

Socio – Cultural Contribution and its Impact

The Bengali immigrants who settled in different parts of the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts in the 19th and 20th centuries, had established cultural and religious organisations, promoting Bengali culture and sentiment in the process ¹. As regards the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts, the migration from Western India was largely the migration of labour class, though the movement of upper – class Bengalis was not at all insignificant. The East India Company and later on, British Government of India imported educated Bengalis in the proposed area from various parts of eastern Bengal for employment in administrative services and also in tea industry from the beginning of the British rule ². The recruits of the educated Bengali youths from Eastern Bengal for administrative purposes in face of the indolence and incapacity of the local people, averted the administrative breakdown ³. In addition to that they also acted as torch – bearers of Bengali culture in the province. Circumstances assigned them a position of primacy, unsought for though. It was not the administrative work and the cause of education alone that led to the import of Bengali youths in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts. They arrived also as clerks in tea gardens, as contractors supervising roads, as physicians, advocates and as businessmen like timber, jute traders ⁴. For example, Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty, the retired Sessions Judge of Cooch Behar, was appointed as Manager of Gauripur Tea Estate in Assam. Later on he established a tea estate singlehandedly in Jalpaiguri Dooars namely Jadavpur Tea Estate ⁵. Thus various parts of Eastern Bengal and northern part of North Bengal especially this two tea growing districts come closer to each other. Bengali immigrants and Bengali culture were both welcomed by the natives of these two areas.

It is true that the Cooch Behar Royal family played a pivotal role in initiating the valuable literary tradition in the northern part of North Bengal. They made the literary sphere of Bengali literature fertile. They not only endeavoured in literary pursuits but also penned a large number of valuable books. Maharaja Harendra Narayan was truly a pioneer in this field. Unlike the Cooch Behar Royal family, the Royal family of Jalpaiguri kept itself quite aloof from indulging in literary works. Only those who started residing in Jalpaiguri owing to their engagement in tea gardens or district administration (barring the tribal community), were in some way

involved in this limited literary efforts ⁶. As regards written works, traces were not perceivable before the establishment of the press. Written works ushered in at a later stage. In this age, the duel between the white tea planters and the nationalist tea planters was in vogue. At the primary stage whatever literary thoughts found expression was mainly due to the need and responsibility which was felt unavoidable. And as such some periodicals and newspapers were published. Such literary practitioners did not qualify as experts in this field. But undoubtedly they kindled the lamp of literary endeavours.

The Jalpaiguri town came into existence in 1869 and as such it owes its establishment to the colonial rule. Most of its dwellers were migrants. A lion share of them came into jalpaiguri town after the proclamation of this town as district Head Quarter. This chapter lays emphasis on how a colonial town which accounts for a large number of Bengali entrepreneurs could delve into the sea of literature and initiate a golden era of literary practice ⁷.

The upsurge of the Bengali renaissance which engulfed Calcutta in the nineteenth and twentieth century also took long strides and reached Jalpaiguri town in no time. It is true that the nineteenth century Calcutta could boast of many luminaries and in this respect the Jalpaiguri town did not lack behind as a large number of social reformers, keen educationalists and education stalwarts accounted for a large section of population of the Jalpaiguri town. Being a tea industry centred town, Jalpaiguri attracted some great names of Bengali literature in various times. Such recurrent visits, literary to say, by literary experts did not happened in the case of other towns of North Bengal. Nevertheless, inculcating educational interests, cultural consciousness among the inhabitants of this town were done by the honest efforts of some renowned personalities such as Tarini Prasad Ray, Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, Sasi Kumar Niyogi, DR. Charu Chandra Sanyal, Hriday Nath Bagchi, Satyendra Prasad Ray, Birendra Chandra Ghosh, Jogodindra Deb Raikot and so on. These stalwarts not only spread the name and fame of Jalpaiguri in Bengal but also at a national level ⁸. By the 1930's Jalpaiguri had already achieved the status of a prospering town in the matter of literature. Jalpaiguri could rightly claim to be the 'Venus of Bengal' in that era ⁹.

It is important to mention that in Jalpaiguri town literature mainly flourished in the nineteenth century due to some individual efforts which ultimately

produced a limited variety of literature. But by the end of the nineteenth century a concerted effort in the direction of literary practice could be perceived. The first and foremost contribution of the Bengali entrepreneurs in literary field of the Jalpaiguri town began with the creation of Debating Club. The foundation of this cultural association laid under the auspicious leadership of two noble Bengali tea planter Jogesh Chandra Ghosh and Jogodindra Deb Raikot in the year 1917. Being a brilliant student of the renowned Presidency College Calcutta, Jogesh Chandra Ghosh tied the knot with copious illuminate personalities as well as cultural associations. This impetus actually drew him to set up a likewise association in his own town. In this literary process he got the literary assistance from Jogodindra Deb Raikot. Thus the Debating Club came into existence. Both of them, however, were its President and Secretary respectively. Its chief aim was to arrange literary discussion and cultural debate on heterogeneous subjects. Primarily it was held at the residence of Jogodindra Raikot where Jogesh Chandra Ghosh discussed on numerous themes in regard to the literary World of the then Calcutta ¹⁰.

Tea Industrialist Jogesh Chandra Ghosh was a social reformer in the truest sense of the term. He was a staunch believer of ritual of Upanayana (sacred thread). In 1923 he, along with his friend, Saral Agnihotri accepted the sacred thread. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh was elected the joint – president of the Kayastha Sabha, Jalpaiguri. Saral Agnihotri was a social preacher and Justice Chandra Madhab Ghosh was the editor of Kayastha Patrika. Later the editorial responsibility came on Jogesh Ghosh. He was a strong advocator of Widow Remarriage. Under his inspiration few institutions came up in Jalpaiguri town to further the spirit of this social movement. However, in the year 1923 Kayastha Sabha held its session at Manikganj and it was presided over by the renowned historian Jadunath Sarkar. People from various nook and corner of undivided Bengal participated in this session. The prime organiser of this session was Jogesh Chandra Ghosh. He had a residence in Calcutta's Harish Mukharjee's road. The ground floor of this two – storied building was given to the Kayastha Sabha and this became its office. Many wise and learned people from different strata of the society used to assemble there. For the spread and organisation of Kayastha Sabha he made liberal donations ¹¹.

Another milestone in the literary atlas of the colonial Jalpaiguri town was the Arya Natya Samaj which owes its origin in the year 1902 under the tutelage of

Sasi Kumar Neyogi. In this process Jogesh Chandra Ghosh strengthened the association financially by gleaning money from various tea companies as well as from Marwari traders. The fundamental objective of this association was to arouse national consciousness among the residents of the town as well as to develop a cultural environment around the whole town. The building of this literary association was constructed in a land measuring three acre donated by Bairagi Babaji, a saint. Md. Sonaula Saheb was said to have donated his jute storage building to this association where they established its first stage to perform dramas, dance ¹². Moreover, Arya Natya Samaj had a huge collection of invaluable artefacts which were now and then gifted by some great personages of Jalpaiguri town such as Jogodindra Raikot donated his entire collection of books to this cultural institution. Taraprasad Biswas's contribution was a canvas painting bearing the theme of Russo – Japan war. In this respect, Jogesh Chandra Ghosh came into his assistance in ways more than one. Ramani Chattarjee, the famous singer, dwelt in grovelling poverty, Gopalpur Tea Company with a view to stand by his side appointed him as the secretary of the Gopalpur Tea Company in order to rescue him from the financial deplorable condition. So that he could further his noble mission in the field of music ¹³.

Arya Natya Samaj also published a popular monthly Bengali newspaper namely 'Trisrota' under the guidance of tea industrialist Sasi Kumar Neyogi. This institution also used to arrange an extra vaganza, the most popular festival of the Bengalis "Durga Puja". To cite the names of some great plays staged here references should be made to 'Bijay Basanta', 'Gyan Brikkher Phal'. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh's performance in 'Jaydeb" is still living in the memory of the institution. Arrangements for a night long musical concert used to be held here ¹⁴. The learned members of this institution usually used to read both Bengali and English news daily such as Education Gazette, Somprakash, Sanjibani, sadharani, Nababibhar, Grambarta Prakashika, Hindu Ranjika ¹⁵. The nationalistic fervour of this town found its expression in the fact that in the year 1905 during the time of partition of Bengal, in order to promote a feeling of brother hood among the inhabitants the Arya Natya Samaj arranged for a 'Rakhi Bandhan Ceremony'. The first session of the Indian national Congress of the Jalpaiguri town took place here. This session was presided over by Jogodindra Raikot where Smt. Sarajoni Naidu appealed the people of Jalpaiguri to free India from the British regime. Later it was translated in Bengali by

Jyotish Chandra Sanyal. Even Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi put their footprints there. Nevertheless references also ought to be made here such as Sarajoni Naidu, Padmaja Naidu, Kailash Nath Katju, Raja Gopalachari and Dr. Haren Mukherjee who delivered their valuable lecture at the premises of Arya Natya Samaj as Governor. However, after the demise of Sasi Kumar Neyogi in the year 1909 the famous Bengali tea planter Tarini Prasad Ray adorned the chair as its president. During his tenure it reached the pinnacle of its glory. After his death in 1948 his greatest son planter Satyendra Prasad Ray became its president ¹⁶.

The next purely literary association which expanded the glory of the Jalpaiguri town around the whole Bengal was the Bandhab Natya Samaj. As we know after the partition of Bengal in 1905, a large number of youths of the town came pouring into the nationalist movement with a view to free the country and reorganise it. Many plays which were then staged carried a strong nationalist sentiment. The money collected from these efforts was liberally contributed to the cause for the upliftment of the country and countrymen. At this juncture an influential section thought it unwise and unaccommodating to utilise the stage of the Arya Natya Samaj. This paved the way for the birth of the Bandhab Natya Samaj in 1924. That the cultural needs and aspirations among the urban populace of the Jalpaiguri town were increasing by leaps and bounds, was evident from the fact, that within a span of 20 years from the establishment of Arya Natya Samaj, Bandhab Natya Samaj had its own existence along with a theatre. The section of dramatists used to stage their plays in the outer premises of the Sanyal's household, were the main initiators in establishing the Friends Dramatic Club or the Bandhab Natya Samaj. In the year 1924 the land for this purpose was leased from M. Khatun in lieu of Rs. 200 and the theatre hall was constructed. In this respect the names which rightly claim to be mentioned here are as follows tea planter Nawab Mushurraf Hossain, Mukhleshwar Rahaman, Kalipada Banarjee, Nagendra Nath Mahalanabish. They were the members of the Trustee Board of this institution. In 1929 the most respectable figure of the town DR. C.C. Sanyal appeared in the scene and became a trustee member – he remained the President till his death.

At the earlier stages renowned personages of the drama world had performed for Bandhab Natya Samaj. Even Sishir Bhaduri put his footprints on its stage. This was somewhat coincidence that after staging a performance in Darjeeling

town Sishir Bhaduri and his groups met with huge financial loss. At this juncture while they were returning Dr. C.C. Sanyal made a timely decision and invited him to perform at Bandhab Natya Samaj. Mr. Bhaduri readily accepted the proposal and for the next seven days plays like Sita, Alamgir, Chandragupta were staged in full house. In all these three plays Sishir Bhaduri played the leading role and also directed them. The loss made in Darjeeling was amply compensated and being satisfied with this, the Secretary of Sisir bhaduri's group Purna Babu arranged for an additional show of Alamgir. And he donated the sell proceeded from this show for the enhancement of Bandhab Natya Samaj. In this way, through various efforts made its place in the sphere of theatre and contributed in the production of some important dramas ¹⁷.

