

Chapter- 3

Cultural Scenario of Jalpaiguri District in the Colonial Period

The society of Jalpaiguri was formed during the colonial period. Here it is found that a multi-dimensional society was formed comprising indigenous people and immigrated people of various castes, religions and classes. These people immigrated in the district, Jalpaiguri, particularly in Western Dooars for various purposes of whom a large number of people came here for obtaining lands and became Jotdars or intermediaries. Secondly, a large number of people entered into this tract for tea cultivation of whom many were proprietors, managers and officials of tea-estates and a major portion were immigrated as a labourer mainly Santals, Oraons, Madesias etc. from Chhotanagpur and Santal Parganas. Other than these, a large number of people of Nepali community also immigrated in this area time to time.

In this chapter a picture of the cultural scenario of the district will be presented. At the outset, I would like to mention here that the cultural history of Jalpaiguri particularly in the Dooars had a distinctive character unlike other parts of Bengal, broadly speaking of India for which the Jalpaiguri district is called a “Mini India” still today, Sailen Debnath, in his book pointed out, ‘North Bengal is the best example of pluralistic culture representing the cultural diversity of the whole of India in the form of a many India. The Bengalis of southern delta often ignorant of the pluralistic nature of North Bengal invariably commit mistakes emphasizing much on so called ‘Bengali culture’ even in case of North Bengal.’¹

Many of the scholars, writers and historians have an idea of cultural history indicating only the cultural attainments such as education, entertainment, mainly dance, songs, music, arts etc. But it is not the cultural scenario as a whole of a nation or community means a characteristics or

ideology of the people as a whole. In this context we mention that stone- age culture where culture means an over- all livelihoods of the people during that age or period, such as Paleolithic culture, Mesolithic and Neolithic culture. In this way, we may mention the society of Indus Valley Civilization where it is told that over all livelihoods of the people of Indus called 'Harappan Culture'. In the above mentioned cultural society, culture does not mean only the education, dance, music, arts etc. Here culture stands the meaning of the characteristics of the people of that age. Whether one is an avowed Hindu or not, the Indian way of life has touched communities all over the country. Infact there has been a cultural synthesis, as evidenced in the observance of rites & ceremonies & in the possession of beliefs & tales & songs & sayings. Indian folklore is as much the Hindu's as it is the tribal's. There are differences, but there is a large common ground where the Brahmin & the so-called tribal meet at their mutual case.²

Before going through the details of the cultural history of Jalpaiguri, it should be mentioned here specifically that it can be divided into two categories namely (1) Indigenous culture and (2) Immigrated culture. I shall mean the indigenous culture as the culture of their own of the indigenous people that is non- Aryan culture and non- western culture. So the immigrated culture also can be divided into two categories namely the A) Aryan Culture or Sanskritization and B) Western Culture or European Culture. Beside these the culture of the society of Jalpaiguri can be divided on the religious basis. Such as the 1) Tribal culture or primitive culture 2) Buddhist culture then 3) Brahmonical culture 4) Hindu culture 5) Islamic culture, lastly the Christian culture.

Culture of indigenous people

The formation of the society of Jalpaiguri is discussed and analyzed earlier. Here the people of different communities who formed the society time

to time is mentioned and here also referred about the indigenous group of people. Firstly it is to be mentioned here that who were the people of indigenous? Or what does it mean by indigenous people? Here indigenous people means people belonged to different tribal community or ethnic groups or original shelters in the districts as elsewhere in India who entered in this tract time to time before the penetration of Aryans and Europeans.³

Among the indigenous groups of the people of the district like other parts of North Bengal the Bodos originated from Indo-Mongoloid race, had a significant role in all sphere of the society and culture of the district. There were other tribal communities who originated from the Bodos namely Koch, Mech, Rabha, Garo, Toto etc. and who were originated from the same human race, Mongoloid. Ramesh Suba, an oldest person of Mech community pointed out that the word “Boro” came from “Bod” namely Harbod, Karbod and Bodfisa. After the natural calamity occurred, the people came from Tibet into India through Nathula. This people were called Bodo. He also pointed out that the Bodos had 5 brothers namely Meche, Koche, Lapche, Limbu and Rai. People who came with Lapche called Lepcha, people who came with Limbu and Rai are called Limbus and Rais and people who came with Meche would call Meches and people who immigrated with Koche would call Koch.⁴

Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal wrote, “Such was the history of a Tebeto-Burman speaking Indo-Mongoloid tribe, the Bodos who migrated into India through Patkoi Hills between India and Burma and gradually spread themselves into the whole of modern Assam, North Bengal and parts of East Bengal.”⁵

As the Meches were aboriginal tribes of the whole north eastern region. They habituated with shifting cultivation which means they did not dwell in a particular place permanently. After leaving in a place for few years, they shifted into another place and they cultivated in the same manner and hunted in

the jungle. They lived independently and governed by them led by *Morols* or *Mondals* (leader of the community) of their same community. They were simple and worshiper of nature. They believed in "Bathaou" religion. Amarendra Nath Suba, the oldest person of the Mech community told, "The Meches originated from Mongoloid race. They believed in Bathaou religion. The existence of the God Bathaos is in the Sij plant which is fixed up in the north eastern side of the house. They worship Bathaou in every year in the month of Baishakha (Bengali year). They worshiped nature including trees, leaves and all the mysterious things of nature. Still now many of them did the same. Later on many of them converted into another religion. Some of them became Christian; some of them became Buddhist and Muslim also. Those who did not accept other religion and maintain their oldest traditional systems are treated 'Hindus'.⁶

Those who became Hindus, they carried on their life by the customs and manner of Hindu religion; that means Sanskritization also entered into their traditional culture. Those who became Christian they conducted their life by the custom and manner of Christian ideology. In such a way Muslim and other religion - based Meches turned themselves from their own traditional culture. This was a kind of cultural identity crisis which will be discussed later on in this thesis.

Like the Meches, Rabhas were the aboriginal community originated from Indo - Mongoloid race. Rabhas were also non- Aryan, believe in natural power, simple in habit. They would also live in the forest adjacent areas. They had their own culture and conducted their life by their own customs and rules, lead by their own leaders, that mean they also had their separate septs or gotras. But this septs or *Gotras* would not mean any cast because there was no any casticism or colour (varna) in the society of Rabha . This division was formed on the basis of their profession. ⁷

Reboti Mohon Saha wrote “ We have collected near about the names of 350 separate Gotras and their prohibited foods and the customs of utilizing of prohibited things . The marriage in the same sept or Gotras was completely prohibited.”⁸

Like the other tribal communities of the North Eastern region of the Indo- Mongoloid race the Rabha’s society was maternal, that means females took the responsibility of the whole family. Sunil Pal writes in his article, According to the anthropologist Rabhas belong to the matriarchal society. The characteristic is followed slightly still now. The children of the Rabha were recognized by the mothergenealogy instead of their father genealogy. In the early days bridegrooms had to live in the house of bride before marriage. After marriage bridegroom could live in the house of father in law instead of returned his own house or he could settled near the house of father in law. But now a day this customs is not followed .⁹

The Meches

The Meches of the Sub-Himalayan region of West Bengal are known in some part of the country as Bodos. But actually they are a branch of the Bodos and the Kacharies. The River Mechi in the border area of Nepal is named after the Meches as per the opinions of some scholars. Meches and Kiratas belong to the Asura dynasty. They were Mlechhas and so abbreviated into Mech.¹⁰

Grierson also mentioned that Mech is a corruption of Mlechhas. They ruled Pragjyotishpur for 400 years and began to decline from the 11th century.¹¹ Hooker in 1854 reports that the Koch replaced the Meches of the Tarai Forest.¹²

Dalton opined that the Meches are found in the recently annexed Bhutan Duars. They extended from there in a westerly direction into Nepal Tarai, foot of the Himalayas.¹³ Sunder pointed out that the Mech and the

Kachhari are the same people. In the Duars they call themselves Bodo.¹⁴ H.H. Risley mentioned that the Meches of the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district are divided into two sub-tribes- Agnia Mech and Jat Mech.¹⁵ The Meches are a numerically small tribe; actually they are a branch of the Bodos and Kachharies. The river Mechi in the border area of Nepal is named after the Meches as per the opinions of some scholars. In general they are frank and courteous, friendly among themselves and hospitable to strangers. They follow the patrilineal system of family structure. Most of them have joint or extended family. Marriage can take place between a boy & a girl belonging to the same class.¹⁶ Gait pointed out that in the past the Meches and the Koches intermarried freely, but the conversion of the Koches to Hinduism had led to discontinuance of this practice.¹⁷ The impact of new civilization from time to time not only alters the way of life but also many of the racial customs. Widow Remarriage is prevalent among them. Mech community was a part of Phoenician/ Sumerians, whose name was Penis. Perhaps they were called as Panikoch.¹⁸ They came to Assam before 4000 years and they were called Mlechha by the Aryan.¹⁹ Grunning pointed out that the Meches are of Mongolian origin and are believed to the Western Branch of the Kachari or Bodo tribe.²⁰

The following statement shows the number and distribution of the Mech tribe in 1872 and 1881 in North Bengal:--²¹

District	1872	1881
Bogra	--	31
Rangpur	--	6835
Darjeeling	893	1063
Jalpaiguri	40	8760
Coochbehar	--	224

The Meches have different *Gotras* like Koch and Rava. These are as follows-

1. Narjinaree- They would live in high level in the society. Once, their occupation was to fight for their community.
2. Basumatari: -They would work in the agrarian sector and produce crops.
3. Sampramari:-Their occupation was to worship and pacify the planets and stars. According to the Brahmanism they are Brahmanas.
4. Hajoari:-The people belonged to Hajoari gotras were in lower position like sudras.
5. Mochari---Those Meches who flew away from the invasion of enemy and sheltered in jungle where tiger would live. They fought against tiger or *Bagh*, so they were treated as *Bagh* gotra.
6. Iswarari--- Those Meches who were silent and remained depending on the God or Iswar not to fight against the enemy. Out of these there were more gotras or septs namely Bargonari, Doimari, and Khatluari etc.

