

A DISCOURSE ON THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE RABHA COMMUNITY OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

Arpita Sarkar*

Dr. Tapas Mistri**

Abstract

Religion becomes the important part of the human society since the dawn of the civilization. The *Rabha* is a scheduled tribe community belonging to the Indo-Mongoloid group of people. In West Bengal, they mainly settled in Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar district. The *Rabha* community has magnificent traditional beliefs and social practices. With selected structured questionnaire, field survey and interactions with the inhabitants of the community the present study partakes to understand the actual form and position of the religion along with the transition and trends of changes in religion of the *Rabha* community in the segregated parts of the west Bengal. It is observed that their traditional religious philosophy is mainly based on Animism. But the influence of Hinduism and Christianity has a far reaching impact on the religious tradition and structure of the Rabhas. Besides the *Rabha* society have also constantly changes in the process of *Hinduism*, *Sanskritisation* and *Christianization* (Singha, 2004). These changing trends have effects on their socio-cultural, economic, political life, social institution etc. There is a need of sensitive careful understanding to recognize the effects of religious changes on their daily life and social interactions.

Key Words: Religion, tradition, transition, *Sanskritization*, *Christianization*

* **Research Scholar, Department of Geography, The University of Burdwan, West Bengal.**

** **Assistant Professor in Geography, The University of Burdwan, West Bengal.**

1. Introduction:

Religion is a complex phenomenon. Religion being one of the earliest institutions is also one of the oldest subjects in human history. The English word 'Religion' has a Latin root, religion meaning 'to bind together' (Ranold L. Johnston, 1961). Religion is the root of rites and rituals, which means the system of faith and worship. Rites and rituals are one of the most important institutions of human culture, which relates people to each other on special occasions. All societies have some beliefs, which can be grouped under the term religion. The Rabhas of West Bengal believe in Animism. They have the concept of attributing living soul to inanimate object and natural phenomenon. Since, the early days the Rabhas are used to worship spirits presumed to stay on stone, trees and others natural objects. They did never offer incorporeal worship but now-a-days they participate on community idol worship influenced by neighbouring communities. In this way, they take part on worships of Goddess *Durga*, *kali*, *Saraswati* and others. They also perform many Hindu religious occasions like *Ras Yatra*, *Bijaya Dasami* and so on. As a result there occurred cultural admixture of a number of people irrespective of any religion, caste and locality. These factors are automatically mobilizing them to get more *Hinduized*. Though the present day beliefs externally seem to be simple but it is really complex when we learn in its totality. Rabha religion not only reinforces the social structures but also contributes to social cohesion and community building based on natural trust and benevolent give and take. This also instills in them an element of confidence in their day to day transactions.

2. Objectives:

This study has been taken with the following objectives-

1. To understand about the traditional religion of the Rabha community of West Bengal.
2. To find out the affecting factors from the other communities in the religious world of the Rabhas.
3. To carve out the transformation and dimensional change in the religious life of the Rabhas and its impacts on their society.

3. Literature Review:

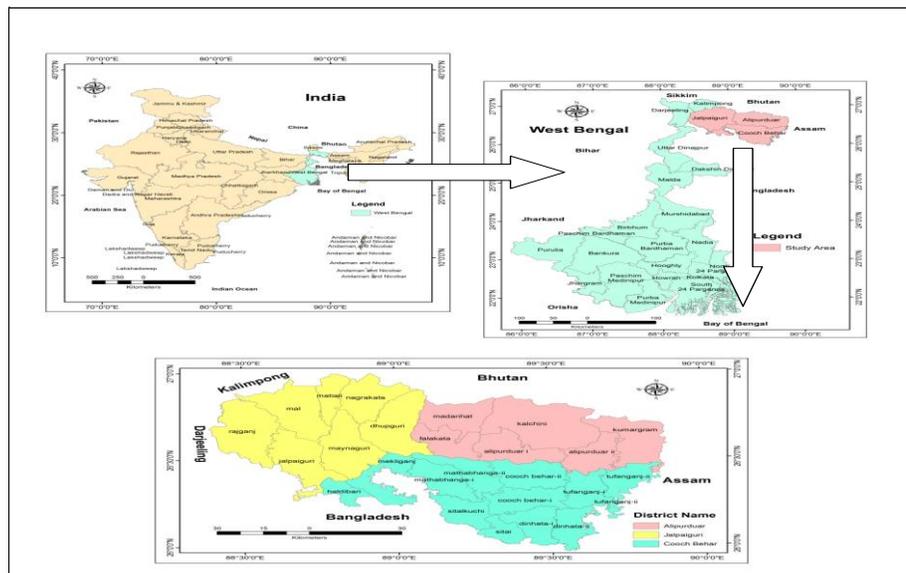
Juri Saikia(2017), discuss various socio-cultural processes like acculturation, assimilation, progressive absorption, fusion, *Sanskritization* etc has influenced upon almost all the ethnic