In the year 1918, an opera house came into existence at the Raikot household and it was christened as 'Sangit Samaj'. At that time the middle class and lower – middle class people kept themselves at arms distance from musical endeavours. Most of the people held the view that music and dance were a matter of pomp and show which benefitted only the King's and Badshah's Darbar (royal Court). People from the lower strata of the society had any connection with musical art and culture. That the respectable community of the society could involve in this branch of art was first conceived by Jogodindra Raikot and the establishment of 'Sangit Samaj' by him bears the testimony to this fact.

In order to carry out extensive musical practices, connoisseurs of music used to visit Jalpaiguri town of and on from every nook and corner of the country. They used to stay for months and their prime objective was to further the cause of music. In addition to this, Jogodindra Raikot with the same objective, initiated two musical competitions namely 'Chhatra o Prakton Chhatra Samiti' (Association for the running and ex – student's) and 'Chhatra Samiti' (Association for the student's) in the year 1932 and 1934 respectively. Active cooperation from renowned tea planter S.P. Roy cannot be over looked in this matter. In the year 1932, Sarajendra Deb Raikot, Kshirodendra Deb raikot, Dinesh Chandra Roy, Salamat Hossain Khan assembled at Brahma samaj Hall and laid the foundation of a music school and this school was named after the renowned musician of the contemporary Jalpaiguri town Prafulla Shankar. Therefore it was called 'Prafulla Sangit Sangha' which came into existence in 1938 at the household of Tarak Nath Chakrabarty. Arya Natya Samaj did not lack behind in this matter and assumed some forward looking steps in regard to music,

starting from 1942. Along with this a large number of music schools were also founded in the town and the names ought to be mentioned in this respect were 'Sangitalaya' of Prafulla Basu, 'Murchana' of Radhanath Das¹⁸.

There was prevalent proverb that Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth and Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge do not co – exist. This might be the reason why industrialists did not have any bent of mind towards music and art. But a renowned Bengali tea – industrialist of Jalpaiguri town stood out as an exception to this rule and this applied to tea planter B.C. Ghosh and S.P. Ray. As a man devoted to religion, B.C. Ghosh laid the foundation stone of Theosophical Society on one hand, and Jalpaiguri Sangit Samsad on the other hand. His inspiration in this matter was mainly drawn from late Manaranjan Chakrabarty, a renowned musical genius and widely known as Nidhu Babu of North Bengal. As we know, the terrible flood of 1968 wrecked havoc in Jalpaiguri town. 'Jalpaiguri Sangit Samsad', quiet evidently, came under the impact of this flood and was almost totally demolished. The first Secretary of this institution Kalipada Biswas and President B.C. Ghosh came in the assistance of artists by affording financial aid and also made a fully fledged attempt to renovate the institution.

At the Arya Natya Samaj, B.C. Ghosh and Jogodindra Deb Raikot were overwhelmed to hear the performance of various musical instruments and hymns of Haridas Brajabasi. They were spell bound and were so much impacted that they became the disciples of Haridas Brajabasi and started learning hymns under his guidance. 'Mridanga' is a popular musical instrument of Bengal. Haridas Brajabasi and a renowned Mridanga player Manmath das paid visit to Jalpaiguri and put up at Gopal Bhawan of the renowned Ghosh family every two months. Later on B.C. Ghosh founded Jalpaiguri Kirtan mridanga Sikksha Niketan. However, Haridas Brajabasi passed away in 1894, 8th July in this town¹⁹.

In the year 1945 S.P. Ray was the main individual who arranged for All Bengal Artists Competition whose name and fame was wide spread covering the whole of North Bengal, Assam and South Bengal. The number of competitors participated in this competition was over increasing. In order to take part in it and to strive for perfection different institutions were established to impart musical education. In the early 1950's S.P. Ray became the president of Arya Natya Samaj

and he graced this chair until his death in the year 1987²⁰. The dancing and singing school named 'Chhandam' came up at Arya Natya Samaj. Kathhak dancing star Prahlad Das and Manipuri dancing star Tarun Kumar set their feet at Arya Natya Samaj in order to train boys and girls in various traits of dance. The competition was graced by the presence of S.P. Ray who used to enjoy the competition and provide encouragement to the competitors²¹.

The golden Jubilee ceremony of Arya Natya Samaj took place in the year 1954 provided an occasion to S.P. Ray to give financial assistance to reconstruct the green room of this institution. On this occasion, a cultural function up to seven days was held and famous dramatist Manmath Ray was the valuable guest at this competition. S.P. Ray held Sarajendra Deb Raikot in high esteem and had profound respect for him. After the demise of Sarajendra Deb Raikot he encouraged and also assisted Samarendra Deb Raikot to establish "Sarajendra Deb Raikot Sangit Sadan" (music school) in the fond memory of his father²².

Another laudable literary association of the town was the 'Udita Sahitya Samiti' founded in the year 1943, October 31 as an off shot of the Raikot Para Boy's and Library. It was the first literary association established only for the youths of the town. In the cultural history of North Bengal we could not find the second one which main objective was to further the cause of the youth culture. Its first president was Mahit Ghosh and Secretary was Nirmal Basu, the then Food Minister of Govt. of W.B. and deputy secretary was Nayeb Huda, the then High Official of the Bangladesh Foreign in India. Mithilesh Ganguly, the renowned tea industrialist of the town was its patroniser.

The first session of the North Bengal Cultural Association took place in the Town hall of Rangpur, Eastern Bengal in B.S. 1315 (13 Ashar) was no doubt a limelight in the cultural history of undivided Bengal. It was presided over by the great historian Akshay Kumar Maitrey. Poet Kabiguru Rabindra Nath Tagore, Raja Prabhat Chandra Barua Bahadur of Gauripur Estate Assam, Dewan kalika Das Dutta of Cooch Behar, Raja Sharat Kumar Ray of Digha all sent their welcome address letter. Numerous delegates from various districts of North Bengal put their feet there such as Thakur Panchanan of Cooch Behar; Umagati Roy, Raja Jagadindra Deb Raikat of Jalpaiguri; Pandit Rajani Kanta Chakrabarty of Malda²³.

One land mark in regard to the Bengali tea planters of the Jalpaiguri town which will always remain vivid in the socio – cultural history of the Jalpaiguri district was the establishment of various schools and colleges. They built up number of schools not only in the various nook and corner of the Jalpaiguri town but also in the neighbouring places which were adjacent to the gardens so that all the children could get some sort of education to bring a ray of hope for the younger generation.

The Sadar Girls High School of the Jalpaiguri town came into existence in the year 1902. The foundation stone of this institution was laid down by late Jalan Mian, a reputed educationist of the town. His wife was a Brahmo woman of the contemporary Jalpaiguri town. She established there a primary school in the same year which was upgraded as upper primary school in the year 1907. Mrs. Jalan was also the librarian of Brahmo Samaj's own library in Jalpaiguri town. It really astonished us to speculate that how a woman belonged to such a conservative community of the contemporary society took the main role for the growth and development of women education. In this juncture, she got assistance from Sharat Pandit, a renowned educator of the then Jalpaiguri town. However, behind its growth and development, the role played by the Princess Suniti Debi of Cooch Behar royal family is deserved to be mentioned. She said to have assisted the school by providing raw materials to lay the construction of building in the year 1911 – 12. In the year 1921 this school was transformed as an English Medium school ²⁴.

Next to her, two respectable personages of the town in the contemporary period such as tea planter Tarini Prasad Ray and Jogesh Chandra Ghosh assisted the school by affording furniture and other necessities. Subhasini Debi, wife of tea planter Jogesh Chandra Ghosh was said to have collected money from door to door for its further development. At the initiative of tea planter S.P. Ray the managing committee of the school received its affiliation as well as a huge grant from the Govt. of W.B. Kailash Nath Katju, the then Honourable Governor of W.B. during his visit in Jalpaiguri town in the year 1950 gave a finest statement about this school which was as follows – “This is definitely one of the best Girls School that I have had the pleasure of visiting in the state of W.B.” This school, literary to say, ushered a new epoch in the history of female education in Jalpaiguri district ²⁵.

The most keen educationist tea planter family in the contemporary society of the Jalpaiguri town was the Rahut family. Their commencement in the field of education was started under the auspicious leadership of Kamini Kanta Rahut. He was an educationist, a fine player, a dramatist and actor, a philanthropist. There is an age old mythological proverb prevailed in the society that without the birth of Lord Ramachandra, nobody could know his father Dasharatha. This proverb can easily be coined pertaining to the Rahut family of the contemporary Jalpaiguri town. As because Ananda Chandra Rahut and Nalini Kanta Rahut survives as yet in the present society of Jalpaiguri town owing to the contributions made by Kamini Kanta Rahut in the field of socio – cultural atmosphere. As to the first, he was one of the founders of the following institutes, but above all, the very life of them such as Ananda Chandra College, Ananda Chandra Teachers Training College, Ananda Chandra College of Commerce, Ananda Model School, Soudamani Girls' School and Sishu Mahal ²⁶.

The journey of tea planter Kamini Kanta Rahut began in the field of education with the establishment of Saudamani Girls' School in the year 1931. He also had to set up a primary school namely Sishu Mahal to further the cause of children education in Jalpaiguri town. Kamini Kanta Rahut, in memory of his father Ananda Chandra Rahut, established three important higher educational institutions in Jalpaiguri town namely Ananda Chandra College, Ananda Chandra Teachers Training College, Ananda Chandra College of Commerce. In the beginning of the twentieth century especially up to 1940's there was no provision for the youths of this district to get collegiate education excepting going to their social orbit such as Rangpur college, Rajshahi, Victoria college in Cooch Behar or even in Calcutta. Moreover, they had to face much financial hardships in order to bear their educational expenses while pursuing their college education in some other places. This resulted in the creation of Ananda Chandra College in 1942 under the initiative drew from the tea planter and the renowned educationist of the town Kamini Kanti Rahut. He was said to have donated four acre of land and a grant of 25,000/- for its constructional development. In this great project he got the help from his two bosom friends namely Tarani Mahan Chakrabarty, the ex – Head Master of Sonaula High School and Debendra Kumar Chanda, the then Assistant Teacher of Jalpaiguri sadar Girls' High School. It is really commendable to say that a large of notable educationist of Bengal started their carrier from this heritage institution of North Bengal such as the famous

writer Sri Narayan Gangapadhyay, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Govt. of W.B. Kalyan Bhushan Chakrabarty and Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal and so on. In the year 1951 the ex – student of this college Srimati Pratima Biswas stood first in M.A. (Bengali) examination from Calcutta University²⁷.