‘The Meches are rich in their cultural heritage .Their string instrument drums and other leather instruments have a distinguish rhythm.Their community dance is very attractive. The women can dance for a longtime at a stretch. Their physical- stature and smiling gesture while dancing is highly appealing’.²²

Religion

The Meches believed in Bathou religion at the initial stage in their ethnic lives. In the later period they had been converted into Hindu religion, Christian religion and many of the Meches became Rajbanshis. It is mentioned in the archival report, “The Meches of Duars, who are generally averse to sending their children to school, are gradually beginning to understand the advantages of even elementary instruction. There are at present several of them undergoing a course of training in the Julpigoree normal school for the post of Guru in primary schools. The girls’ school at Boda is flourishing, and that at the sudder station is making their progress.”²³

Mahakal, the deity who governs wild animals and is supposed to reside here. Much of this taluk was first cultivated by Meches and lately by the Santals who have a colony here.²⁴ Chepani village named after the Chapa or Champ tree (*Michelia hampaka*) which used to grow here. The Taluk is a well cultivated one. The cultivators were Rajbansis and Muhammadans. Much injury is done to crops by pig.²⁵ About 'Taleswarguri' is named after the deity, Taleswar who is believed to remain here. The Taluk is full of jungle.²⁶

The Rabhas

The Rabhas belong to Mongoloid race having similarity with other members of blood group such as Garo, Kachari, Mech, Koch, Hajong and others. According to Buchanon Hamilton the Rabhas have a good deal of similarities in socio-religious and material life with those of the Pani Koch. According to Hodgson, they belong to the great Bodo or Mech family.

Reboti Mohan Saha wrote, "It is known from various sources that their predecessors came to the North- Eastern part of India from Siberia through Mongolia, Chin, Tibet and Brahmadesh before near about 3000 B. C."²⁷

Like all the other societies the Rabha society also bears various types of bonds and one of such bonds is kinship or relationship bond in which the members of a particular group are related with one another either consanguineally or officially.²⁸

To the Rabhas marriage is one of the most important events of life. Marriage among the Rabhas is known as Biye. According to Friend-Peneira, the Rabha society sanctions three types of marriage-by purchase, by gift and by servitude.²⁹ Among the Rabhas their clothing vary little from person to person though economic condition, enlightenedness, social or political status etc.create some difference in quality and also in quantity. They had their own culture that was tribal culture, earlier marriage, worships everything was held in accordance with the customs of the tribals. Earlier marriage was held by killing

the cocks. Marriage was performed in case of the absence of the bridegroom when killing the hen by his name. Betel leaf, betle nut was kept as witnessed; they worshiped to the Shiva and Parboti. Dinonath Rava told, “We had our own clothes making with endi- cotton called *maflar* (scarf), *gamchha* (towel) and *chadar* (swal). Women had two parts of clothes namely lafun and kamrang. The male wear dhoti, shirt and chadar and women wear ‘Shari’. Seasonal variation of clothing is also seen. Sometimes they also wear coat, sweater and chadar. Different types of ornaments are used by the Rabha women.”³⁰

To the Rabhas marriage is one of the most important events of life. The most important type of marriage which covered the major cases is by negotiations. There are three types of marriage take place in the society, by purchases, by gift and by servitude.

Food

Now- a- days Rabhas eat everything like other Bengali people use as their food. However their traditional or favourite food was *haria* (a kind of local wine) chicken and pork. In every occasion they use *haria* and meat as their food and honour to their guest by giving *haria* and meat, even they give the pork to the Siva and Parvati in their house. They believe that if they do not do it, then they will face in danger.

Religion or culture

The religious life of the Ravas includes the basic animistic concepts and faiths of other Mongoloid groups akin to them namely the Mech and the Kachari, but there are some significant differences too. The Supreme God of the Ravas is called Rishi. Besides Rishi the Ravas worship two female goddess named Rungtuk and Basek who are actually the two daughters of Rishi. There are people among the Ravas who consider Rungtuk and Basek as Lakshi or Laksmi and Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of wealth and learning respectively.³¹

Dinonath Rava had given a description about the village deities “Rishi is their chief and most powerful deity, and he is considered as very old, and has a wife named Charipak. The persons among them, who have committed to memory the prayers, which are offered to Rishi, are called Roja, the appellation given by the Bengalese to all those who pretend to cure diseases by incantation.”³²

Toto

Totos were also a tribal community originated from, Indo- Mongoloid of the Jalpaiguri district. They are considered as the smallest tribe not only of the Dooars but also of the whole of India.

Toto, a small Tibeto Barman speaking autochthones tribe lives in Toto para bounded on the north by Bhutan, on the east by the Torsha River and on the south by the Titi forest.³³ It can be said that the Totos were the community of the non- Aryan. They were simple in habit and out of the civic society. Toto although demographically a small language spoken as mother tongue by only 376 ethnic Totos, deserves special mention, because tolos are an autochthons tribe of the district. Toto is a language of the non- pronominalised Himalayan groups of the Tibeto Burman family of language, like the Burung, Manger and Lepcha.³⁴

Food:-

The food of the Totos consists of rice, Chura (parched rice), milk and dahi (curd). Pork, cow, dear, fowl, duck, pigeon, goat, peacock, fish of all kinds and rhinoceros are eaten. Blood of Pigs and Cows is cooked as vegetable curry. When Toto have no rice they eat marua and khoni, which are cooked in water and are said to be nourishing.³⁵

Clothes:-

The dresses of the Toto like the Bhutias the male people wear a cloth measuring 6 foot in length and 3 foot in width from solder to knee call edundung. This cloth was set up in the shoulder by the clip making of bamboo and wood. Another piece of long cloth called godo set up in the wrist like a belt. There was a pocket of the cloth on the abdomen like bag in which they put various things like pan and supari. The dresses of women are made with four pieces of clothes, one piece of cloth wear from waist to knee. One piece of cloth is covered up the upper portion of the body. Third piece of cloth is used in waist like a belt. Another fourth piece of cloth is wear around the head. They have also a pocket like a bag in the dress outing various things.

Religion:-

The Totos are very superstitious and have two Gods or *Debotas*, to whom they make offerings of meat and other articles.

Ishpa is supposed to be in the Badoo hill and to cause sleekness whenever he is displaced. In view of satisfying and pleasing him, offering of pigs, cows cocks are made to him ; goats, fowls and pigeons displeasing. Drink (Eu) is regularly given to him. The deity was so much wakeful that later on she was placed in the great temple of Totopara. The temple look like a toto house, though it's size was large than that.

In order to satisfy Chima and to pursue her to keep the village in safety from sleekness and other troubles, offerings of alua rice, fowls and Eu have to be made to her. ³⁶

The Toto organized another celebration for the betterment of them. It was called "Garom Puja" or prayer for the wellbeing of the whole village. For their veneration they brought a priest crossing the boundaries of their villages. Sometime the priest belonged to the Garo class. Women were not permitted to

be present at the puja..... For the puja fifteen pigeons, two pigs ,one duck, three goats (One white, one black, and one reddish), cocks and hens as many as possible and also eggs of hens were sacrificed.³⁷ They believe that they may be recovered from diseases if they gratify their Gods and Goddesses by sacrificing ox or pigs and cows. They satisfy Ispa with the Eu their intoxicating liquor.³⁸ “They also believe that ‘Oda’ and ‘Pishu’ are their ancestral deity, live at ‘Ziri’. They keep a wooden seat and equipment for brewing of home beer (EU) therefore their deity. Most of the Totos suffered from a skin disease called ‘Yaws’ in the past and considered as a blessing of God Ishpa. According to them their women would have been elope away by members of their communities if they had no ‘Yaws’ in their community.”³⁹The Totos do not have any idol but there is a community puja house called ‘Dem-sha’. Their chief God is ‘Ishpa’and Goddess is ‘Chima’. Their chief fests are Omchu and Mayu puja, the former held in July-August and the later in the month of Bhadra (Aug-Sept).They keep two drum like instrument hanging along the roof of the community puja house which they play during Mayu puja. The Toto New Year is started in the Bengali Month of Shraavan; they celebrate New Year with Mahakal Puja. ⁴⁰

Garos

Garos were the Indo-mongoloid tribe of the Jalpaiguri district and elsewhere in North east India. The Garos had believed to have come into the Dooars from the Khashia and Jayantia hills, but no correct information is available regarding them. They are divided into 26 clans or sub- castes. ⁴¹

Like the other Indo Mongoloid tribal people Garo society was also matriarchal. The children of the Garos were recognized by their mother genealogy. Their society and culture was ruled by their own customs, laws and rituals. They governed themselves by their own *Moral* or *Mandal*. They were also habituated with shifting cultivation and hunting. They were simple and

kept themselves out of modern society that was the Aryan culture and western culture. Still now uneducated Garos who lived in Meghalaya and other parts of North East India do not like the modern culture or urbanization or modernization. They like to live happily in the nature holding their own culture.

Food:-

Rice is the main food of the Garos. Beside this flesh of pig, goat, deer, duck, fowl and pigeon are eaten by them. All kind of vegetables are eaten by them. Milk is drunk by Garos. They also drink *haria* made by the blood of pigs with vegetables. They eat all kind of fruits, sugar and sweet meats.

Marriage was not allowed between a man and the women between the same castes among the Garos. One caste must marry into another caste. Polygamy and divorce was not forbidden among them. But widows are allowed to marry.

“Gamchha”, a cotton *Dhoti* wear by the Garos and “Bukhechili” a coat cover their bodies. “Daggu” a piece of cloth cover their heads. The male Garos put on their traditional loin cloth called “Gamcha”.they wind a cloth as turban on their heads. Turban is called ‘Pagga’ in Garo. The female Garos wear a particular garment called ‘Lufun and kambang’.

“Rishi” is their chief deity, in the month of Chaitra and Baishak a new bamboo is cut and planted in the courtyard to represent Rishi. They believed that Rishi would be protecting them from enemies, fire, sickness and troubles. They also worship Mahakal, Tacur and Lamengju.

Drums, Bangsi, Debdi, and Kala are used by the Garos as instrument. At first the Garos had no drums; under instruction of the ‘Huji’ (priest) the Garos had a drum among their musical instruments.⁴² Bangshi is a flute made

of bamboo, Debdi is a metal bell and 'kala' is a pipe about 7 feet long, made from the stem of null grass. In the month of Baishak they observe "Subachini" festival for the purpose of remove evil power.

Drucpa

Drucpas were mainly permanent inhabitant of Bhutan during pre-colonial and colonial period. They would temporarily live in the Dooars but before coming the rainy season they left the places because they could not accommodate with the intolerable climate of the duars. It is found from different sources that before coming of the Britishers the duars were completely unhealthy condition for the people. No people other than the Meches could tolerate the climate of dooars. The name of their dialect is 'Dzonkha'. They lived mainly in the Buxa hill, Sikim and Darjeeling. Drucpas were very simple in nature and hospitable. They were broad minded. If anybody comes in their house they honoured their guest by giving red- tea with jar.

