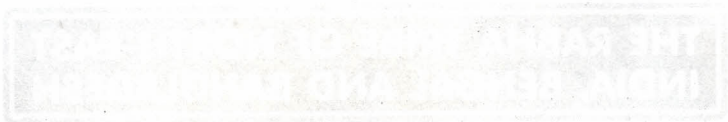


A Mittal Publication

THE RABHA TRIBE OF NORTH EAST INDIA BENGAL AND BANGLADESH



Phukan Basumatary



THE AUTHOR

PHUKAN BASUMATARY (*b.* 1967) by profession a teacher in Boro language and literature, is a scholar of Tibeto-Burman language and linguistics. He has an immense interest and enthusiasm in the field of TB languages and Tribal folklore of the North eastern regions of India. An Introduction to the Boro Language (2005) is an evidence of Phukan's earlier contribution to the TB scholarship. He has been awarded PhD Degree by Gauhati University in 2006 for his research work. A Study in Cultural and Linguistic Affinities of the Boros and Rabhas of Assam. A few books on Boro language and literature have recently been published by different publishers of Assam. He has contributed a lot of articles and research papers in different journals, magazines, anthologies, periodicals and news papers in Boro, English, Hindi, Bangla and Assamese language. A lot of articles on Boro language and folklore have also been translated into Bangla and Hindi.

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OF
NORTH-EAST INDIA,
BENGAL
AND
BANGLADESH**

PHUKAN BASUMATARY



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This book is
sincerely dedicated to
my Guru

Prof. (Dr.) Dipankar Moral,
Dept. of Assamese,
Gauhati University,
Assam [India]
and to the Rabhas as a whole

PREFACE

This is the primary attempt to design a concise framework of the monograph of the Rabha culture and language. Till date no further extensive analytical work has been made by the scholars of Tibeto-Burman scholarship. Here analysis has been done based on the field-data collected from primary and secondary sources. Materials gathered in this work are divided into two parts: one is cultural elements and the other is linguistic features. The linguistic features have been shown at different levels: phonology, morphology and lexis. Thus analysis of cultural features has also been made from a purely folkloristic point of view.

This study will help the interested readers and investigators to have more information of culture and language of the Rabhas. This principal objective has been taken into account in this volume. It is worth to mention here that the author is sincerely indebted to all the Rabha speakers, known and little known Rabha scholars who helped me immensely in collecting data and finally to proceed to the proposed aim. The author has never been felt trustee oneself for approximately successful completion of the project. Acknowledgements will always remain to the native speakers, informants and active and passive bearers of language and culture of this community.

This is a descriptive study where cultural and linguistic items have been described and analyzed from a synchronic point of view. The study demands high academic value and sociological importance in the present day context of the northeastern region of India.

I am really grateful to Mr. Krishan Mittal, because he has taken up a bold step to publish this volume only for the greater interest of the Rabha society. I deeply feel that Mr. Mittal's endeavour is, no doubt, a great contribution towards the Rabhas.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Br.	Boro
D.	Dimasa
Bahing.	Bahing
Nagari.	Nagari
K.	Kachin
B.	Burmese
Kanauri.	Kanauri
T.	Tibetan
Lisu.	Lisu
Ahi.	Ahi
Nyi.	Nyi
Kb.	Kok-Borok
G.	Garo
PTB.	Proto-Tibeto Burman
L.	Lushei
Nung.	Nung
Lim.	Limbu
Magar	Magad
Vayu.	Vayu
Achang.	Achang
Dhimal.	Dhimal
Adv.	Adverb
Adj.	Adjective
V.	Verb
N.	Noun
Pro.	Pronoun

x / *The Rabha Tribe of North-East India, Bengal and Bangladesh*

- /ə/ For typological convenient this mark is used for high back un-rounded vowel phoneme
- /w/ Used for bilabial semi-vowel
- > (has) becomes
- N Used for voiced velar nasal phoneme

