

## **Chapter- 6**

### **Post Colonial Culture of Jalpaiguri District**

The cultural scenario of the people of the Jalpaiguri district in the post colonial period changed a lot dramatically. The district of Jalpaiguri was dominated by the indigenous people in the pre-colonial period; in the colonial period the influence of the indigenous people was going to decrease because of the immigration of the outsiders from the neighbouring areas of different classes, religions and castes. So, in every aspect of the district such as administration, politics, economy, education, culture, etc. the immigrated people dominated on the indigenous people. Sitangshu Prosad Chakraborty writes in this context, “Rajbanshis had their own tradition in every sphere of their lives. But coming of the BarnaHindus, Europeans and other communities, Rajbanshis also were going to accept the culture of the Barna Hindus in the colonial and post colonial period adjusting with the modern culture in the wave of time.”<sup>1</sup> The immigration of huge number of people of different castes and classes the indigenous people and their culture facing in crises. Amarendra Nath Suba pointed out, the people of Mech community who were majority and ‘son of the soil’ in the Dooars in the pre- colonial period were facing in identity crises in the colonial period and in the post colonial period they lost their cultural heritage and ethnicity.<sup>2</sup> Among the immigrated people, particularly two categories of them such as higher castes of the Hindus & the Western people occupied the position of the society. Naturally in the cultural life the Westernization & the Sanskritization entered and extended into the society & culture of the people of the district.

To explore the cultural history of the post colonial period it can be divided into three categories namely-1) **Village culture**, 2) **Urban culture** and 3) **the culture of the Tribal people**. Let us examine the Village culture.

1) **Village Culture:** - It should be mentioned here that acculturation between indigenous people and immigrated people was took place as a result of which a cultural synthesis was grown in the society of the district like other parts of North Bengal. After living year to year together in the same villages the indigenous people and the immigrated people accepted the culture of each other as their neighbours. Though it was started in the colonial period, in the post colonial period it became more effective because of the influx of the refugees coming from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) after 1947.

In terms of food habit many indigenous foods were taken as the food of the immigrated people, on the other hand the immigrated people were habituated with the food habit of the indigenous people. Not only that the indigenous people accepted the process of cooking and spices from the immigrated people. Beside these, after independence and partition, the spread of education accelerated, many school, colleges, institution were established, as a result of which many indigenous people came under the education. They became educated and many of them got services, the number of employee increased day after day. These educated people went out of the house, settled into different places, started to live different places of the country, as a result of which they gradually became habituated with the food habit of multi character dishes. The food habit of the educated people automatically influenced the other people of the villages. For example many people of Rajbanshi Community used burning fishes as their food, but the new generation people including educated people do not use various types of spices, simply they used turmeric, cumin, coriander etc. dusting in the traditional husking machine, but now a days they used various types of spices purchasing from market. In this regard Sitangshu Prosad Chakraborty stated, Relating food habit they also habituated with modern food habit at present, particularly, the educated Rajbanshis and the Rajbanshis of urban areas use modern food instead of taking their traditional food habit such as *pelka*, *chheka*, *sidal- sutki*.<sup>3</sup>

It is found in the field survey that all most all of the indigenous people use modern type's food accordingly the global culture of food habit. Jagat Singh Barman an inhabitant of Takomari, in the district of Cooch Behar adjacent to Jalpaiguri district pointed out that, they eat everything in accordance with the Hindu food habit. Both of the veg and non- veg they take as their food which are available in the market and they purchased accordingly their financial capacity. They sometimes eat their traditional food like *pelka*, *sutkasidal*, *chheka* etc. But usually they use all the food which is eaten by other Bengali people. There are no vast differences between our food habit and the food habit of other Bengali people.<sup>4</sup> In this context Kaitalu Barman another inhabitant of Cooch Behar of the same village expressed his view that they rarely use traditional food, generally they are habituated with the food habit like the other Bengali people. He also added that their children preferred the modern food than the traditional food.<sup>5</sup>I have also collected information from many educated Rajbanshis who serve in various departments and dowelled in the town and my colleagues of Rajbanshi community talking with them directly where no differences have been found in their food habit between the Rajbanshis and other Bengali people.

Besides Rajbanshi people, the other indigenous people of the district such as Mech, Toto, Garo, Rabha, Santal, Oraon, Munda, Nepalese and Bhutias also more or less are habituated with modern food habit though they occasionally use their traditional food. It is relevant to mention here that due to increase the activities and propagation of various types of media reaching in the remote areas of the rural and urban areas as a result of the global revolution every sphere of the society, economy, politics and culture have been changed rapidly. Naturally, people of different communities already have become habituated with the modern food habit, particularly the young generation are not much interested to their traditional food habit, rather they are interested and preferred to the modern food habit like Chinese, Western, South Indian, Panjabi, Rajasthani and Kashmiri dishes. Kailash Tirky of Hashimara informed

me that they use both the traditional food and modern food in their food habit. He also added that presently the hunting in the forest areas is strictly prohibited; as a result they cannot hunt in the forest and jungle. Naturally, they cannot afford meat of various types of animals which were their traditional food. Apart from these the youths of present generation are interested to take modern food.<sup>6</sup>Ramesh Suba of Satali Basti pointed out that they use traditional food occasionally, but generally they use modern food.<sup>7</sup>

**Dress:** - In the post colonial period through the line of modernization and industrialization reached in the village society. The indigenous people of the district have their separate traditional dresses of each community including tribal people. Every tribal community had their traditional dress both of men and women. As for example the Rajbansi people other than the Jotdar family wear generally *Lungi*, *Gamchha*, *Shirt* etc. and the poor old women wear unstitched *Lungi* called *Fota* or *Tapan* covering from upper portion of the chest to the lower portion of the knee, young girl and women wearied Sharee. D.H.E. Sunder mentioned in his report, “Rajbanshi women wear a ‘sari’ or wrapper called *Fota-Kapor* round them, from over their breasts up to their ankles. Men wear a Jacket, called “*Piran*”, round their necks and a *Dhoti* round their loins. Men also carry a small round bag in which they keep betel nut, lime etc.<sup>8</sup>Regarding dresses Sitangshu Prosad Chakraborty writes, “The Rajbanshis use also modern dresses instead of traditional dresses like *Fota* or *Tapan*.”<sup>9</sup>It is called “*botus*”.<sup>10</sup> The Muslim people generally wear *Lungi* and *Punjabi* or *Shirt*. But in the post colonial phase for increasing education and changing socio-economic status the dress habit of the indigenous people gradually was being changed. The educated people, particularly among whose were involved in service in different sectors in different parts of the country accepted modern dresses. They became less interested to wear traditional dresses.

