

The Changing worship Rituals of the Rajbansi of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar in the 19th and 20th Century

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Abstract: *Rajbansi people were the largest group of Hindu people of North Bengal. From the very beginning of the Colonial period, the Rajbansi people had belief in different rituals. They worshiped different gods and goddesses and they observed various ceremonies or rituals. But with the change of time such religious believers also began to change. Large number of people of the community came from outside of North Bengal with their religious view and rituals. The different rituals of outsiders influenced those of the local people. The Rajbansi people gradually received Western education and thereby changed their attitudes and their life style as well. With that, they also had changed some rituals. Not only educated people, but the general people of village or rural area also had changed their rituals. The modern science and technology worked actively in these regards.*

Keyword: Rajbansi, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, Hindu, Sanskritisation, Puja (worship)

For a long period they had been living in Rangpur (now in Bangladesh), Goalpara (a district of Assam), Dinajpur, Darjeeling Jalpaiguri and princely state of Coochbehar. In post Colonial period most of the Rajbansi people also started living in Darjeeling Terai (Siliguri Sub-Division), Jalpaiguri district and Coochbehar district of West Bengal. There were long standing debates on the origin and the identity of the Rajbansis. Hamilton Buchanan, W.W. Hunter etc. identified them as tribal people.¹ On the other hand, Charu Chandra Sanyal etc. identified them as majority Hindu social group in this area. But the Rajbansi people considered themselves as Hindu and demanded that they were the Kshatriya by caste within the four fold caste system of Hindu i.e. Aryan. But practically, they accepted the Hindu religious beliefs and some rituals. But they have some traditional beliefs and rituals which are different from those of the Varna Hindu people. So when they are observing the Hindu rituals some age old rituals and beliefs began to be out of practice. Therefore, the focus of the scenario to helped showing how some traditional rituals of

Rajbansis began to retreat and new ideas to come into front.

This above mentioned area or *Desh* (country/region) was of the Rajbansis.² It has been said that North Bengal was '*Pandap Barjita Desh*' (not inhabited by the Aryans or the Pandaves).³ But some scholars disagree to this opinion. They argued that, this region were not Non-Aryan i.e. uninhabited by the Aryan or the *Pandaves*. But it is true that the situation had changed. The Rajbansi people changed their primitive life style. So some rituals underwent changes and there were the modifications of their customs and manners. During the Colonial and the Post Colonial period the people, coming from neighboring country and different parts of India permanently settled in this area. As a result, the Rajbansi people came in close contact with the Varna Hindu people mainly in rural society and as well as in urban society of Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri. Though the Rajbansi people profess themselves to be Hindu, they practiced certain ceremonies which were prevalent in the earlier period and which were different from this of the Varna Hindu people. But at a later period the Rajbansi people started to be influenced by the rituals of the people coming from outside.

Some Gods and the Goddesses of Rajbansis:-

In Rajbansis society human sacrifice was offered to the goddess Durga.⁴ It has been abandoned in later years but human effigies were sacrificed instead. Except *Siva* and *Bisnu* all others were females (goddesses). But in the later period some Gods, like *Bhot Thakur*, *Masan Thakur* both are males etc. were included. *Saktism* and *Tantrism* were the main forms of religion, although they are much to the liberation towards *Vaisnavism*.⁵

The Rajbansi made their images of deities with cork (*sola*) and clay. But it was changed and the images were made by cork were hardly seen in the last phase of the 20th century. The clay images also were prevalent among them. But the images were not like the images of gods and goddesses worshipped by the outsiders. The images of deities of worshiped by one with Rajbansi flat noses, the lion were like tiger etc, because they had no idea about the actual image of lions or other images. At present, the clay images of the deities worshipped by Rajbansi are evaluated and they prepared images after the actual images of the deity,⁶ because they learned it from the outsiders. It is necessary to say that the Royal dynasties of Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri were different, but the origin of the two dynasties was more or less the same.⁷ Therefore gods and goddesses they were worshipped the same.