GLOSSARY

- Baikho** A ritualistic festival performed with some wonderful and magical events. During the festival the Baikho deity is propitiated to make village-folk free from the evil influences, ailments and diseases.
- Badung duppa** A musical instrument i.e. a drum made of bamboo tube with bamboo strings on it. The instrument is believed as the holy creation of the god Risibay. As recounted in the myth the instrument is come into existence among the Rabhas by the grace of god Risibay. This is only used during the ritualistic festivals.
- Bogezary** A legendary woman who is believed as a skilled singer and lyricist.
- Dodan** A great legendary king of the Rabhas.
- Duli** A kind of container made of bamboo which is used for keeping rice and other agricultural products.
- Don** A kind of container made of bamboo. This is used for measuring agricultural things.
- Dokhom** A kind low stool made of wood. This is used for sitting. Dokhom is considered as the symbol of respect in their social rituals and ceremonies.
- Grimbuda** This is an agricultural ceremony performed in the autumn season. The Grimbuda goddess is worshipped as the owner of crops and paddy field.
- Hamzar** This is a folk-song related to the agriculture. From the contextual point of view, the song is known as work song. This kind of song is sung particularly at the time of tilling land or burning forest or jungles for shifting cultivation at the hills. The term **hamzar** is composed of two root steams i.e **ha** (earth) and **mazar** (in the midst of forest).
- Hasong** A kind of village worship prevalent among the Rongdani group of the Rabhas. This is a ritualistic worship. During the worship thirteen deities are propitiated very sincerely and collectively by the village folk. The Oza recites charms at the event of

- worship for plenty production of crops and welfare of the village-folk.
- Hoimaru chay** A kind of ritualistic song i.e. actually charms recited in rhythmic manner by the Oza at the event of offerings to the Baikho deity.
- Kambung** Women dress used to cover the breast. This is like a wrapper.
- Katha Zibra** The term is used to denote the proverbial sayings of the Rabhas. It corresponds to the English term *proverb*.
- Karha-nol** A kind of flute specially made of reed. The flute is four or five feet long in length. As narrated in the myth the flute is created by the grace of god Risibay and particularly used in the context of religious and ritualistic worship.
- Kham** A kind of drum made of wood. It is almost three or four feet long.
- Khodabang** Women dress used to tie the hair.
- Mai-jham** A kind of store-house which is built to keep agricultural products like crops and various seeds.
- Marukshetry** Marukshetry is believed, as recounted in legendary tale, as a skilled soldier of the great king Dodan.
- Nakhem** Pounded dried fish which is preserved in bamboo tube.
- Onla** A kind of traditional curry. Its recipe is very simple and easy to prepare within a short time. The curry is prepared with a few quantity of rice powder and essentially taken in their traditional marriage ceremony.
- Oza** A medicine man who recites charms and incantations at the event of offerings to the deities. The term is derived from Asomiya word having same meaning.
- Pazal** A kind of traditional male dress.
- Pachar** A kind of wrapper used both male and female.
- Riphan** Used by the women and worn in the waist or the breast.
- Sandri** A kind of sieve made of bamboo.
- Sathar** A kind of song sung during the Baikho worship having exotic sentiments of youthful exuberance.
- Senkanen** A kind of male and female dress used for making turban on the head or to tie round the waist.
- Zongga** An earthen pitcher comparatively big and long in size having wide mouth. Particularly used for keeping rice beer.

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1

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic Identity

The Rabhas are one of the indigenous tribes of Assam. Their concentration is found throughout the state of Assam besides its adjoining States like West Bengal, Meghalaya and in a few areas of Bangladesh. As per 1991 Census Report of Assam, Rabha speakers are estimated 1,1,2424. The Rabhas of Assam are influenced by different cultural and linguistic communities to a large extent. As a result of adaptation of cultural and linguistic elements from other communities and repudiation of their own identity, some of the clan groups of the Rabhas have shifted to the Hindu Asomiya caste to a great extent. However, some of them are in the process of mobilization to survive and preserve their inherent culture and language.

Assam is a multiethnic and multilingual state of the north-eastern India. There are four different language families viz: Indo-Aryan, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian. Linguistically the Rabhas belong to the Tibeto-Burman sub-family within the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. Most of the scholars have some valuable opinions about the origin of the Rabhas.

The generic term *Bodo* was first used by Hodgson to this group of languages.¹ The Bodo group comprises (as stated in the *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol.-I, Part-I) the following tribes: Kachari or Bodo, Lalung (now called Tiwa), Dimasa, Garo, Rabha, Tripuri (Kakborok), Koch, Chutiya (Deuri) and Moran.