All the indigenous people started slowly to wear modern dress like other people of main stream. The young generation both male and female is

habituated with the modern dresses they started to wear Pant, Shirt, Shoe, etc. The girls and female wear Churidar or salwar kamij, Frok, Sarees etc, not only that presently the female also wear the dresses of the male such as pant, shirt etc. The old men wear Dhoti, Punjabi also Pant, Shirts etc. Now a day's almost all the indigenous people have been wearing modern dress, no differences are followed in terms of dresses between the indigenous people and the immigrated people. For the emergence of global culture no man can deny to accept the global culture. So, now a day's no man can be identified of which community they belong with their dresses because of the abolition of traditional dresses except few instances and increasing the modern dress-habit. Tapan Katham of Katham Bari near Maynaguri pointed out that once they had traditional dress, but now it is not prevailing sufficiently, in most of the cases both male and female use modern dresses as their dress habit. However, in the season of various occasions they use their traditional dress. <sup>11</sup>

**Food Habit**—A feast is arranged where 5 or 7 or 9 persons were invited and feed them with *Dai* (curd), *Chira* (flattend rice) and *Kala* (*banana*) in the month of Baishakha (April) which was called *Baishakhi Seba*.

Kailash Roy informed me about the food habit of the people of Rajbanshi community. He told that they used some traditional food beside their modern food such as *Chheka* (*dry dish of vegetable*) which is cooked by using pieces of vegetables, particularly different types of Shak (spinage) with *Khar* (*paddy straw*) produced in a traditional way from ashes or soda purchased from market, *Phoktai* which is cooked by *Takoa*, a kind of snail. Further more they have to eat *mankachu* (the arum) in the month of Bhadra, *olkachu* (a kind of arum) in the month of Aswin, Pachkol or *Chalta* (an edible acid fruit) in the month of Kartik. Besides food habit he had told about their customs which are as follows:-

During the time of Chaitra Sankranti a bough of *Guja* tree, betel leaf and betel nut with garlic and onion, these are all together and hanged on the top of the door. *Akash Prodip*—(*Sky lamp*)-This lamp is lighted in the house in the month of Kartik. A little lamp covering with cloth is placed in a top of a bamboo stick in the house. *Vela Bhasa*- A raft making with banana leaf is flown in the river or pond in any Thursday of the month of Bhadra.<sup>12</sup>

**Social Work of the Jotdar Family**— It is true that the Jotdars, belonged to indigenous community, particularly the Rajbanshis had done many benevolent works or social works. In the colonial period many benevolent Jotdars of Jalpaiguri district like other parts of North Bengal would look after developmental work of the villages. They would build new roads. They would help their *Proja* or sharecroppers by giving crops, materials for making house and various instruments for cultivation. They organized many social institutions of which various occasions or festivals were performed where all the people assembled, enjoyed and joined in feast together. Upendra Nath Barman wrote in his book, “There were huge amount of milk, curd and ghee, even in the poorest family there were 2/1 cows. Children, young men, old men everybody would eat milk, curd and become healthy and diseaseless....”<sup>13</sup>

Sunder mentioned in his report of a ‘Jotdar’s Fund’. The grants of ‘Jotdari Fund’ used in many developmental works. There were many Jotdars who were involved in social works and would try to maintain good relation with adhiars or projas. The Jotdar played a significant role in developing the education in the rural and urban areas also. Many Jotdars donated land for establishment of school. Not only donated lands, they would give money, built houses recruited teachers for the schools. Nani Mohon Sen, a resident of Basusuba near Maynaguri pointed out, “The Land of Basusuba High School and Basusuba *Hat* (weekly market) was donated by Binay Kumar Roy and Nirmal Chandra Roy. And Nagendra Nath Roy donated 6 acres of lands for

establishment of Betgara Charerbari Nagendranath High School (1971). He also donated 1 acre of land to Hari Mandir.”<sup>14</sup>

**Role of Education:** In the colonial period the education did not enter among the mass people. Unlike the East Bengal and South Bengal the spread of Western education started slowly in the district. Like other parts of Bengal indigenous education system was introduced led by Jotdars and Zamindars, emphasizing on Sanskrit –based education in the different parts of the district. But it is true that only the people of Jotdars, Zamindars and economically solvent families could take education. The poor people or ordinary people never enter into the door of education. But in the post-colonial period, the independent govt. tried to increase the speed of education. Govt. accepted various policies both from the central and state govt. as a result of which many schools, colleges and universities were established in different parts of the district as elsewhere of the country. For accepting the democratic policy and method in the field of education, besides the rich people, the ordinary people or poor people also started to send their children in the premises of the schools and colleges as a result within few decades the percentage of education was going up.

