QUEST OF INCLUSION FOR THE EXCLUDED: STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SOCIO-CULTURAL INCLUSION OF THE RAJBANSHI COMMUNITY IN WEST BENGAL

Kamal Chandra Barman

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Political Science, M. U. C. Women's College, Purba Bardhaman, WB, India

ABSTRACT

Social Inclusion is considered to be the most trusted antidotes to the century old history of discrimination and exclusion of the ethnic minorities. It is a result of intercommunications between and among different variables like- distortions of the past history, socio-cultural discriminations, economic inequalities, religious backwardness and ostracisms etc. For emancipation from these social devils, Social Inclusion is the only possible way to dismantle this exclusivist society. To understand the process of social inclusion of the Rajbanshi community of the northern part of West Bengal, it is therefore necessary to examine the historical, linguistic, socio-cultural, educational and financial conditions of them. To find out the root causes of their exclusions with some probable findings and solutions is the main objectives of this article. To reach the objective, data has been collected from several primary as well as secondary sources for getting in-depth information of exclusion of the Rajbanshis for inclusion in the national mainstream. For that purpose a questionnaire based survey technique and a descriptive and analytical tool has been followed by using methodology of social inclusion. Therefore, Emancipation of the Rajbanshis from the above mentioned social devils is possible by armored them with proper education, making them literate to take decisions at different level and show their responsibility to the society. At the same time, the role of the government and civil society are also indispensable to restore their socio-cultural pasts with economic dignity and include them into the national mainstream.

Key words: Rajbanshi, Social Exclusion, Inclusion, Dismantle, Emancipation, West Bengal

1. Introduction

Everyone knows West Bengal is relatively a well governed state within Indian union, but nowadays government is failed to bring desired progress of some the communities which making dissatisfaction among them. Gradually took part in the socio-cultural mobilizations from which the seeds of exclusion in the northern region of West Bengal have grown up. The government of India as well as the government of West Bengal is gradually taking some sort of necessary measures to douse the fire of separate state demand on the basis of socio-cultural distinctions of the Gorkhas, Rajbanshis, Kamtapuris etc. For example- the creation of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) etc. The most important segment of this article is the Rajbangshi community, the sons of the soil of the region that has been excluded socio-culturally and economically by the other communities of the society for a long period of time, who needs inclusion into the national mainstream.

2. Research Problem

This study feels that it is necessary to examine the causes of socio-cultural exclusion of the Rajbanshis community in order to understand the real issues involved with and whether PRIs is working for the process of social inclusion of the excluded or not? This analysis will help to know the actual causes of socio-cultural alienation of the excluded groups, like- Rajbanshis of West Bengal. So, socio-cultural exclusion is the problem in the process of social inclusion.

3. Review of literature

A large number of theoretical study concerning the problem of socio-cultural, linguistic and racial mobilization have come up in recent years and to identify these relevant literatures pertaining to this area of study is a tough task. But all these works differ from each other in their approach and characterization of these mobilizations. Some of the works have been reviewed here.

Uwe Skoda, Kenneth Bo Nielsen and Marianne Qvortrup Fibiger in their study "Navigating Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Contemporary India and Beyond: Structures, Agents, Practices" nicely narrated the problems of exclusion and inclusion within a broad theoretical and conceptual framework with the help of empirical data. It explains in detail why we need to change our focus from state and caste centric discussion to a discourse on communities, resources and spaces instead. This book analyzes some of the factors, like- caste hierarchy and economic policies with some empirical case studies and the contributors express their conceptual

knowledge regarding social exclusion and inclusion and try to provide a cross disciplinary approach.

V. Rama Krishna in his article "Inclusive Growth and Socio-Economic Political Linkage of Inclusive Policies for Exclusive Sections" pointed out clearly the relationship between Socio-Economic, Political factors and inclusive growth at rural level. In a globalized world Indian economy has passed through different stages of growth. But one important earmark has been taken for national growth is the inclusive growth for the excluded sections of the society. For that purpose the government has taken many schemes and policies, such as- PMGSY, IAY, PMAGY, SLWS etc. to increase the allocation to social sectors. His concept of Inclusive Growth focused on economic growth with a necessary and crucial condition for poverty eradication that means the pace of growth and enlargement of the economy is needed for investment and employment generation. But pro-poor policies have two side effects- one is positive effect on growth and second, a negative effect on inequality. Besides this, the government should take necessary policies for sustainable growth.

"The Contexts of Social Exclusion" by Hilary Silver depicts social exclusion and inclusions are context-dependent concepts. The various aspects of exclusion and inclusion may vary in meaning and manifestations in different scenarios. This study focuses on how Globalization is sometimes juxtaposed to and even blamed for exclusionary particularism.

Gary Bouma's paper on 'Religious Diversity and the Challenges of Social Inclusion' described the diversified nature and role of society and religion. As societies have become religiously diverse in ways and extents not familiar in the recent histories of most, the issues of how to include this diversity and how to manage it, that is, questions about how to be a religiously diverse society have come to the fore. As a result religion has become part of the social policy conversation in new ways. It has also occasioned new thinking about religions, their forms and the complexity of ways they are negotiated by adherents and the ways they are related to society, the state and each other. This issue of Social Inclusion explores these issues of social inclusion in both particular settings and in cross-national comparative studies by presenting research and critical thought on this critical issue facing every society today.

4. Research Gap

All the above mentioned literature has discussed many areas of social exclusion and inclusion. But not a single work has discussed the exclusion and inclusion of Rajbanshis which is still remained untouched. Keeping this in mind, the present article is a humble attempt to fill the above research gap and this study focused on two Gram Panchayats of the district of Cooch

Behar and makes clear the picture of their functioning of the government for the process of social inclusion of the excluded into the mainstream society.

5. Objectives of the Study

The specific objective of the study are- i) to find out the correlations between Exclusion and Inclusion; and ii) to assess the nature of socio-cultural exclusion of the Rajbanshi community in West Bengal and insert them into the national mainstream through the process of inclusion.

6. Methodology

Sampling from two selected Gram Panchayats (GP), namely- Chhotoa Sal Bari GP and Pachagarh GP, have been done and to reach in the objective of the study data has been also collected from different secondary sources for getting in depth information of the exclusion in rural areas. For that purpose a questionnaire based survey technique and a descriptive and analytical tool has been followed by using methodology of social exclusion and inclusion.

7. Universe of the study

Two extreme opposite villages, namely- Chhoto Sal Bari GP from Sitalkuchi and Pahagarh GP from Mathabhanga-1 community development blocks respectively. Therefore, a total of 1800 (Rajanshi-632 + Others-1168) and 1824 (Rajanshi-580 + Others-1244) respondents have been interviewed. Respondents were not only from the Rajbanshi alone, but also from other communities are there. I think by comparing two different and extreme opposite primary units, this study can portray the actual socio-cultural, religious, linguistic and economic picture of backwardness of these two selected GPs.

8. Research Questions

This study judge the applicability of the concept of socio-cultural exclusion in the contemporary India and puts forward some questions which need ration answer. These are- 1) how do the liberalized Indian economy contributing to the processes of social exclusion and inclusion? 2) How does the social ground alter 'development' on which exclusions and inequalities are negotiated? And lastly, 3) To what extent Indian liberal democracy provides excluded groups new opportunities for pursuing strategies of inclusion.

9. Hypotheses

Rajbanshis and people from other backward classes which includes- Muslims, Brahmins, Sarkar, Debnath, Biswas, Namadas, Pal, Shil, Sen, Mondal, Orao, Kirtaniya etc. of North Bengal are equally facing a lot of problems from the above mentioned social devils. But this study mainly focused on the socio-cultural exclusion of the Rajbanshis. Hypotheses suggest that decentralized grass root democratic bodies (PRIs) may further lead to the process of social inclusion of the Rajbanshi community.

10. Discussion

10.1 Population in the District

Cooch Behar district is central area of settlement of Rajbanshi community including Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. Not only that but also in some areas of Derjeeling, North and South Dinajpur, Alipuduar districts of this state are inhibited by the Rajbanshis. For that reason, Cooch Behar has been selected as the study area. Total no of population in the district is 24, 79,155 (Census-2001) out of which 12, 72,094 males and 12, 07,061 females.