*"The group of tribes known as Bodo or Bârâ forms the most numerous and important section of the non-Aryan tribes of the provinces of Assam."*²

It is supposed that the generic term Bodo or Boro had been transformed from the name of Bod > Tibbot > Tibet (Nath,

Rajmohan: The Background of Assamese Culture, 1948). Nath, Rajmohan has a comment in this regard:

"The inhabitants of various parts of the Bod country were known as Boddō-Ficha or Boddō-cha (Ficha-cha-children) or the children of the Bod country, and were later known simply as the Boddō or the Bodo."

The inhabitants of the Tibet country have more affinities in cultural traits with the Boro-Garo (P.K. Benedict and Dr. D. Moral used the term in case of Bodo used by G.A. Grierson) group of people.

There is no distinct information about the origin of the Rabhas. Some scholars, regarding their place of origin, offer divergent opinions. Major A. Playfair noticed that the Rabhas had migrated from the Tibetan regions to the Garo-Hills and afterwards spread throughout the state of Assam-plains. In respect to the origin of the Rabhas, Gait wrote in his 'Census Report of Assam' (1891),

"There seems to be a good deal of uncertainty as to who these people really are. In lower Assam, it is asserted that they are an off-shoot of the Garos, while in Kamrup and Darrang it is thought that they are Kachari on the road to Hinduism."

Edward Tuite Dalton also noticed,

*"The Rabhas and the Hajongs of the Goalpara district are also branches of the Kachari race and connected with the Garos."*³

There is no doubt about the fact that the Rabhas have a language and culture to identify them as a distinct tribe. There is no logic to offer a vague opinion that a Kachari becomes a Rabha through the acceptance of Hinduism or proselytism or that the Rabhas are an off-shoot of the Garos. Among the scholars, there are diversified opinions and explanations about the origin of the Rabhas. However, ethnic affinities establish them to be member of the great Mongolian stock. The Rabhas have some clan groups which consists of Rongdani, Maitori, Koch (or Pani Koch), Hana, Pati, Dahuri, Totla, Bitalia etc. The first three groups are the major socio-linguistic group. They are maintaining their inherent language and culture in comparison to the other minor groups. The major group of the Rabhas i.e. Rongdani, Maitori and Koch show some variations in the lexical and phonological levels. The Rongdani claim for them a position of superiority. Most of the writers and written literature are flourishing recently in this dialect. So, efforts have been made recently to codify the Rongdani dialect as a

standard language of the Rabhas as a whole. Different books and magazines are also being published currently in this dialect. The *Bebak Rabha Krourang Runchum* (a literary organization of the Rabhas) and the *Rabha Bhasha Parishad* (another literary organization) have taken up many effective plans to enrich their language, literature and culture. Vocabulary books and dictionaries are published by the literary organizations.

Other minor groups of the Rabhas like the Pati, Totla, and Hana, etc. have lost their own language and have shifted to Asomiya which has resulted in the formation of a *mixed dialect*, an ethnic dialect within the Asomiya speech community.

The Rongdanis and the Maitoris are concentrated over the southern part of Goalpara district and the north-eastern part of the Garo-Hills district of Meghalaya. The Patis live in Kamrup and the eastern part of Goalpara district. The Koches are the most important dialect group of the Rabhas. The highest numbers of populations of the Koches are distributed in the West Garo-Hills of Meghalaya, North Bengal, and in a few areas of the district of Dhubri, Goalpara, Bongaigaon and Kokrajhar of Assam. The Koches are also known as Pani Koch particularly in the West Garo-Hills. The term is derived from *panni Koch*. In Rabha, *pan* means tree and *{-ni}* is a suffix. It means inhabitant of the forest.⁴ In this regard, Edward Gait observed that the Pani Koches are the only division of the tribe, which speaks Koch language. On the other hand, Dr. G.A. Grierson has mentioned the six divisions of the Pani Koches viz. *Harigaya, Satpariya, Dasgaya, Chapra, Wanang* and *Tintekiya*.⁵ One striking observation is found in this regard. H.B. Rowney observed,

*"The primitive or Pani Koches lived amid the woods but there are few of them now to meet with where still existing. They claim to be of the same race with the Garos and the language and customs of the two peoples certainly do agree to a great extent."*⁶

As it were, the Rabhas are a distinct tribe of the northeast India having many dialect groups of its own and show maximum similarity with other Boro-Garo group of languages.