The education penetrates slowly like other parts of North Bengal in the district of Jalpaiguri. There were few indigenous primary schools established by the Jotdars in the pre- colonial and colonial period. It should be mentioned here that the English schools were set up by the British in different phases of colonial period in the district. The following table shows the growth of different schools in the district during the post-colonial period.<sup>15</sup>

<b>Name of Schools</b>	<b>Year of recognition</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>Jorpakri Abdul Gani High English School</b>	<b>1947</b>	<b>Boys</b>	
<b>Mcwilliam High English School</b>	<b>1947</b>	<b>Boys</b>	
<b>Mandalghat High English School</b>	<b>1947</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Abolished in 1948</b>
<b>Jalpaiguri Govt. Girl's High School</b>	<b>1948</b>	<b>Girls</b>	
<b>Begum Foisonna Girls School</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>Girls</b>	
<b>Mohitnagar Tara prosad High School</b>	<b>1953</b>	<b>Co-educational</b>	
<b>Arabinda Madhyamik School</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>Boys</b>	
<b>Kumudini High School</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>Girls</b>	

On the educational side, the total numbers of teachers are 3,699 as per 1961 Census, of whom only 497 are women. There are only 77 university teachers who generally teach in colleges. There are 20 such teachers amongst the women of Jalpaiguri. There are 785 teachers of Secondary Schools of whom 219 are women. There are as many as 1,976 primary school teachers in the district, 209 of them is being females. 720 persons have returned their

occupation as teaching, but they could not be classified in any one of the above categories.

The statement below will show the percentage of literates amongst persons, males and females in the rural and urban areas separately for the district as well as for the state.<sup>16</sup>

State/District	Percentage of Literates			
		Persons	Males	Females
<b>West Bengal</b>	Rural	21.64	32.86	9.73
	<b>Urban</b>	52.89	59.59	43.33
<b>Jalpaiguri</b>	Rural	16.20	24.03	7.12
	<b>Urban</b>	49.31	55.86	40.78

As a result of increasing education the cultural scenario both of the towns and villages was going to be changed rapidly, For coming under education, people accepted slowly modern culture such as national and international in every sphere of life, educated people became rational and scientific mentality and abolishing superstition , irrational customs and usages.

It is found in Janamat, the Bengali periodicals; today, after congress regime, all most all the colleges and universities are under the banner of Chhatraparishad by giving excuse of protecting from Naxalite attack. But they are unwilling to examination. They had only intention to occupy union; they had no initiative to conduct examination and teaching learning smoothly. Ananda Chandra College of Jalpaiguri had tried many times to take examination, Professors were sitting with question papers and answer scripts but the students did not come .<sup>17</sup>

There has been an all round quantitative development in education since 1947. The number of Primary Schools has doubled; while the number of students in those schools has increased by four times during the two decades beginning from 1947....High Schools have increased six times during these years with an increase of eight and a half in the number of students. The number of colleges has tripled, and students there have increased by eight times. Jalpaiguri Ananda Chandra College was established in 1942, Alipurduar College was established in 1957, the Prosanna Deba Womens College was set up in 1950 and the Jalpaiguri Ananda Chandra College of Commerce was established in 1962. By the establishment of this College the educational scenario of the district has been changed rapidly. The students passing from these colleges got the chances in the different sectors of the society in the district and abroad. Many reputed persons and intellectuals, who became famous in the different field of the country and abroad and who brightened the name of the district as well as of the colleges, were the glory of the colleges. Still now, this college has been carrying on this legacy and heritage.

Jalpaiguri Polytechnic Institute established on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1950 had 35 boys on its roll as on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1971. Jalpaiguri Engineering College, a Government-aided institution functioning from 1961, had 401 students in 1963-64. This institution had 603 boys on its roll as on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1971. Large sums are being spent by Government for the education of the backward classes. In 1965, there were 2,586 Scheduled Tribes and 6,435 Scheduled castes students in the secondary schools of the district, forming respectively 12.03 per cent of the total scheduled Tribes students and 5.28 per cent of the total scheduled Castes student of the state.<sup>18</sup>

The Social Welfare Board has been communicating education among aged women and children in the village of the district since 1955. Old women are also given education through story-telling, songs etc. The schemes for Social Education in the state started in 1948-49 but the work in this district

started later. Steps are taken to establish literacy centers, Night Schools, etc. There are Complete Centers, with two teachers, one for give a share in training social education and another for literacy. During the year 1973-74 there were 35 Night Schools, 24 Literacy Centres, 30 complete Social Education centres,<sup>37</sup> Social Cum Company centers and 70 one-teacher *Pathsalas*.<sup>19</sup>

In the district the educational and cultural sector of the society, the libraries both in rural and urban areas had an important role. Library Association started functioning through an ad hoc committee on and from 16th December 1954. The foundation stone of the building of the association was laid towards the beginning of 1956 on a piece of Khasmahal Land. In 1961, there were 12 government sponsored rural libraries. The District Library Association distributes lump grants to deserving public libraries managed by voluntary workers.<sup>20</sup>

The District Sports Association which was established in 1956 organizes competitions in different games and sports amongst the clubs affiliated to it and hold coaching camps for the training of young athletics. In 1961, there were 29 clubs affiliated to the Association, which in turn is affiliated to the State Association. Institute for physical culture named Adarsa Bymagar was established in 1952 at Jalpaiguri town. Stadium having capacity for 1,400 onlookers was set up in 1957 on 0.99 acres of land donated by the State Government. It was inaugurated in 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1961.<sup>21</sup>

### **Medical treatment-**

The indigenous people always depend on indigenous treatment of medicinal plants and *Ojha* or *Kabiraj*. Different types of plants were used as medicine, *mantra* and *tuk-tak* etc. The indigenous people including tribal people did not believe in allopathic treatment or medicine. But in the post colonial period people becoming educated, started to accept slowly the allopathic treatment. Various dispensaries, hospitals and health centers were

being established in different parts of the district as other parts of the country, people have been coming under modern medical and surgical treatment.

The people of the villages had believed that a good number of causes like impurities, bad weather, disappointment or anger of God; evil spirits were the root causes of various diseases. For treatments of various diseases local *Ojhas* were called. The *Ojhas* (village exorcists) by chanting mantras tried to satisfy the disappointed Gods. In most of the cases the deities were the Goddess. For the treatment of the village community herbs and shrubs were utilized immensely as raw materials for preparing medicines. The *Ojhas* collected liquor or black goat or a red cock & rupees 1.50 from the patient as fees.

Sometimes the tribal people considered certain evil souls or sinister spirits responsible for different diseases. In Tribal society the tribal people were influenced by the impact of magic especially black or harmful magic. The magician after creating an image of the specific person by mud or sand pierced an Incanted iron Skewer on it. The person began to ill within a few days.