Table no-1	Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Population			
Population	Sex	District Total	Rural	Urban
Scheduled Caste	Male	636446	613853	22593
	Female	605928	583596	22332
	Total	1242374	1197449	44925
Scheduled Tribes	Male	7425	6855	570
	Female	6821	6281	540
	Total	14246	13136	1110

Source: Census Report of India-2001

This table (Table no-1) shows the present quantum of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes population of the district. The total agricultural land under production is 33157 thousand hectares out of which 274702 hectares under operational land. During the 1971 Census, 14% Rajbangshi people were there among the total population of North Bengal. The Leadership of the movement always try to mobilize the people of Scheduled Caste Rajbangshi by spreading ethnic religious sentiments, by revolving past history in their favour, such as- the proficiency of warrior Chila Roy, Mahati Sabha etc. and non-Rajbangshi scheduled caste population.

10.2 Origin of the Rajbanshis

The history of origin of the Rajbanshi community is totally a conundrum. There is hardly any opinion of consensus regarding their origin. It is said that they belong to the great Bodo family that entered India in 10th century BC from the East and settled on the banks of Brahmaputra and gradually spread over Assam and the whole of North as well as East Bengal now Bangladesh. But some scholars of this Rajbanshi community argued that they did not belong to the Bodo community. According to them, Rajbanshis of North Bengal is from the family of King Prithu of Kamrupa. However it is a debatable topic, whether the Rajbanshis of North Bengal belong to the Bodo or King Prithu's family, we just mention here some scholar's argument about the origin of Rajbanshis of West Bengal.

10.2.1 Mongolian Origin

Baktyar Khiliji, when he entered Tibet in 1206 AD, it was reported that at that time between Lakhnavati and Tibet lay hill and the jungle tract that was inhabited by the three non-Indian Mongolian tribes i.e. the Koch, the Mech, and the Tharu. Muslim historians of the medieval period pointed out that the Kamrupa was inhabited by the Kwnc, the Myj, and the Thew (means- the Kwnc or Koch, Myj or Mech and Thew or Tharu) peoples who are from Mongoloid race and speech made a distinct impression upon the Turks are the same racial.

10.2.2 Dravidian Origin

Risley described that Koch, Koch-Mandi, Rajbanshi, Paliya and Deshi belong to a great Dravidian tribe origin of North Eastern and Eastern Bengal. Among them, some of them are the suspected mixture of Mongolian origin also. The transformation of Koch into Rajbanshi, the name by which they are now known in Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar is a singular illustration of the influence exercised by fiction in the making of caste. In the words of Risley, Rajbanshi people are "thoroughly Koch' under the name of Rajbanshi. There is no historical foundation for the claim of Rajbanshis to be the provincial variety of Kshatriyas. It is a regular

fact that the title Rajbanshi serves much the same purpose for the lower stratum of Hindu population of north Bengal as the title Rajput does for the landholding class of dubious origin all over India. The original nucleus of Rajbanshi was certainly Dravidian". (D. N. Das)

10.2.3 Mixed Origin of Austric-Dravidian-Mongoloid

Edward Gait another scholar who described that "the Bhimals of Darjeeling and Nepal terrain is as Rajbanshis. They often called themselves Rajbanshis. Their title is Mallik (Maulick). The Koch is cultivators and the same as Rajbanshis. Though the Kochs freely called themselves Rajbanshis, it is believed that the two communities sprang from entirely different sources, the Koch Kings of Mongoloid origin, while the Rajbanshis are Dravidian tribes who probably owned the name long before the Koch King rose to power. In Cooch Behar the persons now known as Rajbanshis are either pure Koches who though dark have a distinct Mongoloid physiognomy or else a mixed breed which the Koch element usually predominates". (D. N. Das)

S. K. Chatterjee wrote, "The messages of North Bengal areas are very largely of Bodo origin or mixed Austric-Dravidian-Mongoloid. They now are described as- Koch that is Hinduism or Semi-Hinduism Bodo who have abandoned their original Tibeto-Burman speech and have adopted the northern dialect of Bengali. They call themselves as Rajbanshis and claim that they are Kshatriyas..…. He himself was a worshiper of Shiva and Durga, revived the Shakta Shrine at Kamakhya. This is an old shrine of hoary antiquity and of Mongoloid or possibly even earlier Austric-origin. It witnessed the final Brahmanisation of a pre-Aryan cult. It is a symbol of the final Aryanization or Hinduization of the Indo-Mongoloids of North eastern India".

10.2.4 Origin of Non-Aryan

Charu Chandra Sanyal argued that the Koch is non-Aryan in origin; some of them adopted Hinduism and became Rajbanshis. These Rajbanshis later on claimed to be Kshatriyas. The scholars who belong to Rajbanshi origin have argued that the source of Rajbanshis is not from the Koch or Bodo origin, rather they viewed that Rajbanshis are the direct descendents of King Prithu who was installed as a King in 1200 AD and remained in power up to 1228 AD. These indigenous scholars argued that the Rajbanshi population has their own culture, own language and habits. There was a story about the source of the present Rajbanshi population, which is like this- King Parasurama took the policy of De-kshatriyaization in this area. The people of this area were Aryan (who was the Kshatriya). For that reason, a section of Rajbanshis fled from their mainland due to the fear of Parasurama. This group of people started living in the forestland. Ultimately they remained detached from their own communities of people and maintained their own cultures, language and performed their own Kshatriya rituals etc. In this way, they were

called Bhanga Kshatriya. So, the Rajbanshis of Cooch Behar would not be from Anglo-Mongoloid background rather they have a separate Kshatriya past. (C.C. Sanyal)

10.2.5 Origin of Semi-Hinduism

Dr. Hunter also argued that the Koch king Hajo founded a kingdom at Kamrupa in 15th century and his grandson Visva Singha, together with his officers and all people of the kingdom apostatized and adopted the Hinduism. The Brahmins manufactured a divine ancestry for the chief. They converted the name of Koch and took that of Rajbanshi. Hunter also notes that "in Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar, the cultivators and respectable men adopt the name Rajbanshi which literally means 'Royal Race', and the name Koch refers to labourers and especially to the palanquin bearers. Hunter places the Rajbanshi under semi-Hinduism aboriginals." (D. N. Das)

Thus, the origin of the Rajbanshis of North Bengal is either Mongoloid or Dravidian or Austric. Whatever it is, they were the sons of the soil of North Bengal, no doubt about it. In recent times we find different class mobilization and politics though this mobilization started from the late 1960's especially from the time when the Left front Government (LFG) has come into power. During the 1980s class mobilization replaced ethnic mobilization like the Uttarakhand movement, KPP movement and more importantly greater Cooch Behar people Associations (GCPSA) movement. All these movements demand for a separate state within the Indian union. The Rajbanshis of North Bengal except the hill area of Darjeeling said that they have a different existence not only from socio-cultural but also from economic and political aspects in comparison with Bengalis. They have no hesitation to say that they are leading a backward life.

11. Religion of Rajbanshis

It is not a matter of happiness to see intolerant activities of some of the religious groups which are undoubtedly opposite with the entire spirit of a secular state. In ancient societies, secular political ideologies did not exist and the ideological element was caused entirely by religion. But gradually religious values and political culture during the age of globalization have come close to each other and become homogenous patterns of political life. The relationship between globalization and religion is complex in nature which leads to some sort of challenges. On the one hand, religion takes advantage of information communication and technology and on the other hand, religion enters into a circle of conflict in which religions become more self-conscious of themselves which may be harmful to the nation building process. In the case of India, there are a huge number of religious groups, castes and sub-castes and it is unfortunate to say that some of them are opposed to each other due to their religious practices and habits and fought

each other for supremacy and leads to religious exclusion. For the complete departure of religious exclusion during the age of globalization, an important attribute of secularism is very much essential which has already been established and India has become a secular state now.

11.1 Concept of Religious Exclusion

During globalization, so many religious groups which are gradually losing their religious practices and rituals and becoming excluded who needs special attention. Rajbanshi is one of them which have gradually lost its religious practices. Religious exclusion is another concept which is also closely associated with social exclusion. While an individual becomes unable to take part in socio-cultural, religious activities in the society, due to low level or no income which can be called as religious exclusion which means they remain far away from the fruits of development of religious activities and cultures. Poor and unemployed people are the main victims of religious exclusion and marginalization. As a result some people lose their self-confidence and feel greater and greater isolation which is widening the gap between rich and poor which needs inclusion. Religious inclusion is a process of improving the socio-cultural and religious conditions for individuals as well as for groups in the society. The main aim is to empower excluded and marginalized people and help them to procure advantages from globalized opportunities. Through this process common people can enjoy equal access to religious spaces, socio-cultural and economic development. Therefore, they need religious inclusion not only for their personal betterment but also for the welfare of the whole society.