Some changing elements/institutions:

Marriages through social interactions with outsiders, Made Rajbansi people change their culture and rituals. There are some factors, which also led to change the rituals of the Rajbansi people.

a) The role of Royal Court:-

In the beginning, the Royal dynasties of Coochbehar were the Koch. But they converted to the Rajbansi in later period. They made relations with *Varna* Hindu people through marriages. With that relationship, some rituals also entered into the royal palace of Coochbehar and the Royal court of Jalpaiguri. Except that, some kings belonging to Coochbehar and the Royal family of Jalpaiguri invited spiritual intellectuals from Mithila, Kamrup and from other parts of India. Those spiritual intellectuals influenced the member of the royal court and other Rajbansi People. For example, the religious preacher like-Gorakh Nath (according to Mr. Grayarson, Gorakh Nath came from Nepal), Shankardev, Madhabdev, Damodar Deb were the religious preachers of Coochbehar.⁸

According to D.H.E. Sunder the principle caste of the Duars were Rajbansi or Koch, Muhamadan, Dobasiya, Mech, Garo, Bhutia and Toto etc. Brahmanism was introduced among the people in the time of Visu, grandson of Hajo; who, together with his officers and all the people embraced the new religion. The name was abandoned by the converts, and assumed the name of *Rajbansi*, literally of the royal kindred." The Koch people transferred themselves from tribe to Hindu or *Brahmanical* religion. Not before the late ninetieth century, the Rajbansi people claimed themselves as *Varna* Hindu people. Again they propagated that they were *Kshatriya* by cast, and a social movement started under the leadership of Rai Saheb Thakur Panchann Barma. But till the early or mid ninetieth century the Rajbansis were distinct caste from *Brahmanical* Hindu or they were non-Brahmanical Hindu.⁹ But process of Hinduization was started. The changes occurred in the field of religion or conversion what's ever in the following way:

Koch or Tribal > claimed as Rajbansis > Hinduised > Brahmanical Hinduised (themselves) > *Bhanga Kshatriya* or called themselves as *Brattya Kshatriya*. > the Rajbansi began to worship the pre-Aryan cult > and the Rajbansi or converted Rajbansi claimed *Kshatriya* with help of mythology or according to the thought of Thakur Panchanan Barma, a social reformer of Rajbansi.

The name of God Siva was popularized in the names such as:

Siva (God of *Mahakal*) or *Mahakal* or *Pashupati* or *Dangdara* (hold the stick/ weapons (*Dang*) to fight against demons with *Dang* or teach who are wrong) = *Bisua* = *Pahar Pati* (Head of Mountain).

According to Ranajit Dasgupta the *Kshatriya* movement soon got involved in the issue of political reforms but it did not lay so much stress on the social movement of Rajbansi. The Rajbansi people did not jointed with the backward class organization, because the Rajbansi people claimed themselves as practioners of higher rituals and social status.¹⁰

Hindu communalism too gained ground considerably, led by *Hindu Mahasabha* leaders and organizers like- Kumudini Kanta Chakrabarty, Nalini Ranjan Ghosh, a leading planter, Jagadish Ghose, also a lawyer, Satish Lahiri, Jogesh Dutta and Bijoy Hore among them three are active in the Congress politics since late 1920s and the *Hindu Mahasabha* ultimately stepped up its activities. The *Hindu Mahasabha* started to spread its politics and organization through a variety of activities, such as relief work among distressed peasants in Dhupguri and Falakata, *Shuddhi Sangha* for a Rajbansi woman alleged to have been kidnapped by Muslim miscreants, *shuddhi* ceremony for Santals, conversion of Christians into Rajbansi *Kshatriyas* and organization of anti-Pakistan public meeting. By late in 1944 AD, the district leaders felt that the conference would be in Jalpaiguri. All India and provincial leaders, like- B. S. Munje, Babaji Khaparde, Shyamaprasad, attended the conference, held on 24 and 25 February, 1945

Shankardev- He was *kaystha* by cast, but he was *Bhaktibadi Sadhak* (devotee/worshippers). He was patronized by Naranarayan, Shukladhwaj and Chila Roy who were the member of the Royal court of Coochbehar. He set up its headquarters in Madhupur, at a stone's throw from the royal palaces, capital cities and in other places. Lord Madanmohan's temple was established as the deity of the royal family. Goddess *Durga's* temple was built in *Debi Bari* of Coochbehar town etc. all under the patronage of the Maharaja. Brahmin priests began to come in the Royal palace and other parts of Coochbehar state. Sanskrit language made an inroad through religious ritualistic needs. Because those priests used or utter the *mantras* for different rituals or *for pujas* (worships) in Sanskrit language.