Food:-Rice and meat was their main food. They always use red chilly with their meal, salt and tomatoes are added with food. Pan- Supari is very famous among them. They are mainly Buddhist. So they never kill animal.

They wear Bokhu like over coat and half pant; it may be used as a bed-cover. The Drucpa women wear *Gochhum* and *kira*. *Gochhum* is like a semij used as a under wear. *Kira* is cloth was about 10.5 feet long and 6 feet width and it is closed near solder with pin. They used a cloth as belt.

There is no occasion among the Druckpas during the time of marriage. When a boy or girl loves or choose each other they live in the girl's house as husband and wife with the permission of their guardian. But in the case of misunderstanding they have the right to leave each other by mutual divorce on

condition of compensation to the women at time of second marriage. But in the case of divorce the children may live in his or her mother.

Rajbanshi

The Rajbanshis were the indigenous people of the district and as elsewhere in the greater North Bengal during the pre- colonial and colonial period. The Rajbanshis were the majority people of North Bengal, particularly in the district of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Dinajpur and the plain areas of Darjeeling district. In the plain areas of the Duars and the Sadar subdivision of the Jalpaiguri district Rajbanshis were the majority. They had been in the areas through long past. Other than North Bengal, Rajbanshis had been living in the other parts of Bengal and Assam. The Rajbanshis constituted the most predominant section of the local Hindu population in the northern districts of Bengal. Numerically they were the third largest Hindu caste in Bengal as a whole. The origin of this caste is shrouded in mystery & the basic debate is around the question of their association with the Koches. Whatever might have been their actual origin; there is no dispute about the fact that the Rajbanshis were the early settlers in North Bengal. They were a socially homogenous community; in the sense that there was no sub-caste among them.⁴³ Dr. Charu Chandra sanyal stated that the above observations point to the fact that the Koches are non-Aryan in origin. Some of them adopted Hinduism and became Rajbanshis. These Rajbanshis later on claimed to be Kshatriya.⁴⁴ There are many debates among the origin or ethnological identity of the Rajbanshis. The main debate was whether Rajbanshis were originated from Mongoloid race or Aryan race. This debate was initiated from the starting of the census work from 1870 onwards by the British- India Government. In the census report Government has shown the Rajbanshis and the Koches in the same group. Here one point should be mentioned that the Koch was originated from the Indo- Mongoloid and they were treated as tribal community. In accordance with the Aryan culture, the non- Aryan people treated as Dasa,

Dasyu, Kirata, and Nisada which means the lower graded people in the society. The non- Aryan people had not their position in the society.

So, when Rajbanshis were shown as a non-aryan people that were Koches, they protested against the census report. This protest turned into a social movement called “Kshatriyo Movement”. They demanded that Koches and Rajbanshis were not originated in the same human race. Koches were the tribal people and the Rajbanshi originated from Aryan race. In accordance with the social status of the Aryans, Rajbanshis held the 2nd position that was “Kshatriyos” after the Brahmanas. They gave the description from different sources of the Hindu Shastras or mythologies, that after defeating in the battle to the Porshurama they came in the Ratnapith that was the place beside the Trishrota or Jalpes, settled there and they were called “Bratyo Kshatriyos”. This Kshatriya movement got a new motion under the leadership of Thakur Panchanan Barma who led the movement throughout the North Bengal and Assam. Ultimately their demand became success and in the census report of 1911 Rajbanshis and Koches were shown separately. In spite of that this debate had not been closed. Because almost all the historians and scholars and the British officials showed that the Rajbanshis originated from the Mongoloid race. Swaraj Basu writes, “In case of the Rajbanshi caste movement, we find that one of the main thrusts of their movement was to distance themselves from the Koches and to establish their superior social rank. The local situation also provided a sufficient ground for the Rajbanshis’ assertion of a Kshatriya identity and their endeavour to build up caste solidarity.”⁴⁵

The specific movements for social mobility also achieved very little success. In a secular context, in the case of chasi Kaibarttas their new designation, Mahishya won general recognition, both social and official. Also successful were the Rajbanshis and the Namasudras.⁴⁶ The most numerous race in Jalpaiguri was the Rajbanshi or Koch. The Koches first appeared in Bengal about the close of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century, when Hajo founded

the Koch kingdom on the downfall of the ancient Empire of Kamrup. During the reign of his grandson Visu, the people became semi-Hinduised and adopted the name of Rajbanshi, i.e., of the royal race.⁴⁷ Hunter showed in his reports that the Koches and the Rajbanshis were the same communities and the Koches or the Rajbanshis as they are now called, may be briefly mentioned among the semi-aboriginal tribes, although they are now recognized as a distinct caste of Hindus. The Koch not separately returned in the Census Report, but manifestly included among the Rajbansis.⁴⁸

It is historically true that the Rajbanshis were converted into Hinduism from the Indo-Mongolian group, naturally Hinduised culture entered in the society of the Rajbanshis gradually.⁴⁹

It is stated that among the Koches who converted into Hindu religion called the Rajbanshis and who converted into Islam called Muslim or Mahameddan. Hunter here pointed out that the name of Koch was abandoned by the converts who assumed that of Rajbanshis literally of the Royal Kindred. The Koches or the Rajbanshis form by far the majority of the Hindu population of Jalpaiguri district.⁵⁰ Whatever the identity of the Rajbanshis they were the people like semi-tribes, simple in habit. Swaraj Basu pointed out, "...As they were guided by the traditional Brahmonical cultural values, the Rajbansis, with a tradition and culture of their own, failed to get a respectable position in the status estimation of these immigrant upper caste gentry."⁵¹ There were sharp dissimilarities between the cultural practices of these two groups and the upper caste gentry treated the Rajbansis as 'backward, uncultured and even *antyaaj*'.⁵² They were mainly habituated with agrarian cultivation. Almost all the people of Rajbanshis were uneducated in the colonial period. They would live in the villages. Their house was made mainly with the Bamboos and thrash and the economically solvent Jotdars made their house with ironsheet and wood. Generally in the house of the Rajbanshis four huts were seen. Sunder stated in his report, Among the Rajbanshis as well as Mahamedan there four huts in every homestead. These face north, southeast and west. Sometimes an extra hut

called Darigharis also built and is used by friends who may be staying for a night. So in building a homestead care is taken to have it bounded as follows whenever possible.⁵³

North----- Betel nut trees

South ----- compound

East ----- Water

West ----- Bamboos

In making the homestead of the Rajbanshis a proverb is prevailing in the Rajbanshi society which is followed by the Rajbanshis people at the time of making their house like this –

Uttare gua,

Dakshine Dhua,

Purbe Hans,

Pashime Bansh.

Uttare gua means in the North of the homestead there would be a betel nut garden, *Dakshine dhua* means in the South of the homestead there would be blank field or farm house that means no trees would remain in the South. *Purbe Hans* means in the East portion of the house there would be a pond and in the pond ducks would swim, *Pashime Bansh* means in the Western portion of the house a garden of bamboos would remain. ⁵⁴

Food:-

As the Rajbanshis people became Hindus, so they eat everything in accordance with the Hindu religion, but some special food or items are eaten by the Rajbanshis of which *Chheka* is one of the delicious food of the Rajbanshis which is cooked by different types of vegetables specially mixing with one kind of soda. Another delicious vegetable of the Rajbanshis is Lapha Shak (spinach). Another delicious food is eaten by the Rajbanshis people locally known as Sutka and Sidal. Sutka means dry fishes and sidal is made by crushing of small dry fishes, spices, turmeric and chilly, all these are crushed in a husk locally called chham and Gain. The habit of eating sidal is got not only

in North Bengal but also in whole North- East India and even in Burma, Malaysia etc.⁵⁵

Rajbanshis like to eat very much pan and supari locally known *Gua pan*. Gua means raw betel nut. They honoured their guest by offering gua pan at the initial stage of receiving. Many of them always keep this gua pan in their pocket or small container, and gradually they eat this after some duration.

Dress

Upendra Nath Barman wrote, 'It is known that the women of Rajbanshi community wore a dress called Buki (Bukali) and it was prevailing since ancient time. Apart from this the two parts of dress named Riya and Mekhla were used by the women. Men wore dhoti. It should be mentioned here that the men of poor family wore small dhoti from the upper side of knee and the very poor men wore a piece of cloth called 'Nengti'. At the time of continuing social reforms movement Thakur Panchanan Barma propagated to wear dhoti instead of 'Nengti' and sari of women instead of 'Buki'.⁵⁶ Advance group among the Rajbanshis whom we may refer to in the absence of a better term as the Rajbanshi 'elites', followed the upper caste Hindus of the region in dress, lifestyle, marriage customs, and religious practices.⁵⁷ Discarding their traditional clothes, both men and women dressed in the fashion of the upper castes in society.⁵⁸

Marriage

As the Rajbanshis belonged to Hindu community, so the marriage ceremony was performed according to the Hindu religion or Brahmanical references. Despite that many customs or rituals were to be followed at the time of marriage. A middle man locally known as 'Ghatak' or 'Ghatki' communicated between the guardians of bride and bride- grooms and information was sent time to time to both of the parties. If both sides were

satisfied and chosen each other the wedding was confirmed and fixed up the date of marriage.

The marriage ceremony of the Rajbanshis of the district was completed by three stages, namely pan tola, adhibas and marriage. The guests of bride were gone to the house of bride groom and the new clothes and ornaments were worn to the bride groom and blessed her. This occasion is called Pan Tola. In the second stage the following occasions are performed --- turmeric was touched to the body of the bride groom called *adhibas* and in the occasion called Naua kamani was performed. Then the Hargouri puja, *Nandi mukhi shradhya* and the last stage the main marriage ceremony was performed. Among the local customs or rituals of the marriage ceremony among the Rajbanshis a 'Mittar' or friend was to be selected at the time of marriage who remained as a friend or a relative of the bride in the whole life. Another custom was- a person who dropped water in the head of the bride and bride- groom at the time of marriage and related with them as their parents called 'Pani chhita Baap and Pani chhita Mao'. They also related with the bride and bride- groom in the whole life as their parents. Another custom in the marriage of the Rajbanshis which is not seen in the marriage of Aryan culture a Bairati played a vital role in the whole marriage ceremony. Polygamy was seen in the society of the Rajbanshis meaning of which that a Rajbanshi man could marry more than one. Widow Remarriage was also a common practice in the society of the Rajbanshis where in the society of higher caste widow remarriage was a hard task. In this point of view Rajbanshis were more liberal than the higher caste people.