On first Baisak of every year the Bisua festival was celebrated with the object of uprooting unhealthiness in the family and also removing the existence of evil spirit.....*Garam Thakur* was another deity who was very much popular in the villages....brought sickness among children and was very much active during outbreak of Cholera.<sup>22</sup>

The data of Hospitals also an important source for collection of health statistics. The Hospitals send in-patient records, monthly returns of patients treated in the outdoor and annual administrative reports. The receipt position of these reports is not, however, always bright as will appear from the table below.<sup>23</sup>

<b>Receipt Position of Hospital Returns for Jalpaiguri district: 1967</b>					
<b>Total No of Medical Institutions</b>			<b>No. Of Medical Institutions Which Submitted Returns</b>		
Hospitals & Health Centers	Dispensaries	Clinics	Hospitals and Health Centers	Dispensaries	Clinics
40	14	23	32(80.0)	10(71.4)	1(4.0)

The sampling technique has also been resorted to for want of a system of full coverage of vital registration. The scheme opened up with a pilot study in July 1966 to be followed by sample surveys in full scale in January 1968. The State was divided into two natural or geographical divisions namely The Himalayan, consisting of the three contiguous districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar and the plains consisting of the remaining districts. The vital rates obtained under the scheme have been found to be fairly reasonable and accurate. Half-yearly censuses of births and deaths are also undertaken to improve the system of registration. The estimated mid-year population in 1967 in the district was as follows.<sup>24</sup>

	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Male</b>	46,848	7, 82,282	8, 29,130
<b>Female</b>	38,113	6, 78,140	7, 16,253
<b>Total</b>	84,961	14, 60,422	15, 45,383

There is no infrastructure or proper system of medical treatment for the suffering patients who have been suffering from various diseases; there is distress condition in the medical ward. There is no place to display bed.

Doctors cannot treat their patient smoothly for want of places. The system of the Government is responsible for that. It spent many days to finish the work of a block bearing 100 beds. But there is no sufficient bed, net or blanket according to requirements. There is no medicine, no glycerin, no Cathedra which is very essential for hospital.<sup>25</sup>

Over the census decade of 1951-61 the composition of Jalpaiguri's population by different religious communities has not altered to any appreciable extent. In 1951 the Hindus comprised 84.14 percent and the Muslim formed about one tenth of the district's total population. The Christian community was only 2.79 percent in 1951 against their present strength of 3.75 percent among the district's population. The proportion of Buddhist in the district's population structure has nearly doubled itself within the last ten years. They are now 1.34 percent against the 1951 percentage of only 0.72. There is a statement given below shows the percentage distribution of Hindus and Muslims in the district and its different police stations. The Hindus are almost evenly distributed all over the district. The maximum concentration is found in the police stations of Alipurduar and the least in the police station of Rajganj.<sup>26</sup>

{ Percentage of Religions to Total Population }

<b>District/Subdivision/Police Station</b>	<b>Religion</b>	
	Hindu	Muslim
<b>Jalpaiguri District</b>	85.41	9.55
<b>Sadar Subdivision</b>	83.28	13.56
<b>Jalpaiguri</b>	81.55	17.33
<b>Rajganj</b>	75.28	23.75
<b>Maynaguri</b>	86.37	13.38
<b>Nagrakata</b>	89.99	4.21

Mention may be made that the Rajbanshis were originated from Indo-Mongoloid race so the influence and social customs and usages were seen in the life of the Rajbanshis unlike the Aryan culture or Aryan customs or religion, though there are so many debates in this regard.

After immigration of the Aryanization or Sanskritization Rajbanshis like other indigenous people of Bengal influenced by the Sanskritization. They converted in to Hinduisation accepting the culture of Aryans led by Brahmanas. Rajbanshi people like other indigenous people of Bengal influenced by the Sanskritization. They converted into Hinduisation accepting the culture of Aryans led by the Brahmanas. Rajbanshi people like other indigenous people including different tribes after becoming Hinduanised culture. They performed various worships, festivals, customs, marriage, *shradhya* (funeral) etc. in accordance with the guidance of the Brahmanas. In such a way different types of worships such as Durga puja, Rash puja etc were performed guided by Brahmanas according to 'Purana' (Hindu shastra).

After independence for heavy influx of population of different castes and tribes the indigenous people accepted the religious customs, usages and festivals from different castes people of Hinduised family. They also participated and enjoyed the various programmes and festivals of the Hindus, suppose the festivals like Jamaishasti, Bhaiphota, etc. Was not prevailing in the Rajbanshis, but now a day's many Rajbanshi families observed such type of occasions or festivals. Dipen Roy of Rajbanshi community of Ukilpara, Jalpaiguri told that they observed the day of Bhaiphota. His daughter Priyanka Roy gives the *bhaiphota* (a Hindu ritual wishing long life for the brother by the sister) to her elder brother. Beside this, they worshipped different Hindu God and Goddess such as Lakshipuja, Saraswatipuja, Kali puja, Manashapuja, Bishwakarmapuja, and Janmastami etc. in accordance with the Hindu mythology.<sup>27</sup>

**Entertainments:** -Rajbanshi people, local Muslims including other indigenous people had various types of songs, dances, Rajbanshis and local Muslims had their *Bhawaiya gan* (songs), *Kushan gan*, *Palatiya gan*, *Dotara gan* etc which were there traditional culture. But in the post colonial period for entering the modern culture indigenous people gradually accepted it. They accepted Baul, Bhatiali, Rabindra Sangit, Nazrulgiti, Adhunik songs etc. Not only that now a days the young generation people like Hindi songs, Adhunik songs, Hindi cinema instead of their traditional culture.

It should be mentioned here that in spite of all these changes many indigenous people still now do not forget their traditional culture. They observed and preserved their traditional culture as their wealth and heritage.