Madhabdev-Madhabdev was also *Kaystha* by cast but he was a worshipper of Lord *Krishna*. He influenced the Rajbansi people of Coochbehar. Not only had that, after the death of Madhabdev, the worship of Lord Krishna started at different part of the rural area of Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri district. The rural people established the temple (some of them made with straw) of Lord Krishna. They called it '*Hari Mandir*' or '*Hari sabha*' (temple of lord Krishna). They started *Sangkirtan* (song to adore *Thakur Hari*).

A different places of Jalpaiguri and the princely state of Coochbehar many *Hari Mandir* i.e. temple of Lord Krishna were growing up. Some particulars of some Hari mandir are given below:

- i) ***Hari Temple of Moulani-*** This temple was founded by Laxmya Roy and it was founded in the first quarter of 20th century. Other founding member was Chandramohan Roy. The land gifted for the temple was about 1.2 Bigha. (1/2 acre).
- ii) Harimandir of Jharmatiali, of Moulani (PS Mal, District Jalpaiguri).

Some line of a poem, which was related to the idea of Madhabdev are-

“কোচ মেচ লোক সবে এড়িলেক,
পূর্বের যত আচার।”

(all Koch, Mech men give up the previous manner and some ritual).¹¹
These lines also indicate the changing manner or custom of Rajbansis.

Damodar Deb- Damodar Deb was the worshipper of *Hari* (Krishna). This religious preacher also changed some rituals, because the above-mentioned devotee belongs to the *Varna Hindu*.

But in the later period the Rajbansi people were influenced by *Bhaktibadi* religions. So the Rajbansi people accepted the *Vaisnavism*. The idea of Shankardeba and religious idea of Chaitanya became popular with the Rajbansi people. So they began to practise the Hindu rituals to establish themselves as Hindu by religion and they are not tribal people. Therefore, Hinduism entered into the Rajbansi land.

b) Migration:

For the strategic and the economic importance, there were the influx immigrants. People from outside came and gradually settled in this area for their own interest and existence. This outsider people came from different races, group of religions, they come with their own social manners, and cultural models, rituals etc. which were different from those of the local people. The rituals of the outsiders influenced the Rajbansi people because the rituals of outsiders were more dominating or acceptable than the rituals of local people.

Rajbansi people worshipped different nature gods and goddess. These were originated from fear. Now they are surviving against some of the unfavorable nature or bad weather. Therefore the worship of old nature gods or goddesses became less important. They gradually accepted the outsider's culture, rituals etc. and they gave up some old rituals of their own. But still now old generation is worshiping their popular gods and goddesses and they arrange their festive occasions with deep faith or deep trust. But it may be recalled that they have accepted the *Brahamanistic* religious festival to uplift their religious ideas.

c) Marriage and administrator-

Though the kingdoms like Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Gouripur etc were under the rule of Rajbansi kings, they had *Zaminders* and *Jotedars* below them. Most of the *Zamindars* were the Rajbansi or local tribes. But many rituals of the Rajbansi were slowly disappearing (fading) because of the marriages of the princes of Rajbansi royal families with the Hindu communities belonging to different sub-castes, like-*Brahmins*, *Baidyas* and *Kayasthas* etc. Most of them were also service men and other professionals in the palaces and cities. For example, Suniti Sen, daughter of Keshab Chandra Sen, got married to young

Prince Nripendra Narayan of Coochbehar in 1878.¹² So the *Varna* Hindu man and woman tried to introduce the Hindu rituals.