communities. According to him that religion brings new elements to society and culture and a society is depended in large scale on religion to maintain the social norms and value. **Hemanta Kumar Kalita and Bhanu Bezbora Kalita (2017)**, discuss the concept of religion and various elements of religion. They said that tribes are mostly the believer of the natural Gods and Goddesses. They are not bothered about the refined religious belief. **Dhanjoy Narjary (2014)**, described the rich cultural tradition of the Rabha tribe and represents their multicoloured society as well as socio-cultural background. He said that the Rabhas are animist in their religious traditions since the early days but now the influence of Hinduism has an impact on the religious tradition and structure of Rabhas. **Somnath Bhattacharjee (2015)** shows the issue that how the economic and religious changes are altered the different organisational aspects of the plain land Rabha society. He discusses the religious belief and other practices of Rabhas. **Anup Sen (2016)** discusses the socio-cultural environment of Rabha community. According to him the Rabhas individuals essentially religious and their religion measurements not bind in the midst of a specific religion; rather they have grasped Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism as a rule. **Romeo Rwtin Lokobok (2015)** shows at the socio-religious practice of ‘Song Bai Tang’ of the Koch Rabhas practiced in the villages as a community festivals and ritual and it is the greatest religious and social festivals of Koch Rabhas and celebrated in Rabha villages every year around the months of February or March.

4. About The Study Area:

West Bengal, one of the states in Eastern India lies between the Himalayas in the North and the Bay of Bengal in the South at geographical location between 27°13'15"to 21° 25' 24" North latitude and 85° 48' 20" to 89°53'04"East longitude. At present the state has a total area about 88,752square km. The major land mass of the state can be divided into two natural geographical divisions, like the Northern Himalayas and the Southern plane divisions excepting the spurs of Western hilly tract of the bordering states of Bihar and Odisha. The Rabhas are highly concentrated in three districts like Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar which are situated in Northern parts of West Bengal. Jalpaiguri district situated between 26°16' and 27°0' North latitude and 88°4' and 89°53' East longitudes. The district was established in 1869 in British India. In this district the highly settled Rabha villages are *Gosaihat Banachaya, Jharlatagram, Khuklung Basti, Murti* and Gorumara forest adjoining Areas. The Cooch Behar district is located

in the North Eastern part of the state and forms part of the Himalayan Terai of West Bengal. This district situated between $26^{\circ}36'20''$ to $26^{\circ}57'47''$ North and $89^{\circ}54'35''$ to $89^{\circ}47'44''$ East. The Rabha villages are *Dhalpal-I*, *Dhalpal-II*, *Haripur*, *Nagurhati*, *Talliguri*, *Rasikbill*, *Changtamari*, *Bharia*, *Bansraja* etc. Alipurduar district is the 20th district in the state of West Bengal. In this district more than 80% of the total population are SC/ST community. The highly settled Rabha villages are *Uttar Mendabari*, *Dakshin Mendabari*, *Nararkhali*, *Radhanagar*, *Hemguri* and *Chilapata* forest adjoining areas.



Map No 1. Location map of the study area

5. Materials and Methods:

For this study primary and secondary data are collected. The primary data were collected using the methods of observation, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, case study and survey method like the household survey and field survey. Most of the quantitative data are collected in secondary data sources like census data, various Government documents, Reports of village Panchayat office in Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar district, District Gazetteers, District Census Handbook, survey of India, published journals, books, newspapers and others. As there are some published documents on Rabha religion were used to collect information as people's sense of history and perception which have been considered a great value for this study. The qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods are used in this study. Religious leaders (*Deuri*) of the Rabha villages and the village *Mondal* (Headman) and Rabha herbal expert (*Ojha*) were interviewed to gathered qualitative data on the religious affiliations of the people. Since the

researchers visited the religious places including their common worship places and attained some festivals and household rituals and participant observation and scheduled interview method were used and taking note of the importance of their religious practices and opinions on socio-religious life of the various groups like the Rongdania and Pati Rabhas of West Bengal. These opportunities are to give knowledge of their religious life. In this study, detailed field work was done from 2017 to May 2018. In depth interviews and observations were given more importance than the numerical data. Discussion and major findings were drawn on the qualitative and quantitative data analysis and personal experiences of the researchers. On the other hand, Arc-GIS software is used to prepare the location map.