Ananda Chandra Teacher's Training College established in the year 1958 was another remarkable instance of the Rahut family in the field of education. It is the first ever Teachers Training College in North Bengal. It provides the better opportunity to get Teachers Training course over the years across the entire Dooars region as a whole. In the same year the Ananda Chandra College of Commerce put its foot under the patronage of the same tea planter family. In earlier days, classes were usually taken place in the evening at the same building of Ananda Chandra College²⁸.

The Kadamtala Girls' High School began its journey at the household of Madhusudan Karmakar in the year 1928. Two famous female educator of the town such as Bimala Ray, daughter of Madhusudan Karmakar and Anupama Debi, elder sister of Pritinidhan Roy were the first teachers of this school. It was upgraded as a Higher Secondary school in the year 1965. Tea planter S.P. Ray's contribution behind its sustainable growth and development was really praiseworthy. The Jalpaiguri Central Girls' High School owes its origin under the initiative of tea planter as well as the famous educationist Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal. In this juncture he was assisted by a number of respectable educators of the Town such as Tarani Mahan Chakrabarty, Dr. Dhiraj Mahan Sen, Rukshini Kanta Bhowmick and so on. It began its journey in the Sonaula High School in the morning from 6 to 10 A.M. with four female teachers and 82 female students. Later the school was shifted to another area and the land was bought from school's own fund. However, tea planter S.P. Ray's contribution behind its sustainable growth and development was really praiseworthy. During his tenure as the Member of Parliament, he arranged a huge grant from the Central Govt.'s Education Department for its building construction which was later inaugurated by Dharendra Mahan Sen, the then D.I. of Jalpaiguri district. In the year 1959 it became Secondary school and in 1965 became Higher Secondary also. However, tea industrialist S.P. Ray founded a fund namely 'Tarini Prasad Ray Memorial Fund' bearing the name of his renowned father for the pretext of providing help to the needy students of this college²⁹.

The Sishu Mahal primary school established in the year 1944 with only seven students undoubtedly ushered a new epoch in the history of infant education in Jalpaiguri district. In earlier days, the school was generally taken place at the auditorium of the Jalpaiguri Cultural Institute. Later under the endeavours of two energetic personages namely Amiya Chakrabarty and Subir Talapatra, the school was shifted to the adjacent area of Jalpaiguri Cultural Institute. Tea industrialists such as S.P. Ray, B.C. Ghosh, Ramdin Daga played a vital role behind its construction. All the aforesaid founding fathers of the school were famous for their respective areas of eminence despite being renowned tea planters. The buildings of this school such as Rabindra Bhawan, Jogesh Bhawan bears the testimony of this fact ³⁰.

Another heritage educational institution of the Jalpaiguri town is the Fanindra Deb Institution (F.D.I.). The bedrock of this institution was laid down by the tea industrialist Prasanna Deb Raikot in memory of his father Fanindra Deb Raikot in the year 1917. P.D. Raikot donated rupees five thousand for its up gradation as a Higher Secondary institution and also donated rupees ten thousand along with bricks, cement, wood for its building construction. As we know, in 1930's during the Civil Disobedience Movement the whole of India was then under the flame of independence movement; old and young – everyone being deeply moved with the Swadeshi emotion and sentiment, called for quitting India out of the British Crown. The upsurge of this movement was said to have put its step in Jalpaiguri town also. The students of the Fanindra Deb Institution (FDI) could not keep them aloof from this orbit. As a consequence, the school authority received a financial set back from the Government and all the grants had immediately stopped. The monthly salary of a teacher was decreased from fifty to twenty. In this deplorable condition, Prasanna Deb Raikot extended his hand to Annada Charan Sen, the then secretary of the school and thus the school survived from its fragile condition. The name of Prasanna Deb Raikot will always remain vivid for his other beneficiaries' establishments such as the Jotedars' Association, Pallimangal Samiti ³¹. He also established the Belakoba High School. It was earlier established by Khan Bahadur Walliur Rahaman, the father - in - law of Khan Bahadur Makhleswar Rahaman. Both of them were notable tea planters in the contemporary period. Khan Bahadur Walliur Rahaman played a pivotal role in setting up the Atiabari T.E. in the year 1900. Being an educationist he had to establish a school at Belakoba namely Walliur Rahaman High School. After the partition took

place in 1947 this school was further renamed as Belakoba High School under the initiative of P.D. Raikot. However, the Belakoba region of Jalpaiguri district later came to be known as Prasanna Nagar bearing the name of Prasanna Deb Raikot ³².

Prasanna Deb Raikot also started a primary school bearing the name of his mother Rani Amriteshwari in 2nd January 1920. The first Head master of this school was Tarani Mahan Chakrabarty. He dreamed to set up the school in the middle of the town. Munsii Muhammad Sonallah came forward to fulfil his dream and hence he donated five thousand rupees, seven bigha of land along with six rooms of his palace where the school further commenced its journey in a so mature shape. This school later came to be known as Sonalla Institution.

Prasanna Deb Raikot further assumed another project by setting up a M.E. School in memory of his mother Rani Amriteshwari at Sannyasikata. Now a day it is known to us as Sannyasikata High School. In a Board meeting of the Jalpaiguri Municipality it was said that considered the letter No. 56 dated 18th November 1921, received from the Head Master of Sonallah Institute which was formerly the name of Amriteshwari M.E. school together with the note of Vice – Chairman. Late Khirodendra Deb Raikot, son of Late Jagadindra Deb Raikot was the first Head Master of this school ³³.

Jagadindra Deb Raikot, another illuminate personality of the Raikot family took initiative to further the cause of education. To commemorate the memory of his mother, Jagadindra Deb Raikot laid the foundation of Rani Jagadeshwari Primary School in the year 1914. He served this school as a teacher until his death ³⁴.

Analogous contribution made by the Raikot family in the field of education was the Phanindra Deb Women's College founded in the year 1950. Rani Ashrumati Debi, wife of P.D. Raikot was an advocate of women emancipation. Hence, to further the cause of women education she established the Phanindra Deb Women's College in memory of her notable husband. It started its journey on 31st August 1950 with only ten to eleven girl students. Suniti Bala Chanda, the then Head mistress of Jalpaiguri Sadar Girls High School and the renowned educationist of the Jalpaiguri town took the responsibility of its management. The teachers of A.C. College used to take the classes temporarily. The first permanent teachers of this college were Banalata chakrabarty and Basanti Sen. Later on, Swarna Kumari Ray Chaudhury joined there

as its first Principal. Tea planter Walliur Rahaman donated a major portion of his residence for this college. In the year 1956 the building of the Imperial Tobacco Company was bought for the purpose of college hostel. The first type writing machine of this college had to come from the Gopalpur House. Tea industrialist S.P. Ray introduced a fund namely 'Sharat Jamini Memorial Fund' bearing the name of his mother for the pretext of providing help to the needy students of this college. However, it is the first college across the whole North Bengal who comprised a women's cricket team for the first time under the supervision of the college teacher Krishna Bhattacharya ³⁵.

The renowned Nawab family of the Jalpaiguri town started their journey behind the growth and development of socio – cultural atmosphere in Jalpaiguri district under the leadership of Musharuf Hossain, the son – in – law of Nawab Rahim Baksh. Both of them were harbinger in Indian tea industry. It is quite interesting to note that in those days there was a gulf of difference and social segregation among the Muslim entrepreneurs in the trade depending upon the ethnicity and cultural group in respect of their attitudes and value system in the sphere of socio – political, socio – economic and socio – cultural life. Khan Bahadur Nawab Rahim Baksh and his son – in – law Nawab Musharuf Hossain stands completely different in this respect. However, Nawab Musharuf Hossain had to establish the Fayejannecha High School in memory of his wife Begam Fayejannecha in the year 1950 ³⁶.

This description will be a futile one if we do not mention the contributions made by tea planter S.P. Ray and B.C. Ghosh in this field. Their copious contributions are quite evident in the tea garden belt and its adjacent areas randomly. Satyendra Prasad Roy came into 'Tea' in the early thirties. He was the third son of tea industrialist Tarini Prasad Roy. As the latter was a very busy lawyer and also connected with many other tea companies besides his own, he had to choose one of his sons for his assistance for the administration of his own tea gardens. In spite of that S.P. Ray's had immense contribution in the field of education. His devotion towards the advancement of education in North Bengal deserves special mention as he helped in establishing innumerable schools and colleges throughout whole North Bengal. As a Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) for three terms he had to establish number of schools, colleges. S.P. Ray was said to have constructed a Girls' Hostel to accommodate fifty students of the Maynaguri High School ³⁷. The Nagrakata High

School was established in the year 1958 which promoted into Higher Secondary section in the year 1966. S.P. Ray's contribution in this regard was truly commendable³⁸. The Kalabari Tea Estate Senior Basic School established in the year 1960 was also a landmark of his career. It definitely helped to cater education in the garden itself so that all the children of the garden could get some sort of education to bring a ray of hope for the younger generation. Such examples are also available in regard to this great tea industrialist cum educator. The Banarhat High School came into existence in the year 1960 under the initiative drew from Mr. Mackintyre, the then Manager of the Tea Estate. Tea planter S.P. Ray laid there the foundation of a Senior Basic School in the year 1960. The Madhu Tea Estate Senior Basic School and Mathura Tea Estate Senior Basic School founded in the year 1962 and 1963 respectively were also an analogous instance in this sphere. Nevertheless, there were other schools in the Jalpaiguri district who could receive the assistance from this 'Tea' man such as Deshbandhu Nagar High School, Sonali Girls High School, Jalpaiguri High School, Mohit Nagar High School, Belakoba High School, Dhupguri High School, Bairatgri High School, Falakata High School, Falakata Girls' High School, Kalchini High School, Kumargram High School, Banarhat High School, Bakshirhat High School and so on³⁹.

Born in the illustrious planter's family of Jalpaiguri town, B.C. Ghosh was one of the main pioneers in the field of education in post – colonial period. He assisted his vindicate in many times to tea planter S.P. Ray. The harbinger from this family in this respect was tea planter Gopal Chandra Ghosh. He endeavoured by leaps and bounds to spread education in his native village of un - divided Bengal namely Baraingal, Dist – Pabna. He was said to have constructed a mammoth building for this purpose and singlehandedly expensed thirty thousand rupees from his own repository fund. Later three schools owe its origin to this building such as Gopal Chandra High School, Dakshina Kali Girls' School, Subhasini Girls' High School. To further the cause of studying Sanskrit language, he constructed a Pathshala at Kalagaria village. He helped the Jalpaiguri High School by providing ten thousand rupees for its building construction⁴⁰.

As a Chairman of I.T.P.A., B.C. Ghosh raised a point to the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri in his letter dated 7/03/1960 related to a proposal for raising the Jalpaiguri Polytechnic into a full – fledged Engineering College. He

argued that it was possible to have an Engineering College at Jalpaiguri provided the local people would contribute Rs. 10 lakhs as its share of capital costs to be incurred by the Government. In lieu of contribution in cash Government might accept an offer of land for the proposed Engineering College; land was still cheaper at Jalpaiguri than at other places in West Bengal, and according to a scheme which B.C. Ghosh placed before the Government, if a sum of Rs. 26,000/- could be raised locally, lands still could be purchased in the neighbourhood of the Jalpaiguri Polytechnic Institute to meet the requirement of the Engineering College. However, Shri Ghosh's suggestion was accepted and it was resolved that a special appeal on the basis of Shri Ghosh's note dated 20/02/1960 should be made to the members for raising a total sum of Rs. 26,000/- for purchase of lands for the proposed Engineering College at Jalpaiguri ⁴¹.