As a result of living all together from very long time the Rajbansi people began to accept rituals of *Varna* Hindu. The most brilliant and well educated Panchanan Barma, received higher education but he was deprived of a befitting assignment in the kingdom and got an appointment of a mere Hostel Superintendent of a school. Not only that, soon he lost the privilege of living in his own land. It occurred that the influence of the *Varna* Hindu people was more powerful than that of the Rajbansis in Royal palace. It indicate that the Hindu caste people were the controllers of everything in the court of the palace.

c) Advent of the British:-

Coming of the Britishers was a very important factor in this regard. They came with their Western education and Christian religion. This factor was directly and indirectly responsible for changing the culture as well as the rituals of the Indians. The Britishers were more rational than the Rajbansis or Indians. Another point is that the people of *Varna* Hindu and other outsiders (Non-Rajbansi) came here after the coming of Britishers. All these factors play an important role to change the rituals of the Rajbansis in the region.

d) Role of Thakur Panchanan Barma:-

Thakur Panchanan Barma tried to reform the Rajbansi society¹³ and some rituals were also added. He started *Jajna*, sacred thread etc. Firstly, Ray Shaheb Panchanan Barma sought political upliftment of the Rajbansi community into a hierarchical position. Again, for the social upliftment he organized the first *Upanayan* ceremony on the banks of the River Karotoya at Debiganj in Jalpaiguri in 1912.¹⁴ Other rituals were also introduced in the process of upliftment of the Rajbansi community.

e) Education:-

Some Rajbansi received modern education. So they became more rational and changed their life style. Some people engaged themselves with Government job and they began to live in the town. The city dweller changed some rituals, which they were so long observing in the village.

f) Outsider's priest:

The rituals of the outsider, considerably influenced the Rajbansi's rituals. Among the outsiders, were the Britishers, the *Bhatias* i.e. people came from *Bhatir desh* or East Bengal, Muslims and non Bengali Hindu people, like Bihari, Marwari etc. were remarkable. Some priests had come from Assam and they permanently settled in this area. Since there were no professional priests among the Rajbansis, they (Rajbansi) were dependent on the outsiders. The Rajbansi people had no such idea about the *sastric* rule of Hindu and Hindu holy books. So the priests of Assam and priests of other parts of India had

played an important role to introduce the Hindu rituals among the Rajbansis from outside. These outsiders' priests were doing work as priest for the observation of the rituals among the Rajbansis. They (priests) from outside conducted 'Seba'(fest), 'Sradhya'(funeral ceremony), 'Puja'(worships) etc. of Rajbansis. Therefore some hymns or verses (*mantras*) and rules of sacred texts, customs etc. were changed. So when the Assamese priest had given *shastric* instruction over the Rajbansi people for the particular rituals then Rajbansi people began to give up their own system of rituals. Rajbansi people began to accept the advices of priests from the outside.

g) Impact of globalization:

In the last decade of 20th century, the idea of globalization was very strong and viral. The impact of globalization was important. Not only the Rajbansis, but also other people were influenced by the idea of globalization. Religious elements, elements of rituals, customs etc. were influenced by global idea. So globalization touched everything.

h) Nationality:

With the course of time the Rajbansi people come under impact of many national parties, political gathering, social gathering, journey by common vehicle etc. that also play an important role to change the rituals of the Rajbansi.¹⁵

i) Electronics Media:

In the last quarter of the 20th century there were the presence of some media like- Radio, TV, Cinema, Government publicity etc. which play an important role to change the rituals of the Rajbansi.¹⁶ Except this the news paper, magazine also played an important role to change the rituals as well.

j) Changes of economic activity/livelihood:

With the passage of time economic activity like the agricultural activities etc. gave way for some to government service, labour (carpenter, mason, tea garden etc.) etc. With the changes, some people also lost their land. Therefore, the rituals related to agriculture passed into forgetfulness.¹⁷

Some process of changes:-

The changing process or evolutions of some theatre, song, and amusement related to the rituals of Rajbansis are given bellow:-

1) Change the 'Kusana gan'-

Bena or Bayana Kushan (story of Ramayana which singing with 'Bena' plying).

Dotara Kushan (song with 'Dotra' plying)

Dotara Kushan (song with 'Dotra' plying but it is more reverie or 'chatka').