Objective of the Study

The present study aims to highlight the cultural and linguistic features of the Rabhas. The micro-level analysis is done based on the field data collected from primary as well as secondary sources.

For illustration and synchronic analysis, materials are gathered from the Rongdanis, Maitoris and the Koches groups. Materials included in this work are divided into two parts i.e. one is cultural elements and the other is linguistic features. The linguistic features have been shown at different levels i.e. phonology, morphology and lexis. Thus analysis of cultural features has also been made from a purely folkloristic point of view. In this work, emphasis is given on a synchronic analysis.

Emerging of the Rabha Written Literature

Rabha has a rich tradition in respect to the folk-literature. Among the Rabhas, songs of the folk, tales, legends, charms related to various religious festivals and performances, various myths, riddles, idioms and proverbial sayings are still prevailing as relic of the folk-knowledge.

While considering the written movement of Rabha literature, it is necessary to notice the beginning of 1900 A.D. The written tradition of Rabha literature was started towards the beginning of twentieth century with the publication of a religious book *Markni Nima Saikai* (1909) which was translated into Rongdani dialect from *The Gospel of Mark* of the original holy Bible. It was most probably the oldest specimen of written trend in Rabha. *Penem Lamon Dam* (a religious book) was written by Purna Chandra Koch in Rabha in 1926. Besides some pioneer works were done by Rajen Rongkho and Adhar Bantho. *Rabha Zibraw Orgi* (a book on Rabha language) and *Bhag Tekkang* (1948) were written by Rajen Rongkho and published by Ishawar Chandra Hato. Thus Adhar Bantho wrote a book *Rabha Bhasa* (1950, Rabha language). During this period, various socio-cultural organizations came into existence. For example, *Rabha Krishti Sanmilan* (1955) had taken up many effective plans for the development of the Rabhas. Late Rajen Pam and Rajen Rabha both were the pioneers in this respect. Prasanna Kumar Pam wrote a legendary drama *Dodan Bir* (1957) which was most probably the first drama in Rabha. Thus several outstanding Rabha dramas on socio-cultural aspects were flourishing very slowly. Bineswar Kumar Santok wrote a historical drama *Zabed Bir* (1960) while dramas like *Sirigini Risi* and *Rangsari* were written by Rajen Pam. He also translated several dramas into Assamese from the original Bengali drama. *Sati Dumkachi* (1988) was a bi-lingual (Rabha-Assamese) drama written by Upen Rabha Hakasam. Besides these, he also wrote a historical drama *Ranggir Parsuram* (1998). Some of the dramatists

who contributed a lot of dramas in the field of Rabha literature are: Prakash Rabha, Naren Rabha Hakasam, Khanin Rabha, Anil Hadu, Anil Rabha, Uday Rabha and others.

In 1973, the first Rabha magazine *Zatini Khurang* (message of the race) was published under the editorship of Prakash Rabha. In this decade, an outstanding magazine *Champai* (1978, honeycomb) was published under the editorship of Listi Rabha Rongkho. It is worth mentioning here that these two magazines had taken up influential role in respect to the development of literary genres like poetry, prose, short story, novelette, etc. The first Rabha novelette *Phesek Twrangkayto* (1973) was written by Listi Rabha Rongkho and was published in the magazine *Zatini Khurang*. In the last decade of twentieth century, novels like *Zanong Zinong* (1990, river and rivulet) and *Daidi* were also written by Rajen Pam bearing social folk-customs and cultural aspects, etc. It is mentionable that more novels or novelettes are not found in printed form in the present trends of Rabha literature.