6. Perspectives of Traditional Religion:

The Rabhas are very conservative in their religious practices and beliefs. So they also maintained the traditional beliefs and values, customs and rituals with great care. The Rabhas believe in animism. They have the concept of attributing living soul to inanimate objects and natural phenomena. Traditional Rabhas used to worship spirits presumed to stay on stone, trees and other natural objects. All those worship are occurred in betterment of their daily livelihood conditions. They have also various rituals and beliefs connected with agricultural activities, hunting, fishing and also their treatment of disease and ailment. Their clan based totemic objects like different plants and animals were related with forest but gradually lost their impressions along with the ecological disturbances. Totemic objects played an important role in their socio-religious life which maintained their social unity and solidarity but it is now getting converted in to atomic in nature.

The Rabhas believe in the existence of a number of spirits, demons, deities, ghosts etc. These are broadly be classified into two categories-benevolent and malevolent. The Rabhas are afraid of these supernatural and believe that they inflict disease, death and calamities to men and animals. Since, the Rabhas offer worship to spirits, soul and different God and Goddess, they are worshiper of power and inanimate. Some of the rituals are observed by the entire community and some others are observed in the particular household. The rituals are connected with life cycle of an individual, welfare of family and property, treatment of diseases etc are observed in family and community level. The Rabhas take the name of water (*chikka*), fire (*bar*), and wind (*rampar*)

because in each human body there are these three elements found. They believe that water is seen in the form of blood, fire is seen in the form of temperature and wind is seen in the form of breathing. This concept is related to the age old Hindu views that human body consist of five basic elements known as ‘*Panchabhuta*’ (Fig No 1.)

The traditional Rabhas are in different times having been organizing different religious rites related to varieties of deities. The puja offering and deities associated with religious rites are grouped as given below:

- The various religious worships are mainly *Rantak puja*, *Hasang puja*, *Kancho puja*, *Baikho puja*, *Mairabai puja*, *Khokshi puja* and others.
- The various worships based on folk beliefs and customs are mainly *Paura Deo*, *Lakhar deo*, *Bahali deo*, *Kuber Deotar puja*, *Khelaram puja*, *Bera Hasubai puja* etc.

The major deities of Rabhas are discussed in below:

- Rishideo or Rntak deity:** *Rishi* is the main household deity of the Rabhas. It is also called *Rntak*, is the meaning of ‘Picher of rice’. The Rabhas are ancient time this Picher of rice is considered as household deity and *puja* is offered in the auspicious day of ‘*Bihu-Sankranti*’ or ‘*Nawabhat*’. The deity is worshiped before commencement of marriage ceremony, harvesting ceremony etc.
- Hasang:** *Hasang* is combination of 13 deities, these deities are-*Langachara*, *Koinang*, *Fedor*, *Langgacha*, *Tura*, *Darmang*, *Kolaka*, *Pajamba*, *Burabadi*, *Khuchuri*, *Tray-nang* and *Chari*. In this worship a special *Bhog* or *Phok-chak* curry is prepared with ‘*Dhekia*’ (a fern) and some meat of fowl, pork mixed with rice powder.
- Langa:** *Langa* literally means ‘*Mahadeva*’, one of the greatest deities. This deity is worshiped in jungle or in the bank of rivers. It is offered in the month of *Baishak* or *Jeth* an object to have a good harvest.
- Baikho:** In the ancient times this Goddess was worshiped by all section of the Rabhas. The meaning is that ‘*Bai*’ means deity and ‘*Kho*’ means great. In *Baikho* four Goddesses are worshiped like- *Susari*, *Nakkati*, *Tamai* and *Daduri*. In this worshiped in the fixed date and place in the jungle and ‘*Haimaru*’ song is sung. The song is sung are the chief priest house and when the song begins no one can sleep at night.