2. Evolution of *Kritan* (Vaisnavite song)
Tuksha gan (manashikshya or *deha tattva*/ religious songs concerning the frailness of body)
Sangkirtan (song to adore *Thakur Hari*).
Kirtan (Vaisnavit song).¹⁸

Changing character:-

1) Sanskritisation:-

Outsider did not only ascribe to it (change), but the Rajbansi people themselves accepted the rituals of outsiders i.e. *Varna* Hindus. So *Brahamanical* ideas or *Sanskritisation* were effective. The character of the society of Northern North Bengal bears almost all the vices of the immigrants. Thakur Panchanan Barma started *Kshatriya* movement. So he tried to establish the fact that the Rajbansis were *Varna* Hindu people. It was also part of the process of Sanskritisation.

2) Westernization:-

Western education, customs, manners influenced all the people of this area. Some Western ideas out of the knowledge of science, education, history writing, and literature were more rational. So people became rational with the acceptance of Western science and Modern technology. As a result, many local rituals of Rajbansi became thing of the past.

3) The change was superficial:-

It was a change, but the changes were superficial but not original. It as started from later period or particular time. The reforms gave a scent of impression to start to realize the rituals of other people as their own.

4) The evolution was ideal and infrastructural:-

The change was made to take some idea from the different groups of people. After the acceptance, the idea of social structure also began to change. i.e. *Brahamana* became priest but not *adhikari* (Rajbansis priest).

Outcome:-

The Rajbansi people are abreast with time. They welcome the ideas of the people coming from outside. The Rajbansi people received not only *sastiric* education, but western education also. On the other hand, they do not give up all rituals what is prevalent in their community from the beginning. They received education and became more rational. Not only the Rajbansi people, the *Bhatia* people also accepted some rituals of Rajbansi. Like-*Gourinath Khela, Chorchunni Khela, Nanda udsab* etc. So mixed culture grew up in this area.

Similarities of the rituals between the Bhatia people and Rajbansi.

There were some similar rituals among the Rajbansi and Bhatia people in the regard of *pujas* or festivals. A table is given below:

Common Name	Rajbansis	Bhatias
Goddess of Snake	<i>Bisohari</i>	<i>Monasa</i>
God of air	<i>Paban thakur</i>	<i>Hanuman or Paban thakur</i> (black face monkey)
Religious Reformar of Hinduism	<i>Pir</i> was respected person (worship)	respected person
Respected Priest or <i>Brahmana</i>	<i>Odhikari, Pad-dhari Kantulsi, Cokrodhari</i>	<i>Gosai</i> (spiritual teachers), <i>Bairagi, Sanyasi</i> etc.
Image of Gods and Goddess	Last phase of Colonial rule ²⁰	From the ancient time.
Eating rice etc. feed to God	<i>Seva</i> (feed or feast to God) to Narayana or Madonmohon	<i>Bhog</i> (Item of food for God, like-Krisna, Chattanya Mahaprobhu who were the symbol of Bishnu) indirectly feed the people)
Kali	In these area there are five/ six type <i>Kali</i> , like- <i>Haowa kali</i> (stands with right leg front), <i>Nangha kali</i> (Do not wear cloth), <i>Than Kali, Bao-kali, Bhodro-Kali, Sasan-Kali</i> etc. This Goddess is worshipping in any time of the year. ²¹ Some <i>Kali</i> were not stand on the God <i>Siva</i> .	<i>Bhodra kali, Sasan Kali-Kali</i> are prevalent in the society of immigrant Bhatia people from immemorial time. The main time of <i>Kali puja</i> performed after the <i>Durga puja</i> in the month of October or November. In another way the <i>Kali puja</i> performed on Saturday or Wednesday or any month or on the day of new moon. Most of the Image of the <i>Kali</i> that are worshiped by Bhatia people, are stand on the God <i>Siva</i> . According to Hindu <i>Sastra</i> there are 108 type of <i>Kali</i> . But Hindu do not worship 108 <i>Kali</i> at a time or alone.
Worship God <i>Siva</i>	<i>Siva ratri</i> (worship <i>Mahakal Mahadeva</i> through out the month of Bengali month Magh), <i>Hara, Bisuba</i> etc were the form of <i>Siva</i> .	Worship <i>Siva</i> but not whole month.
New rice eaten	<i>Naya Khawa</i> -New rice of <i>haimonty</i> offered to the sacred Basil (<i>tulsi tola</i>) and	<i>Nabanna</i> -First offer to God and Goddesses and then take all the family member. Some time

