhani Sabha - Power struggle by the Cooch Beharis*' in *Socio political Movements in North Bengal*' (ed) that due to poor communication and transport system the Islamic preachers could not travel in to the remote villages of Cooch Behar . But this argument did not appear to me as convincing. Because when the Islamic preacher could convert the village people in to the Islam they could also easily visit that place. The main reason behind this, there was no such caste discrimination as prevailed in the Hindu Society in other parts of the country including Bengal. So the converted Muslims did not feel it necessary to alienate from the main stream of the Hindu population from whom

they were once a part. The number of Seikh, Mughal, and Pathans were insignificant indicating the fact those Muslim came as invaders they did not prefer this part of the land for their permanent settlement. According to the census report of 1981, the total number of the Muslim Population in Cooch Behar district was 170746. Out of which only 1146 were the out siders Muslims. So a kind of ethno-linguistic consolidation instead of the religious consolidation took place amongst the Hindu and Muslim of Cooch Beharis.

Like as Muslims amongst the Cooch Beharis the Brahmins amongst them also showed an another uniqueness in their presence. There are Adhikari Brahmins that are present only in that community and others are Maithali Brahmins. They maintained a very good understanding with the Rajbansi community and it is they who introduced the Bramanical practices in the community. They were liberal and did that ritual practice keeping the many customs of the Rajbansi community. Thus here also exists a differentiation between the ritual Hindu practice of North Bengal and the Rarh Bengal or the South Bengal. South Bengal follows the customs of Kalinga where the North Bengal followed the practice of Maithali customs. The difference between these two are such sharp that the Kamrupiya Brahmin were despised by the Rarhi Barendra and Vaidik Brahman who represented the rest of Bengal.

An interesting point is that, the Saha's a traditional Bengali business community and Jogi a non caste Bengali community were inducted in the Rajbansi community. How they were included in the Rajbansi Community and many of them became the members of the Hitasadhani Sabha need another field of study which excluded from my research study.

6.12 ETHNO-CASTE-LINGUISTIC ANTAGONISM

There are so many variations in Bengali spoken language. Those who speak in different variation of that spoken Bengali in their respective areas everybody claim themselves as the Bengali and Bengali is their mother tongue. So when the chaste Bengali of Nadia-Krishnanagar of central Bengal was recognized as the spoken standard Bengali for teaching, study and writing no Bengali objected it. Even in Bangladesh follows this standard.

It is not the same in case of Rajbansi. They claim that they are not the Bengali and their language is not Bengali. It is Rajbansi or Kamtapuri / Kamtabehari. On the other, many of the Bengali Scholars claimed that this language is the dialect of Bengali and they have to accept it for the cause of the integration, as if it should be taken into the fact if the Rajbansi is regarded as one of the language of India and independent from Bengali the integration of our country will be fallen like a sand made castle. The role of language in question of establishing the ethnic identity has already been discussed earlier. Here in this chapter I like to throw some light about the economic disparities on the issues of the ethno-linguistic matter.

The economic disparities bring also the disparities in the education which ultimately effect the economic position of the community.

During the period of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur introduced the modern education in Cooch Behar State. Many primary and secondary schools were established by him.

During his regime he founded the college in the name of Queen Victoria in 1888. For remembering the Golden Jubilee Celebration off her coronation. It was the first degree college of the then North East India. It should be noted that the Cotton College of Guwahati was established after 12 years of Cooch Bihar Victoria College.

Although the college was established in the princely state by the ruler in order to spread the education but the lion share of the opportunity of higher education was availed by the outsiders. The Administrative Report of 1933 showed that forty seven candidates were appeared for the examination of which only eleven were Coochbeharis. Out of eleven seven were Hindus and four were Muslims.

From the same source it is found that in the year of 1940 forty three students were appeared in the Calcutta University Examination and only seven were Coochbeharis. The higher posts of all the educational institutions were occupied by the non-Cooch Beharis. For example, all the Head Masters and Head Mistress of the Jenkins School and the Sunity Academy including the principal of the Victoria College were the non-Coochbeharis. In the meantime educated middle class had emerged in the Rajbansi Community and this disparity had created a feeling of discontentment in the rising middle class of that said community.

A feeling for the need of an organization to represent the Cooch Beharis or the ‘man of the soil’ got its momentum. It is further aggravated when the new land policy was introduced by the king.