### **Urban Culture**

As the society of the towns of Jalpaiguri district was formed in the colonial period, particularly comprising immigrated people of different castes, religion and culture which is discussed earlier in the colonial society. From the discussion it is found that the society of the towns dominated by the immigrated people particularly the people coming from East Bengal (Now Bangladesh), nature of the indigenous people was nominal.

Among the immigrated people there were Bengali Hindus, Biharies, Marwari including traders, businessmen, servicemen, Jotders, intermediaries, landholders, owners and officials of teagarden labourers comprised the society of Jalpaiguri. Kumudini Kanta Chakraborty mentioned regarding the immigration of different types of people, "In Jalpaiguri town a number of 'Paschima Coolee', Rikshwawala, Mason, Carpenters is near about 2000 and their daily income is at least Rs 5 as such they daily earned Rs 10000, monthly Rs 3 lakhs and early Rs 36 lakhs and the said amount was sent their own countries."<sup>28</sup> On the other hand the society of Alipurduar town mainly comprised the people coming from East Bengal, Biharies and Marwaris. It is

relevant to mention here that the hinduised culture dominated in the society of the towns.

It should be also mentioned here that a cultural assimilation or synthesis was followed in the society. No rigidity of casteism or untouchability was followed in the society. Different types of worship and festivals such as Durgapuja, Kalipuja, and Laxmipuja were held where people from different castes and classes were participated and enjoyed among each other.

On the other hand in the various festivals of Muslims and Christian people of different communities and religions assembled in various occasions and festivals, feast jointly; get together shared their enjoyment among each other. Since the independence the people of Jalpaiguri enjoyed the 'Christmas Day' on every year. People of different communities other than the Christian assembled in the Church at ShirishTala, Jalpaiguri and enjoyed the Day. Besides this Church there were many Churches namely Baptist Church at Nayabasti, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar Junction, Dhupguri, Malbazar and many other places of the Jalpaiguri district. In these all the Christians assembled in specific times for observing their religious activities and performances. People other than the Christians also visits and assembled in different times in these holy religious places. They prayed in the Churches to the God.

One of the cultural characteristics of the Jalpaiguri town was peace and hospitability which has been continuing till today. At time of festivals and worships people went to the house of their relatives and friends where they would get heartiest hospitality, getting food, gifts etc. It is found in different sources that S. P. Roy, the Jotdar and social workers had a great role in different sphere of the society and culture of Jalpaiguri town. It is found in District Gazetteer. A son of the late Ananda Chandra Rahut of Jalpaiguri made a gift of 4 bighas of Land and Rs. 25,000 in case for a college in memory of his late father. The college named Ananda Chandra College started functioning

from 1942 with roll strength of 91 which figure rose to 211 next year and to 582 in 1947. B.A. Classes were opened in 1948. With the munificence of Asrumati Devi, wife of Raja Prasannadeva, The Prasannadeva Girls' College came into existence in 1950, with a gift of 50 bighas of land from the local people, the Alipurduar college came into existence in 1957. In 1955 the social Welfare Board established welfare Centers for women and children in different areas. These centers imparted social education among women.<sup>29</sup>

In 1954, a juvenile organization named "Danpiteder Asar" started working for the physical and mental growth of children. This organization tried to develop the mind of the children through book banks, exhibitions, nutrition's programmes etc. The Jalpaiguri Youngmen's Association, have also started a centre for physical and mental culture of the children named 'Sisu Udyan'. Some other organizations also worked from time to time for children welfare only. 'Mile -Mise' of Desbandhu para, the juvenile section of the Cultural Association at Deshbandhunagar etc.<sup>30</sup>

Rahut family also had played a positive role in the cultural canvas of the Jalpaiguri society. The Ananda Chandra College was named after Ananda Chandra Rahut, his son Kamini Kanta Rahut donated land for establishment of college to memoir his father A. C. Rahut. The owner of land of Netaji Subhas Mahavidyalaya, Haldibari, Coochbehar was Kamini kanta Rahut which donated by the authority of Haldibari Girl's High School.

Regarding games and sports Jalpaiguri played a significant role in the history of North Bengal since the inception of the district. Not only the games & sports but also in the field of arts, literature & culture it had a remarkable position.

It should be mentioned here regarding the cultural life of the people such as games & sports, art, literature, music & songs, it can be divided broadly into

two categories namely the traditional culture of the indigenous people & the culture of the Barnahindus migrated from outside the district. Other than these there are some cultural instances of the Muslims (outsiders) Christians and some Europeans. In the colonial and post colonial period these differences are followed clearly but in the wave of time their differences were going to decrease. Particularly in the post independent period all the cultures of traditional migrated Hindu, Muslims were assimilated, in spite of having few instances of different culture.

Ashok Prosad Roy writes “Jalpaiguri Town Club was formed in 1898 by the inspiration and attempt of the English people and the honourable persons of that time. In 1951 and onwards the status of football playing of the youth Jalpaiguri town was admirable. In 1951 under the leadership of Low men ‘Liz Cup’ tournament was held.”<sup>31</sup>

Each English officer of the town had a Tennis court in their Bungalow compound where Sahib and Mem Sahib would play in the Tennis court. The Mem Sahib of the tea gardens of the Dooars and the Jute Company would play tennis. Later on, the European club was formed in the town for them where they would play tennis regularly. This Club was handed over to the people of the town after leaving the English people after independence. Since 1960s’ Tennis playing was held, but at present it is not held in this Club.<sup>32</sup> There are a few cultural Societies in the district town of which Arya Natya Samaj and Bandhab Natya Samaj are connected with dramatic performances. <sup>33</sup>Tennis playing was also held in the Arya Natya Samaj and it was started since 1930s. In every year the Tennis player would come from Dinajpur, Rangpur, Sodpur, Gaibanda and they participated in the Friendly Match in this town organized by the Samaj.<sup>34</sup>

Badminton match was started in this town in 1930s. At the initial stage this playing was held in localities of the town such as Kadamtala, Raikot Para,

Babupara and Ukilpara. In 1940s and 1950s many boys and girls practice Badminton. In various Club and Mahallas of the town many boys practiced for the Badminton in the night. Various tournaments were also organized in the town. The players of the town attained the top position in North Bengal.

