Rediscovering Identities: Rajbanshi Community and Folklore

Anindita Saha

Research Scholar

Department of English

Sister Nivedita University

New Town

Email:anindita123450@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper makes an attempt to explore, how the long-submerged *Rajbanshi* community resurfaces in the Indian Literature. Whether folktales can enhance the cultural and regional backdrop of the *Rajbanshis*, there lies the question. Pluralism or multiculturalism has been playing a decisive role in the functioning of modern states throughout the world. In case of India, cultural or tribal or communal consciousness has risen mainly in post-independence era. The *Rajbanshi* community, one of the major ethnic groups of North Bengal, came up with the *Kamtapur* Movement to fight for their identity and a formal recognition in the society. Social Reform is a kind of social movement that aims to make gradual change, or change in certain aspects of society, rather than rapid or fundamental one. The folk literature was spread through the rural culture of the *Rajbanshi* community. Folk-culture is one of the main elements of folk-literature. Folk literature is thus a verbal art or expressive literature, spoken, sung and refers to the oral customs, traditions, and culture of a group of people. There are a lot of literary sources that are hiding amidst folklores. The *Rajbanshis*, the *Rabhas*, the *Totos* and many more tribes were losing their identity. Amongst them, The *Rajbanshis* led the Kamtapur Movement to be identified amongst all. Folklore was used as an instrument and was the sole medium to make this social reform movement bring in certain changes and help the community to move forward to rediscover their identity; the *Rajbanshis*, thus, made a march towards success.

Key words: *Rajbanshi* community, Folklore, Pluralism, Identity, Social reform movement