B.C. Ghosh extended his hand to S.P. Ray for the pretext of establishing Birpara High School in the year 1957. B.C. Ghosh also opened a Secondary school at Gopalpur Tea Estate by amalgamating two primary schools in the year 1949. It was inaugurated by Harendra Nath Mukherjee, the then Governor of W.B. He also laid the foundation of Kadambini T.E. Junior Basic School in memory of his beloved sister Kadambini Debi ⁴².

The Niyogi family of Jalpaiguri town did not lag far behind in this field. Their first and foremost contribution of this family was made by establishing the Nimti Jhara Junior High School under the inspiration of tea planter Rajendra Kumar Niyogi in the year 1960. During its inauguration day 6th June 1961 Soumendra Nath Tagore, the son of Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore's own brother along with notable Rabindra Sangeet singer Suchitra Mitra and others were said to have attended the function. In this juncture, the main inspiration was drawn from Harendra Kumar Mukhopadhyay, the then Governor of W.B. who also inaugurated a hospital there in 1954. Later it became a Junior High School in 1970 and also a High School in 1982. In this regards the role played by tea planter Sachindra Kumar Niyogi is worthy to be mentioned ⁴³.

Another keen educationist tea planter family of Alipurduar town was the Samaddar family. Their journey began under the leadership of Rai Bahadur Bidhu Bhushan Samaddar. He founded few tea estates singlehandedly in the adjacent areas of the Alipurduar sub – division such as Turturi, Patkapara. Later he owned the

Majherdabri tea estate from the Rangpur Tea Association ⁴⁴. However, in spite of this economic venture he had to assume some major steps for the socio – cultural development of the society. The foundation of Alipurduar New Town High School in the year 1956 bore the testimony of this fact. In this respect he drew assistance from Nalini Kanta Mukhopadhyay, the then renowned Head Master of the Mc William High School of Alipurduar town. The fundamental aim behind the creation of this school was to accommodate the boys and girls of refugee families. Nevertheless, Rai Bahadur Bidhu Bhushan Samaddar also extended his helping hand in laying the foundation of Railway High School, Alipurduar College in the year 1957. Nalini Kanta Mukhopadhyay was said to have arranged 50 acre of land for this college. Tea planter S.P. Ray also assisted the college by providing money for its building construction ⁴⁵.

Another well wisher of the educational development of the Jalpaiguri town was tea industrialist Rai Bahadur Jay Govinda Guha. He was the founder member of Jalpaiguri Medical School established in the year 1930. Being the President of the Jalpaiguri District Board he attained support from various district's Board of the Rajshahi Division as well as Cooch Behar Estate to lay the foundation of Medical School in Jalpaiguri district. He was the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri District School Board established in the year 1936 and chaired the post for eight years from its inception days. After his death Bipulendra Nath Banarjee took the responsibility. Tea industrialist Khan Bahadur Makhleswar Rahaman became the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri District School Board in the year 1944 ⁴⁶.

As we know with the incorporation of the Bengal Municipal Act in the year 1932 various important departments of the district came under the control of the Local Self – Government. In this juncture, Jay Govinda Guha became the President of the Advisory Committee of the Education Department of the District. He propounded the elementary and School education in every nook and corner of the district. Hence Jay Govinda Guha got the title Rai Bahadur from the British Government for his profound contribution in the educational field of the Jalpaiguri district. Sakhikul Islam, the then elite businessmen of the town adorned him with the title 'Jinnah of North Bengal'. The conference of 'North Bengal Education League' took place at the premises of Fanindra Deb Institution, Jalpaiguri on 08/10/1939 under the president ship of Jay Govinda Guha bear the testimony of this fact. This conference was

attended by radiant personages of the Jalpaiguri town such as Pritinidhan Ray, Anukul Mukharjee, Enamul Hossain, Maulavi Jaharatullah and so on ⁴⁷.

The women of the Bengali tea planter family of the Jalpaiguri town did not lag behind in this sphere. Subhasihini Ghosh, wife of tea planter Jogesh Chandra Ghosh ranked first in this respect. She was the advocator of female education in Jalpaiguri town. Being the first President of Women Association of Indian National Congress of the Jalpaiguri town, she opened few primary schools in the town in 1927 - 28. In this endeavour she got the assistance from Hemprava Chanda, Suniti Niyogi. The later belonged to the tea planter Niyogi family of Jalpaiguri town. In the year 1939 she was elected as the Chairman of Women Volunteer's Association of Jalpaiguri town. Bigyani Debi was the main patroniser of Mahila Atmarakshya Samiti (Women Self – Defence Association) ⁴⁸.

Another keen female educationist of the Jalpaiguri town was Begum Rahimennesha, daughter of tea industrialist Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh. Born in a conservative family, she nurtured a strong feeling of women education. She was said to have published two Bengali Magazines namely 'Mihir' and 'Sudhakar' from Dacca. Furthermore, she used to help the women nationalists of the town. To commemorate the works of this female educator tea industrialist Musharuf Hossain had to establish a primary school namely Begum Rahimennesha Primary School at Adar Para in the 1924 ⁴⁹.

Apart from the literary associations a number of associations were said to have established in Jalapiguri town to provide social service to the people of the whole districts. These are as follows – Jalpaiguri Institute, Kamala Samiti, Shilpa Samiti, Seba Samiti, Sahriday Sampraday, Harijan Sabha, Kayastha Sabha and so on. The main inspiration behind the creation of these associations was none other than Jogesh Chandra Ghosh. To lay the foundation of Jalpaiguri Institute, he was assisted very much by Jogendra Lal Nandi, the then land revenue officer of the Khas mahal area of the Jalpaiguri town. The later was said to have assisted by giving him land as well as with money collected from the opulent Jotedar's of the town. As Jogesh Chandra Ghosh was a far sighted business man, he surmised the expeditious advent of the non – Bengali traders especially the Marwari class as the tempest to the Bengali community in field of trade and commerce. To give a set back to the entry of the

Marwari traders, he opened a commercial hub in Jalapiguri town namely Kamala Samiti. It supplied all types of necessary articles across the whole Dooars region and provides oxygen to the Bengali traders for the pretext of surviving in this field of trade and commerce. However, this hub was conducted under the supervision of Mathura Nath Dutta. In addition to that Jogesh Chandra Ghosh also extended his hand to Sasi Kumar Neyogi in the process of establishing a weaving industry in the town. Thus the Shilpa Samiti came into existence in the year 1907 which supplied country made dresses (Swadeshi Bastra) throughout the whole North Bengal. Unfortunately, this industry oriented by the Swadeshi idealism collapsed with a turn of year as it went against the interest of the Colonial rule.

The next purely voluntary association of the town was the Seba Samiti. It was founded under the collaborate endeavour of a group of youths of the town such as Sitanath Pramanik, Madhusudan Dasgupta, Abin Goswami, Suresh Maitra and so on. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh financially helped the institution during the time of its foundation. Moreover, being a Municipal Commissioner of the Jalpaiguri town he established another voluntary association namely Sahriday Sampraday. Next to that he also laid the bedrock of Hari Sabha, an association comprised with the people in respect of caste, creed and religion. Interesting to say, the Muhamadden people also tied their knot with this association⁵⁰.

Tea industrialist Sasi Kumar Neyogi will be remembered for ever for his far - sighted thinking in regard to the sanitary condition of the Jalpaiguri town. Since its inception the Superintendent of the Jalpaiguri District Hospital was a European. Sasi Kumar Neyogi made delicate ties with him and thus the Jalpaiguri District Hospital got a handsome shape and also became the paramount hospital across the whole Rajshahi Division in colonial period. Many important constructions came into existence such as outdoor, male and female ward was constructed and a new ward was opened bearing the name of the renowned personage of the town Munsii Md. Sonaula. However, in 1930's with the initiation of Jackson Medical School the facilities of the Jalpaiguri District Hospital were extended at a staggering rate⁵¹.

Founder editor of Janamat Jyotish Chandra Sanyal was a versatile writer who had an illustrious career of editing the Janamat magazine for a span of twelve years (1924 – 1936). He was also the central figure behind the creation of

Indian Tea Planters' Association in Jalpaiguri town in 1915 and also assisted others to promote their business. For example Tarini Prasad Ray got assistance from him in introducing Kamala Tea Company in Terai to a large extent. However, he carried the responsibility of editing at a time when freedom struggle for India's independence at its peak. Its printing works were done at 'Bina Printing Press' established in the year 1920 by a few notable Bengali tea industrialists such as Satish lahiri, Jagabandhu sarkar, Shanti Nidhan Roy and Jyotish Chandra Sanyal. It was the first press of the Jalpaiguri town ever. The next printing press of the town was 'The Planter's Press' which also came into existence under the initiatives of a few tea planter families such as Ghatak, bagchi, Niyogi, Ganguly⁵².

At the inauguration of fifty years of Janamat, Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal had aptly commented about Jyotish Chandra Sanyal that "His writings consisted of Arabinda's political far sightedness, Rabindranath's philosophy, creativity of Pramath Chaudhury, clarity of C.R. Das and an indomitable courage". It is obvious that his writings and opinions became a sore in the eye of the British. Consequently, the publication of Janamat was banned in 1930. But he denied following the dictates of British rule and in 1931 the publication resumed. In the year 1935 and 1936 the autumn number of this magazine reached the hand of the readers.

Following the lines of Janamat, he also bought out English daily 'Varendra'. The entire North Bengal was included in Varendra land. This inspired him profoundly to christen the name of his English daily as Varendra. He also continued providing supplements to some notable English news daily such as the Statesman, The Englishman and Modern Review and so on. However, Varendra could not survive long but Janamat withstood all the onslaughts. Every week well thought of editorials of Jyotish Chandra Sanyal and other erudite personalities were published there. But those could not be preserved as most of them were washed away in the terrible flood of 1968. The autumn number of Janamat dated 15th October, 1925 contains a valuable opinion about late Sarala Devi's Birastami are as follows –

“What were the last Swadeshi Movement and its subsequent developments? Bengal was only casting off her Tamashik lethargy and slowly developing her innate Rajas, when all of a sudden this natural process of self – evolution was arrested. Mahatma Gandhi appeared in the arena of our national

struggle. His ideal of non – violence and his message of passive resistance captured the imaginations of the people. But the result was disastrous for Bengal. All Rajasik activities, all efforts of physical culture were considered unnecessary and were sometimes denounced as fostering the spirit of Himsa, Mahatmaji was not to blame. The leaders were not to blame. The people (and specifically the students and Congress volunteers) neglected physical culture, because for them the necessary incentive did not exist, because they thought wrongly, that the new ideal of non – violence had rendered the cultivation of the body unnecessary and superfluous. And we find today that Tamas our World enemy is reigning supreme all over Bengal”⁵³.

“Whether Srimati Sarala Devi’s efforts succeed or not, it is certainly a matter of congratulation that the genius of Bengal is asserting itself in and through her again”.