Poems and short stories were written by few enthusiastic writers and most of the writings were published in the magazine *Champai*. These poems and short stories contained the theme of religion, culture and ethics. Some of the noted poets of the *Champai Age* (1978-1982) of Rabha literature were Charumohan Rabha, Prakash Rabha, Bhaben Rabha, Bhupen Rabha, Suranjib Baksak, and Mala Ram Rabha and so on. During the *Champai Age* some poems were translated into Rabha from Assamese poems. These are translated by some enthusiastic Rabha poets. Some famous poems of Amar Khayyam were also translated into Rabha by Listi Rabha, while Hato Mama (Prakash Rabha) translated an Assamese poem *Xule Bhani Xule* written by Mitra Devi Mahanta. Besides these, Assamese poem like *Xusi* written by noted Assamese poet Nilamani Phukan was translated into Rabha by Charu Dabang with the Rabha title *Pithar* (sacred). Poem of Ananda Chandra Agarwala *Ai* (mother) was also translated into Rabha by Charumohan Rabha with the Rabha title *Aiya*. Another poet Someswar Rabha translated an Assamese poem *Dhulikana Mai* written by Chandra Dhar Baruah. He translated into Rabha with the title *Gosa dhuri Ang* (I am dust). In Rabha, poems in prose were also written by Upen Chandra Rabha with the title *Handar nay*. This poem was published in the magazine *Champai*. It is mentionable that two poetry books were published during the pre-*Champai Age*. *Randana Chandana*

(1963) was written by Lakshmi Phenan while in 1966, Khagen Hato wrote a poetry book *Hachuini Khurang* (a collection of romantic poems). Charumohan Rabha wrote a poetry book *Khusombrippar* during the *Champai Age*. In 1987, S.M.Santok wrote a poetry book *Tokrang khurang* containing seventeen poems of romantic ideas. Towards the last decade of twentieth century some poetry books were published bearing the theme of national spirit as regards religion, culture, heritage, etc. Most of the poems were composed in rhyming couplets. Various romantic poems were composed in this period. Jagat Kama wrote many poems bearing socio-cultural themes and published in the form of poetry book with the title *Dongchanabe* A collection of forty one (41) lyrical romantic poems *Madapkey Ganthini Khurang* (weeping of the soul) was published in the last part of twentieth century. Poems were written by Parikshit Rabha based on love theme especially to the nation and nature.

Towards the beginning of twenty first century, some promising young poets like Hima Rabha and Riniki Churchung Pam are taking leading part in the field of Rabha poetry. *Charpak* (a collection of romantic poem, 2000) is written and published by Hima Rabha while Riniki Churchung Pam has written and published a collection of romantic poems with the title *Mukachari* (2001). These two poetry books are highly appreciated by the Rabha critic Dr. Malina Devi Rabha. *Rachak Par* (2002) is a famous poetry book in Rabha written by Nitai Rabha which consists of 26 (twenty-six) poems. This book is published by Nirupama Rabha of Goalpara District. Jagat Kama, President of the BRKR, writes a few words on this book that the poems explore patriotism, love to nature and socio-religious aspects of the Rabhas.⁷ During this year, two other books on songs were published. These are *Nangi Chika Zorai* (2002) written by Sulochan Rabha and *Hasongi Parchung* (2002) written by Sandesh Baksaka.

In the field of short story, the Rabhas are not rich. The written trend of short story was started since 1982. A young writer Durjyodhan Rabha Juro wrote a short story *Tukhur Sabra* in the magazine *Champai* (4th issue, 1982). Most probably it is the first and pioneer work in the field of Rabha short story. The writer has published a short story book containing two short stories with Assamese version. The name of the book was *Pramchina Thekai* (2000). Prior to that late Rajen Rabha wrote some short stories and these were published by Rabha Bhasha Parishad with the title

Gopchani Gangkhay (2001). Presently, these stories are highly appreciated by the native readers. It is said that the written trends short story is flourishing very slowly in this literature. Jharna Chikasam (in the nick name) has also two self-composed short stories. These are: *Hasong Siri* (1994) and *Habayni Songsar* (1994). Both the short stories are highly appreciated by the native readers. It is mentionable that literary genres like criticism, children literature, travelogue, and biography and satire writings are in an infant stage in the history of Rabha literature till now. Among the Rabhas, at present a strong movement is taken place in respect to the literary genre and they are very much interested to establish their language as a language of educational institution.

Present Status of the Rabha Language

The Rabha language has been introduced as subject language up to class three standard of Primary school in 1988. Further no initial step has been taken in this regard. The Rabha language has not gained an opportunity to use as medium of instruction in the high school standard, as MIL subject in the higher secondary or college level and P.G. course in the university.