Three general points emerged from the study of the NSSO which are- 1) the impact of liberalization across casts and communities and their internal disparities getting worsen. 2) The traditionally privileged upper-classes get benefits more irrespective of their religious backgrounds, as compared with SCs, STs and OBCs. 3) The share of SCs and STs decreased in the top 5% MPCE groups both in rural and urban India. (T. K. Oommen, 'Social Inclusion in Independent India' (2014) pp. 128-129) It is therefore necessary to understand these ethnic religious mobilization and to examine the root causes of them. So that the problems of religious exclusion can be mitigate.

11.2 Religious practices of the Rajbanshis

Traditional communities have been broken down by the direct impact of globalization. Concept of 'global village' which is nothing but a system dramatically alters what individuals traditionally understood by the terms 'citizenship'. Religion has got monumental benefits by technological advancements, such as- websites of any temple providing information about its geographical location, features and importance. Globalization in its early stages of development

allowed religions to remain isolated from one each-other but now it allows having regular and unavoidable contact and interacting with each other. In this way Globalization is engendering greater religious tolerance in modern society. Globalization causes psychological disorders. Because it allows an individual to think about his/her job security. Therefore, the inner peace of individuals is destroyed with the impact of globalization and only religion can bring back this inner peace and personal fulfillment. At the same time, individuals realize that getting involved within their communities and organizing together in social movements brings more satisfaction to them than material profits. Religious practices are common for all sections whether it is upper caste peoples or lower caste, but the difference lies in ways of worship. Rajbanshi populations are still maintaining their traditional age old rituals to some extent which are inconsistent with upper caste Hindu practices. Rajbanshis worship the nature gods and goddesses. Such as- gods and goddesses of roads, forests, rivers, paddy fields, snake etc. Some of the religious practices and rituals are discussed here.

11.3 Gotsu Puna

In this globalized world, religious groups are always trying to find out their sense of belongingness in modern society. Religious leaders pointed out the loss of ethical values, corruption and demanding to go back to the traditional values and religious norms. It is due to a feeling of being a part of a group which represents their interests and regains their traditional sense of whom they are they are the part. One of these religious cultures is Gotsu Puna or Roa Gara Puja or Tamak Gara Puja which is a religious practice of worship in the motherland. Actually, it is a ceremony of the cultivators to celebrate their first transplantation of paddy, tobacco etc. Objectives of the puja are to satisfy Ma Dhoritri (mother land) who will provide blessings for good cultivation. It is gradually disappearing.

11.4 Masan Puja

Masan is a most dangerous horrible male spirit who generally lives in cremation ground or bathing ghat or road. These spirits may also reside in trees like- bamboo, plantain tree etc. He may be different kinds such as-Barika Masan who lives in bamboo, Ghater Masan who lives in bathing ghat, Tisila Masan who lives in water, Kal Masan who lives in cremation ground etc. Masan can attack any person at any time and place and take possession of him which is known as 'Chutsia Dhora'. Symptoms of an affected person by the Masan, likewise-the person may eat burnt earth, burnt wood charcoal, all fish fries, roasted cereals etc. At the same time the affected person may suffer from diarrhea, dysentery, weakness, passing of urine unconsciously in the bed and he was worshiped by the family members of the affected person for cure.

11.5 Bisohari Puja

It is also a kind of puja which has a deep connection with marriage, childbirth, shradh etc. Bisohari is the goddess of snakes and worshiped by this community people at the starting point of the above mentioned ceremonies. By observing this occasion Rajbanshis always try to regain their traditional sense.

11.6 Tsauni Puja

Tsauni Puja or Chauni Puja is the worship of the female evil spirits. These spirits will come and attack the expectant mother when the pregnancy advances to six or nine month or a new born baby if they become dissatisfied i.e. this puja is done for the satisfaction of the spirits. Although we all know very well that whether evil spirits exist or not are a matter of justification. But it is a matter of belief which provides a feeling of home and a notion of truth.

11.7 Bas Khela

Rajbanshi young boys with fancy dresses, during the month of Baishakh, after the harvesting of paddy, on the Madan Chaturdashi day observed Bas Khela which is also known as Madan Kam Puja. A few pieces of bamboo poles wrapped with colorful clothes and changor tied up at the top of each bamboo arrived at a house of a village, members of the group sing songs and dance which is called Birsani Khela or Bas Khela. They move from one house to another the same way and collect money, rice and vegetables. On the last day, they worship Goddess Kali for the welfare of the village, epidemic free zone etc.

11.8 Bhandani Puja

After the day of Bijaya Dasami, Bhandani Puja starts with up to two days which is generally found in between Tista to Raidak river bank of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri. This puja is also known as Dang Dhori Mao Puja. Image of the goddess is like this- a single female deity with two hands seated on a tiger named Bhandani. There is no Siva or Mahadeva in the real picture. But later on Ganesh, Kartik, Laxmi and Swaraswati were added to the image and the tiger converted into a lion. Some people said that Maa Bhandani fought the demons with weapons and became simple. Some others said that it is the puja of the mother earth for giving good crops in the field.

11.9 Hudum Deo Puja

This puja is only for drought prone areas. Women of that drought area assimilated in a distant paddy field at night with sharp knives in hands and made an image of the rain-god with a

plantain tree. Then women remove their clothes and untied their hair and completely nude they dance and sing obscene songs and abuse the rain god. Symbolically two women become cows and the third one becomes a farmer ploughing the land and spraying the seeds of paddy. No man is allowed to see the episode. Actually through this whole episode, a clear cut shameful picture has been shown to the rain-god, so that rain can come in the drought area. Today, all these religious practices and rituals are being gradually abolishing. New generations even don't know the name of these religious practices of Rajbanshi community. So, the question is arising why these religious practices and rituals of marginalized communities are gradually abolishing?

11.10 Problem with Religious practices

Globalization in other ways is a revolution which disrupts the traditional religious practices and customs of the age-old communities and causes economic marginalization which brings mental stresses, the disadvantageous consequences of globalization. There is no doubt that religion has given a special place in politics, but one of the major problems associated with religious exclusion is communal violence that led to increased death rates in different parts of the country. There are many cases where Muslims have been killed by the people of other religious groups and vice versa. Religion may also create some sort of provoking situations for political violence and conflicting situations which need solution. It is unfortunate to say that in a class divided society like India, some of the religious groups struggle for power and try to control over each other. If it is not controlled, then fragmentation would be the ultimate result. Side by side, religious attitudes are opposed to democratic feelings. If religious forces are allowed to become powerful then there will be a greater chance of disintegration. So, it is a difficult challenge to correlate democratic decentralized bodies with religious inclusion.

12. Linguistic Exclusion

12.1 Language of Rajbanshis

Article 351 of the Indian constitution prescribes: **"**It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindu Language, to develop it so that may serve as a medium of expression for all elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages." (T. K. Oommen, 'Social Inclusion in Independent India' (2014) pp. 139) Two recommendations were made by the SRC. These are- 1) unity of India must not be imposed, but must be a fundamental unity recognizing its social pluralities and cultural diversity. The strength of the Indian Union

must be the strength that it derives from its constituent units; and 2) in the past India had not been an integrated political unit; so the effort should be to create a united India and the new concept of unity cannot be based on the reaffirmation or re-enunciation of old values such as religion and language which are divisive rather than cohesive.