Religion---At present the Rajbanshis are Hindus. But originally they were Koches, an Indo- Mongoloid tribes believing in tribal culture, though it is debatable. It is assumed by most of the historians and social scientists that the Rajbanshis were converted to Hinduism from Koches. There were many Gods, Goddesses and deities who were worshiped by the Rajbanshis. It should be

mentioned here that there were many non- Aryan God and Goddess worshiped by the Rajbanshis as they were basically non- Aryan. After converted into Hinduism they worshiped Hindu God and Goddess. Among the non- Aryan deities there were Bisto Thakur, he was worshiped by the name of Jalthakur also. This worship was held in the month of Bhadra. He is a deity of water. The BrahmoThakur is a deity of Agni or fire. Besides, there were Paban thakur or deity of air, Basumati thakur, Bisha hari thakurani, Mahakal thakur, the oldest Deity, Gramthakur, Shib thakur, or Maheswar, Lakshi thakurani, Dharma thakur etc.⁵⁹ The worship of Banadurga is held in every year at the time of Ekadashi of Durga worship at Bhandani in the village of Barnish near Maynaguri. This worship is performed in accordance with the Rajbanshi Mythology. The Devi is immersioned at the midnight of ekadashi according to the Vedicliterature. There was a custom to sacrifice of goat and dove to the Goddes.⁶⁰

The worship of Ban Durga is held at the time of Ekadashi in every year at the Barnish village of Maynaguri in accordance with the Rajbanshi customs.⁶¹

Harihar Adhikary informed me, “Late Hariprosad Basuniya was a zamindar. He introduced Kalipuja at first. The worship of Kali of the house of Hariprosad Basuniya was known as ‘Hariprosad Basuniya Barir Puja’ and later on it was known as ‘Kal Singh Basuniya Barir Kalipuja’”.⁶² The Basuniyas then had a total land of (80) eighty Hals (an unit of fifteen bighas), comprising of the jotes Betgara, Khagrabari, Naktabari (near Baksirdanga) and “Dhanda Simla” (near Nathula). It is also learnt that the former title of the Basuniyas was “Das’. They came from the Gaibandha thana of Rangpur District (Now in Bangladesh). The title Basuniya” was probably given by the British.”⁶³ The marriage of Rajbanshi society was like a social festival. Before performing the marriage ceremony the worship of *Kuloguru*, placed the east of the house is given and thereafter the worship of *Bishahari* is given.⁶⁴

Various worships and occasions of the Rajbanshis:-

Kainagata—this worship Kainagata is started from the previous Purnima. In this worship their forefathers are respected by sacrificing water oblation to their forefather by the Brahmana or Adhikary. **Nabanna**—this worship is observed at the time of collecting new crops. There is a custom prevailing among many of the Bengali Hindu families that they gave worship before eating new crops. Binapani Adhikari told, “Baishakhipuja or worship is performed in the month of Baishakha (April-May). Different types of fruits and flowers are given in this worship. Out of these dahi (curd) and chira are also given. Nor Brahmana or priest is necessary to perform this worship; rather the priest of Rajbanshi community called Adhikary performed this worship.”⁶⁵ Kali/Bishahari worship is performed by local priest known as *Mareya* or *Ojha*. It is significant that no Sanskrit mantra is uttered in this worship, rather the mantras are pronounced in local dialect or Rajbanshi language. This puja is sacrificed by the left hand. Different types of customs and usages were performed at the time of marriage which were enjoyed by the relative’s invitees and the villagers.⁶⁶ **Gochubona**- this worship is observed before growing plants of paddy in the land. At first land is prepared for growing plants of paddy. Thereafter a worship called gochubona is performed in the lands. Few plants of paddy are poured these worships performed to their deity with rice, banana and other fruits. Masdal, black arum and raw milk is given to the worship. **Jatrapuja**—this worship is performed in the day of Nabami of the month of Aswin (October) by giving sugarcane, lemon and other fruits and the next day, in the day of Vijoya Dasami the Jatrapuja is observed in the house. In this worship the essential instruments of the house including books have been worshiped’ **Laxmi puja**—Laxmi puja is popular festivals of the Hindu Bengali. In every houses of the Hindu Bengali the Goddess mother Laxmi is observed. Like other Hindu Bengali people in the house of Rajbanshi community mother Laxmi is observed. The Rajbanshis worship with *dai, chira, Kala* and other fruits. The plant of paddy is cut at the bottom, covered with banana leaves and kept in the kitchen”.⁶⁷

W.W.Hunter wrote, “A singular relic of old superstition is the worship of the God Hudum Deo. The women of a village assemble together in some distant and solitary place, no male being allowed to be present at the rites which is always performed at night, young bamboo is stuck in the ground, and the women throwing off their garments, dance round the mystic tree, singing old songs and charms. The rite is more especially performed when there is no rain and the crops are suffering from drough.”⁶⁸

Literature- George Abraham Greerson published his research report in Linguistic Survey of India in 1927 where he mentioned “When we cross the river (Brahmaputra) coming from Dacca, we meet a well-marked form of speech in Rangpur and the districts to its north and east. It is called Rajbansi and while undoubtedly belonging to the eastern branch has still points of difference which lead us to class it as a separate dialect.”⁶⁹ He also wrote, “The dialect is usually known as Rajbansi, from the tribe of that name already alluded to. It is also frequently called Rangpuri from one of the districts in which it is spoken. In the Darjeeling Terai the dialect is influenced by the neighbouring northern Bengali and has a special name, as a sub-dialect viz Bahe.”⁷⁰

The issue of Kamtapuri language has not yet been solved, it is going on as there is no inscription or grammar of Kamtapuri language or Rajbanshi language.⁷¹ Provat Ranjan sarkar mentioned the language of Rajbansis of North Bengal as ‘Rangpuri Bangla’.⁷² Upendranath Barman stated that the Rajbanshi language is a pure Aryan language which was supported by different scholars like Hodson etc.⁷³ Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal pointed out that the Rajbansis speak Bengali but it is a local dialect sometimes widely away from standard Bengali.⁷⁴

Entertainments:-

There are many dramas, songs, palatia songs which are written and performed by the Rajbanshi language. In Dinajpur district one of the ancient dramas “Monai Yatra”. The original writer of Monai yatra was Telenga Fakir, inhabitant of another writer was Najir Mahmud Sarkar.

In Malda, Dinajpur, Bagura, Murshidabad district one kind of drama named Alkap was performed where evolved the various incidents of society and the story of the poor and distressed people. Another type of drama of Malda and Dinajpur district was Gambhira remaining the history of various people and comedy.⁷⁵ Rangpur Bartaboho Patrika introduced a valuable literature and culture. Many informations and writings were published in this Patrika. It was patronized by the Zamindar of Kunder of Rangpur district.⁷⁶

As the Rajbanshis were converted into Hindus which is referred earlier, they performed all the worship, festivals, occasions in accordance with the Hindu customs and mythology. But many of the customs, festivals and worships and rituals were found which was out of the Aryan culture. These cultures have been going on through the ancient period to the present day.

Muslim culture

The Muslims of North Bengal can be divided into two categories in terms of ethnological point of view, (1) Local Muslim, (2) the Immigrated Muslim. One point is to be noted here that the local Muslim originated from Koches, a tribes of North- eastern region of India. Though there are many debates in this regard, but it is reasonable to admit that the Koches who converted into Islam called Muslim, from the physical or biological point of view assimilation are found among the indigenous Muslim, Koch and Rajbanshis. It is mentioned in the imperial Gazetteer of India ‘the proposition of Mahamadan has declined since 1872 when they formed 34.6 percent of the population. They are chiefly

Sheikhs and *Nasyas*, and are for the most part, converts from the aboriginal Koch and Mech races.⁷⁷ The Shaikhs and the Nasyas, who compose the majority of the Muslims of the district, were in the main, natives of the district and in their appearances dress and their customs differed very little from the Rajbanshis. They were very much “the sons of the soils.”⁷⁸ Upendra Nath Barman stated that all Muslims inhabitants of Rajbanshi areas converted from Hindus. Their title was ‘Nasya’.⁷⁹ It can be said easily that the Muslims of North Bengal were converted and they were indigenous Muslims.⁸⁰

Hunter wrote in this regard “The Musalman and Rajbansi population live on good terms in the same tracts side by side, and intermix socially with each other. It is not unusual to find Muammadan and Rajbansi families dwelling together in the same homestead, although in separate houses.”⁸¹ So, from the cultural point of view many of usages are followed among the Koches, Rajbanshis and indigenous Muslims. In regard to social customs, dress and food, (except the eating of pork) the Mahamadams resembles the Rajbanshis.⁸²

But as the indigenous Muslims converted into Islam, so they followed some Islamic culture. Sunder also showed the similarities regarding social and cultural point of view between Rajbanshis and local Muslims. In the pattern of the homestead the same category and design was followed both in the homestead of Rajbanshis and local Muslims. Among the Mahamadans the chief occupation of the women was the husking of paddy, preparing the husband’s food, fetching water, looking after the children etc. Sunder wrote, “On rising in the morning, Rajbanshis go out without eating anything. After this they proceed to the field and plough up to about mid-day, when they return home. This is called ‘Dupar Samay’; children have their meals whenever hungry. Women eat with the children and always after the male. Mahamadan generally eat *panta bhat* (stale rice) in the morning before going to the field for ploughing.”⁸³

Rajbanshis and Mahamadan women wear a Shari or wrapper called *phota- kapor* round them. Men wear a jacket called *piran*. Girls wear a Shari from waist to ankles up to the 5th or 6th year. Among Mahamadans this is called 'Hetpatani'.

Rajbanshis women wore various types of ornaments such as:-⁸⁴

- (1) Ear- *angti* (silver ear ring), *machipath*, ditto, *guji*.
- (2) Nose—Noth (gold ring), *phul*, *guji*.
- (3) Neck—Chandra har (silver neckless), *siklihar*, *mala*, *kuchia- mor-har*, *hasila*, *poalmala*, *kati kala -mala*
- (4) Feet—Tongkaru (silver ancklets)
- (5) Wrists—Gotadu, or *gokul kharu*, *mutakharu*, *sakado*.
- (6) Finger—*Angti* (silver ring).