Rabha primers and text books for students of primary level are also written in recent times. After inception of the *Bebak Rabha Krourang Runchum* (a literary organization) and the *Rabha Bhasa Parishad*, most of the writers and enthusiastic personalities have dedicated their best of knowledge for writing grammars and text books besides different literary genres. Rabha grammars for school students are composed under the auspices of the *Rabha Bhasa Parishad* in 1982-83. Dictionary and vocabulary books are also composed during this period.

Use of Script

Traditionally Rabha has no script of its own. In the beginning of the 20th century when the written tradition was initiated as part of its standardization process, most of the writers used Roman or Bengali script for writing. In the last decade of the 19th century, the Christian missionaries and many other enthusiastic personalities collected folk literature and published all these materials in the printed form. The Missionaries adopted the Roman script for writing in Rabha. Bengali and Roman scripts were used for writing the Rabha language since the beginning of the 20th century. The Christian missionaries translated the Holy Bible into Rabha. The Gospel of Mark was translated into Rabha with the title *Markni Nima Saikai* in 1909 which was published by the British

and foreign Bible society. This book was translated with the help of Bengali script. The Rabha book like *Penem Lamon Dam* written by Purna Chandra Koch and published by Rabha Baptist Church union was also in this script. The Rabha writers of this period like Rajen Rongkho and Adhar Bantho were also used Benagli script for their writings.

It is to be mentioned here that during the last decade of the 20th century when the *Bebak Rabha Krouang Runchum* and the *Rabha Bhasa Parishad* came into existence; the Bengali script was replaced by the Asomiya script. This script is used very popularly among the Rabha writers till date.

Dialect Groups

Rabha has chiefly three dialect groups which are associated with Maitori, Rangdani and Koch or Kocha group of the Rabha community.⁸ There are eight sub-branches of the Rabhas. Among them Maitori, Rangdani and Koch or Kocha are the major subdivision of the Rabhas. They have been maintaining language and culture. But other sub-branches have lost their native language. It is interesting to note that the three major dialect groups show certain linguistic variations in respect to phonology, lexical set of words and morphology to some extent. But cultural divergences are not found evidently among these dialect groups.

Linguistic Studies

Linguistic studies on Rabha language had been started primarily by some enthusiastic Christian Missionaries towards the last few years of the 19th Century. W.W. Hunter had given a few informations on Rabha in the Statistical Accounts of the District of Jalpaiguri in 1876. G.A.Grierson in his *Linguistic Survey of India*, (Vol.-III, Part-II) had given a note on Rabha language with a specimen of Rongdani dialect. Besides Damant, G.H had also given information about the Rabhas and their language on his writing "Notes on the Locality and population of the Tribes dwelling between the Brahmaputra and Ningthi River."⁹ The three personalities namely J.D.Anderson, Major A. Playfair and Rev. Sydney Endle also worked on the Rabhas and their language. J.D.Anderson had given a comparative note on Rabha and Boro vocabulary which was incorporated in *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol.-III, Part-II. Major A. Playfair had also given a comparative list of Rabha-Garo vocabulary in appendix of *The Garos*, 1909. Next to Playfair, Rev. Sidney Endle had described in brief on the Rabhas and their language in the appendix-1 of *The Kacharis*. From a

comparative outlook, Endle opined a valuable comment on the Rabha language:

*"Their language, which would seem to be rapidly dying out, forms a very interesting link between Garo and Kachari, having much in common with both, but with some special features peculiar to it. Like the language of other branches of the Boro race, the Rabha language at one time undoubtedly agglutinative, seems to be in process of becoming inflexional, through contact and intercourse with the speakers of more or less broken-down Sanskritic languages e.g. Bengali, Assamese etc."*¹⁰

Besides Friend Periera and Rev. A. F. Stephen were also the mentionable names in this field. It may be noted that scientific analysis on Rabha language has also been done since the mid twentieth century. Dr. Rebati Mohan Saha is an important name in this field. He has done a comparative analysis on Bangla and Koch-Rabha language. Much important information of the Koch-Rabhas i.e. Koch and their dialect concentrated especially in the district of Goalpara and North Bengal, are analyzed elaborately in his thesis *Bangla Bhasar Tulana Prasangge Koch-Rabha Bhasa* (1981). *Ethnic Affinities of the Rabha* (1960) written by B.M.Das is also a valuable book on ethnic identity of the Rabhas.