The government took the initiative for the development of the cultivable land for the enhancing the revenue of the state. In order to do that they took a massive steps for the distribution of fallow land and jungle land to convert it for the cultivation. The local cultivators at the initial stage did not show their interest in doing this laborious job. At that time most of them were engaged in ploughing the land as ‘adhiars’ as the land was easily available and it was comparatively easy to plough.

In order to attract the cultivators of the outside areas the government announced various attractive measures. So many farmers mostly from the then East Bengal came here and accepted the land. They were laborious and had the skill in the art of the agriculture and converted both the fallow and forest land into the agricultural land. As the land was virgin and the art of skill in

agriculture that the ‘incoming farmer employed in those land, within a short span of time it became a fertile land for various crops and turned the fortune of the farmer of the said land comparatively better than the local farmers. When the local farmers came forward with their demand for the land there was no land to distribute them.

This measure resulted in a radical change in the land–man ratio of the state which had a tremendous effect upon the social structure of the state and caused one of the factors for the conflict between the Cooch Beharis and the outsiders of the state.

We can have an idea about the land scenario from the Settlement Report of Mr Becket, the settlement officer of Cooch Behar. He wrote on 1872 and an extract is produced to realise the land situation of the state:

‘From calculation made, I found that out of about 150,000 bighas of revenue paying land included in 185 taluks, about 81,000 bighas are held by foreigners, of the remaining 69,000 bighas less than a third is held by cultivating Jotedars, and the remainder by resident Jotedars, who do not actually cultivate land but live on profits derived from Chukanidars (Middle man) (Source: Ghosh)

The processes of change of land man ratio and ownership of land was a continuous processes as many of the incoming settlers were the farmer by their profession. Thus there were discontents mounting from the both side of the social strata. From the urban side the newly educated Cooch beharis found that their avenue for employment in the administrative arena was occupied by the more educated Bengali outsiders much before of their becoming the educated people. In the rural side the cultivable land were now in the hand of the outsiders farmers. So the front of the conflict between the Cooch beharis and the no-Cooch beharis extended day by day. The Cooch beharis were feeling the need of their organization that could raise their voice for them. At that point the emergence of the Hitasadhani Sabha should not be discarded as the organization of the land lords; rather it should be examined in the light of the social transformation. At the time of the freedom of India, the people of Cooch Behar, especially those Cooch beharis, began to understand that Cooch Behar State had no other option but to take a decision on the merger issue. As the conflict on both the economic and social area were mainly between the Cooch beharis and Bengali they sought an organization who could make strong stage for the interest of the Cooch Beharis. Hitasadhni Sabha was an outcome of that social situation.

6.13 THE FORCES BEHIND THE LINGUISTIC CONFLICT

Kamta kings patronized the poets to translate Sanskrit books in to Kamta languages. I am mentioning those books as the kamta languages because I could not find their names in the history of Bengali Literature. Dharma Naryan Burman during the interview lamented that inspite

of this exalted position of Kamta language the scholars of Bengal and Assam tend to underestimate Proto Language by saying that it is dialect of Bengali and on the other hand of Assamese.

In the absence of the recognition by the history of Bengali literature, the scholars of Assam included these one of the finest creation in the literature in the history of Assam taking it to the account that a large section of the Rajbanshi community is now living in Goalpara after it annexed with Assam. Here I like to quote from the Books '*Assamese, Its Formation and Development*' where it wrote in the page no 16, Ch I. as follows:

'It was under the patronage of kings of Kamtapura, outside the western limit of modern Assam, fourteen miles to the south of Cooch Behar that the earliest Assam books were written. Even now the spoken language of North Bengal and western Assam (dialect of Goalpara and Kamrup) is substantially the same and seems to form one dialect group.'

I met several members of the Rajbanshi community in different occasions and in a seminar where the participant from both schools, supporting the name of the language as 'Rajbanshi'. When I mentioned the remarks taking extract of the remarks of Banikanta Kakati as mentioned just above all the speakers except the participants of Goalpara opposed the remarks of Kakati as a deceitful remarks. Many of them asked how the Kamta court poet's book can be earliest books of Assamiya language. They argued that when those books were written in the court of the Kamta Raj Darbar that must be the books of Kamta language, the court language of the kingdom.