Jyotish Chandra Sanyal also penned a good number of Bengali fictions such as Sima o Ashim, Selima, Biman Pathe, Ek Adhyay, Bijali Bou and so on. His graceful English writing finds expression in his ‘Little Jim in Wonder’⁵⁴.

After India’s independence there was a hot debate whether the Cooch Behar district would accede to Assam or East Pakistan, or whether it would continue in West Bengal. At this juncture Janamat appeared in the scenario and started to collect facts behind the Bhatia Kheda Movement. It also published some critical examinations about the issue. And also bought in public a copy of the treaty signed between the British Government and the Cooch Behar State. Ballav Bhai Patel, the then Home Minister of India somehow or the other came across these findings of Janamat and in sudden time of events it was declared Cooch Behar had acceded to West Bengal. During the Radcliffe Award a large portion of Berubari was included in the map of Pakistan. Though Janamat tried to create public opinion against this matter but it was hashed up.

After the glorious tenure of Jyotish Chandra Sanyal, tea planter Kabiraj Satish Chandra Lahiri took over the reins of Janamat. Next came Satyendra Nath Maullick but within a gap of short period of time, he left Janamat for Trisrota, another renowned Bengali Magazine of the then Jalpaiguri town. Then came tea Planter and directors of various Indian owned tea gardens Kumudini Chakrabarty followed by Dr. C.C. Sanyal from 1943. After Dr. C.C. Sanyal his immediate

successor Mukulesh sanyal, son of Jyotish Chandra sanyal became the editor and it is continuing till date ⁵⁵.

Now let us discuss the role of other renowned tea planters of the Jalpaiguri town. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh was said to have edited 'Kayastha sabha' a reputed Bengali daily of the contemporary period for a short period of time ⁵⁶. Another outstanding literary personage of the tea planter family of Jalpaiguri town Jagadindra Deb Raikot who wrote a famous book named "Jalpesh Mandirer Itibritta" published in 1303 B.S. His further contribution in this bookish World was 'Raikot Bansha o Tahader Rajyer Sankkhipta Bibaran' published in the year 1903. These two books, literary to say, laid the foundation of writing the local history of Jalpaiguri district in regard to the colonial period ⁵⁷. In this field the name of tea planter Kamini kanta Rahut is ought to be mentioned. He was said to have write a play named 'Manik' ⁵⁸. Tea Planter B.C. Ghosh is also an outstanding personage in this respect. His book named 'The Development of the Tea Industry in the District of Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1968' is a wealth to the researchers indeed. Nevertheless, he also kept busy in patronising various literary associations, local magazines at his best level. To cite such instances, the cultural institution 'Aragami' and a Bengali magazine named 'Uttar Patra' received his patronage ⁵⁹.

The elite Muslim class of the then Jalpaiguri town did not lag behind the Hindus in this respect. With the financial assistance of tea planter Peshkar Rahim Baksh two Bengali magazine named 'Mihir' and 'Sudhakar' were said to have published weekly from Dacca. It began its journey in the year 1895 and the editor was Sk. Abdur Rahim ⁶⁰. Rahim Baksh himself was a good writer. His 'Waqafnama' published in the year 1904 bears the testimony to this fact. He was also the District President of Anjumalia Islamia. In 1895 he constructed the Nawab Palace's Mosque and named it as Bani Masjid. In this respect it is, however, important to mention that in the year 1897 at the inauguration of sixty years of Queen Victori's reign, Peshkar Rahim Baksh was awarded with the title of Khan Bahadur ⁶¹.

Though significant traces of literary practices could not be perceived of the Raikot family of Jalpaiguri town, but it is proven fact that Phanindra Deb Raikot wrote ten *kirtan* (hymns enchanting in the name of Lord Krishna and Goddess Radha) songs. That he had also penned a book is evident from its mention in the

Janamat Magazine dated 27 Asara, B.S. 1350 where it reads – “we have gone through a book named ‘Palli sanghathan Parikalpana’ written by P.D. Raikot”⁶².

This description will not achieve its significance if we do not mention Dr. C.C. Sanyal’s contribution in the literary field. He was the director Chairman of M/s. Anjuman Tea Co. Lt. He served ITPA in various capacities and was elected Chairman in the year 1956. He was also a member of the Legislative Council of Government of West Bengal and also a member of Senate of the North Bengal University⁶³. Along with being the directors of various tea companies, his literary habits are worth mentioning. He shared a fond relationship with Bhashacharya Suniti Kumar Chattarjee. In 1953 in the journal of Asiatic Society (Vol. xx, No. 2) an article wrote by Dr. C. C. Sanyal namely ‘The Totos A Sub – Himalayan Tribe’ made a glorious presence. In 1965 a book titled “The Rajbansis of North Bengal” was published and consequently in the year 1968 he was awarded the ‘Rabindra Puraskar’ for this great literary work. This book contains his perception about the material and non – material culture of the Rajbangsi’s. Only one individual who had made likewise contribution before him was Sarat Chandra Ray. He designed his research on the socio – cultural aspects of a few aboriginal tribes such as the Mundas, Oraons. As such Suniti Kumar Chattarjee has made an apt observation by saying that “Dr. Sanyal has already made his name in writing a firsthand account of the Rajbangsi people”. “The Meches A Sub – Himalayan Tribe” is another feather in the cap of Dr. Sanyal’s. It gives a detailed and quite a factual account of Bodo life and Bodo ways. Suniti Kumar Chattarjee has rightly remarks that it is only where are remote from the Aryan speaking Indians – they are able to maintain their separate identity a little; but their absorption into an Aryan – speaking body – politic is inevitable, whether in Nepal or in Bangladesh or in Assam. But in the process of their becoming completely Indianised, they are sure to make at least some temperamental contributions to the Indian population of the North and the North – east, if not much in the way of material or spiritual; and it is for the future to disclose what line this Kirata, this Indo – Mongoloid or Mongoloid contribution to Indian mentality and culture will take”. His last major contribution in the field of research world is ‘The Jalpaiguri District centenary Souvenir 1869 – 1968’ which he edited along with Dr. Rehati Mahan Lahiri in the year 1970⁶⁴.

Now let us discuss the nurturing of games and sports by the encouragement and inspiration of the Bengali tea planters. Jagadindra Deb Raikot, belonged to the tea industrialist Raikot family of Jalpaiguri town was an evergreen man. Old age would not bow down his spirits as a sportsman. He was said to have received cricket coaching in abroad (London). He tended the play ground in front of his house and made it a suitable cricket field in all respect. He convinced and gathered some local youths, bought the cricket gears and built up a cricket team. Needless to mention, along with the British Cricket team, only one native cricket team of the Jalpaiguri town came into existence with the assistance of Jagadindra Deb Raikot. Though the pioneer in introducing the game of cricket to the natives of the Jalpaiguri town was the then Cooch Behar Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. He himself had participated in County Cricket Matches in England ⁶⁵.

However, tea planter Jogesh Chandra Ghosh and his friend circle got themselves involved in cricket at the play ground of Jagadindra Deb Raikot. At a later stage, Jogesh Chandra Ghosh also initiated the game of football on the same field side by side with cricket. The later also built up a gymnasium at his own house. It, however, used to remain closed for three months every winter. In order to pass the leisure hour constructively, 'Balak Sangit' group was formed. Now a new game started at the initiative of Hriday Goswami. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh bought all his musical instruments from his native village to Jalpaiguri. 'Balak Sangit' group used to organise singing sessions every Sunday at different houses in the locality. In 1901 another gymnasium named Union Club came up behind the present Gurjanjhara Tea Company's building. Here along with physical exercises emphasis were given in inculcating nationalist spirits among the youths. The patrons behind this institution were Sasi Kumar Neyogi, Tarini Prasad Ray, Trailakya Nath Maullick, Annada Charan Sen. All were renowned tea planters of the contemporary period. In 1932 another gymnasium named 'Adarsha Byamagar' came into existence by the efforts of Laxman Mallick ⁶⁶.

The sudden spurt of the interest in regard to games and sports came with the setting up of Town Club. It was said to have established in the year 1898, the same year in which the Calcutta Football League started. This league was at first confined within the British Military teams. It was because Bengalis used to play football in bare foot. The main personalities whose inspirations played a pivotal role

in founding the Club were Sasi kumar Neogi, Tarini Prasad Ray, Rahim Baksh, Jagadindra Deb Raikot and Jogesh Chandra Ghosh. All were the renowned Bengali tea planters in the contemporary period⁶⁷. They, however, got assistance from a group of sports lovers such as Rai Bahadur Kalipada Banarjee, Rai Bahadur Priyanath Banarjee, Rajani basu, Jogendra Nath Basu. Mr. Lowman, the then Superintendent of Police of the Jalpaiguri district had also contributed to a large behind its setting up. He was himself a good soccer. 3.09 acre of PWD land was allotted for the purpose of founding the club. The Deputy Commissioner of the district was the president of the club by virtue of his post. Along with Town Club few other clubs were also flourished such as Victoria Club, Star Club, Diamond Jubilee Club, Ukilpara Club, Raikotpara Club. After the establishment of Town Club, Bengali youths were slowly but surely got attracted towards the game of football and by the year 1915 the club boasts of a team entirely consisting of Bengali players. In the contemporary period, the Town Club football team was the best across the whole Rajshahi division.

However, at that time there were no provisions of stadium and as such sports lovers used to watch the game standing by the road side under the shade of trees. Some renowned players of the then period of Town Club were such as Nalini Kanta Rahut, S.P. Ray, Sarajendra Deb Raikot, Kamini Kanta Rahut, Santosh Kumar Banarjee, Dharendra Nath Bhowmick. All were the renowned tea planters of the then period. Tea planter remained an indispensable part of this club for over half a century. The present Town Club's stadium is one of his worth mentioning contributions of the upliftment of the club.

1930's and 1940's were the golden era of this club. Two very important football tournaments were organised namely Sonaula Shield and Begam Fayzannecha (wife of tea planter Musharaff Hossain) Shield. Some great teams comprising of some commendable football players came from Calcutta and all over North Bengal to take part in these shields. Many famous international players and olympicians had showed their genius at the town club play field such as Samad, Sailendra Manna, Ahmed Khan, Appa Rao and so on. Nevertheless, under the guidance of Ahmed Rahaman, son of the tea planter Waliur Rahaman the town Club's football team used to play in different places such as Rangpur, Sodpur, Dinajpur of undivided Bengal. There was no discrimination between the Hindu and Muslim players. Jackson Medical School had a famous football team and it was Town Club

that stood up against this team and put up a tough competition. Here it should be mentioned that Jackson Medical School had also a famous cricket team comprising of British officials and military servants. The Cooch Beghar Maharaja Jagadindra Narayan came along with his team and played an exciting exhibition matches with this tough opponent in late thirties.

After the re - alignment of the partitioned Bengal took place in 1911, there was an upsurge of interest for the game of football. The Kumudini cup started with the assistance of Kumudini Banarjee, principal of Rajshahi College in 1910. All most all the schools in the Rajshahi division took part in this competition. Among them the football of Jalpaiguri District School was the most accomplished and the best. They had won the trophy for three consecutive years such as 1913, 1914, 1915 respectively. A good number of players of this team held different posts of high esteemed at later periods such as Kamini Kanta Rahut, S.P. Ray who were great names in Indian tea industry. After the non – cooperation movement there was a bit of ebbing away of interest for football. But it was rekindled. The personalities who reigned supreme on the field at a later stage were Ramesh Chandra Majumder (later he became the Vice – Chancellor of Delhi University), S.P. Ray, Sailesh Chandra Neyogi.