The centre of wrestling (Kusti) was formed in the different places of the town. Boys would learn Kusti. Later on, some Yoga centre (byamagar) was established in the town namely Adarsha Byamagar, Vibekananda Byamagar, Shanti Byamagar, Progati Byamagar etc. Many boys and girls would come and learn Yoga in these centres.<sup>35</sup>

Malay Mukhopadhyay writes, “I had close connection with some body builders (byambid) many of whom were freedom fighters who joined the independence movement for the country in the colonial period. Among these body builders there were late Sarat Das Majumdar, Bhola Paul (Kustigir), and Dinesh Roy, Lakshan Moulick (Freedom fighter), Ajit Chakraborty (Freedom fighter) and Dindayal babu.”<sup>36</sup>

The role of Adarsha Bymagar in the field of exercise and yoga was remarkable. The member of this institution Sri Surojit Das obtained the first position in the competition of ‘Mr. Hercules of India.’ Sri Basudev Das, the member of Adarsha Bymagar became the champion in the rise in the power lifting competition. Three times he represented in the international competition. He won the award of ‘Bangashree’ in Body building competition. He became ‘Junior Mr. India’. He became group champion in the senior national competition. Sri. Amal Das became ‘Bangashree’ in the Body building competition and became champion in the ‘Bharatshree’ Competition.<sup>37</sup> Other than these; there were so many competitors in the town who won the national and state level award in different competition of the body exercise, body building and kustigiri(wrestling). Birendra Prosad Basu, a retired teacher, lawyer and reporter of Hakimpara, Jalpaiguri argued “I came from East

Pakistan in 1955 and joined in service in Jalpaiguri School Board. He pointed out that most of the land owners of mosque were Hindus. A cultural synthesis and communal harmony was followed among the people of Jalpaiguri which was the main characteristic of the town”.<sup>38</sup> Prosadiram Prabhu Dayal, a reputed businessman of Dinbazar, Jalpaiguri informed me, “..... I am the founder of the ‘Prabhudayal Utensils’ Shop. Most of the houses of the town were made of thurst (Khar) when he came to this town,..... the Raikots of Baikunthapur would buried in the ground to the victims or criminals.”<sup>39</sup> Dipak Krishna Bhowmik a lawyer, ex-congress leader of Kamarpara, Jalpaiguri pointed out, “Once Sonaula Sahib borrowed Rs.400000 to the Raikot of Baikunthapur when the Raikot was failure to pay the revenue to the British Govt. After that when Raikot wanted to repay the said amount to Sonaula Sahib, he denied to receive the money. It traced the liberal and heartiest mentality of Sonaula.”<sup>40</sup>

Tapesh Sanyal a lawyer of Nayabasti, Jalpaiguri informed, “Our family was a cultured one in the society of the town. His grandfather Durga Charan Sanyal and his father Jyotish Chandra Sanyal both edited a famous Bengali periodicals named ‘Janamat’ where many scholars and intellectuals had contributed by giving their valuable writing of different aspects from different angles. .... There was a good relation between the Hindu and Muslims. His father Jyotish Chandra Sanyal was famous lawyer as well as he was the first secretary of Indian national Congress. He was also founder of Indian Tea Planters Association. Bengal Club was established before 1947 by the inspiration of his father Jyotish Chandra Sanyal. This club was a cultural centre in the town. Inside thisclub there was a library and Tenish Court.”<sup>41</sup> The greatest inconvenience in North Bengal was communication system. North Bengal has been scattered from other parts of West Bengal due to natural causes. Since the long days Jyam Air Company which minimum communication system maintained through their irregular Air communication system, that was stopped since December 21 for which North Bengal has

nearly been scattered the communication system by Bus and Train led North Bengal behind 48 hours. For that disadvantage of communication, news papers and letter by posting system are not coming regularly; on the other hand people had to wait for baby food and emergency medicine. It has become difficult to send serious patient to Calcutta.<sup>42</sup>

It cannot be denied today that the production had not been increased in accordance with the mission of four plans. Some projects cannot be started for want of money. The high prices of essential things of the 1960's became the root cause of endless sufferings of the people. In the 1970's the rate of high prices increased in the compound rate. The distribution system has become weaker. The number of jobless persons has been going up rapidly.

Karala River—Karala, once a glorious river, is fast drying up and losing its depth. The water has become almost still. Garbage and effluents are continuously being dumped into the river. Dirty waters from burning Ghats (landing stage) and hospitals find their way into it on a regular basis. Given the amount of stagnant and polluted water in the river, an epidemic is not unlikely. The Karala River, which runs through Jalpaiguri apparently a calm river, becomes quite dangerous during the rainy season. Low-lying areas on either sides of the riverbank are flooded every year. Some time ago, Karala merges into the river Tista just outside Jalpaiguri town. The area was known as King Saheber Ghat. But Tista's river-bed gradually rose above Ghat of Karala. An expedition team, lead by Prabir Dutta, went to examine the situation in 1964. They found that the waters were coming from a well. The river entered Jalpaiguri town after crossing the Baikunthapur forest several times.