- e) **Moirabi:** The Rabhas are practiced in *Moirabi* when there are any ailments like sudden loss of consciousness, dumb, frightening and abnormality. The priest begins puja with mantra and offering of a pigeon fowls.
- f) **Khusumbia:** This *puja* is offered when spread of diseases like allergy, skin ailments, swelling of bodies etc.
- g) **Koncho Deity:** It is worshiped in order to save the granary from insects, mouse etc and keep livestock intact.
- h) **Dainy Deity:** This worship is protect crops and to prevent people from diseases.
- Some other important deities are also found in traditional religion in Rabhas. *Bay-Ma-Bay* (Benevolent deity), *Darmang Bay* (God of good health), *Bero-Hachu-Bay* (Protector of domestic animals), *Khaisam-Bay* (sacrifice to cure height blindness), *Achka Bay* (Goddess of water), *Budha Bay* (household deity), *Biswali Bay* (to cure pain), *Singra bay* (to cure fever), *Khclaram Bay* (to save crops) and others (Narzary, D. 2014).

7. Results and Analysis:

7.1. Influence of Others Religious Groups and Societies:

Today, the Rabhas of West Bengal are more often follow a faith which is a blend of some animistic and others religious rituals. The religious life of the Rabhas gives the picture of a mixture of different elements.

Hinduism: The plain land Rabhas are living with the people of caste Hindus from a prolonged period, naturally a lot of cultural traits can be observed of the Rabhas. The influence of Hinduism has a far reaching impact on the religious tradition and structure of different groups of the Rabhas. Since the early Forties there has been a widespread movement of Hinduism and a larger section of the Rabhas have adopted Hinduism. They believe that '*Rishi*' is the supreme creator of the world and reside in heaven. '*Rishi Deo*' is the transformation of 'Shiva'. He is the worshiped in various forms. Beside *Rishi*, the Rabhas worship two female Goddess named *Rungtuk* and *Basek* who are actually the two daughters of *Rishi*. Hindu Rabhas are considering *Rungtuk* and *Basek* as *Lakshmi* and *Saraswati*. They also worship *Kamakshya Devi* during *Ambabachi* that is a Hindu Holy festival related to *Kali* Goddess. The *Kamakshya puja* of *Kamakhyaguri* under Alipurduar district is a big festival of the Rabhas. Earlier days they use of *Trishul*, prayer flags,

bells etc but now a days they have purchased many calendars and photos of popular Gods and Goddesses like the Hinduism. Also they perform many Hindu religious occasions like *Rathayatra*, *Dolyatra*, *Bijoya Dasami* and others. They organize fairs during these occasions and as a result there occurred cultural and religious admixture (Fig No 2 & 3).

Vaishnavism: For the first time in 1935 in west Bengal, the Brahmin priest Dhareshwar Sharma to gave them the initiation of *Vaishnavism*. Later on many other Rabhas are followed the pioneers. At that time most of the Rabha families have their Hindu *Kulguru*. During 1970's some Rabhas were *Khastrised* by wearing six threaded *paita* from *Rajbanshi Vaisnab Goswami* or *adhikari* (Priest). After the acceptance of *Vaishnavism* they started to worship Lord *Balaram* and a number of other Hindu Gods and Goddesses such as Lord Shiva, Devi Kali, *Devi Durga* etc. The influence of *Vaishnavism* has also been a strong force in bringing about a leaning towards Hinduism. The *Chaitanya Vaishnavism* of Bengal origin is more active of the Rabhas in some villages like Haripur, Bonchamari, Dhalpal-II, Bharia etc of West Bengal. This has lead to performance of *Vaishnav* singing in place of some original tribal rituals. Some sections of Rabhas have formally come into the caste fold by initiation (Saran) through *Vaishnav* Gurus but some are come to without any formal entry. Acceptances of *Vaishnavism* some Rabhas are going for worship of Goddesses of *Sitala* and *Manasa*.

Satsangha: In 1998 some Rabha families were initiated by the *Satsangha* of Thakur Anukul Chandra in the villages of Gosaihat Banachaya, Haripur, Chat Rampur, Bansraja etc in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar district. With this gradual acceptance of Hindu belief naturally a lot of changes are occurred in the rituals of Rabha societies. At present various social and religious festivals are performed by them with the help of Hindu Brahman priest (Fig No. 4)

■ *Christianization*: The advent of Christian Missionaries in the Rabhas inhabiting areas of West Bengal and preaching of doctrine of Christianity and publication of such doctrine by the British foreign and Bible society (1909) first in Rangdani dialect in 1909 had to be said as the process of *Christianization* among the Rabhas. Various changes are occurred with the contact of Christianity. The Church have been providing education, medical care and to some extent

orientation for the youth. However it has a motivating force which gives greater leadership in orienting peoples to become socially minded and taking up challenges of modern societies.