	then all the members of the house eat the new rice. An Odhikary called for the offering rice.	invite relatives or neighbours.
Fasting ceremony (fast in day 11 of lunar fortnight)	Utthan ekadasi -In the Bengali month of <i>Kartik</i> (Oct.-Nov.) on the day before <i>Rash Purnima</i> , the Rajbansis celebrate a <i>puja</i> attended with songs. ²²	In the Bengali month of <i>Kartik</i> (whole month) celebrated fasting in day time. They take the Vegetables food not ate non-veg. It mainly celebrated the religious sect.
Ceremonial bath in the river.	Baruni Sinan - In the month of <i>Magh</i> (jan.-Feb), a few days before the <i>Siva Ratri</i> , the Rajbansis take a ceremonial bath in the river. Puja is offered to <i>Mahadev</i> and <i>Bisahori</i> . In the last quarter of 20 th century image was included of <i>Kappil Muni</i> .	Baruni Sinan - In the month of <i>Magh</i> (jan.-Feb), a few days before the <i>Siva Ratri</i> the <i>Bhatias</i> take a ceremonial bath in the river. But Puja is offered to <i>Kappil Muni</i> .
Evil male spirit and Female evil spirit <i>Bhandani puja</i>	Bhut and Pettani – Bhut was male spirit. When a man an unnatural death his soul becomes a <i>bhut</i> . This spirit lived in bamboo or areca groves, in <i>shewra</i> trees(strblus asper) and may be enter into every house through the doors, windows or a big hole in the wall. ²³ To remove the spirit an exorcist is called. <i>Pettani</i> or <i>Pettani</i> i.e. female spirit.	Bhut and Pettani - This spirit lived in bamboo or areca groves, in <i>shewra</i> trees(strblus asper) and Both are came also when the man and woman go the area of the living area of the spirit. To remove the spirit an exorcist is called.
<i>Bhandani puja</i>	It was called <i>Dang dhari mao</i> which worshiped by Rajbansi people.	This puja also performed by Bhatia people. But name of the deity was only <i>Bhandani</i> .
<i>Chandi puja</i>	It was said there were in <i>Chandi puja</i> once a time human sacrifice was performed in Baikunthapur and <i>Baro Durga Bari</i> of Coochbehar during the time of <i>Chandi puja</i> .	The name of Chandi are <i>Udhar Chandi</i> , <i>Mongol Chandi</i> etc. In Varna hindu society there were not human sacrifice during the puja of Chandi.
<i>Sotyonarayan puia</i> - (Worship of God Narayan)	Sotyonarayan puia – This puja was performed in the month of <i>Asad</i> (June-July) by a Rajbansi Adhikary (priest). Later time i.e. middle half of	The rituals were the same as in East and South Bengal. But the priest were the Hindu Brahamana and they performed it Month other than