Karala used to be famous for the *Dusserah* (festival on the occasion of the immersion of Goddess Durga). Decorated boats carrying idols of Goddess Durga would cruise along the river from evening till late at night before the ceremonial immersion of all the Idols.<sup>43</sup>

Literature-Jalpaiguri district can demand an admirable and remarkable position in the field of Philanthropic and writings on various subjects through the publication and editing of books, journals, periodicals, little magazines and newspapers. Many writers, literates and poets have been produced and born out in the district. Till now Jalpaiguri has been bearing a remarkable position in the canvas of cultural world in North Bengal. Since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a wave of writing and studying literature and other subjects relating to social science had been flowing over and which is continuing till now. Sailendra Nath Mukhopadhyay pointed out, “Narayan Gangopadhyay wrote page after page of Upanibesh sitting in the room in Natun para of Jalpaiguri town, he collected sources of the stories of ‘Swarnasita’ and top while dwelling in Jalpaiguri town. Bhujangadhar Roy, secretary of weekly periodicals ‘Trishrota’ wrote poems-once he attained popularity as a poet of the circle of Rabindranath Tagore.”<sup>44</sup>

The author of ‘Anya Nagar’, Sudhir Ranjan Mukhopadhyay stayed some days in Jalpaiguri, Asim Roy and Shirsendu Mukhopadhyay studied in Fanindra Dev Institution. The memorized the experience of Jalpaiguri in their writings again and again. Bashir Al Hellel of Dhaka was a student of A.C. College of Jalpaiguri. Samir Rakshit and Samaresh Majumdar spent their student life in Jalpaiguri. Kartik Lahiri, the resident of Kolkata, once stayed in Jalpaiguri and started his writings. Jibon Sarkar of Dhupguri, now resident of Kolkata did not forget dhupguri and Jalpaiguri. The main theme of this writings is memorise world of Dhupguri and East Bengal. Ashru Kumar Sikdar, famous literent was a student of A. C. College. Amitava Dasgupta, poet was teaching someday in Maynaguris and A.C. College of Jalpaiguri. Debesh Roy spent his school life and college life in Jalpaiguri and teaching in A.C. College. He never forgets his district. <sup>45</sup>

After independence, a weekly named 'Barta' began publication. The Jalpaiguri Cha Karmachari Samiti began publication of its weekly named Ahvan, Nisan were another Bengali weekly which continued for a few years. Danpiteder Asar, Amader Kotha, Uttarpath, Nirapeksha were published for sometime from the District Headquarters.<sup>46</sup>

Samaresh Majumdar mentioned, "I was born in Goyerkata near Jalpaiguri.....my earliest memories are therefore replete with forest's deep stillness and unending natural beauty. My first love was a beautiful spring called Angra Bhasha (meaning that which wets the angra or cloth worn by local women round their waists.)...I knew every stone, every pebble in that spring. .Often we used to come across naked tribal women wading for into the current to collect the logs.... By morning they were all gone. That used to make me very sad....At Jalpaiguri town where I went to school new vistas opened up for me. Tista with its broad, curving sweeps confronted me instead of the wispy, playful Angra Bhasha. Just the size of it was overwhelming. The sand embankments stretched for miles into the forests. The town itself was then a fascinating cross between the urban and the rural."<sup>47</sup>

### **Religious practices**

There are many archeological instances in the district of Jalpaiguri which proves that the Jalpaiguri as a part of ancient Kamrupa or Pragjyotishpur was historically enriched since the ancient period. Among the archeological instances the name of many fort or Garh can be referred. Garh of King Nal was famous in North Bengal, which is situated in the Chilapata forest of Jalpaiguri district. It is assumed by different researchers that this fort was established by the Koch king Nara Narayana.

The second important fort was situated in Garalbariof Chaulhati Thana of Jalpaiguri district locally known as “Prithu Rajar Garh”, it is also known as Bhitargarh. The major portions of this Garh are laid in present Bangladesh.

The Buxa fort situated on the Buxa hill of Jalpaiguri district is the famous archeological instances of the district. There is a debate about the builder of the fort. In the colonial period Britishers used it as prison of Indian victims or freedom fighters.

Among temples of the Jalpaiguri district Jalpesh temple is one of the greatest temples in the district, nay NorthBengal or North East India. It is a temple of God Shiba. It is also debatable that who was the creator of this temple is. Many local scholars argue that, this temple was established by the king Jalpesh. But for the natural calamity this temple was destroyed. The work was started by Koch King Prana Narayana (1632-65) and the work of the temple was finished by Koch king Moda Narayan. Again the temple was destroyed. In 1927 this temple was rebuilt.

One of the famous ancient temples of Jalpaiguri was Baikuntha Nath Mandir of Royal family. Some scholars argue that it was built by Raikot Sarpadeb. It was destroyed by earthquake in 1897 and it was rebuilt in 1898. Besides, there are more important temples such as Kali Mandir (temple) of Rajbari, Swasan Kali Mandir of Mashkalaibari, Kalibari of Jogomaya and Dinbazar. The kali temple of Pandapara was built by Koch king Rup Narayan (1693-1714). It is assumed that the temple of Dhapchandi of Dhapganj was established prior to the reign of Hussain Shahi. The temple of Madanmohan of Keranipara was built in 1923. Besides, the temple of Sanyasi Thakur is one of the important temples of Jalpaiguri district. The temple is like Pagoda to see.

The mosque situated in the Ghoomti no.4 of Jalpaiguri is old one. It was refounded by a Muslim saint named Dinu..... About 148 years ago. Later

his son-in law Danbir Munshi Mahammad Sonaulla finished the innovation work of the mosque. The mosque is known as “Puratan Masjid”. Sonaulla built a mosque in 1902 in Dinbazar of Jalpaiguri. The mosque of Nawab house is situated beside this said mosque. Khan Bahadur Rahim Box built it in 1885. Further prove that mosque of Nayabasti was established by the joint endeavour of Khan Bahadur Tasuddak Ahmed, the Inspector of School and Mahammad Ismail Gani Sardar.