Table no: 13	**Secessionist and Separatist Demands in Independent India**
1	Tamil Nadu demanded an independent sovereign state based on Tamil Language and Dravidian Hindustan (1960)
2	Sikhistan/Khalistan, based on Sikh religion and Punjabi language (1950s and 80s).
3	Kashmir Valley (Islam the main basis) for either Azad Kashmir or Integration with Pakistan.
4	Demand for Mizo state (Predominantly Christian) based on tribal and linguistic specificity.
5	Demand for Sovereign Nagaland (Predominantly Christian) based on tribal identity and consolidation of the common homeland.
(T. K. Oommen, "Social Inclusion in Independent India" (2014) Page: 139)	

This table (Table no: 13) shows the vivid picture of the demands of formation of separate states within Indian Territory again and again. India's caste system coexisted with numerous castes specializing in different occupations in the same village. All of them share the same mother tongue, occasionally with minor dialectal variations. Thus, neither religion nor caste can be the only basis for forming politico-administrative units. But the language is territorially tied-up and complicates the situation in India. However, there are several factors that are responsible for this linguistic exclusion in India. These are - "1) the border areas of linguistic regions are invariably bilingual or even trilingual which adversely affects the co-terminality between territory and language. 2) Members of the same tribal community may speak other languages in addition to their mother tongue. 3) The process of industrialization, urbanization and modernization prompt

the migration which always creates multilingual habitats, particularly in urban settlements. 4) The misconstrued tendency to associate language and religion reduces the salience of languages as an identity marker." (T. K. Oommen, 2014)

The Language spoken by the Rajbangshi people has some similarities and dissimilarities with standard Bengali and Assamese. The Scholars and leaders of this community viewed that Rajbangshi language is a separate one and it is not a dialect of Bengali language. As for example, the words 'Deobar'(Sunday); 'Khokrabhat'(previous night's cooked rice); 'Bianka'(Morning); 'Sagai'(Relatives) etc. are used as 'Rabibar', 'Basibhat', 'Sakal', 'Atmiya' etc respectively in Bengali language. In such a way leaders of the movement induce people in favour of the movement and become excluded. Globalization gives open spaces for many regional languages or dialects like- Kamtapuri etc. to lose their importance and abolishing gradually. In pursuing the policy of promoting Hindi as the 'national' language at national level and Bengali as the official language in the state of West Bengal, the processes of exclusion and expansionism are at work. In this way manufactured concepts of 'outsiders' and 'insiders' in the socio-cultural context have been created. To be sure, the twin processes of expansionism and exclusion are at work in the case of other dominant languages also.

Table no: 14	**Reasons for ongoing Demands for Separate States:**
1	Vidarbha (Maharashtra): regional disparity and underdevelopment.
2	Bundelkhand (divided between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh): cultural unity and underdevelopment.
3	Bhojpur (divided between Uttar Pradesh and Bihar): cultural similarity and linguistic homogeneity.
4	Harit Pradesh (western Uttar Pradesh): for better governance and accelerated development.
5	Vishal Haryana: for cultural consolidation and better governance.
6	Coorg (Karnataka): based on cultural specificity and under development.

7	The Dangs and the Bublas (Gujrat): tribal identity and accelerated development.
8	Saurashtra (Gujrat): Regional disparity and cultural specificity .
9	Kosala (Odisha): regional disparity and cultural specificity.
10	Ladakh (union territory)(Jammu and Kashmir): regional disparity and cultural specificity.
11	Bodoland (Assam): cultural specificity and under development.
	(T. K. Oommen, "Social Inclusion in Independent India" (2014) Page: 144)

This table (Table no-14) also shows that most of the separatist movements in post independence India have a religious dimension in addition to linguistic or tribal identity. In this process, the native languages of the state have been excluded with religious identity. The language policy of independent India created a hierarchical structure of legitimacy of languages. Hindi is at the highest stage of this hierarchical status which is referred to as the official and national language and Bengali seems to be at the highest stage of this hierarchical status which is referred to as the official state in West Bengal. But the Official Language Act- 1963 does not confer national language status to Hindi. A great many other languages with millions of speakers are described as dialects, such as- Maithili, Bhojpuri, Rajbanshi, Awadhi, Braj Bhasa, Santali, Bhili, Gondi, Kurukh, and others. Not only are these languages not given any official recognition, but also every effort is made to stigmatize them. The ethnic regional languages like- Rajbanshi complain of Bengali imperialism. In this process, subaltern groups and their languages get excluded and their cultural identity gets jeopardized. Professor Oommen rightly pointed out that linguistic pluralism and administrative decentralization are the only insurance against this ongoing process of exclusion.

The Rajbanshis of Cooch Behar state used to speak a language of their own which has certain similarities and dissimilarities with Bengali language and nearly similar to the Assamese language. The inhabitants of the Cooch Behar state, majority of them are called Rajbanshis and speak a language which is called Rajbanshi- Kamtapuri language. For example, some scholars argued that "the Rajbanshi people usually take three big meals a day, one in the morning usually

puffed (muri) or flattened rice (*Tsura*) or previous nights cooked rice 'Khokora bhat' or 'Panta bhat', and another in the noon and lastly at night". (Charu Chandra Sanyal) These words 'Tsura' and 'Khokora bhat' or 'Pantha bhat' are really from this said language which is different from standard Bengali language. In Bengali these two words are pronounced like, "Chire " and "Basi bhat". So there is a huge gap between these two types of usages.

However, most of the scholars of the language argued that Rajbanshi or Kamatapuri is a dialect of Bengali language. According to Dr. Rameswar Shaw, Bengali language has five different sub-language likes- 1) "Rari- Central and West Bengal (West Rari- Birbhum, Burdwan, east Bankura; East Rari- Kolkata, 24 Paragana, Nadia, Howrah, Hugli, North East MIdnapur, and Murshidabad); 2) Bengali – East Bengal and South Bengal (Dhaka, Mymensingh, faridpur, Barisal, Khulna, Yashohar, Noakhali and Chattagram); 3) Barendri-North Bengal (Malda, South Dinajpur, Rajsahi and Pabna); 4) Jharkhandi- South West Bengal and some parts of Bihar (Manbhum, Singhbhum, Dhalbhu, South West Bankura, South West Midnapur); and lastly 5) Kamrupi or Rajbanshi- North Bengal (Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Cooch Behar, North Dinajpur, Kachhar, Srihatta and Tripura)". (Rameswar Shaw) From this classification of Bengali language he tried to show that the Kamrupi or the Rajbanshi language is a sub- language of Bengali language.

On the other Hand Dr. Grierson opined that it is Rangpuri or Rajbanshi dialect. Some other scholars suggested that language spoken by the people of the Cooch Behar state is a form of Bengali language with important local or tribal variations. Some other scholars argued that having many words in common with the Bengali Language a part of the vocabulary of this dialect is indisputably its own and forms one of the several points which marks it out from the standard Bengali. For example "Danger Cooch Behar Basir Koyta Katha "- here the word "*Danger*" is different from standard Bengali language and it is the word of Rajbanshi community's own. It has already been mentioned that the language of the Rajbanshi community of Cooch Behar (other parts of North Bengal) has become distinctive. Though it is a language of Rajbanshis, yet the written form of this language has to depend on the Bengali alphabets. After 60 years of independence, the problem of this Rajbanshi language remains the same. For that reason various movements like- in 1970, Uttarkhanda movement and in 1980s, Kamtapur movement and in recent time especially in 2005-06, the Greater Cooch Behar People's Association's movements etc. have taken place on the basis of this language demand.

13. Socio-Cultural Exclusion of Rajbanshis

The specified region of the GCPA is a melting pot of different socio-cultural communities, such as Paliyas, Bodos, Kocharies, Khens, Koches, Muslims and Rajbangshi etc. All these races fought with each other for supremacy and their social identity. The Rajbangshi community, the main locomotive of these mobilizations demanding a distinct socio-cultural identity which is not new and which we have seen in the history of separate state demand from Kshatriya Samiti to Kamtapur People's Party. But on the basis of different Census report, it has seen that they have four separate socio-cultural statuses of Rajbangshis of West Bengal. This continuous changing process of the identities of the Rajbangshi population leads to many questions, such as- what is the actual position of the Rajbangshi people in the caste system of the society in the age of globalization? Why Rajbanshi community changing their socio-cultural status again and again.