During the colonial period Muslims and Rajbanshis enjoyed in the cultural entertainments. In the folk songs and folk dance the difference between Rajbanshis and Muslims is not followed. Bajle Rahaman writes, "Before 1940s the impact of the hadis, sariyat could not be accumulated actively in the society of North Bengal. They took embraced Islam from the Sufi Darbesh, but religion preachers were interfered to the indigenious language- culture- folklore as a result the indigenious Muslims conveyed and maintained their folkloristic tradition through the ages or for hundreds of years".⁸⁵

Other than Bhaoyaiya songs there were so many folksongs which were sang and enjoyed by the Hindu and Muslim artists namely – Gorakhnather gan , Akoali gan, Panchali songs of Sattapir , Jari gan , Murshedi songs, Saital Senol songs and Gambhira songs of Malda. Kushan and dotaradanga gan was performed on the stages. In these gan a plot of different facts, social, historical and mythological may be, was performed. At the gap of the plot or drama, dance and songs were performed in which Hindu and Muslim youths danced on the stage being make-up of the girls locally called "Chhukri" (dancer). One Gidal and one Doyari joined and danced with them. In the Kushan Palatiya songs Gidal took the *Bena* (a musical instrument) and in

the Dotorā Danga Gan (song), Gidal used dotara (a musical instrument). Gidal sang at first and then Chhukri and Doyari song followed by Gidal.

There is a little different between the kushan gan and the Dotara Danga Gan. In the kushan gan Gidal uses “Bena” as a musical instrument instead of Dotorā. Indigenous people both of Hindus and Muslims participated and enjoyed the Kushan and Dotorā Danga Gan. These songs including different plots of socio-religious and mythological facts were performed in different stages of North Bengal and Assam.

Besides these songs the Muslim youths collected paddy from house to house with singing the ‘Akoali Song’. This was an old and traditional system. Some *Bairagis* (like Baul) sing their songs from house to house with Dotorā and Khanjani. Abdul Bairagi lived in Sitalkuchi Block, Baramarichha village of Dinhatā Subdivision in Cooch Behar district.

There were some occasions or rituals or festivals where both the Rajbanshis and indigenous Muslims participated and performed as follows.⁸⁶

Gochar Pana: -In this ceremony before the transplanting of cold weather paddy (locally known as Hemti Dhan) a young plantaintree, a kewa (Kostas specious) flower, a bunch of jute, a bunch of munj grass, and a black arum are planted in a corner of the paddy field. Some *sindur* (vermillion) and *kajal* (antimony) are then put on the plantain tree and on the ground together with some *dhup* (incense). After this, some milk is poured at the base of the tree. After this ceremony, which is performed to satisfy the Goddess Laksmi, Planting operation begins. It is usually performed by the Nasya Sheiekh.

Naban Khawa: - It is a ceremony carries into effect when the Haimonti paddy was first cut. Before eating the new paddy, the Rajbanshis used to take a small quantity of new rice together with some sugar, plantains, dahi(curd),

ghi(clarified butter), gur(molasses) and alua rice and made a puja in the name of their deceased parents and relatives. This was called 'tarpan' after that they had to bath and purified themselves. At first Brahmanas had to take their meals, after Brahmanas other people would take the meal of new rice.

Pushna:- Like the Hindus the Mahamadans also observed the *pushna occasion* (the day of Paush Sankranti) by eating the *cakes* (Pitha), making of the dust of rice. They distributed cakes or pitha and halwa (sweets) to their neighbours and enjoyed the day by wishing their cow and cowshed.

Baraghar:- At the time of constructing their houses like the Rajbanshis the local Nasya Sheikh Muslims to pay heed to the North sided room as the most important place. They had to take their valuable things in this room, even the new bride first enter in this room, because of its holiness.

Holud Makha--- Like the local Rajbanshis, the Muslim observed holud makha occasion. In this occasion, turmeric and white cotton shari and a napkin had been sent to the bride's house from groom' side.

Chailon Bati--- It was a famous tradition followed by the Nasya Sheikh. In this social practice holding a wicker- tray filled with banana, lamp and other things in favour of groom, a Bairati received the Bride grooms with dancing mode.

Sindur Khela-Sindur Tola--- This was the famous social practice followed by indigenous Muslims, mostly among the Nasya Sheikh. They would enjoy the occasion with smearing vermilion on the forehead of the women. They also enjoyed in 'Firani or Sindur Tola' occasion when bride groom came in the house of father in law after 7 days or one week.

Beside these there were so many festivals and social practices performed by the Rajbanshis and Mahamadans and in this respect there was assimilation in the Rajbanshis and other lower castes Hindus and the indigenous Muslims of North Bengal. Mahanta Debata, Basuli Debi, Burima Ma also worshiped by the Muslims like the Hindus as evils spirit or demon in Dinajpur District. They worshiped and satisfied the evils spirit for their protection from deceases, premature death and erosion. Manta Bajikars Muslims worshiped Manasa in Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri district. 'Bapday Deoya,' *Jharphuk, Magon, Dosti, Manod, Sadh* were also the social practices performed by the local Muslims and the Rajbanshis. Other than these local Muslims and Rajbanshis there were so many lower castes Hindu performed such types of folkloristic occasion or worship for their protection, living peacefully, and to save them from the different types of natural calamities and evil spirit or demons.

Apart from this cultural assimilation there were some dissimilation in culture of Indigenous Hindus and Muslims of North Bengal. As the local Muslims converted into Islam, so they had to obey all the terms and condition of the religion and rituals laws and practices guided by the Maulavi or Mollah. These compulsory duties were Namaj, wearing Kalma, Zakat, and Haj etc.

At the age of six or seven years a Muhammadan boy is circumcised. This is called Sonait, and is performed by the Ostath with little ceremony. The Ostath is paid from four anna to one rupee as a free.⁸⁷

Faiz Mahal Palace, popularly known as Nawab Palace or Nawab Bari, was built by the late Nawab Musharruf Hussain, Khan Bahadur, over an area more than 18 bighas in the heart of Jalpaiguri town, as a residence for himself and members of his family. Austrian and Turkish artists painted the wall frescoes. The flooring of the entire palace, including a grand staircase, is made of the finest Italian marble. There are Venetian stained glass windows and massive sliding Burma teak doors in the main drawing and dining rooms. The extensive grounds of the palace accomodated houses, garrages, tennis, courts,

cricket and football fields and offices of numerous tea estates, owned or controlled by the family. The complex was acquired by an order of the West Bengal Government in July 1972. But, in spite of all endeavours by the heirs, who live in Calcutta, no compensation has yet been paid.⁸⁸

Immigrated Culture

From the above discussion it is found the cultural scenario and practices of the different indigenous communities or people of the district Jalpaiguri as elsewhere in North Bengal. Now I will try to through a new light on the immigrated culture. In the previous chapter it is discussed the formation of the district and society of Jalpaiguri and there we have found a large number of people immigrated in the district of different communities, castes religion and classes in the colonial period. So a multi- cultural scenario was seen in the district. In the cultural point of view the immigrated culture may be categorized into two broad culture namely Sanskrit culture and Western culture which was a turning point for changing the society and culture of the district as elsewhere in Bengal, nay India.

By the entering of Sanskritization and Westernization society stepped into a new world. A so called 'Renaissance' was taken place in the district, nay Bengal. Sanskritization was started long before in the ancient period; but it got a new shape and life in the colonial period. Sanskrit culture means the culture of higher castes strata originated from traditional Hindunization or Aryanization. In the colonial period by the formation of the district in 1869 and initiation of new commercial enterprise following new economic policy many opportunities came to the business classes and the people seeking for job for their livelihood. It is relevant to mention here that in this field the people belonged to higher strata took a significant role because it is followed that almost all the people involved in different commercial sectors and service sectors were coming from

higher castes and higher class in the colonial period. Mukulesh Sanyal wrote ‘At time of festival, theater were held in every locality. Aged persons performed theaters which were enjoyed by the older persons and youths. The females of the houses supervise the pandel of worship. It was charming and dream atmosphere.’⁸⁹ The most significant thing of Durga festival was Bijoya Dashami, at the time of Bijoya Dashami everyone congratulate each other persons used to give their regard or *pronam* to the honorable persons. The society of Jalpaiguri town was a homogenous. Bijoya Sammiloni was held in both the places of Aryanatya Samaj and Bandhab Natyo Samaj. In spite of having competition between them, they forgot that. Emergence come across among each other, performed songs, drama and lastly sweets were distributed.⁹⁰ Started organizing the corporate life of different classes of people by establishing a club, where in the evening, met many middle-aged man and youths of different vocations. This club helped to foster a fellow feeling and also to mean away men from wasteful practices including excessive drinking etc. This club later on developed into Arya Natya Samaj. The life of Jalpaiguri public was fully expressed in colourful activities in which prominent were men like Chintaharan Chakraborty, Satish Master, Jogen Nag, Suren Sen, Sarat Chaterjee etc.⁹¹

Samir Chakraborty wrote, “It seems to me that the Durga puja in Tea Garden was started 50 to 70 years ago from today. Earlier Bengali Babu and officials of tea garden formed club like the Europeans. Tea Company built the club-building. In every club there performed drama at the time of Durga puja. Nepali or Non Bengali Babus, Sahib, Manager everybody would join these festival.”⁹²

Mukulesh Sanyal again pointed out that the Jalpaiguri town was not big. It was nice town; there was good relation among each other. There was a cultural life which was evolved through these enjoying festivals. There was no huge

number of Durga worships, some family worship and some public worship were seen.⁹³

Role of different educational institutions of the town—

Jalpaiguri Zilla School was one of the important institutions in the social and cultural canvas of Jalpaiguri. Many scholars and eminent persons had come out from this school that was scattered in different parts of the country and abroad also. Durga Prosad Ghatak wrote, Surendra Prosad Roy studied in the upper class to us. He was the elder son of Tarini prosad Roy. He passed the Matrick examination, and then he admitted in Presidency College. There after he was sent to England for studying I.C.S. But he suffered on head problem there. He was the classmate of Dr.Meghnath Saha. Dr. Saha met with Surendra Prosad Roy when he came to Jalpaiguri. Dr. Sir I. Rahaman M.A. (Oxon) was a meritorious student of this school. He was senior to us. Later he became Vice – Chancellor of Dhaka University, The library of Zilla School was one of the largest and greatest in North Bengal.⁹⁴

Sri B.N.Dasgupta, Ex Vice-Chancellor, North Bengal University, wrote, “....In my days of childhood, in our mohalla I knew two eminent elders who used to live for some time in their early years in Jalpaiguri who became important industrialists later: Khirod Chakraborty, the founder of the “Calcutta Fan”, and Dinesh Chandra Majumdar, the founder of ‘Gwalior potteries’ in Gwalior state and later in Delhi.”⁹⁵

Religion of the Jalpaiguri district in the colonial period

Religiously Jalpaiguri district was a multidimensional character. Like India people belonged multi-religion had been living in this district, for that the district, Jalpaiguri may be called “Mini India’. Through ancient period to modern period it had a glorious past , because the legacy of the ancient

religion such as Pre-Vedic-Religion, Vedic Religion, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Ajibikism, Saivism, Baisnavism and Tantrikism fell upon the society of the district like all over the North Bengal. Religion which was originated in the medieval age such as Nathism, Sufism, Islam and Christianize of early modern period had entered in the society of the district. It should be mentioned here that the Vedic religion or Brahmanism had entered in this area being so delay unlike other parts of India. In the district as elsewhere of Bengal people maintained the Pre-Vedic Religion that was the nature oriented religion till the penetration of the Vedic religion.