In the year 1915, the Leesa Cup Football Tournament started its journey under the initiative of the then Divisional Commissioner Mr. Leesa. Within a few days this tournament became so popular in the whole Rajshahi Division. The Sonaulla Shield started its journey in 1926 under the patronage of M.L. Rahman, a tea planter who returned India after staying in London for a long time. In this year the shield was won by Sayyedpur Loco Sporting Club of the then Pakistan and football stalwart Sharat Singh was a part of this club. In 1928 the victory of the Shield went to Pabna Football Club and in the same year tea planter Santosh Banarjee, D.N. Bhowmik joined the club. Nirmal Ghosh joined the Arians Club in Calcutta and took over the responsibility of captaining the team to the famous IFA shield victory. Tea planter Santosh Banarjee was an undisputed sportsman. Santosh Trophy and Santosh Memorial Cup bear his name. The Town Club became victorious at Lalmanihat in 1928. At that time Santosh Banarjee, Fazlur Rahman was a part of the team.

After the temporary discontinuation of Sonaulla Shield, Six – a – Side football tournament were organised and small clubs of the town participated in them.

The positive consequence of this was that it gave the players opportunity of adequate practices. In 1945 in memory of tea planter Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, J.C. Memorial District Association came up in Jalpaiguri town. This was a worthy endeavour by his two worthy sons namely Debesh Chandra Ghosh and Birendra Chandra Ghosh. This effort undoubtedly opened the doors of world of sports for the citizens of this town. Under its guidance, apart from football, coaching was imparted to other games such as swimming, ball throw, Kabadi, athletics and so on. in 1933 – 34 after Dr. Rahman it was tea industrialist B.C. Ghosh who took over the responsibility of Town Club and Sonaula Shield.

In 1940 tea industrialist Musharuff Hossain started Fayzannesha Shield in memory of his beloved wife. Sonaula Shield was earmarked for the runners up. Teams from Calcutta such as Arians, Kalighat, Mahamadan Sporting, Mahan Bagan participated in this tournament. In 1947 the Fayzannesha Shield stopped and the immediate next year P.D. Raikot Memorial Shield was initiated.

The contribution of tea industrialists of Jalpaiguri town such as S.P. Ray, B.C. Ghosh behind the construction Town Club stadium was beyond doubt. Both of them were Districts President by virtue of their posts. In 1957 1.99 acre plot of land adjacent to the Town Club play ground was made available. At the inspiration of the Deputy Commissioner N.C. Basu and by the untiring efforts of S.P. Ray, B.C. Ghosh, the Central Govt. approved the construction Town Club stadium in 1959. The stadium was inaugurated by the then Central Minister Humayun kabir in 1961 ⁶⁸.

To receive College education S.P. Ray went to Calcutta and there he participated in every competition representing his college team. He was fond of Town Club as well as football. Not only did he ruled football as an integral part of Town Club's team, but also shown bright in the football fraternity in Calcutta and other districts of Bengal for a long period of time. He also took part in the First Division Calcutta Football League representing teams such as Wari, Arians, Kalighat ⁶⁹.

In 1930's under the aegis of Jalpaiguri Municipality Inter – Ward Football League was organised. Here S.P. Roy took part as a player demonstrating his skills as a left – out. His friend Gora Mahalanabish played in the back. However, the journey of this tournament came to an end in 1951 ⁷⁰.

On one hand he was a great player, on the other hand an efficient sports administrator. He held dignified honorary positions in different football clubs of Bengal such as President of Calcutta Wari Club, Vice – President of West Bengal Club of Football, President of West Bengal District Federation. It was because of his inspiration and patronage, that players from Jalpaiguri such as Mojammel Haque, Runu Guha Thakurata, Mantu Mallick, Manilal Ghatak, Lalit Dutta became stars in the Calcutta field. Lalit Dutta on account of his excellent football skill appointed in the Bengal Civil Service and later appointed as the Deputy Commissioner in Jalpaiguri district. It is, however, important to mention that he was first Bengali from Jalpaiguri town appointed in this prestigious post. In the year 1957 the Town Club football team comprised of tea planter Santosh Kumar Banarjee, Appa Rao won the Bardaloi Trophy. This soccer team also participated in other tournaments outside Bengal such as Patu Majumder Shield in Allahabad, IFA Shield in Kolkata ⁷¹.

Whatsoever, in addition to this, S.P. Ray gave much necessary employment to many skilled football players in order to make their future secure so that they could pursue their interest in football. This trend was also continued in ‘Bengal Duars Railway’ and hence they had a strong efficient football team in this region. It is true that such glaring instances are plenty but it cannot be denied in order to accommodate football players in the football team of the gardens, the administration of the garden suffered a huge set back ⁷².

It is true that Tarini Prasad Ray (T.P. Ray) and Satyendra Prasad Roy (S.P. Ray) had made commendable efforts for the flourishing of Jalpaiguri and North Bengal. Their roles had similarities as well as dissimilarities. T.P. Ray’s focal point was Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts. Because at that period other districts of North Bengal did not have dearth of renowned persons whereas S.P. Ray directed his attention towards the accomplishment of whole North Bengal. As we know, after the partition took place in 1947, different districts of North Bengal confronted different problems and set back. As such instead of tea business, the recommendation of Jalpaiguri town and other areas of North Bengal drew his attention more. Naturally tea business became his secondary aim. The focus shifted from tea business to the upliftment of Jalpaiguri town. It is a fact that due to his versatile capabilities he gave a shape to the present day North Bengal but evaluating his efforts from the view point of tea business, S.P. Roy is not beyond criticism. We cannot help but criticism him ⁷³.

Let us now move to our original discussion. Apart from football he cultivated rich interests for other sports too. He was said to have arranged a Badminton Competition which continued for many years in the premises of Arya Natya samaj. He provided financial assistance for the expenses incurred in arranging the tournament. He also arranged cricket coaching camps under the guidance of famous player Pankaj Roy as a step to ensure the spread of the game of cricket ⁷⁴. Being the President of West Bengal Football Federation, he travelled across whole West Bengal and participated in tournaments of almost every district. The setting up of Tennis Court at Arya Natya samaj is also a milestone in his sports career. In this field he got utmost assistance from his close friends such as Saroj Kumar Banarjee, Sarajendra Deb Raikot, Santosh Kumar Banarjee, Mahendra Nath Ghatak. All of them were famous tea industrialists in those days ⁷⁵.

Ashok Prasad Ray, the worthy son of S.P. Ray also followed the footsteps of his renowned father and made contributions in the field of literature, culture and sports. He was the working President of West Bengal District Sports Federation and associated with many Sporting Associations of the district. He was also the member of Sports Council, Jalpaiguri and a keen promoter for welfare of sports and cultural activities in the district. He also adorned the chair as president of Arya Natya Samaj. However, it would not be exaggerated to say that the preview of contributions made by tea planter Ashok Prasad Roy in the field of sports and culture was not so extended what his father S.P. Ray had done during his tenure.

The sound economic base of Jalpaiguri town in colonial period was also a great example pertaining to the benevolent activities of the Bengali tea industrialists. According to Prof. Binoy Sarkar, “moneys are flying in Jalpaiguri, if you can catch it.” He further commented that “the most prosperous town of the Bengalis, across the whole of Bengal, outside Calcutta is none other than Jalpaiguri. The Court Bar Library did not consist of the minute details of the legal sphere; rather it consisted of discussion and debate on share market” ⁸. So this statement undoubtedly highlights in front of us about the sound economic base of Jalpaiguri town which came into force with the entrepreneurial activity of the Indian planters.

Long before the initiation of nationalised Government Banks in Jalpaiguri town, financial institutions appeared in the scenario with the private

enterprise. And the most worth mentioning name and definitely the oldest among them were the 'Jalpaiguri Banking and Trading Corporation Limited'. It was established in the year 1889 under the auspicious dexterity of the renowned planter late Tarini Prasad Ray. Tea Planter Jogesh Chandra Ghosh father – in – law of Tarini Prasad Ray inspired and assisted him very much. The Indian tea planters got financial support from such Trading banks. At this juncture the role played by Sir R. N. Mukherjee is worthy to be mentioned. He saved many Indian gardens by providing forty lacks rupees as loan through this bank. During the World wide economic depression took place in 1930's. However, it was later taken over by the State Bank of India in 1967. The reputed tea industrialist vis – a – vis nationalist cultural family of the town the Sanyal's did not lag behind much in this field. Ganesh Chandra Sanyal was said to have laid the foundation of Laxmi Bank in Jalpaiguri town. Its chief aim was to draw loan to the Indian tea gardens. However, it did not last long as its financial base was too feeble. Apart from Bengali Hindu tea planters, the Bengali Muslim tea planters also contributed to a large extent behind the establishment of Banks in Jalpaiguri town. The idea of the establishment of a co – operative bank was however first brought about by Babu Nityananda Roy, a young educated Jotedar of Bonapara. This idea first came into shape in a meeting announced by the then Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri Mr. F.W. Strong on 29th March, 1919. Tea industrialist Mussaruf Hossain, Collector of the Rajshahi Division Mr. Aatoyar Rahaman extended their hands in this project and thus the 'Jalpaiguri central Co – operative Banking Union' came into existence. It was registered on 6th April, 1919. On account of this excellent works the British Government entitled this two great personage of the Jalpaiguri Muslim community as Khan Bahadur.

Apart from this, two other financial institutions were the 'Bengal Dooars Bank Limited' established in 1911 and the 'Raikot Industrial Bank' established in 1920. Empowered by an order by the Central Government the management of these two private enterprises went into the hands of the State Bank of India in 1966. In addition to this, there were also another private financial institution namely the 'Jotedar Banking and Trading Corporation' established in the year 1911. In 1962 the above mentioned was renamed as 'Jotedar Trading and Loan Corporation Limited' and its salient features were changed from a Bank to a non – Banking financial corporation. The branch of the Calcutta Commercial Bank was opened in Jalpaiguri

town on 25th December, 1938 under the leadership of Khan Bahadur Jay Govinda Guha. He was also the founder member of the Jackson Medical School. Jalpaiguri district can boast of such many other privately controlled financial establishments like 'Bengal Dooars Bank Limited', 'Raikot Industrial Bank', Jalpaiguri Banking and Trading Corporation Limited', 'Jotedar Trading and Loan Corporation Limited' and Kumilla bank which later merged with the United Bank of India, Jalpaiguri town ¹¹⁷. References should be made to the 'Das & Co.' which was established in the year 1927 under the initiative of Senior Manager late Manaranjan Dasgupta. Its radical aim was to provide monetary help to the Bengali owned tea gardens ⁷⁶.