7.2. Causes Of Shifting Of Others Religious Practices:

The Rabha community is not careful to observe the long established religion and rituals as they are facing their identity crises before the other advanced communities such as the well developed local *Bengalis*, *Rajbanshis* and Christians. The Rabha groups have lost some of their original worship patterns side by side with their originality in social structure. The process of assimilation the Rabha community succeeded in retaining some of the distinct identity markers in spite of the push and pull of development perspectives. Some major causes are there of shifting in other religious practices. These are:

Economic causes: In recent most of the Rabha groups are going to movements towards economic betterments. Traditionally, they practiced in jhum cultivation, hunting, fishing and forest product gatherings. But due to the Forest Act now they cannot collect the forest products and hunting and jhum cultivation are also prohibited. So now they are went to completely settled cultivation like the Hindu and Rajbanshi peoples. Then the Hindu religion Rabhas are produced in highly produced paddy, horticultural products (pine-apple, orange, jackfruit, mango, betel nut, banana, papaya, coconut), mustered oil, sugarcane, cotton and others. Some Hindu and Christianized Rabhas are using chemical fertilizers and pesticides for betterment yield in agriculture. They are shifting to others religion because to take education and various white colours jobs also. These recently added economic persuasions have made them away from community engagements with special reference to religious rituals up to a certain extent.

Political reason: Every Rabha villages the modern three tier panchayat system has become much influential that it is breaking their old heritage of traditional religious administration and number of other social welfare works. In this Rabha society has a fast change is going on in the effect of modern political system. The Rabha peoples are to take various advantages of this system and they are affected in Hindu religion. Beside in the first half of the 20th century many Rabha peoples of Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar districts are started movements for upgrading the position to get equal social rank as that of Hindu caste like the local Bengali and *Rajbansis*.

Education: To take of modern education and new modes of occupation have greatly influenced the traditional religious system of the Rabhas. In Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar district the Rabhas are accept the Hindu and Christian religion and got the privilege to come in the modern educational scenario. Presently in their locality there are some high school, primary school and libraries. With the advent of modern education the Hindu Rabhas are now became accustomed with Bengali and English language. The formal increase in educational standard is breaking their age old religious practices.

To change their dwellings: Spatial variation- Rabha groups are scattered in several places of plains and forest areas of West Bengal. The section of plain land Rabhas are getting more in touch with other adjacent population than the forest Rabhas (Sarkar & Mistri, 2017). So the religious traits were also started to blend with the neighbours like *Hindu*, *Muslim* and *Christian* religious and emerged a new way of living in plane land Rabhas. The hilly and forest dwellings Rabhas are try to shift in the plain land villages and town areas for betterment of their economic conditions and life styles. In plane land Rabhas are more in touch with Hindu peoples. So changes of their permanent dwelling places and to take equal social rank of Hindu peoples they are shifting their traditional religion to Hindu religion. In the context of interaction with others their religious practices are in touch with modern education, technology and modern economic pursuits.

Weakness of their own traditional religion of Rabhas: Modern Rabha generations are do not maintain and like many traditional religious practices. Like the various totemic objects are gradually lost in the new generations because of the ecological disturbances. Educated Rabhas are not believed in the malevolent deities and they find the logic in their religious practices. So they are now attracted in the Hindu and Christian religious practices.

Attraction of the glamour's of the others religious practices: Traditional Rabha religious practices and worshiped are so old in nature. But in compare of the Hindu and Christian religious practices are so gorgeous and peaceful in nature. Like the Hindu religion practices are *Dewali*, *Durgapuja* etc and Christian religion practices are Good Friday, Christmas etc are so much glamour's in outer look. So the Rabhas are attracted in these religions practices.

7.3. Change of Society from Matrilineal To Patrilineal:

The Rabhas have several clans termed '*Baray*' or '*Husuk*' which is matrilineal in nature. They are strictly maintained in clan exogamy. The whole Rabha society is divided into a number of exogamous clan. Traditional Rabha religion support the matrilineal process that means a new born baby inherent his or her mother clan. But the Hindu Rabhas are support patrilineal process and the authority is under the hand of males. In each family the eldest male members is considered as the head and everybody of the family are to follow his directions.