13.1 Cultural traditions of Rajbanshis

The sons of the soil i.e. Rajbanshis of the Cooch Behar have a close cultural and social connection over a long period of time which have already been mentioned. Thus a new kind of overwhelming interaction is created between the indigenous society and the alien population in Cooch Behar. One of the most important social aspects of Rajbanshis of not only Cooch Behar but also North Bengal is that they claim to possess a distinct social identity that is very old. Since the late 19th century, they have passed through at least four distinct identities in different censuses. For instances- From Koch to Rajbanshi (1871-72); From Rajbanshi to Bratya Kshatriya (1881); From Bratya Kshatriya to Kshatriya Rajbanshi (1911 & 1921); and lastly from, Kshatriya Rajbanshis to only Kshatriya (1931). Though, these continuously changing identities of Rajbanshis of Cooch Behar State created some sort of inconvenience to ascertain their exact position in Caste hierarchy during different census operations.
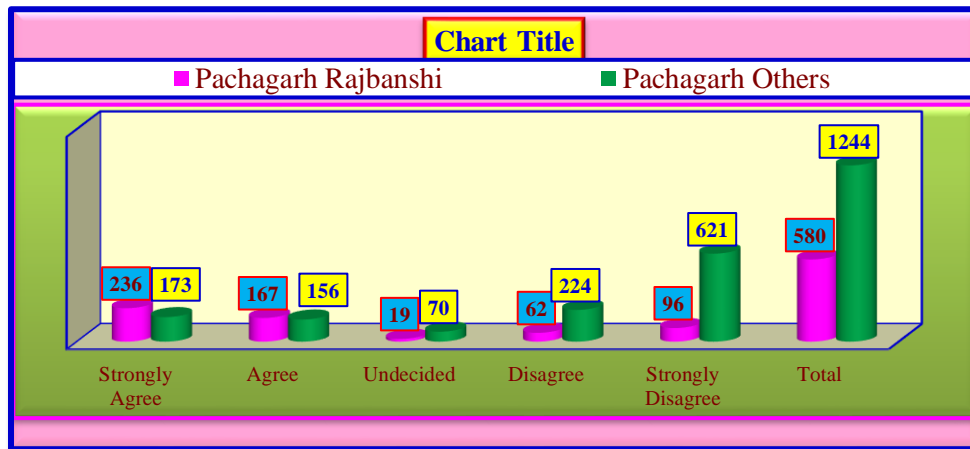
13.2 Reasons for the Abolishment of Traditional Cultures of Rajbanshi people of the Chhoto Sa Bari GP
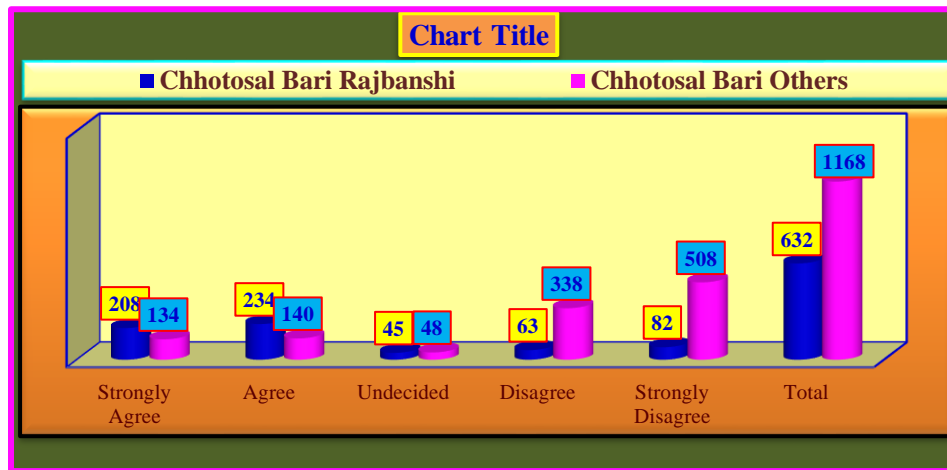
Source: Field Data (Primary)

This table provides the picture of gradual abolishment of traditional cultures (Folk songs, customs, food habits, traditional dress up, rituals etc.) of Rajbanshi people at Chhoto Sal Bari gram panchayat. Out of this total **632** Rajbanshi people, 32.96% (208) replied strongly agree, 37.02 **%** (234) replied agree, 9.96% (63) replied disagree and 12.97% (82) replied strongly disagree whereas 7.12% (45) remained undecided **when they were asked that only modern cultures are responsible for gradual abolishment of traditional cultures (Folk songs, customs, food habits, traditional dress up, rituals etc.) of Rajbanshi people of the Chhoto Sa Bari GP or not.** So far as Others are concern which include Muslims, Brahmins, Sarkar, Debnath, Biswas, Namadas, Pal, Shil, Sen, Mondal, Orao, Kirtaniya etc. (other than Rajbanshi) also responded unhesitatingly and agreed. Out of this total **1168** Others people, 11.47**%** (134) replied strongly agree, 11.98 **%** (140) replied agree, 28.93% (338) replied disagree and 43.49% (508) replied strongly disagree whereas 4.10% (48) remained undecided when they were asked same question. So, in this field it has seen that there are two distinct arguments between these two groups of people about the gradual abolishment of traditional cultures (Folk songs, customs, food habits, traditional dress up, rituals etc.) of Rajbanshi people due to modern cultures. But most mention worthy thing here is that 32.96% (208) out of total 632 Rajbanshi people strongly agreed in favour of the motion and 43.49% (508) people from Other communities strongly disagreed with the motion. Only 11.98 **%** (140) from other communities appreciate with a view.

13.3 Reasons for the Abolishment of Traditional Cultures of Rajbanshi people of the Pachagarh GP

Source: Field Data (Primary)

This table provides the picture of gradual abolishment of traditional cultures (Folk songs, customs, food habits, traditional dress up, rituals etc.) of Rajbanshi people at Pachagarh gram panchayat. Out of this total **580** Rajbanshi people, 40.68 (236) replied strongly agree, 28.79 **%** (167) replied agree, 10.68% (62) replied disagree and 16.55% (96) replied strongly disagree whereas 3.27% (19) remained undecided **when they were asked that only modern cultures are responsible for gradual abolishment of traditional cultures (Folk songs, customs, food habits, traditional dress up, rituals etc.) of Rajbanshi people of the Pachagarh GP or not.** So far as Others are concern which include Muslims, Brahmins, Sarkar, Debnath, Biswas, Namadas, Pal, Shil, Sen, Mondal, Orao, Kirtaniya etc. (other than Rajbanshi) also responded unhesitatingly and agreed. Out of this total **1244** Others people, 13.90**%** (173) replied strongly agree, 12.50 **%** (156) replied agree, 18.006% (224) replied disagree and 49.91% (577) replied strongly disagree whereas 5.62% (70) remained undecided when they were asked same question. So, in this field it has seen that there are two different pictures between these two groups of people about the gradual abolishment of traditional cultures (Folk songs, customs, food habits, traditional dress up, rituals etc.) of Rajbanshi people due to modern cultures. But most mention worthy thing here is that 40.68% (236) out of total 580 Rajbanshi people strongly agreed in favour of the motion and 49.91% (621) people from Other communities.

It has already been mentioned above that the Rajbanshi community is culturally different from other communities such as- Bengalis (Hindu), Muslims and at present Bhatias (the immigrants who are from Bhati desh which means East Bengal, are called Bhatias). There is a huge gap between these two groups of people culturally. Some cultural aspects of the Rajbanshi populations in the district of Cooch Behar particularly and north Bengal in general discussed

here. 1stly the material culture of Rajbanshi which is different from other alien groups. In North Bengal it is generally found that the naming of a village was made on the basis of Jotedars/jotes and on the basis of inhabitants living, on the basis of land and on the basis of deity etc. For example- on the basis of Jote, Bhabani Jote, Kshirod Jote; on the basis of inhabitants, Dakuapara, Gidalpara, Pandit para etc.; on the basis of land, Dangapara, Altagram, Gorgoria ghat etc.; and on the basis of deity, Bhandari Kalirhat, Jalpaiguri, Kathalguri, Bigotari etc.

14. House Building traditions of the Rajbanshis

In case of house building, there is a distinct process, like this- when a Rajbanshi house is built one calls a 'Panjiar'(a Rajbanshi pandit) to see if the land would be suitable for the purpose. The 'Panjiar' comes and draws the figures on the earth and this determines the position of the stars and other astrological factors. He then gives his opinion. In this case the panjir is the final authority. If he considers the land unsuitable, Rajbanshi will never build his house on the land. When a land is selected a house would be created on the basis of some traditional customs. For instance, there is a saying about the plan of house that- "Uttore gua/Dokshine dhua/Pube Hans/Pacchime bas". (C. C. Sanyal) In English it is like that, 'Areca on the North /Open on the South/Ducks (pond) on the East/Bamboo on the west'.