As the district had a long history and legacy in the religion is concerned so to have a clear picture of the religion I have to go back in the page of history, without which religion of the colonial period cannot be realized. In a broad sense, the religious structure can be divided into two main categories—1) Indigenous religion, meaning of which religion of the people of their own, out of the immigrated religion. 2) Immigrated religion that were immigrated in the society of the district as elsewhere of Bengal from outside of Bengal amongst which Sanskrit based religion, such as vedic religion, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism etc. There is no way to know the religious beliefs of the indigenous people of North Bengal before the penetration of the Aryan civilization and culture. Whatever types of the indigenous religions, these gradually turned their characters and mixed up with the traditional Hindu religion after coming of the Aryans gradually. This Vedic religion had two ways—the first one was Brahmanism based on Vedas and the second were anti-Vedas Jainism, Buddhism and Ajibikism.

It can be said on the basis of the historical evidences that the Aryan culture or religion had entered in Bengal in delaying. So, one question is raised specifically—who were the indigenous people before entering the Aryan people or culture or who formed the society before penetration of the Aryans? In the previous chapter I have discussed about the formation of the society or social

structure of the district like other parts of North Bengal. Naturally here I will discuss the religion of the indigenous people before coming of the Aryans. It can be said reaching on the debates that the society before coming of the Aryans was ethnic based or 'Totem' or 'Kouma'- based. The people of different 'Totem' or 'Kouma' had separate culture, customs, rituals, usages in their daily life. This people had been dwelling for their livelihood with their culture and religion. They had their own rules and regulations in their socio-economic status. In the religion is concerned they had no specific traditional religion like Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Islamism and Shikhism. Their men were dependent on the nature, they had no formed education or scientific mentality is and every power of nature was treated as god or goddess by them and they worshiped or respected every power as their god or goddess as their deity.

In their everyday life of the indigenous people of the district as elsewhere in Bengal, they worshiped or prayed different powers or deities to protect themselves from different diseases and natural calamities. Different worships or occasions were held or performed in their socio-economic life, at the time of sowing of different agricultural crops, collected the crops stored in the house and eating new crops.

It should be mentioned here that there are many customs, worship and usages are followed in the Bengali society till now which is completely different from the Vedic religion or Brahmanism or traditional Hinduism. It is hard to say that from whence this customs or usages were introduced or who introduced this. Nihar Ranjan Roy wrote, "Indian people, like many people of other countries worshiped stones, mountain, flowers and fruits, animals, birds and specific places etc. believing them as deity. Till now indigenous people of Khasi, Munda, Santals, Rajbanshis, Sabars, communities do the same. Among the girls of Hindus Brahmins society in Bangladesh particularly in the villages, the worships of the trees are prevailing particularly the Tulsi, Sheora, Bata on

every holly occasion of our society. Besides in these occasions mango leaves are used, kalabau is worshipped, powder of rice etc. is required in many rituals – all these were coming from the culture or rituals of non- Aryan people or Adibasis.”⁹⁶ It is mentioned earlier that the indigenous people of the Jalpaiguri, as happened in elsewhere of North Bengal before coming of the Aryan culture of the Vedic religion, believed in nature based religion. There is difference in terms of culture and religion among the indigenous people of North Bengal, but more or less there were some similarities in the culture and religion among the all indigenous communities. These similarities were all the customs, culture, or usages were pre- Vedic or pre- Brahmanas. The indigenous people of the district of Jalpaiguri such as Koch, Mech, Garo, Toto, Druckpa Jalda, Rajbanshis, and Paliya etc. had been carrying out their tradition and culture of the pre- Vedic society.

Though the communication with the Aryan culture was made during the period of king Bhagadatta, the ruler of Pragjyotishpur, there was no influence of Aryanization in the society of North Bengal. The Aryan or Brahmin culture or religion was gradually entering since the reign of Guptas. As the North Bengal was included with the Gupta empire and the Gupta rulers were Aryans, so they tried to spread the Brahmanization in North Bengal as elsewhere in India. After that, different rulers of this region, such as rulers of the Kamtapur kingdom, rulers of the Koch kingdom, were patronized by the Brahmanism. The rulers of the Koch- Kamta kingdom converted into traditional Hinduism. They imported Brahmans from Kanouj, Mithila, and Benaras etc. They granted lands to the Brahmanas for their livelihood and religious performances. The traditional Hindu culture or Brahmin culture entered in the palace of the Koch – Kamta kingdom and from thence it was spread among the ordinary people of the society.

Beside the Vedic- Brahmana religion the Buddhism and Jainism we also extended in the society of North Bengal. Mentioned may be made here that by

the penetration of Buddhism, Jainism and Azibikism, the Aryan culture and religion were introduced spread over the ancient. Because the progenitor and patronize of these religion belong to Aryan community. However the philosophy of three religions was anti - Vedic and unbelievable in super human of Vedas. The Chinese pilgrim Yuan- Chuang confessed that Lord Buddha came to Pundrabardhana, Samatata and Karnasubarna where he spread the Buddhism. Buddhism was also spread and extended having a new motion in the reign of Palas, patronized by the Pala kings as they were Buddhist.

Beside the Buddhism, Jainism and Ajibikism, the Vaishnavism was also influenced in the society of Bengal including the district of Jalpaiguri in the ancient period. The Vaishnaism emerged as a new shaped and philosophy with the emergence of Sree Chaitanya Deb of Nadia district. The influence of Vaishnabism was spread over all the parts of Bengal including eastern and north eastern part of India. It started its journey as social reforms. Another Saints of Vaishnabism was Sankar Dev in Assam. He came to Koch kingdom at the time of Nara Narayan and the permission of Nara Narayan he spread the Vaishnabism in Koch kingdom.

Beside these religions the Saiva religion, the Sakta religion and Nathism also originated in the district of Jalpaiguri as elsewhere in North Bengal. The people believing in Nathism were called 'Jugi'. The Nath People practices different type of Jogas. The Jugis of Nath people fought against the Brahmanism or Brahmin based casteism. Jalpesh—A village in pargana South Maynaguri, it contains a temple of Shiva, which was built on the site of an earlier temple by Pran Narain, one of the CoochBehar Rajas about three centuries ago. The temple is a massive white washed building, surmounted by a large dome, with an outer diameter of 34 feet, round the base and top of which run galleries. A flight of steps leads down to the basement which is sunk some depth in the mound and which contains a very ancient Siva linga. An old established fair is held at Jalpesh in February at the time of the Sivaratri

festival; at lasts for about three weeks and is attended by people from all parts of the district as well as from Rangpur, Dinajpur, and other parts of Northern Bengal.⁹⁷ The Jalpesh temple is four miles from Moynaguri. Regarding the maintenance of the Jalpesh temple E.M.Konstam, Esq., Under Secy.to the Govt.of Bengal, Revenue Dept., wrote a letter to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, “I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No.1973 Rct., dated the 25th February 1896.You observe that it has been found impossible, by the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri to select jots which would yield exactly Rs. 1,720 assigned to the Jalpesh Temple for its maintenance. In the circumstances the Lieutenant. Governor sanctions the arrangement under which it is proposed to make are grant of three jotes, yielding an income of Rs.1, 726, for the maintenance of the temple and its Pujaris.I am to add that the lands are liable to be resumed if the temple is allowed to fall into disrepair.”⁹⁸ It is mentioned in Jalpaiguri district Gazetteer, “Jalpesh is a village in Maynaguri police station, situated on the bank of the Jhora River the main temple here combines the Hindu and Muslim architectures. The temple has to look of a mosque of North India.....A big fair called “Jalpesh Mela” on the occasion of Shivaratri festival is held here every year in February which is attended by a large number of persons coming from different parts of North Bengal. The temple committee organizes the fair since 1955.”⁹⁹

Sannyasir Hat also called Sannyasi Kata in Rajganj Police Station, is a famous spot in Sikarpur Tea Garden area and is said to be so named after a Sannyasi, i.e. a Sage .According to the legend he was Bhabani Pathak, a character in Bankim Chandra’s novel, “Devi Choudhurani”.The temple here looks like a Buddhist pagoda. Local people say it was constructed by one Scott is not very distant past.

A major portion of the population of the district as elsewhere in Bengal was Muslims. It is hard to say that when Islamization was entered in the society

of North Bengal. It is assumed that the Islamization or Islamic culture entered in the society of North Bengal by the invasion of Md. Bakhtiar Khalji to Tibet through North Bengal. In the reign of Hussain Sahi and Ilias Sahi, Islamization got a new motion and since then Islamization extended over the different parts of Bengal, It is a vital question how and why the large number of people became Muslim. There are so many historical evidences and on the basis of these evidences it can be said that the maximum portion of the Muslim people are converted from Hindus and Buddhist particularly the lower caste people. As the people of lower caste and lower class had no dignity to the upper caste people in the caste based society of Hinduism, so the socially and economically depressed class people were converted gradually into Muslim? In the process of Islamization Sufi saints, pirs, fakirs and Muslim rulers took a significant role.