During the break of the seminar I met with the participant coming from Goalpara and asked about their silence on that issue. Ajoy Joyti Das Prof. of a college of Boroland told me that they were in dilemma in question whether this creation will be the part of the Assamiya Buranji or the independent kamta language. They argued that from their school hood they are learning from the history of Assamese literature name as Ahom Buranji that these are the part of the Assamese literature that means the literature field of Assam gave the due recognition of these creations in their history. They further argued that the Rajbanshis of West Bengal do not find these creations in the history of the Bengali Literature. So in West Bengal the children of the Rajbanshis do easily accept the argument that they are not the part of the Bengali literature, rather they are the independent Kamta Bihari or the Rajbanshi language.

This argument bears the weight. When the question comes to administer the Rajbanshi community it will be asked that they belong to the Bengali community and the creation that were made in the court of the Kamta dynasty are the treasure of the Bengali literature and the letter of Naranarayan will be the living specimen of the first instance of the Bengali prose but when the question of due respect and reorganization will come there will be no mention of them in the history of so called main stream history of Bengali Literature.

No doubt that Kamta language is an ancient language although it is a matter of debate that this language is prior to Bengali and Assames. It is a debate of no use but only to abuse the harmonious relation between the two communities. If it is taken as granted that it is prior to Bengali it does not bring the downfall of the position of Bengali language.

Language moves forward depending upon the various factors. It is fact, that the ‘change of geo-polity of this region brought about downfall of Proto language. During the British rule Kamta kingdom was divided into four parts, one was tagged with the newly founded Assam state (1874) another portion with Bengal, the other with Bihar and residue was Cooch Bihar state. Consequently the regional language of the respective states took upper hand; there by this language had to recede back. Moreover, Calcutta University was established in the year 1857 and through this university, teaching of Bengali language spread into Eastern India. So Bengali became medium of instruction in Bengal and Cooch Bihar, and Assamese in Assam. And naturally Kamta was pushed back’.

The argument as put forward by D. N Burman in his article ‘The kamta Language – a Brilliant past and Tragic End ‘in Socio political Movements in North Bengal (Ed) cannot be ignored when in the teeth of serious adverse position this language is still not only living but so many Rajbanshi intellectuals are organized together and publishing number of articles and books in the Rajbanshi/Kamtapuri language. I have collected more than one hundred books and journal all of which are written in Kamtapuri Rajbanshi language which is a glaring example of the formation of the middle class intellectuals among the Rajbanshi Community. I got the Gita, a translated version in Rajbanshi language where I had the privilege to write its forwarding. I tried to remember and equate the same thing when the Gita was translated in Bengali version during the period of British rule and the national spirit was its height to overthrow the colonial rule. The translation of Gita was an indication to establish that the Indian philosophy was superior to English philosophy to boost up the national spirit of the people. It appeared to me that the translation of the Gita into Rajbanshi Language by one Rajbanshi intellectual. Nagendra Nath Roy, Head master of a school represents the feeling that the Rajbanshis were not inferior to any community and their language is strong enough to represent the most sacred holy book of the country.

During my field work I met several peoples across the different shades of the people. Most of the people expressed their view that they want to live together .and many of them belonged to the Bengali community told me that those who claimed that Kamtapuri language is a dialect of Bengali they are doing nothing except to convert a non issue into a issue of igniting the fire of ethnic conflict. They opined that when the many of the Bengali feel proud to say that their children do not know how to write or speak in Bengali but very much strong in English and

prefer to send their children to the English medium school then what of the use of making such a non issue that Rajbanshi is the dialect of Bengali language?

In a seminar on the International mother language day in the memory of the departed soul who gave up their lives for the mother tongue in Dacca held at Bagdogra where a large number of teachers of North Bengal University attended. Fortunately I was also one of the speaker on that occasion. Every speaker spoke to keep the practice through their respective mother tongue and argued that the medium of the instruction of education should be through the mother language. After the end of the seminar I made a study how many of the participant opted to send their children to be taught in Bengali medium or any other school where the medium of teaching is their respective mother language. I find none of the university and college teachers who opted to send their children to the schools where the medium of instruction is their respective mother languages.

So those sections of the Bengali intellectuals jumped into the band of wagon to establish that Rajbanshi language is the dialect of Bengali they had to bear one of the major responsibilities for the ethnic unrest of this region.

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