15. Food Habits of the Rajbanshis

If we see the food habits of the Rajbanshi population it is found that they are different from others in the society. There is a saying that the Rajbanshis are rice eating people and eat three big meals a day. However, some special foods of the Rajbanshi community are nicely pointed out by C. C. Sanyal. Accordimg to him- '*Bhotta*', or '*Sana*' (when boiled or roasted vegetables are used and made into a lump or paste with salt, chilis, onions or garlic, it is called '*Bhotta*'.

16. Songs of the Rajbanshis

Song is another ground on which locals feel that their traditional music has lost its importance during the age of globalization. The Rajbanshi songs are also different from others in the society. Various kinds of songs are there in the Rajbanshi community. For example- Bhaowia gan, Bisahari gan, Kushan gan, Dehatatter gan, Palatia gan, Jag gan etc. Through these songs, the peoples of the Rajbanshi community express their feelings, emotions, beliefs, faiths, cultural pasts, past history, feelings of patriotism etc. Through these songs or gans they express their own viewpoints. Through these songs or gans they express their love-respects, happiness and suffering. Thus all these songs become most important to understand the feelings of this community of people. Some examples are-

Bhaowia Song; 1)'Fande Paria baga Kandere'2)' O ki o mor garial Bhai' Puja Song; 3)'Danta dekali taman dia dhali, 4) 0'Moner tike bura geli dur title tsdi'

Apart from these, there are also so many cultural songs, such as- Bisohari songs, Songs of Mechni khela, Bas khela songs, Songs of Charak puja, Marriage songs, Love songs, Dotora songs, Chore-Churnir songs etc. are gradually disappearing due the modern music of Tollywood, Bollywood and Hollywood as well. One of the famous song of them is 'Fande Paria baga Kandere……' The inner meaning of the song is in English- "One heron wept in the trap. The trapper has laid the trap with 'puti' fish as bait. The fool heron was attracted by the bait and flew into the trap. The heron tried his best to extricate from the trap. A Chakhoya (ruddy goose) was flying by. He signaled the female heron that her male partner captured on the dry bed of the river Dhorla. Listening to this, the female heron flew to the river side and saw her male partner got trapped. The female heron wept at the sight of the male heron and the male heron wept on seeing his wife." (C. C. Sanyal)

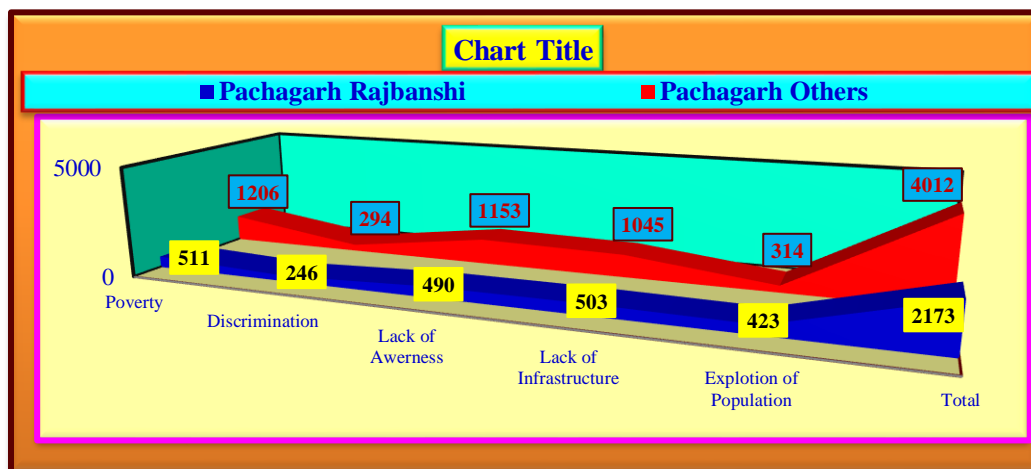**16.1 Reasons behind the Low Literacy Rate among Rajbanshis of the Chhoto Sal Bari G**
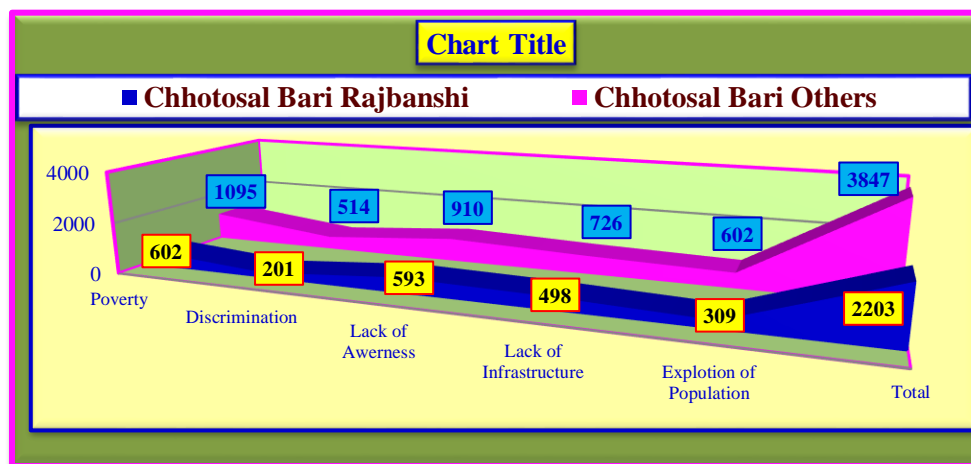
Source: Field Data (Primary)

This table (Table no- 17 A) portrayed the root causes of low literacy rate of Chhoto Sal Bari gram panchayat. This question was fragmented and has asked randomly to two categories of common people. Out of these total **2203** Rajbanshi respondents, 27.32**%** (602) replied poverty, 9.12**%** (201) replied discrimination, 26.91% (593) replied lack of awareness and 22.60% (498) replied lack of infrastructure whereas 14.02% (309) replied explosion of population **when they were asked about the reasons behind the low rate of literacy among Rajbanshis of the**

Chhoto Sal Bari GP. So far as Others are concern which include Muslims, Brahmins, Sarkar, Debnath, Biswas, Namadas, Pal, Shil, Sen, Mondal, Orao, Kirtaniya etc. (other than Rajbanshi) also responded freely. Out of this total **3847** Others people, 28.46**%** (1095) replied poverty, 13.36**%** (514) replied discrimination, 23.65% (910) replied lack of awareness and 18.87% (726) replied lack of infrastructure whereas 15.64% (602) replied explosion of population when they were asked same question. So, in this field it has seen that there is similarity of replies with the reasons of low literacy rate of Chhoto Sal Bari gram panchayat between these two groups of people that is why they are now sending their sons and daughters in private schools, though this trend is new and small in number. The common thing is that literacy rate of these two community people of this gram panchayats is very low and dissatisfactory due to so many reasons.

16.2 Reasons behind the Low Literacy Rate among Rajbanshis of the Pachagarh GP

Source: Field Data (Primary)

This table (Table no- 17 B) portrayed the root causes of low literacy rate of Pachagarh gram panchayat. This question was fragmented and has asked randomly to two categories of common people. Out of these total **2173** Rajbanshi respondents, 23.51**%** (511) replied poverty, 11.32**%** (246) replied discrimination, 22.54% (490) replied lack of awareness and 23.14% (503) replied lack of infrastructure whereas 19.46% (423) replied explosion of population **when they were asked about the reasons behind the low rate of literacy among Rajbanshis of the Pachagarh GP**. So far as Others are concern which include Muslims, Brahmins, Sarkar, Debnath, Biswas, Namadas, Pal, Shil, Sen, Mondal, Orao, Kirtaniya etc. (other than Rajbanshi) also responded freely. Out of this total **4012** Others people, 30.05**%** (1206) replied poverty, 7.32**%** (294) replied

discrimination, 28.73% (1153) replied lack of awareness and 26.04% (1045) replied lack of infrastructure whereas 7.82% (314) replied explosion of population when they were asked same question. So, in this field it has seen that there is similarity of replies with the reasons of low literacy rate of Chhoto Sal Bari gram panchayat between these two groups of people that is why they are now sending their sons and daughters in private schools, though this trend is new and small in number. The common thing is that literacy rate of these two community people of this gram panchayats is very low and dissatisfactory due to so many reasons.