The Church of this district was established in 1882 nearby oldcourt in 1896 for the Indian Christians in Race course para. Both the churches were built for the Protestants. Besides, more churches were established in Santal colony, South Latabari, Chila para corner of Hasimara, Joygaon etc.<sup>48</sup> Ananda Gopal Ghosh pointed out that the stepping of Christian Missionaries was started since the time of Waren Hastings in North Bengal. There witnessed the name of Christian Sahib in the several places of the Dooars such as Sahebpot, Hamiltonganj, Barnesh Bazar, Barnesh Ghat. The King’s Sahib’s Ghat of Jalpaiguri also bears the past memory. The birthday of Jesus Christ, Christmasday, Good Friday etc are observed till today.<sup>49</sup>

Sonaulla established another mosque in Dinbazar of the town. It is known that some lands were acquired from Fanindra Dev Raikot as a pirottor. This mosque, was established in 1902 is known as Sonaulla mosque.<sup>50</sup>

The Jalpesh Mela of this year like previous year has been started in Shib Chaturdashi. In Saturday, first day of the fair more than lakhs of people have been assembled. But the fair of the year is lifeless because people do not have money, yet shops are displayed. Many people have assembled to offer puja.<sup>51</sup>

## References

- 1) Shitangshu Prosad Chakroborty, *Paribartanshil Jiboner Srote Jalpaigurir Rajbanshi Samaj in Kiratbhumi, Jalpaiguri Zilla Shankalan, 1994,125 Barsha Purty Sankhya, Edited by Arobinda Kar, p. 192*
- 2) Interview with Amarendra Nath Suba, 65years, S/O late Chandra Singh Suba, Vill-West Satali, Dist-Alipurduar, Present address–East Netaji Road, P.O Alipurduar Court. Dist. Alipurduar.10.3.12.
- 3) Shitangshu Prosad Chakroborty, op.cit.,p.192
- 4) Interview with Jagat Singh Barman,Takoamari, Rashik Bill, Cooch Behar,12.3.12
- 5) Interview with Kaitalu Barman, 65, Takoamari, P.O. Rashik Bill, Dist. Cooch Behar, 16.4.13
- 6) Interview with Kailash Tirki, 60, Satali, Hasimara, Dist. Alipurduar, 18.4.13
- 7) Interview with Ramesh Chandra Suba, 76 years , S/O Late Buduram Suba,Vill-West Satali, Dist-Alipurduar, a former jotdar.19.4.13
- 8) D.H.E. Sunder, *Settlement officer, Survey & Settlement of the Western Duars in the District of Jalpaiguri, 1889-95 Calcutta, 1895, p.49*
- 9) Shitangshu Prosad Chakroborty, op. cit., p. 192
- 10) Sunder, op. cit., p, 49
- 11) Interview with Tapan Katham, 62, Kathambari, Jalpaiguri. 1.5.14
- 12) Interview with Kailash Roy, 80, Charer Bari, Dhoulaguri, Moynaguri, Jalpaiguri, 12.11.2013
- 13) Upendra Nath Barman, *Uttar Banglar Sekal O Amar Jibon Smriti, Jalpaiguri, 1392 B.S. p.6*
- 14) Interview with Noni Mohan Sen, 72, Basu Suba, P.O. Chapadanga, Thana - Mal, Jalpaiguri., 17.11.13

- 15) Abani Mohan Kusari et. al., *West Bengal District Gazetteer, Jalpaiguri, Government of West Bengal*, 1981, p.254
- 16) Ibid.,p.254
- 17) B. Roy, *Census 1961, West Bengal, District Census Hand Book, Jalpaiguri*, p.60
- 18) Jonomot, A weekly Bengali Periodical, Jalpaiguri, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1973
- 19) Abani Mohan Kusari, op. cit., p.262-63
- 20) Ibid., p. 265
- 21) Ibid., p. 265
- 22) Shraboni Ghosh, *The History of Medical and Healthcare System of North Bengal, from 1869-1968, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis 2013*, pp. 114-122.
- 23) Abani Mohan Kusari, op.cit. p. 277
- 24) Jonomot, *a Bengali weekly periodical*, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1973
- 25) B.Roy, *Census 1961*, op.cit. p. 48
- 26) Ibid., p.48
- 27) Interview with Dipen Roy, 50, Ukil para, Jalpaiguri, 4.7.13
- 28) Kumudini Kanta Chakroborty, *Madhyabitya Bangali, in Sharodiya Jonomot*, 1408 B.S. p.28
- 29) Abani Mohan Kusari, op.cit. , p. 316
- 30) Kamaksya Prosad Chakroborty, *Sekaler Jalpaiguri Shahar Abong Samajik Jiboner Kichhu Katha, Jalpaiguri*, 2001, Sigma Publication, Jalpaiguri, p. 68
- 31) Ashok Prosad Roy, *Shata Barsher Darpane Jalpaigurir Kheladhula in Kiratbhumi, Jalpaiguri Zilla Sankalan*, 1994, op.cit. p.268
- 32) Kamaksa Prosad Chakroborty, op.cit. p. 70
- 33) Abani Mohan Kusari, op.cit. p.267
- 34) Ashok Prosad Roy, op.cit. p. 272
- 35) Ibid., p.274
- 36) Moloy Mukherjee, *Jalpaigurite Byam Charcha in kiratbhumi Jalpaiguri Zilla Sankalan*, 1994, 125 Barsha Purty Sankhya, p, 275

- 37) Ibid., p.277
- 38) Personal interview, Birendra Prosad Basu, 83, Ex-teacher & reporter, Hakimpara, Jalpaiguri, 3.6.14
- 39) Interview with Prosadiram Prabhudayal, 75, Dinbazar, Jalpaiguri, 6.8.14
- 40) Interview with, Dipak Krishna Bhowmik, 80, Lawyer, Jalpaiguri, 4.6.14
- 41) Interview with Tapes Sanyal, 85, Lawyer, Nayabasti, Jalpaiguri, 5.8.14
- 42) Jonomot, Saptahiki, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1973
- 43) The Karala River, The Statesman, Calcutta, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2002.
- 44) Sailendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Bangla Sahitye Jalpaiguri, Kiratbhumi, 1994, op. cit, p. 282
- 45) Ibid., p. 282
- 46) Abani Mohan Kusari, op. cit, p. 314
- 47) An Article written by Samaresh Majumdar, The Statesman, Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2002.
- 48) Birendra prosad Basu, Deb Deuler Desh, Jalpaiguri, 1394 B.S. p.19
- 49) Interview with Ananda Gopal Ghosh, 65, retired professor, N.B.U., 6.8.15
- 50) Birendra Prosad Basu, op.cit, p, 22
- 51) Jonomot, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1973.