At the initial stage the relation between Hindu and Muslim was bitter. But after dwelling or living together in the society years after years the relations became softness and communal synthesis was built among them. In the medieval period by the emergence of Bhaktism and Sufism the communal harmony and integrity among the Hindus and Muslims got a new shape. Ranjit Dasgupta wrote, "In spite of converting into Hinduism and Islamism gradually a major portion of original inhabitants of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Dinajpur and Rangpur, religion cannot change their folkloristic culture, believes, customs and usages in their day to day lives."¹⁰⁰ As a consequences of the weakness and the disintegration of the Muslim rule reign of English East India Company was started through the battle of Plassey and Buxer held in Bengal and it was extended to whole over India gradually. By the coming of Britishers a new era was began in Bengal, nay India. As the medieval age was going on in all over India until starting of the British rule or English culture, feudalism and religious based society- different types of superstitions both in Hindus and Muslims were the main characteristic of the society of Bengal like India. There was no logic or scientific mentality, no modernity. In every sphere of life in

this society of the Hindus and Muslims was carried on by the orthodox mentality. So by the starting of the British rule the western education Western culture was started gradually. By the Western education or culture the process of modernization was started in the society and culture. A new intelligentsia or middle class was emerged who were Western educated. Western educated intellectuals studied western Philosophy that was materialistic, the history of the world, history of the logic and science, history of renaissance held in Europe, history of Industrial revolution, history of new economy, history of French and American Revolution. As a result of these studying they realized the necessity of modernization and the abolition of religious based society of the country. To save the society they tried to initiate western education and abolished the bad materials of the indigenous society like superstition and orthodox mentality. In this tasks Ram Mohan, Vidyasgar, Vibekananda took significant role in the process social reforms. Among the Western educated intellectuals Ram Mohan was one of the greatest reformist of the Indian Society who actually realized the necessity of social reforms without which India's emancipation could not be possible for which he was called "Father of Modern India" . In this way the renaissance was started in Bengal nay India.

In the process of modernization or changing of the age, the missionaries of western countries came to India with the imperialist's powers. They insulted the people and civilization of India for their superior mentality. They evangelical group among the Missionaries treated the Indians as barbarians. Pointing out that the Indian had no civilization, no religion, no culture, just they were uncivilized. Indians had been converted to Christianity giving western education. With the intention of spreading Christianity they started their journey by establishing Christian church, Missionary school, particularly in the remote areas of the countries. It is found in the District Gazetteer of 1981 that the first Church of Christians was established in 1882 in front of old court and it was used only by the Western people. In 1896 another Church was established for the Indian people. Both the Churches were for the

Protestants. In the Western Dooars areas of the Jalpaiguri district the Missionaries entered to spread the Christian religion by establishing various churches. Missionaries established churches at Mahakalguri and Khoardanga in Alipurduar Subdivision of the district.

By establishing all these churches Missionaries spread Christian religion among the indigenous people, particularly the tribal people. It is relevant to mention here that many of the tribal tea- labourers living in different tea- estate were converted to Christianity. Beside this many tribal people belonged to Mech community were also converted to Christianity. Missionaries choose these tribal people to be converted as because these people were simple in habit and nature oriented. They were uneducated. They had been encouraged and also provoked to be converted. Missionaries also established many school in different parts of the district, particularly in the Dooars to give education to the converted people. Their intention was to spread Christianity and the ethics, ideologies and activities of the great Lord Jesus Christ, besides giving education though the Missionaries were biased and orthodox to their racial identity and their so called greatest culture and education for which they insulted and neglected the Indian culture, religion and the people, which led them to spread Christianity. But it became a boon to the people of Bengal, India as because the social revolution or renaissance was started by initiating the western education and culture. So it was positive side of the Missionaries initiatives to take place a social revolution among the Indians and Indian society.

But it had many negative sides also. For the conversion of the tribal into Christianity, the culture of their own or ethnicity had been going to be demolished. The casteless and classless ethnic based society was felt into a crisis; their unity was wasted because they were divided into separate groups accordingly the various groups of Christianity.

Another devastating religious policy of the British was initiating of communal policy by introducing 'Divide and Rule policy'. We are all well acquainted with the policy of 'Divide and Rule'. Britishers introduced different policies in different sector or areas or communities in India. The system of separate administration 'Quota System', 'Regulatory and non- Regulatory System, 6th scheduled etc. were byproduct of the Govt. It is relevant to mention here that the Government regulatory system in the Sadar Sub Division of the district, Jalpaiguri, and no regulatory system in the Western Doars of the district. It was wondered that in the same district the Government introduced separate policies. The intention behind the introduction of these policies was to give people disunited so that they could not fight united against the Government.

There is an instant about the attitude towards the Hindus for the Britishers. There is a letter written by Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri to the Secretary, Ramjhora Tea Co.Ltd. Dated Jalpaiguri, the 25th July 1930.¹⁰¹

Sir,

I have honour to state that it has come to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner that a Kali Mandir has been established in the Hat compound of your Tea Estate. It should be stopped and a report to that effect be sent to this office at an early date.

In response to this letter the Secretary of Ramjhora Tea Estate wrote to The Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri,

Sir,

In reply to your letter No.1372 k.M.dated the 25th July 1930, I beg to submit that we have not constructed any Kali Mandir in our Hat compound nor have we allowed any person to construct any Kali Mandir there. The Coolies and the shopkeepers of the Ramjhora Tea Estate are mostly,

if not all Hindus. Some years ago when the Hat was first started, the coolies and the shopkeepers created a temporary shed to worship the Goddess Kali on that occasion. The Goddess Kali has since then had remained there. We have given direction to our garden Manager to submerge the idol in the water. But as it is known to your honour that the Coolies are a very susceptible people, it shall have to be managed very tactfully so that their feelings may not be wounded. I pray therefore that six months time may be given to submerge the idol in water. As directed by your honour we will report when the idol has been submerged.

Secretary, Ramjhora Tea Co.Ltd.

Devastating communal politics which was stated by the interest by the British Govt. and which got a distressing condition just after concluding the Second World War though it got a new character since 1937. Since 1946 on the eve of the transformation of power a devastating communal riots was going on by which Hindus and Muslims started to kill each other in all over the countries. In the Jalpaiguri district also a communal riot was started. Ranjit Dasgupta stated that the liberal atmosphere was going to be destroyed by the immigration of Hindus from East Bengal now in Bangladesh and the Muslims from Nowakhali- Kumilla of Bangladesh locally known as 'Bhatia'.¹⁰²

On the eve of the independence there raised the demand by Muslim League led by Nawab Musharaff Hussain of Jalpaiguri and the minister of Bengal that Jalpaiguri would be merged with Pakistan. But ultimately it remained in India though the five thanas of Jalpaiguri district namely Boda, Patgram, Panchagar, Debiganj and Tentuliya were merged to Pakistan. So it was a great impetus to people of Jalpaiguri by which a large value had to be given by the people of North Bengal because by losing their areas of the district the socio-economic condition of the people of the district was hampered. So, all these incidents were by product of communal politics of the British.

Medical Treatment---In this context J.E.Cooke, ESQ., Deputy Accountant General, Bengal, wrote letter to the secretary to the Government of Bengal, “With reference to the Notification, dated 8th instant, constituting a new District, called the Julpigoree District, with its Head Quarters at Mynagooree, I request the favour of being informed whether the allowances of Rupees 100 per mensem, sanctioned in Financial order No.3506, dated 2nd December 1867, for the Regimental surgeon for performing the duties of Superintendent of the Julpigoree Dispensary should cease from the 1st proxim,.....”¹⁰³. B.N.Dasgupta pointed out, “For the first time, Dr.Satish Chandra Gupta drew the attention of the thinking public to the needs of health of Jalpaiguri people. It was a Malarious district-apart from its specific medicine for cure, clean water was a paramount need at any time and uncontaminated drinking water was essential in all circumstances....”¹⁰⁴

Annual return of Patients treated in Eden Sanitarium during the year 1890 as follows.¹⁰⁵

Names of the disease	Male	Female	Children	Total	Cured	Reliever	Died
Disentry	2	1	3	6	4	--	2
Malarial fever	55	11	9	75	72	2	1
Debility	21	23	8	52	48	4	--
Syphilis	8	--	--	8	5	3	--
Gonorrhoeaetc.	7	--	--	7	5	2	1
others				190			

Death from fever in Ratio per 1000 of population

Circle	1888	1887	1883to1887	1878 to 1887	1888	1887	1883-1887	1878to1887
Urban	24836	25195	30669	35266	10.40	110.45	12.72	14.63
Rural	1067266	1062573	982772	864015	16.76	16.66	15.44	13.57

The establishment of a pumping station in connection with the scheme of water supply within the Jalpaiguri Municipality and Resolved that the Municipality shall not spend on any account or on any reason the said sums already paid by Babu Krishna Sundar Sen until and unless the entire Government Grant and loan as well as the contribution of the Jalpaiguri District board are fully released and that and if the Municipality spends the amount of Rs.6003/- and Rs.257/- (Already paid) before the receipt of the Government grant and the District Board contribution in full, Babu Krishna Sundar Sen or his executor will be at liberty to demand or get back the said money with interest.¹⁰⁶

References

- 1) Sailen Debnath, *Cultural History of North Bengal*, N.L.Publisher, Siliguri, 2008, p. xii
- 2) Prafulla Dutta Goswami, *Essays on the Folklore and culture of North Eastern India*, first published 1983, United Publishers, Panbazar, Guahati, India.p.41
- 3) Kartik Chandra Sutradhar, *Samaj, Dharma O Arthaniti: Prosanga Uttarbanga*, Sangbedan, Malda, 2012, p. 21
- 4) Interview with Ramesh Suba, 76 years, S/O Late Duduram Suba, Paschim Satali, Hasimara, Dist Alipurduar, and Date 10.10.2011.
- 5) Dr.Charu Chandra Sanyal, *The Meches and the Totos: Two Sub-Himalayan Tribes of North Bengal*, The University of North Bengal, 1973, p.30
- 6) Interview with Amarendra Nath Suba, 65 years, S/O late Chandra Singh Suba, Vill-West Satali, P.O.West Satali, and Dist-Alipurduar, Present address-East Netaji Road, P.O. & Dist. Alipurduar, 6.6.14
- 7) Kartik Chandra Sutradhar & et.al, *Bibartaner Dharay Uttarbanger Samaj, Dharma, Arthoniti O Sanskriti*, Dipali publishers, Malda, 2010, p. 84
- 8) Reboti Mohon Saha, *Rabha Janajati O Tader Jibondhara, in Kiratbhumi, Jalpaiguri Zilla Shankhya*, Edited by Arabinda Kar, Jalpaiguri, p.663
- 9) Sunil Pal, *Rabha O Tader Devi Rantuk Basek*, in Jalpaiguri Zilla Shotobarshiki Swarak Grantha, p.216
- 10) N.Basu, *Social History of Kamrup*, published in 1922, p.98
- 11) Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol-iii, part-ii, 1903
- 12) J. D. Hooker, *Himalayan Journal*, 5th Indian Reprint, 2005, Today & Tomorrow's Printers & Publisher, vol. II, p. 271
- 13) Dalton Hooker, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, 1872, p. 89-92
- 14) D.H.E Sunder, *Settlement officer, Survey & Settlement of the Western Duars in the Dist of Jalpaiguri*, 1889-95, p.65