17. Financial Conditions of Rajbanshis

North Bengal is that part of West Bengal which covers an area of about 21000 square kilometers which is about 24% of the state of West Bengal, is full of diversity. North Bengal contains not only economically backward but also full of backwardness in different fields, like- languages, cultures and moreover in different groups of peoples. On the basis of these different characteristics, the administrative position of North Bengal including 'Darjeeling Gorkha hill Council' can be divided into three sub regions namely- "1) Malda and Dinajpur which is called south sub region; 2) North Dinajpur which is called central Chicken neck sub region and 3) Darjeeling, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri which is called Northern sub-region". (West Bengal Human Development Report-2005) According to the 2001 census, the total population of North Bengal was 14.72 Million, which was 18.35% of the state West Bengal. The decennial population growth of the region (1991-2001) was 22.31% as while 17.84% in case of the state as a whole. In the case of the economy of the region there is a distinction with other parts of India more particularly with South Bengal, mainly because of the backwardness in the industrial sector. The main base of industrial development is communication with other parts of India and outside India. History says up to 1947; there was a link this northern district of West Bengal with the other parts of India. But when partition took place those links were broken down. The ultimate result is the detachment of communication both in roads and rail.

18. Agricultural Status

In the economic history of the Rajbanshi community of North Bengal, it is found that agriculture and land is the main occupation of this area. This land and agriculture is mainly dominated by the Rajbanshis, because they are the early settlers here. But one thing here is that the production from the land was not sufficient for the peoples of this area. This is because of the Jotedari system. This *Jotdar* system was exploited to the total people, because in the hierarchy, they were in the top position and paid revenue to the government directly. The right upon the land of them was inheriting transferable. This Jotedary system also has its own hierarchy. In this hierarchy

Jotedars were Chukanidur, dar Chukanidur, dav-a-Dar Chukanidur, and below these there were the adhiars who were regarded as labourer who work under the supervision of their giris (landlords).

18.1 Jotdari System

According to Dr. Rajat Subhra Mukhopadhyay "up to the end of the 19th century the jotedars of the region were mainly Rajbanshi". But Dr. Arun Kumar Jana in his book argued, "The jotedars were not a homogeneous class. There were rich as well as poor jotedars. Some own big tracts of land." (A. K. Jana) Behind the existence of this Jotedars system there were so many reasons. Basu viewed that there were two main reasons for the existence of this land related system in North Bengal. These are- "1) There were large tracts of uncultivated land which needed to be cleared and hence land was given to the rich in the countryside by the state of low rents. So the rich were usually unable to cultivate these lands." (Basu) That is why they gave these lands to the poor for cultivation, instead of half production given them. 2) "The scarcity of labour, North Bengal at one point of time was a thinly populated area before the immigration of the people of South Bengal and Eastern part of Bengal". (Basu) Here another mentionable thing is that 'according to the 1991 census there were 2.85 million Rajbanshis in the state, out of which 78% inhabit the North Bengal region. Their greatest concentration however is in Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri with around 69% of the total Scheduled Caste population of North Bengal and inhabit mainly in rural areas.' **(A. K. Jana)**

18.2 Transfer of Lands from Rajbanshis to Outsiders

After coming here, the immigrant's population accepted land for the first time as an Adhiar from the Giris and cultivated the lands. Before the Non-Rajbanshi Adhiars, the production of this region was so poor. There was a gradual increase of productivity. This is mainly because of the technique of productivity of the non- Rajbanshi Adhiars. Thus, these non- Rajbanshi Adhiars gradually captured the land and the local Adhiars were becoming jobless at that point of time. On the other hand this extra surplus production brought the interest of the landlord on land and started to give land to this non- Rajbanshi Community. Dr. A.K. Jana rightly viewed that the migration created pressure on land and the land started passing land from the Rajbanshis to other communities. When this migration was continuing on the one hand population increased in this region and create pressure on land and on the other hand a tendency of transfer of land was started, because of the low, inability of the jotedars to payment their revenue to the government because of the inability to pay revenue led to transfer the land to other. In this way a section of Rajbanshi Jotedars gradually became landless. Thus the poor productivity from agriculture, non-

payment of revenue and the high price of land caused a jotedar to transfer lands to the others, Dr. A.K Jana, mentioned some reasons behind this kind of transformation of land. These are- 1) many of them (jotedars); at least the medium and small Jotedars, lost their *Jotes* because of their inability to pay revenue; 2) Land passed into the hands of merchants and many like, Marwaries, Kabiliees, up country men, and the middle class Bengali Migrants from the Rajbanshis; and 3) There was a growth of absentee landlordism in the region. In 1932, the regency council identified 5 to 6 thousand of Jote of Cooch Behar in the list of revenue defaulters and later declared those as Khash land (it is that kind of land which is not anyone's name the owner of this land is the government). All these things led to the transfer of the lands from the Jotedars to the others.

18.3 Aadhiyari System

On the other hand, a rapid growth of the *aadhi*-system occurred. This is because of the migration of the uprooted people from other parts of India. A section of Jotedars preferred non-Rajbanshi adhiars, due to the surplus productivity. Therefore, they began to lease out land to this new non-Rajbangsi adhiar. Thus the original adhiars of North Bengal gradually became less important in the *aadhi* system. In this new phase of adhi system, a conversation was continuing on the topics of sharecroppers and new adhiars who started demands for a legitimate share over their productions. For the first time the adhiars started expressing their dissatisfaction against the so-called Jotedars. But during 1935 this uprising gradually took the shape of a movement where the adhiars of North Bengal.

18.4 Tebhaga Movement

The uprising of *Adhiars* has got the final shape of what is known as Tebhaga movement under the leadership of CPI led Kisan Sabha in 1946. The function of the movement was militant and secessionist which began by removing the paddy of Jotedars from the Khamar of Jotedars and took the two-third share of this paddy. In this movement the *Adhiars* from all sections participated. But the Rajbanshi adhiars did not participate there, because the Rajabnshi Jotedars created fear among these Rajbanshi adhiars by recreating ethnic and economic sentiments among them.

19. Industries of the District

There are no such heavy industries at all in the district. Only a few Cold storages are there which has a limited capacity of employment generation. At present, the picture of industrial backwardness of North Bengal have many reasons, these are- 1) Un-utilization of the raw

materials of North Bengal. Raw materials are there in North Bengal, but still remained un-utilized. The raw materials of North Bengal can be divided into two groups. One is the agricultural based raw materials which come from the agricultural sector, such as- rice, tobacco, oil seeds, jute, mesta, mango, orange etc. Second one is the forest based raw materials, such as- Tea, Timber, Fibre Wood, Bamboo, Bohera, Gamari, Jam, Jarul etc. 2) Another important reason which is necessary for industrial development is the Infrastructure which is not sufficient for development here in North Bengal. The industries generate different facilities, such as- power resources, network of communication system and source of capital etc. On the basis of demand for utilization of power, the position of the districts of North Bengal is in backbencher comparatively to the districts of South Bengal. Some of the Hydral power projects leading to the development of North Bengal are- Jaldhaka Hydro Electric Project (JHEP) which has the capacity to generate 27mw power at Jaldhaka River, the Little Rangit (LR) which has the capacity to generate 2mw power at Rangit River. The Bijan Bari Station (BBS) which has the capacity to create 300mw power at Laring khola.

19.1 Tea Industries in the District

Another most important aspect of industrialization in the districts of North Bengal is Tea production. Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and a small piece of land of Uttar Dinajpur and Cooch Behar have many tea estates. At present, a tendency to lockout tea gardens has started here. Moreover, the condition of the labourer of the tea estates is one of the sources of anxiety and unsocial behaviour. Two reasons are there for such kind of conditions of labourers of the tea gardens. One is the increasing tendency of the number of human labourers and shut down of Tea gardens one by one. Another is the lack of proper management. Particularly the condition of women workers and the children of tea estate are very miserable.