The Bengali tea planters of the Jalpaiguri town had also contributed a lot behind the growth and development of the transport system of North Bengal. The Indian Tea Planter's Association was said to have sent representation to the Government of West Bengal times without number to increase the capacity of North Frontier Railway by doubling the line between Ganga and Brahmaputra, and to bifurcate the second line as a chord between Siliguri and Alipurduar in order that it might run over a safer alignment than Assam Rail Link. Their proposal of the chord line had the support of Governments of W.B. and Assam and after it was approved by a committee of experts appointed by the Railway Board, survey of the alignment was undertaken and completed. However, the proposal did not find a place in the Third and Fifth Year Plan. The Indian Tea Planter's Association also suggested that the new Broad Gauge Line crossing at Khejuriaghat to Siliguri should be extended from Siliguri to Amingaon. This work had given the highest priority in the Third Plan.

The Indian Tea Planter's Association also argued that the Assam Rail Link could not handle more than twenty percent of the goods traffic of North Bengal and Assam; ever since the attainment of independence we have been depending on the Joint Steamer Companies which operate in Pakistan waters and also in Pak Railway in East Bengal to carry the bulk of our traffic. It is reported that Pak Government was going to nationalise these steamer services. Moreover, Assam Government had proposed that North Bengal's tea industry should be kicked out of the wagons at Siliguri to trek in bullock carts or head load all over the Dooars, in order that the Link may carry cement and salt to Assam. The Bengali tea planters of Jalpaiguri town had protested several times against this preposterous proposal.

The Indian Tea Planter's Association have sent representation to the Government of West Bengal times without number to bridge the gap between Calcutta Port and North Bengal. It was a matter of great relief that the central Government at last long decided to go ahead with Rs. 56 Crores Farakka Barrage Project. It increased the opportunity to send teas from North Bengal to Calcutta Auction market to a large amount at a low cost owing to have Railway Link.

The continuity of National Highway No. 31 was broken by the washing away of floods of the two bridges on two streams of the river Torsha, one in 1950 and the other in 1954. The effect was that no road link exists between Assam and the rest of Indian Union and between the Head Quarters and its only sub – division of Jalpaiguri district, for more than six months in the year. The Indian Tea Planter's Association urged year after year the Central government since 1950 for the construction of one or more bridges on the River Torsha, to restore continuity of traffic all the year round on this most important Road Link of the Eastern Frontier of Indian Union. However, the endeavours of the Indian Tea Planters Association had to succeed when they heard a few months back that the experts had reached a general agreement for the construction of a permanent bridge on the Torsha between Hasimara and Madarihat on the downstream side of Railway Bridge. This news was confirmed by Shri Raj Bahadur, Minister of State for Transport and Communications, Government of India ⁷⁷.

Ever since the nineteenth century the Darjeeling hill and the plain portion of the district (i.e. Terai region) have attracted upper – class Bengalis by promising them prospects of a bright career in business and commerce, as also service in Government and semi – Government departments ⁷⁸. The Bengali migrants, who settled in different parts of Darjeeling hill and the foothills in the 19th and early 20th centuries, had established religious and cultural associations, promoting Bengali culture and sentiment in the process. They used to perform Durga Puja each year with great pomp and éclat by collecting subscriptions from among themselves. The Bengalis had established various literary and cultural associations such as Brahma Samaj, Bengali Association, Ramakrishna Mission, sports clubs and so on. Some prominent Bengalis also took initiative in founding primary and Higher Secondary schools. At this juncture, the role played by the native Bengali tea planters is worthy to be mentioned here. Unfortunately their contributions do not get proper attention

from the scholars as yet. Hence an attempt made here to bring the untouched area of history into limelight ⁷⁹.

The first half of the twentieth century, the non – Bengalis accounted for a large section of Siliguri's population. Among the Bengalis majority of them were engaged in vocations such as Jute and timber merchants, lawyers, tea garden's labour contractors, Railway employees and so on. They shared a close informal proximity among themselves and thus the unity in diversity grew. In spite of this the Bengalis regarded themselves as migrants. They did not have an underlined bond with Siliguri and the entire Terai region ⁸⁰. Their main concern was to earn as much as possible and then return to their own native land and reinstate themselves there. As such this neglected region was devoid of any centralised civilization or culture that was perceivable in other sub divisions and districts of Bengal. The then Bengali and non – Bengali residents remained engrossed in exploitation and self – entertainment ⁸¹. In the middle of this, there appeared some wise personalities such as tea industrialist Tarapada Banarjee (owner of Simulbarie T.E.), Kiran Chandra Bhattacharya (founder Kiran Chandra of T.E.), Satish Chandra Kar (founder of Satish Chandra T.E.), Badal Bhattacharya (son of Kiran Chandra Bhattacharya), Kusum Butta (Manager of Domohani T.E. and also a close associate tea planter B.C. Ghosh), Amiya Pal Cjaudhury (owner of Mahargaon Gulma T.E.), Bijay Basanta Bose (Manager of Mahargaon Gulma T.E.) and so on. All of them strove at their best level for the educational and cultural development of this area. This is a well known fact that the discussion about the contribution of the permanently residing Bengali tea planters in Jalpaiguri town are quite wide spread where as the Darjeeling district remains at the back stage in this regard. Thus an attempt made here to bring the untouched area of history into limelight.

Tarai Tarapada Adarsha Vidyalaya was established due to the visionary zeal of the then Sub – Divisional officer Mr. Sachin Guha and the then MLA Jagadish Bhattacharya, Jagadish Ghosh and lawyer Pradyut Bose. The fundamental aim behind the creation of this school was to accommodate the boys and girls of refugee families. Later 16 acre of land was purchased in exchange of 10,000 rupees from Rameshwar Kairi and Ramnath Kairi, the contemporary Jotedars of the Terai region. This money was donated by them later for the pretext of developing the infrastructure of this school. Tea industrialist Tarapada Banarjee made huge contributions by providing

construction materials to this school such as timber, cement along with a financial grant of 40,000/- rupees. After wards the then State Government came forward with a grant of 25,000/- rupees and the school was upgraded to Higher Secondary in 1949 – 53. Since then the school came to be known as Tarai Tarapada Adarsha Bidyalaya bearing the name of late Tarapada Banarjee, popularly known as T.P. Banarjee in tea industry ⁸². In addition to this, he also provided financial assistance in setting up Shaktigarh High School and as such earlier the school bore his name, T.P. Banarjee Shaktigarh Vidyapith. Later the then Governing body of the school in order to curtail the lengthy name, named it as Shaktigarh Vidyapith. Narasingha Vidyapith which came up at Shivmandir was also a beneficiary of T.P. Banarjee's assistance ⁸³. Nevertheless, in the memory of his late wife he founded a girl's school named Jyostnamayee Girl's High School. This is a historical event as it was the first girl's school in the Terai region ⁸⁴. A onetime grants of Rs. 2000/- was also donated by him for the upliftment of Banimandir School situated at Mahananda Colony, Siliguri. Nevertheless, he also extended his assistance to the Matigara Harasundar High School, Siliguri Girls High School and Banimandir Railway High School by providing necessary articles for development. The library room of Siliguri Girls High School bore the name of his wife late Jyostnamayee Debi. Tea planter T.P. Banarjee also assisted S.P. Ray, the then reputed tea industrialist of Jalpaiguri town to lay the foundation of Netaji Higher Secondary School. In addition to that tea planter S.P. Roy gave financial assistance to the Jagadish Chandra Junior High School in the year 1963 ⁸⁵.

Another keen educationist of Siliguri town was tea planter Satish Chandra Kar. The youths of refugee families who migrated here after independence had to face much financial hardships in order to bear their educational expenses while pursuing their college education in some other places. As such he resolved to found a college and with this purpose he set up a committee comprising of Pradyut Basu, Bijay Krishna Ghosh. In order to get Government assistance Satish Kar and Abani Bhattacharya went to Calcutta ⁸⁶. Their efforts were fruitful and in 1950 Siliguri College began its journey in the rooms of Siliguri Boy's High School. Later this college shifted to a 21 acre Govt. land and a boy's hostel came up at Shailabala Pantha Niwas (a building of Ramkrishna Mission). In case of land acquisition,

construction of school building and shifting of present address Bimalakanta Lahiri was assisted by the tea planter Satish Kar⁸⁷.

Tea industrialist T.P. Banarjee, along with other tea industrialists like S.P. Ray and B.C. Ghosh of Jalpaiguri town, went to Calcutta in order to convince the Higher Education Authority and Government to set up a federative – cum – post graduate teaching type University which would function as a affiliative, syllabus – making, examination – conducting and degree endowing body for all the degree colleges of north Bengal. Thus the North Bengal University could establish in the year 1962. It is worth mentioning that the rank holders in the Post Graduate Level of Humanities, Science and Commerce from this university are awarded medals named after tea planter T.P. Banarjee. This practice is prevalent even today. T.P. Banarjee had already created fund for this purpose by his name. After his death, his son late Ranjit Banarjee was said to have continue the practice. Now it is being controlled under the management of North Bengal University⁸⁸.

However, Jyotsnamayee Devi, wife of T.P. Banarjee was also a modern educated woman. Her noble primary object was to further the cause of education and spread the light of enlightenment among the common people. With this aim she and wife of late Hari Majumder, an old resident of Siliguri started a Primary School. Bit by bit the school developed itself and is now known as Jyotsnamayee Girl's High School. It was first established in 1929 and raised to the status of a High School in 1957 and it happens to be the earliest school for girls in the plains portion of the district. However, the first school bus for students was introduced in this school. T.P. Banarjee bought this bus from Calcutta in 1967 – 68⁸⁹.

Another keen educationist of Siliguri town was tea planter Kiran Chandra Bhattacharya. Siliguri and its adjacent areas came under the educational endeavours of Kiran Chandra Bhattacharya who played a pivotal role in establishing a number of schools here. He superseded some Congress leaders of this region like Shiu Mangal Singh, Brajen Bose and himself became the president of Congress in 1953. He formed the Municipal Commissioners Board in the same year. At that time he shared a good rapport with Atul Ghosh, the then undeclared King of Bengal. After independence in order to provide accommodation for the refugees he formed the Keshtapur Colony in the name Lord Krishna. He was the main person of the

Governing Body of many schools of Siliguri town such as Nilnalini High School, Matigara Harasundar High School and so on⁹⁰. The land was purchased for the by Pradyut Basu, the then president of Ramkrishna Samiti from the native landlord Shri Ramlal and at a later stage Kiran Chandra Bhattacharya and others purchased additional land from Shri Bhawal Singh, a religiously inclined man. Thus they extended the boundaries of the school. The land was divided between Nilanalini Vidyamandir and in the northern part of the land Ramkrishna Primary School came up. Tea industrialist Kiran Bhattacharya also had to extend his helping hand to Matigara Harasundar High School, Siliguri Ramakrishna Saradamani Vidyalay by providing them with timber which was required for the fulfilment of the construction of works of the building.