7.4. Changes of Marriage System:

The traditional Rabha religion supports the Intra –tribal marriage like endogamy and clan exogamy marriage. The marriage in outside of the tribal group was strictly prohibited. The prevalence of the system of cross-cousin marriages the relationships between fathers sister and mothers brother with their spouses formed a separate group and relationship. But the Hindu and Christian Rabhas are denied in this system. Now the important types of marriages found in the village areas are '*Saja Biya*' (marriage by talk to each other), '*Gharjai Biya*' (marriage by elopement), and love marriage. They are accepting both the bride and groom belonging to the other caste of the Bengali Hindu and *Rajbanshi* community. Now in their marriage ceremony they have accepted a number of Hindu ritualistic norms and customs. With the help of Hindu Brahman priest they perform and complete the marriage ceremony. Traditionally they are not accepted any institutional certificate in the marriages but now they are adopted registry marriage system follow the act of Indian Law system. Their traditional kinships are also effects of the other religion. The Hindu Rabhas are used the local Bengali kinships. The changing kinships are plays important role in the marriage systems.

7.5. Changes of Family Structure:

The changing perspective of religion have greatly influenced in their traditional family structure. In earlier times they practiced the joint family system. In their families comprised of one or more couple with their children, grand parents and near kin members. But now most of the Hindu and Christian Rabhas are practiced in single family pattern with husband, wife and their one or two children (Sarkar & Mistri, 2017). They observed that the Hindu and specially Christian Rabhs

are now accepted in the modern family planning methods to control the child birth in the villages of Jharlatagram, Kamakshaguri, Hemguri, Talliguri, Haripur, Nagurhati etc in Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar district.

7.6. Changes of Birth and Death Related Rituals:

The traditional Rabhas have certain habitual rules related to the child birth. The traditional Rabhas are sacrifice by offering a duck or a goat to 'Bay-ma-ba' deity for safe delivery. One portion of the bedroom is used for delivery where men are not allowed this portion of the room whereas some older and experienced women of the tribe help to delivery. But now Hindu and Christian Rabhas do not follow the rules and they come to the hospital for delivery. About three months after the birth of the child they are conducted the purifying ceremony (*Bokthay Phakhakay*) together with the name giving ceremony and first feeding (*Tatshi Ginkay*) but Hindu Rabhas are conducted this feeding ceremony in six or eight months later. Before the purification mother is kept in restriction to enter kitchen, cowshed, temple etc but the Hindu and Christian Rabhas are do not follow these restrictions.

After death the traditional Rabhas are in burial process but now Hindu Rabhas prefer cremation in dead bodies. Sometimes they blame sickness; misfortunate and death caused by evil spirits and propitiates them. They arrange the programme of 'Shradhya' after one month or one year of death. Now the Hindu ritual they follow the funeral ceremony on 13 days with the help of Brahmin priest irrespective of their traditional duration of funeral ceremony. They perform a death ceremony called 'Farkanti' and the performance of songs and dances associated with this *Farkanti*, it is receiving the greater attention as the traditional Rabhas. But now former *Farkanti* rituals are being replaced by *kirton*-singing. Now this ceremony has gradually lost its former significance in the Hindu and Christian Rabhas. They are adopted post-funeral ceremony offering prawn and other fish to the deceases as well as the public, it is called 'Masuany Shradha' like the Hindus.

7.7. Socialization and Its Impacts on Religion:

The socialization process has been direct change of the tribal religious beliefs, practices as well as tribal cultures. As it was indigenous, continuous, non-competitive and voluntary change and

the rate of change were slow and selective. Various socialization factors like economic progress, education, urban mobility, social participation, mixing with other communities, transport and communication, social institutions and others have greatly influenced the religious practices of the Rabhas. The intensity of media exposure, political participation and competitive outlook towards social mobility has added strength to these processes (Singh, 2000). The acceptance of Hindu and Christian religious worship and festivals, have altered the traditional cultural practices and adopted a number of new social customs in their life. The Rabhas have gained education through Missionaries and Schools and they have moved away from their indigenous culture and beliefs. Beside the first of the 20th they gave up their 'Rabha' title and started to use the title named 'Das'. Actually this was their social movement. Impacts of their three tier *Panchayat* system their folk administration of justice can't perform in actively and it is highly effects in their traditional religion practices. Due to the changes are also visible in the transport and communication which are remarkable in the Hindu effected villages. They are in a process of constant change due to the contact with other communities and their religion practices, education, economic development, progress of media and communication and others factors.