	20 th the Assamese Brahmans were sometimes called for the purpose. After one or two decade the Varna Hindu Brahaman also do the <i>Puja</i> . The rituals were the same as in East and South Bengal. The Rajbansi people learned this puja from the Bhatia people. Therefore this puja appears to be a new addition to the religious rites of the Rajbansis.	<i>Asad</i> .
offer cooked rice etc. to a God or deity	<i>Seva</i> -In <i>Tulsi tola</i> (beneath of holy basil), Priest- <i>Odhikari</i> or <i>Chokrodhari</i> , or <i>Kantulsi</i> etc. is called to performe the puja. God- <i>Narayan</i> or <i>Modonmohon</i> or Krishna who are worshipped as the symbol of Lord Visnu. ²⁴	<i>Bhog</i> (offer cooked rice etc. to a God or deity). Priest- (<i>Vaisnav</i> or <i>Gosai</i> (Vainavit saint) or <i>Brahaman</i> priest etc. Image- Lord <i>Krisna</i> , <i>Maha Probhhu Chaittanya</i> , etc. Bhatia people Some performed it in Hari Temple in the house or at <i>Tulsi tola</i> .
Haribola, (A Vaisnava deity)	It was the one deity of Gram thakur	Hari was separate deity. Vaisnava deity.
Sannyasi	Siva-Saiva deity part of Gram thakur	Sannyasi was the follower of Siva. Sannysi festival observed in the last whole month the Chaitra (March April). Here Sannyasi were the followers of Siva.
Gorakhnath puja (Saiva)	Worship month of Bhadra (Aug-Sept.) or Phalgun (Feb.-March)	Gorakhnath puja was the the form of god Siva. Mainly observe after the bring forth the calf of a cow. It may be any month.
Magical beliefs and practices	Charmed arrow(ban), like- Baro golaper ban, Tapa ban, Hawa-tepa ban, Meheri-buri ban, Masna ban, Masna ban, Dzuguni ban, Brohmo ban etc.	Charmed arrow(ban)-

It is necessary to say that the Rajbansis who are living in town or semi town do not observe their same previous ceremonies. The names of ceremony or rituals are given bellow:-

Those are, *Dhan Kata puja* (this is the first paddy-cutting ceremony), *Dham Gan* (group songs are arranged in the spare-time or leisure time), *Bisua* or

Bisuma- One part of the ceremony (like- hunting), *Amati* or *Ammabuchi* (menstruation of earth, *Dhaner Phul Ana*, *Charak*, *Meceni Khela puja*, *Gramthakur*, *Gochibuna Banshkhela*, *Madamkam*, *Bhut* (Deo-It is male evil spirit), *Pettani*, *Poiri* (These are female spirits also called 'Deo'), *Masan*, *Masna*-It is male spirit), *Mogor*, *Chon* (This is a male spirit and extremely dangerous), *Ganga sagar*, *Dokhina deo*, *Gohili* (Tree name of one spirit), *Hudum deo puja* (*Hudma*-fight against *bhut* with a sharp knife), *Meceni Kheler gan*, *Bas Khelar gan* (song of bamboo *khela*), *Corok pujar gan*, *Birua song-* (*odzhas*), *Udasi gan*, *Dotara gan*, *Dommir gan*, *Siber Biao gan* etc.²⁶ The main causes was that in town there were no sufficient place for worship the god and goddesses. Most of the people are educated and they realized that some rituals are meaningless. So they give up some unnecessary rituals and ceremony. Another cause was that some ceremony related with the occupations of man. When the people changed their occupation, they give up their rituals also.

Another point was that there was no cast system among the Rajbansi. Therefore, it was the social saneness in the people of these areas. There were also not depressed classes among the Rajbansis. The upper class Rajbansi did not humiliate lower class Rajbansi. In the field of the celebrations of any festival and to perform any rituals there were no obligations among the Rajbansis.

Conclusion:

The Rajbansis of Northern North Bengal comprised the majority Hindu social group who are living in this area from the ancient period or from early medieval period. Some time the foreign invaders attacked them. Later on, the immigrant people permanently settle in this area but Rajbansi people did not give up their ancestral land. Though there are identity problems and educational and economy backwardness, they are living within their society and with their changing culture, religious rituals etc. Most of the people claim their *Kshtriyas* identity and demand the obtainable, but do not completely give up their primitive cultural. So, the Rajbansis are the inhabitants of the 'Land of Rajbansis' and it may say that without this community, so called land of Rajbansi will be incomplete in the changing society of Northern North Bengal. The change was not only in the evolution of their own ritual but here it is more in acceptances rather than the development of their culture and rituals. The culture of Rajbansis is receding with the change of time. But it is interesting that some non-Rajbansi people accepted this retreating culture. So the mix culture has grown in this area. Therefore, it may be said that the people of other races are not responsible for the extension of this regional culture. But some Rajbansi people are not satisfied with this change and grievances arise among them against people who are looked upon as just outsiders.

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