- 15) H. H. Risley, *Tribes & Castes of Bengal, Ethnographic Glossary* vol-I and vol-II, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. Kolkata, 1998.p.89
- 16) B.N.Bordoloi, *Tribes of Assam*, Part-iii, p.30
- 17) Gait- A history of Assam (Reprint) Guahati, 1984, p. 47
- 18) Nagendra Nath Basu, *Social History of Kamrupa*, vol.I, p. 33
- 19) Ibid., p.33
- 20) J. F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers* , Jalpaiguri, 1st published in1911, printed at the Pioneer Press, Allahabad, reprinted by West Bengal District Gazetteers,Higher Education Department, Government of West Bengal, 2011, p.36
- 21) H. H. Risley, op.cit. , p.19
- 22) Premananda Roy, *The Meches, Sub- Himalayan Region of West Bengal*, An introduction to Anthropology Ethnography Linguistics and Culture. 2010, Siliguri, p. 20
- 23) West Bengal state Archives, Kolkata, P.V. Sept, 1877
- 24) A.Mitra, *Census of India, 1951, District Hand Book*, Jalpaiguri, 1951, Jalpaiguri, p. cxcviii
- 25) Ibid., p. cxcviii
- 26) Ibid., p.cxcviii
- 27) Reboti Mohon Saha, *Ravader Sangit O Badyo Jontro, in Kiratbhumi125 celebration* vol. 1869- 1994, Jalpaiguri, 1994, p. 312
- 28) Amal kumar Das, *The Rabhas of West Bengal*, Published by T.B.Singh, Director of Cultural Research Institute on behalf of S.C.S. Tribe Welfare Dept. 1967, p. 6
- 29) Ibid., p.50
- 30) Interview with Dino Nath Rava, 60 years, S/O Gour Hari Rava, Vill. Paglikuti Forest Basti, P.O. Rashikbill, Dist. Coochbehar, and P.S.Baxir Hat.6.7.201
- 31) Sailen Debnath, *The Dooars in Historical Transition*, N. L. Publishers, Siliguri, 2010, p.109
- 32) Interview with Dino Nath Rava, op.cit, 9.7.13

- 33) Abani Mohan Kusari & et.al. *West Bengal District Gazetteer*, Jalpaiguri, Calcutta, July 1981, p.210
- 34) Ibid., p, 81
- 35) Sunder, op.cit. , p. 86
- 36) Ibid, p, 87
- 37) Shraboni Ghosh, *The History of Medical and Healthcare system of North Bengal from 1869-1969*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 2011, N.B.U.
- 38) Premananda Roy, op.cit, p. 57
- 39) Sujoy Debnath, *Changing Profile of the Tribes in the Dooars Area of Jalpaiguri District (1865-1990)*, M.PHIL .DISSERTATION, N.B.U. 2010, p.44
- 40) Interview with Dhaniram Toto, Totopara, Madarihat, Jalpaiguri,12.9.14
- 41) Sunder, op.cit. p.72,
- 42) Ibid., p.78
- 43) Swaraj Basu, *Dynamics of a caste Movement, The Rajbansis of North Bengal, 1910-1947*, 1st published 2003, New Delhi.p.15
- 44) Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal, *The Rajbansis of North Bengal*, (A Study of a Hindu Social Group) Calcutta,1965 p.13
- 45) Swaraj Basu, op.cit, p.62
- 46) Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Caste, Politics and the Raj, Bengal-1872-1937*, 1st published 1990, K.P.Bagchi & Company, p.127
- 47) J.F.Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers Jalpaiguri*,1st published in 1911, printed at The Pioneer Press, Allahabad, reprinted by West Bengal District Gazetteers, Higher Education Department, Govt. of West Bengal, 2011, p.34
- 48) W.W.Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal, vol. X*, Trubner & Company, London, 1876, p, 345
- 49) Interview with Ananda Gopal Ghosh, 65, retired Professor of History, N.B.U. 3.6.14
- 50) Hunter, op.cit. p. 347
- 51) Swaraj Basu, op.cit, p.62

- 52) Ajoy Kumar Roy, *Some notes on the Kshtriya Movement in North Bengal, in journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh vol xx. No I, p.48*
- 53) Sunder, op.cit, p.48
- 54) Interview with Ramesh Roy, 49 years, S/O late Santeswar Roy, Vill & P.O Chapani, P. S. Samuktala, Dist-Jalpaiguri, 12.9.14
- 55) Ashok Prosad Roy, *Itihaser Preksapote Uttarbanga O Rajbansi, Royal Publisher, 1st published, 2006, p.194*
- 56) Upendra Nath Barman, *Rajbanshi Khsatriya Jatir itihās (In Bengali), Jalpaiguri, 1388 B.S.p.14*
- 57) Interview with Anil kumar Roy, 65, S/O Late Bijoy Kumar Roy, Vill- Baro Kamat, P.O Manikganj, Dist-Jalpaiguri, 12.9.13
- 58) Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal, *The Rajbansis of North Bengal, Calcutta, 1965, p. 27-32.*
- 59) Birendra Prosad Basu, *Dev Deuler Des Jalpaiguri, 1394 B.S. p.26*
- 60) Uttarbanga Sambad, A Bengali daily, 16thOct, 2013
- 61) Ibid,
- 62) Interview with Harihar Adhikary, 65, S/O Murari Mohan Adhikary, Village Bolbari, Moynaguri, Jalpaiguri, dated 17.10.13
- 63) Ibid.
- 64) Interview, Binapani Adhikari, 55, C/o Harihar Adhikari, Domohoni, Bolbarigram, Moynaguri, dated 17.10.13
- 65) Ibid
- 66) Interview with Harihar Adhikari, op.cit
- 67) Ibid.
- 68) W.W.Hunter, op.cit.p.378
- 69) George Abraham Greerson, *Linguistic Survey of India, vol, V, p.153*
- 70) Ibid.p.163
- 71) Interview with Bimal Roy, 45, Assistant teacher of Belakoba High School, Jalpaiguri, 7.5.13
- 72) Provat Ranjan Sarkar, *Bangla O Bangali, 1988, p.89*
- 73) Upendra Nath Barman, *Rajbansi Kshatriyo Jatir itihās, 1388 B.S, p.42*

- 74) C.C.Sanyal, op.cit, p.250
- 75) Ashok Roy Prodhan, op.cit, p. 200
- 76) Ratan Lal Chakroborti & Susanta Chandra Kha, *Rangpur Bartaboho, 1848-1851, Kolkata, 2001*p. 54
- 77) *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol XIV*, Jaisalmer to Kara, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1908, p.36
- 78) Grunning, op.cit, p.86
- 79) Dr.Upendra Nath Barman, op.cit.p.47
- 80) Bazlaye Rahaman, *Uttarbanger Muslim Samaj*, Shreshtha Publication, 1st Published in 2008, p.41
- 81) Hunter, op.cit, p.259
- 82) Sunder, op.cit, p. 47
- 83) Ibid.,p. 47
- 84) Ibid., p. 47
- 85) Bazlaye Rahaman, *Uttarbanger Muslim Samaj*, Ibid, p. 89
- 86) Ibid.,89
- 87) Sunder, op.cit.pp.56,57,58
- 88) The Statesman, A English daily, Calcutta, 5th September,2001
- 89) Mukulesh Sanyal, *Jalpaigurir Pujo, Dainik Basumati*, 27th September, 1998
- 90) Ibid
- 91) B.N.Dasgupta, *My School, in Jalpaiguri Zilla School Magazine*, Centinary vol, 1876-1976, p. 6
- 92) Samir Chakraborty, *Cha Baganer Pujo, Dainik Basumati*, 27th September, 1998
- 93) Mukulesh Sanyal, *Jalpaigurir Pujo, Basumati*, 27th September, 1998
- 94) Sri Durga Prosonnyo Ghatak, *Sekaler Katha, 1901, Jalpaiguri Zilla School Shotobarshiki patrika*, 1876-1976, p. 2.
- 95) B.N.Dasgupta, op.cit. p.7
- 96) Nihar Ranjan Roy, *Bangalir Itihas, Adi Parba, Dey's publishing, Kolkata, 1st published in 1356*, p. 479

- 97) West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata, No.1383 I.R.date-Calcutta, the 16 Th March, 1869, 9File 5-E/1 2)
- 98) West Bengal State Archives, A Letter written by E.M.Konstam Esq,under Secretary to the Commissioner of Rajshahi Division,Revenew Dept,Govt.of Bengal.
- 99) Abani MohanKusari, op.cit, p.323
- 100) Ranjit Dasgupta, *Jalpaiguri Zellar Artho Samajik Itihas Sambondhe Kichhu prathomik Mantobyo, Kiratbhumi*, Jalpaiguri Zilla 125 Barshapurti Shankhya, 1994, p.117
- 101) *Trisrota, A Bengali Periodical, Jalpaiguri*, 8.2.31,A letter written by Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri to the secretary, Ramjhora Tea Co. Ltd, Jal, the 25th July, 1930.
- 102) Ranjit Dasgupta, 125th Barsha purti shankhya, Ibid, p. 118
- 103) West Bengal State Archives, Proceedings, lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, February 1869, (letter No 3931 T., dated Calcutta, 28th December, 1868)
- 104) B.N.Dasgupta, op.cit, p. 6
- 105) Progs.Of the GOB, Mun Dept, San Br, July 1889, p.18, WBSA
- 106) Extracts from the proceeding of a meeting of Municipal Commissioners of Jalpaiguri held on 15th January 1930, Resolution.