19.2 Transport and communication

Transport and communication which has already been mentioned above is necessary for the overall development of a particular region. The road system of North Bengal districts have been developed after the partition. At present, construction and enlargement of the road system is in progress not only in the town areas but also in the rural areas as well. The Siliguri-Jalpaiguri road provides links to Cooch Behar. There is a similar road linkage between Malda, Uttardinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur. Mainly three national highways, namely Kolkata-Siliguri national highway (NH-34); Bihar-Assam national highway (NH-31) and Siliguri-Gangtok national highway (NH-31A) have been linked North Bengal with South Bengal and among themselves. The New Jalpaiguri (NJP) and Malda Railway station are important two venues of railway linkage of

districts of North Bengal with the other parts of India. Some people of North Bengal are saying that the distance from Kolkata- North Bengal is associated with some sort of negligence by the state government. But now this approach is gradually changing. The infrastructure of North Bengal is not good whether it is the transport, the energy, education, and health etc. Per hectare agricultural yield in North Bengal is 1400kg while for the rest of West Bengal it is 1800kg per hectare. Irrigation facilities are also inadequate. According to the Human Development Report, "decentralization may serve an especially useful function in this region, in recognizing local differences in material conditions and culture and incorporating these into planning." (West Bengal Human Development Report-2005)

20. Findings

This study shows that a sizable section of the Rajbanshi community is not happy with the state initiatives. State is not passionate and unsympathetic about the socio-cultural distinctiveness of the Rajbanshi community of northern part of West Bengal. Now, extremist groups of the Rajbanshis are leaving their path of violence and the trend of the North East that has been followed by them. But the exclusion of the said group refuses to part with their demand for their socio-cultural recognition in the national mainstream has not yet been recognized. It has also seen that due to the increasing control over the economic sector by the private entities and gradually the government loses its role as a service provider. Day by day, the gap between those who have benefited from the global market and those who have been left behind is widening. Mr. Banshi Badan Barman relatively mentioned that "Cooch Beharer mansi haya tomra na khaya suki maro, naite dyash chhari bhagan". It means the people of Cooch Behar die either with hungry or leave the place of birth. By this statement he actually meant that this is the result of economic exclusion of this region which is also closely associated with religious exclusion.

21. Suggestions for Inclusion

This article suggests many 'Actionable Plan' for policy recommendations to overcome the challenges of socio-cultural and economic exclusions. These proposals for the inclusion of the excluded, are- 1) To increase the rate of Literacy of Rajbanshis; 2) Regulations against Socio-cultural inequalities and Caste based hierarchal discriminations; 3) To implement the constitutional promises of imparting primary education by the mother tongue till the age of 14 years; 4) To facilitate the use of local languages at the local administrative and economic functions; and lastly 5) To treat language rights as Human Rights; These measures will help to the process of Social Inclusion not only of Rajbanshi community but also for other ethnic groups in India.

22. Conclusion

A rights-based collective conceptual framework of the Socio-cultural Inclusion of the Rajbanshi community of West Bengal with the principle of social equity in many aspects of socio-cultural, linguistic, religious and economic backwardness need to be restored by the active participations of the political and apolitical actors, like, Government, NGOs and Civil Society etc. So, by following the fundamental principle i.e. inclusion of Rajbanshi community on the grounds of socio-cultural, linguistic and economic development, equal rights and benefits for all citizens should be established.

Selected Bibliography

1. Oommen, T. K. (2014). Social Inclusion in Independent India, Dimensions and Approaches. Bangalore: *Orient Black Swan*. ISBN 978-81-250-5629-4

2. Baviskar, B. S. & Mathew, G. (2009). Inclusion and Exclusion in Local Governance: Field Studies From Rural India. (1st Ed.). New Delhi: *Sage Publications*. ISBN 978-81-7829-860-3

3. Skoda U., Nielson K. B., & Fibiger M. Q. (2013). Navigating Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Contemporary India and Beyond. New Delhi: *Anthem Press India*. ISBN 978-1-78308-340-4

4. Guruswamy S., (2011). Social Exclusion and Inclusion. New Delhi: *A. P. H. Publishing Corporation*. ISBN 978-81-313-1000-7

5. Nathan D. & Xaxa V., (2012). Social Exclusion and Adverse Inclusion: Development and Deprivation of Adivasis in India. New Delhi: *Oxford University Press*. ISBN 978-0-19-807893-7

6. Rama Krishna V., Shashidhar R., & Muniraju M., (2012). Social Exclusion and Inclusion Continuum: A Paradigm Shift. (Ed.). Bangalore: *Niruta Publication.* ISBN 978-81-923414-5-0

7. Webster, N., (1992). Panchayati Raj and the Decentralization of Development Planning in West Bengal. Kolkata: *K. P. Bagchi and Company.* ISBN 81-7074-119-X

8. Lieten, G. K., (1992). Continuity and Change in Rural West Bengal. New Delhi: *Sage Publication.*

9. Bhattacharyya, H., & Sarkar, P., (2010). Politics of Social Exclusions in India: Democracy at Cross Roads. UK: *Routledge Publishers.*

10. Hassan, J., (2009). Politics of Inclusion: Castes, Minorities, and Affirmative Action. New Delhi: *Oxford University Press*. ISBN 978-0-19-807696-4

11. Sen A., (2000). Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny. Asian Development Bank, Manila.

12. Sanyal, C. C. *The Rajbanshis of North Bengal*. The Asiatic Society, 1905.

13. Oommen, T. K., *Social Inclusion in Independent India, Dimensions and Approaches.* 1st Ed., Orient Black Swan, 2014.

Articles in Periodicals

1. Mohanty, B. (1995). Panchayati Raj: 73rd Constitutional Amendment and Women. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 52, 1995, pp. 3346-3350, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4403611

2. Bhattacharya, R. (2005). Socialist Capital and Participatory Democracy: Empowering People through Panchayats in West Bengal. *The West Bengal Political Science Review*, Vol. VIII, No. I & II, January-December, pp. 10-26.

3. Labonte, R. (2004). Social Inclusion/Exclusion: Dancing Dialectic. *Health Promotion International*, Vol. 19. No. 1, *Oxford University Press.* Canada. pp. 115-121

4. Gary Bouma, G. (2016). Paper on Religious Diversity and the Challenges of Social Inclusion. *Religious Diversity and Social Inclusion*, Vol 4, No 2 (2016), DOI: https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v4i2.631

5. Silver, H. (2015). The Contexts of Social Exclusion, *Department of Economic & Social Affairs,* DESA Working Paper No. 144 ST/ESA/2015/DWP/144

Unpublished PhD Thesis

1. Roy, G. (1975). Uttorbonge Rajbanshi Somajer Debdebi o Puja Parbon (উত্তরবঙ্গে রাজবংশী সমাজের দেবদেবী ও পূজা-পার্বণ). Department of Bengali, Darjeeling: University of North Bengal. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/171598

2. Adhikary, M. C. (2009). Ethno Cultural Identity Crisis of the Rajbanshis of North Eastern Part of india and Nepal and Bangladesh during the period of 1891 to 1979. Department of History, Darjeeling: University of North Bengal. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/137486

3. Sarkar, M. D. (2000). Social Welfare Administration of Scheduled Castes in West Bengal: A Study of Rajbanshi of Cooch Behar. Department of Political Science, Darjeeling: University of North Bengal. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/137476

4. Das, D. N. (1999). Ethno-political Aspects of Regional Movements: A Study in the Context of Some Regional Movements in the plains of North Bengal. Department of Political Science, Darjeeling: University of North Bengal. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/137112

5. Chakraborty, B. (2001). Political History of Merger of the Princely States: A Study of Cooch Behar. Department of Political Science, Darjeeling: University of North Bengal. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/149162

Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation

1. Haldar, I. (2005). Ethnic Regional Mobilization in India: A Study of the Kamtapur State Demand in North Bengal. Department of Political Science, Darjeeling: University of North Bengal.

Reports

1. West Bengal Human Development Report- 2005

News paper Consulted

1. Barman, L. C. (2006, 5th April). Bamshasonei Prithok Rajyer Dabi Uthlo Keno?. Siliguri: *Bartaman*.

Websites

1. http://coochbehar.nic.in/htmfiles/Population_total.html, 05/05/2014

2. http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/3-koch-bihar.html, 05/05/2014

Government Publications

1. Census of India- 1971, 1981, 1991, 2011