8. Conclusion:

The acceptance of Hindu and others religion beliefs, practices and festivals have altered their traditional cultural practices and adopted a number of new social customs in the life of Rabha peoples. With the application of modern knowledge now they were grow up their economic life and on the other hand with the acceptance of modern education and Hindu and Christian rituals in their daily life they are reaching in Hindu social strata. They also are trying to gain equal social prestige along with the local Bengali Hindus and Rajbanshis. These changes are gradually taking them towards modernization and now this Rabha community is on the way of a better society.

References:

[1] Bhattacharjee, S. "Tradition and Transition among the Plain Land Rabhas: An Anthropological Observation," Acme Intellects International Journal of Research in

Management, Social Science and Technology, Vol-10, No-10, ISSN: 23202939(P), 23202793(O), 2015.

[2] Brief History of Cooch Behar, Official Website of Cooch Behar District. Retrieved, 10 Sep, 2008.

[3] Census of India, 1971-2011.

[4] Das, A. K. & Raha, M. K., "The Rabhas of West Bengal," Calcutta; Govt. Of West Bengal, 1967.

[5] Gazetteer of India-West-Bengal, Jalpaiguri (1981): West Bengal. District Gazetteer, Government of West Bengal, Kolkata-01.

[6] Kalita, H. K. & Kalita, B. B. "Tribal Religion of Lower Assam of North East India," International Journal of Management and Applied Science, Vol-3, Issue-9, ISSN-23947926, 2017.

[7] Lokobok, R. R. "The Socio-Religious Practice of Song 'Song Bai Tangi' of the Koch Rabhas: A Case Study with Special reference to the Kokrajhar District of BTAD, Assam," International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Studies (IJHSSS), Vol-1, Issue-VI, Page No: 142-144, ISSN: 23496959, 2015.

[8] Narjary, D. "An Approach to Traditional Cultural of Rabha," Pratidhwani the Eco, Vilume-III, Issue-II, Page No: 108-117, ISSN: 22785264(online), 23219319(print), 2014.

[9] Saikia, J. "Religion and Social Change among the Ethnic Communities of Assam," International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Science Society and Culture (IJIRSSC), Volume: 3, Issue: 1, June, ISSN: 23954345 (O), 24552909 (p), 2017.

[10] Sarkar, A & Mistri, T. "Transformation of the Rabha Society of West Bengal: An Introspection," Edulight. ISSN: 22789545, Volume-6, Issue-12, November, 2017.

[11] Sen, A. 'Some Basic Observation on the Rabha Society and Culture'. Indian Streams Research Journal, Vol-6, Issue- 8, ISSN: 22307850, 2016.

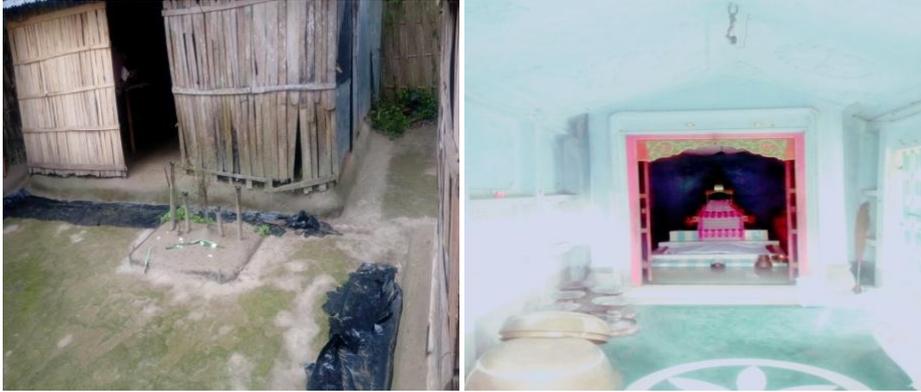


Fig No 1 Traditional Place of Rabha Worships



Fig No. 2 *Hindu Hari Mandir*

Fig No. 3 *Shitala Temple*



Fig No. 4 Glimpses of *Kirtan of Satsang*