Towards the last few years of the twentieth century, a couple of scholars from the Rabhas are busy in active research work on the Rabha philology and culture. Scholars like Dr. Upen Rabha Hakasam and Dr. Malina Devi Rabha have their valuable contribution in this field. The two books *Rabha Bhasa Aru Sahitya* (Rabha language and literature, 1997) and *Asomiya Aru Asomar Tibbat Barmiya Bhasa* (Assamese and Tibeto-Burman languages of Assam, 2000) are important contributions to the field of Rabha language and literature compiled by Dr. Hakasam. Before and after inception of the *Bebak Rabha Krouang Runchum* and the *Rabha Bhasa Parishad* a few Rabha Grammars are also compiled for the benefit of the students and learners of the Rabha language. The enthusiastic personality like Rajen Rongkho wrote a grammar i.e. *Rabha Zibrao Orgi Bhag Tekkang* (1948), while Adhar Bantho also wrote a Rabha grammar *Rabha Bhasa* (1950). These two grammar books incorporate some fundamental introduction of the Rabha language. Presently Rabha organizations like *BRKR* and *Rabha Bhasa Parishad* are also taking active role to compile Rabha grammar for the school students and the learners of the Rabha language. Vocabulary books like *Rabha Rawthap* (Rabha

vocabulary, 2000) and *Rabha Xobda Puthi* (Rabha vocabulary, 1991) are published by the *Rabha Bhasa Parishad* in recent times. A concise dictionary is also compiled by Rabha experts and published by the organization. A great achievement to the field of Rabha philology is contributed by Dr.U.V.Jose. His *Khurangnala* (Rabha-English Dictionary, 2000) is published by Don Bosco Publications, Guwahati, Assam. It is an undoubtedly great contribution to the Rabhas.

NOTES

1. This opinion is stated from the *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol-III, Part-II, p. 1.
2. Grierson, G.A: *LSI*, vol-III,Part-II, p. 61.
3. Dalton, Edward Tuite: *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 87.
4. Rabha, Dhananjay: *Rabha Janajati Chamu Itihas*, p. 34.
5. Grierson, G.A: *LSI*, Vol-III, Part -II, p. 95.
6. Rowney, Horatio Bickerstaff: *The Wild Tribes of India*, p. 146.
7. This opinion is stated from the "Foreword" written by Jagat Kama in the book "*Rachak Par*", 2002.
8. Hakasam, Dr. Upen Rabha: *Rabha Bhasa Aru Sahitya*, p. 1.
9. This report is quoted from the *LSI*, Vol-III, Part-II.
10. Endle, Rev. Sidney: *The Kacharis*, Appendix-I, p. 83.

The book is a short monograph of the Rabhas. It incorporates chiefly two major genres i.e cultural and linguistic features. Here analysis has been done based on the field-data collected from primary and secondary sources. Materials gathered in this work are divided into two parts: one is cultural elements and the other is linguistic features. The linguistic features have been shown at different levels: phonology, morphology and lexis. Analysis of cultural features has also been made from folkloristic point of view.

This study will help the interested readers and field-workers to have more information of culture and language of the Rabhas. This principal objective has been taken into account in this volume. It is an empirical study where cultural and linguistic items have been described and analyzed from a synchronic point of view. This study demands high academic value and sociological importance in the present day context of the northeastern region of India. This study will carry on the multi-dimensional aspects of the language and culture of the society.

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PHUKAN BASUMATARY (b. 1967) by profession a teacher in Boro language and literature, is a scholar of Tibeto-Burman language and linguistics. He has an immense interest and enthusiasm in the field of TB languages and Tribal folklore of the North eastern regions of India. An Introduction to the Boro Language (2005) is an evidence of Phukan's earlier contribution to the TB scholarship. He has been awarded PhD Degree by Gauhati University in 2006 for his research work. A Study in Cultural and Linguistic Affinities of the Boros and Rabhas of Assam. A few books on Boro language and literature have recently been published by different publishers of Assam. He has contributed a lot of articles and research papers in different journals, magazines, anthologies, periodicals and news papers in Boro, English, Hindi, Bangla and Assamese language. A lot of articles on Boro language and folklore have also been translated into Bangla and Hindi.

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