Kiran Bhattacharya was the founding member of Ramakrishna Samiti located at Asrampara, Siliguri. The total number of members was eight and it was established in the 1940. He was also said to have established singlehandedly the 'Dhairiyabala Ashram' in the premises of Ramakrishna Samiti and this was the same building where Ramakrishna Gymnasium was also initiated⁹¹. It is, however, worthy to be mentioned here is that it was the first Gymnasium of Siliguri town. Students health Home, North Bengal Handicapped Association and Kiran Chandra Bhawan are some of the establishments which grew up at that same premises with the passage of time. Kiran Chandra Bhawan mainly came up under the auspicious efforts of Badal Bhattacharya, the worthy son of Kiran Bhattacharya and a venerated name in the tea industry of the Terai region. This building was later donated to Siliguri Municipal Corporation and now it is lent out on the basis of rent on accommodation of various occasions⁹². Badal Bhattacharya's another remarkable contribution is the setting up of an age – old home namely 'Naba Basanta' which was inaugurated by Gopal Krishna Gandhi, the then Governor of W.B. in the year 2005 and also named by Buddhadab Bhattacharya, the then Chief Minister of the Govt. of W.B. This old age home has a capacity to provide shelter to forty to fifty persons at a time. It is mentionable here that the foundation stone of this building was laid by Ashok Narayan Bhattacharya, the then Urban Development Minister of the Govt. of W.B.⁹³

Tea industrialist Badal Bhattacharya was ever interested in the development of sports and culture in Siliguri and its adjacent areas. He was the key figure behind the activity of Siliguri Sports Association in 1960's. This Association,

however, came into existence at Siliguri in 1948 and was affiliated to IFA and West Bengal District Sports federation. It was evident from the fact that in the year 1962 he inaugurated a football tournament namely Kiran Chandra Memorial Shield Tournament in memory of his father Kiran Bhattacharya and this took place at Tilak Maidan which later became the Kanchenjunga Stadium. In the year 1990 this football tournament turned into a Night football tournament where different sub divisional teams of North Bengal participate. Among the persons who had provided adequate assistance for the spread of Table Tennis in this town, Badal Bhattacharya's name came to the foremost. Nevertheless, he always stood by the unemployed youths of the town and with a view to do something worthy for them he set up a welfare organisation which provided the unemployed to obtain tea samples of his garden and engaged them in the job of marketing. Moreover, his name cannot be overlooked in the matter of setting up Siliguri Tea Auction Centre. It is, however, worthy to be mentioned here that by the financial assistance of Badal Bhattacharya and efforts of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, this town got its first ever Electric Furnace in the year 1990 and it has been kept at the crematorium named after his father's name. This is the first ever Electric Furnace in the whole of North Bengal.

The present Director of Kiran Chandra T.E. and the younger brother of Badal Bhattacharya, Ajay Bhattacharya was also keen on social upliftment of this town. His efforts are evident from the fact that he set up a child welfare organisation at Loknath Baba Ashram, Dagapur for the road side vagabond wards. In addition to that he also started a similar organisation in his own tea estate to cater to the needs of his own garden's labourers. This organisation is doing some commendable job in order to rehabilitation to addicted labourers of his garden ⁹⁴.

Another Bengali tea planter family made significant contribution to spread education and culture in the Terai region is the Pal Chaudhury family of Ranaghat, Dist - Nadia. They were the main stake holders of Mahurgaon Gulma T.E. Amitava Pal Chaudhury, the worthy son of Ila Pal Chaudhury and also a doyen in Indian tea industry was said to have donated 9.5 acre of land at Sukna from the Mahurgaon Gulma T.E. in order to establish the first non – Govt. engineering college namely the Siliguri Institute of Technology (SIT) ⁹⁵. There is a primary school (Hindi Medium) named Gulma Primary School established on 1st February 1957. There is also a secondary school named Ila Pal Chaudhury Memorial Hindi High School

established in 1981. It was recognised by Govt. in 1983 as Junior High School, then in 1992 as secondary school and in 1st July 2000 as Higher Secondary School ⁹⁶. Another instance of their educational interests is revealed from the fact that they came forward in setting up the Amiya Pal Chaudhury Memorial High School situated at Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri in the year 1998. In this respect the main inspiration was said to have come from Amitava Pal Chaudhury. He established this educational institution in memory of his father Amiya Pal Chaudhury ⁹⁷. However, this renowned family of Nadia district also formed an engineering college after name of tea industrialist Biprodas Pal Chaudhury at Maheshgang, Ranaghat.

The present Director of the Bhojnarayan T.E. Prasenjit saha has been organising a Table Tennis Tournament in memory of his father Prakash Saha. Prakash Saha served as the president of Arya Samiti, the cultural centre of Siliguri located at Deshbandhu Para till his death ⁹⁸. It was founded in the year 1948. It maintains a community hall fitted with a permanent stage, where dramatic and musical performances as also social gatherings are held. It is to be mentioned here that after Mitra Sammelani, Arya Samiti is the very next organisation which made arrangements for observation of Durga Puja on a grand scale ⁹⁹. There is a close resemblance between Mitra Sammelani and Arya Samiti in the fact that both of them comprised of renowned Bengali tea planters, Railway's high officials and well - established timber merchants who constituted the Governing body of these two organisations.

Dramas and theatres set its foot on the Terai region under the patronage of Bengali tea planters. In 1930's the play 'Pather Seshe' written by Nishi kanta Basu Roy was staged at Thanjhara T.E. on the occasion of Durga Puja. During its inception, a cultural environment was said to have located around the whole garden as because it was set up by Nalini ranjan Ghosh, the then renowned tea industrialist, social worker and the then Member of Parliament from Jalpaiguri Constituency. He used to visit the garden along with his own family on the very special day of Durga Puja Ashtami to pay homage and also to take part in the worship. The renowned tea planter Nalini kanta Rahut of Jalpaiguri town took part in this drama and enacted the character 'Durga Shankar' ¹⁰⁰. In the mid 1930's Naba Natya Club was founded at Bagdogra and the names to be mentioned here in this regard are Purna Chandra Mitra Manager of Sannyasisthan T.E., Prabadh Chandra Sarkar owner of Bengdubi T.E.,

Mohit Haldar owner of Kamalpur T.E., Hrishikesh Sikdar the then head clerk of Paharghumia T.E. and so on. The dramas were staged on a temporary wooden structure at kamalpur T.E. The audience were mostly people from neighbouring tea estates and they used to come in bullock carts ¹⁰¹.

A question might lurk in the mind of the readers why we not mentioning any facts about the hilly region of the Darjeeling district. By response to this question, it is quite obvious because Bengali tea planters were not so much concerned in regard to the spread of education and culture in Darjeeling hill. It is true that initiatives in this respect in Darjeeling hill were drawn mainly from the Bengali intellectuals along with the Europeans. To cite some examples, contributions of poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, the royal family of Cooch Behar, Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan and the leaders of Brahma Samaj as well as Ramakrishna Mission are worthy to mention here. But it is very astonishing to say that such instances pertaining to the Bengali tea planters are indeed very hard to find out in the pages of history. Instances in regard to the Bengali tea planters for setting up schools and colleges in Darjeeling hill to spread women education are very rare. Actually in order to survive the tough competition in tea business along with their European counterparts, they were unable to direct their attention towards the educational endeavours such as establishing schools, colleges in Darjeeling hill. In spite of that, such examples were there who played a pivotal role to promote the cause of culture there but the numbers were too scanty.

Tea Industrialist Bipradas Pal Chaudhury was a versatile personality who played a pivotal role in fostering the socio – cultural atmosphere in Darjeeling hill. He was the founding member of the Darjeeling Brahma Samaj which was founded on 3rd January 1879 at the eastern end of the Hill Cart road on land procured from Government by late Radhanath Roy. He financially helped this cultural institution in setting up its prayer hall in the year 1888. He had a good relation with Keshab Chandra Sen and Pratap Chandra Majumder. During their visit in Darjeeling hill, they stayed in the furnished bungalow of the Tindharia tea garden owned by Bipradas Pal Chaudhury. The later also assisted profoundly Motilal Haldar and Girish Chandra Guha to lay the foundation of the Brahma Samaj Temple in Kurseong. His bosom friend justice Sir Asutosh chaudhury was said to have constructed a house along side of Bipradas Pal Chaudhury's residence in Tindharia range. Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore was a casual visitor to this place as he had a cordial relation with justice late

Sir Asutosh Chaudhury. This property was later acquired by his most efficient son and the most acute Bengali tea planter of the Darjeeling hill, Amiya Pal Chaudhury, who was said to have built up a most beautiful mansion house in this area. Janaki Nath Bose, father of freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, had come to the neighbourhood at the instance of Bipradas Pal Chaudhury who helped him immensely in founding a house in the ridge of Giddapahar. In that house Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was confined as a political leader for a few days. The marvellous scenery witnessed from the house of Janaki Nath Bose is hardly seen from any other place in the Darjeeling hill ¹⁰².

Nevertheless, the efforts of Bengali tea planters and other Bengali intellectuals were evident from the fact that the Darjeeling Debating Club was founded and its principal objective was to further the cause of social awareness and logical thinking among the common masses. Two organisations, namely the "Bengali Association" and the "Bengali Association of Darjeeling" were established in 1908 and 1930 on land leased out by the Maharajahdiraj of Burdwan at Dowhill Road respectively in Darjeeling hill ¹⁰³. The Bengali tea planters extended their hands to other Bengali intellectuals in setting up these two cultural institutions, probably to pursue their cultural interests and social interactions ¹⁰⁴. However, as a pioneer Bengali organisation in Darjeeling hill, it performs over the years a major role to further the cause of education and culture as yet. It runs a primary and a junior high school through the Bengali medium besides organising Durga Puja and other festivals.

Thus we may summarise the discussion that in spite of hectic social, political and sporting activities the Bengali tea planters kept themselves always busy with various welfare activities not only at their own residential places but also at their own tea plantations. The social obligations towards the employees at the tea estate were always at the back of their mind and they spared no pains to see that they were well looked after even in spite of difficult days when the cost kept on increasing and the prices realised for teas were not remunerative to fulfil all obligations.

One landmark which will always remain vivid with all those they came into connection with was the number of schools they built not only in the garden itself but also in the neighbouring places which were adjacent to the gardens so that all the

children could get some sort of education to bring a ray of hope for the younger generation. They were also very keen sportsmen and they spared no pains to see that all the employees could have a field of their own so as to end up a hard day's work by enjoying themselves in the open for a couple of hours before they were driven back to their homes when darkness fell. Their outlook for the weaker sections was always sympathetic. On many occasions they would share the joys and pains with their employees by participating in various sporting activities such as football and athletics so as to bring a bond of friendship and affection amongst all. They were always humble and honest to their ward and many a person who came into contact with them was greatly benefitted whenever approached by them sometime or the other.

After the influx of refugees when the partition took place in 1947 many a family who crossed over approached the Bengali tea industrialists for employment. I can say that many people all over North Bengal will be grateful to them for having given them some security in which they have built up their careers. In short, they were a man for all sections, poor or rich and always went out of their way to help them when in need. To cite an example we can staunchly utter the name of tea industrialist Satyendra Prasad Roy, widely known as S.P. Roy all over West Bengal for his various and multifarious activities in tea. He had immense contribution in the field of education, sports and games and cultural affairs besides his social and political activities.

Lastly, they could carry out all their works efficiently because of their dedication to all they did. They always admired strict discipline and punctuality. In all matters they had the power to take sharp decisions. They were always brief, concise and to the point in directions and decisions. This led them to success in all spheres of his life. The most redeeming features were above all their feeling for their fellow workers, whether big or small for they would go out of their way to help anyone if they were in difficulty. In short, their word of advice inspired other to do well on behalf of the society.

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