

## RECORDING GENEALOGY - NOTE ON A LOST PROFESSION

Nabakumar Duary<sup>1</sup> and Bibhu K. Mohanty<sup>2</sup>

---

**Abstract:** Genealogist's work is an interesting profession usually practiced by the Brahmins in India. He keeps record of the origin of the family, family history, distribution of family members, migration, clan name, marriage, property inheritance through the genealogical charts. The genealogical data are used by the respective families who consult genealogists for relevant records. The present study deals with one genealogist (1920-1999) and his specialized organization (1926-1964) in Kolkata, which was engaged in genealogical work. The genealogical record is a treasure of information which is also important for tracing the family history of Bengali intellectuals and their past society in undivided Bengal. The study result shows that one can have valuable information on individual as well as on particular family and society. It is now an almost dead tradition due to many reasons. But there is a lot of scope to study these genealogical records in social science in general and anthropology in particular.

**Keywords:** Genealogist, Record, Bengali Society, History, Genealogical Chart.

### INTRODUCTION

According to *Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology* the term genealogy means 'A record or account of relationships of descent. Genealogies are important in lineage or descent-based kinship systems, since they provide the basis for membership in kin groups.....'(Seymour-Smith 1986:130). Man has been interested in his ancestry and has often involved elements of mythology, oral tradition, and fiction. Genealogical records are used for practical purposes like the determination of the inheritance of property, social status, eligibility for title rights and so on. However, it gives a picture of the individual family, clan, marriage, surnames, migration history, socio-economic background. In early days *Raja, Maharaja, zaminder*, many royal educated and wealthy higher caste families in India engaged *Ghatak* for collection of information and maintenance of the records for generations as per their convenience. The Kayastha and Brahmin of Mithila area in North Bihar used to follow unique traditional system of compiling and preserving the genealogical records called *Panji-pravandha*, which were considered for maintaining the rule of marriage. The genealogist in Mithila is called *Panjikar* and in Gujrat he is called *Charan/Bhatt*. However, there are some genealogists in all the great temples in India to maintain the records of the *tirthayatri* or pilgrims/devotees as a part of their organizational system. Such records were not only preserved over generations but also updated from time to time with the information of the descending generations. These people are practicing it as a kind of *jajmani* system for their livelihood by maintaining the genealogical records of the pilgrims. This traditional knowledge of

---

1. Dr. Nabakumar Duary, Research Associate (Cultural), Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata, E-mail:nabakumarduary@gmail.com ; 2. Dr. Bibhu K. Mohanty, Anthropologist (Cultural), Anthropological Survey of India, ERC, Kolkata, E-mail: bibhumohanty.2008@rediffmail.co

keeping genealogy has been transmitted through the male line. This whole system of records in *Puridham* of Odisha is called *warja* which is maintained through the *jajmani* relation with devotees by a special category of Brahmin genealogist (Chakrabarty 2012: 396-405).

In Kolkata, we come across some specialized individuals and organization that would prepare genealogical charts and maintain the genealogical records of Bengali intellectuals, *zamindars*, *Raja* and higher caste aristocrat families. These genealogical records are a treasure of information about the respective families. This organization and genealogical works are now closed due to many reasons. It is a fading intangible cultural heritage in India. This is a less explored/untouched field of anthropological research, which may give us many valuable aspects of the Bengali societies in general and undivided Bengal in particular.

The present study focus on the dying tradition of genealogy and genealogist in Kolkata with some relevant aspects including personal experience of a genealogist and its present situation.

In the following section, the case study of a genealogist has been given to show the nature of their work and its importance.

#### **PARESHNATH CHAKRABORTY: CASE STUDY OF A GENEALOGIST**

Pareshnath Chakraborty was a famous genealogist, born on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1920 in Shyamchandpara in Shantipur area in Nadia district of West Bengal. He was eldest son of Ashutosh. The name of his grandfather was Ramchandra, great grandfather was Natabar, great-great-grandfather was Harasundar, and name of the father of Harasundar was Ramsundar. Like any normal eleven year old, Pareshnath was full of dreams when he first came to suburban Kolkata and started living in his relative's house in Bally town on the west bank of the river Ganges in Howrah district. In the later period, he lived in his mother's ancestral house in Golok Dutta Lane in Kolkata under the guardianship of his uncle Ramkrishna Chatterjee. He studied at Ahirtola Banga Primary School and later studied at Motilal Seal Collegiate School. While still a student of standard eight, his father passed away. Inevitably, at the young age of 13, the responsibility of nine family members and supporting his mother and seven younger brothers and sister fell on him. To cope with the hard times, he joined as a letter compositor in Sri Krishna Press located in Grey Street (Arobindo Sarani), in Kolkata. But he did not have job satisfaction. In a chance factor, Paresh met with Nandalal Das and the meeting turned his life in a different direction. Then he left compositor's job and joined Bani Mandir Anusandhan Bibhag in 1934. Here he found his field of interest and learned about the data collection, method of drawing the genealogical chart from Nandalal Das. Nandalal was the main source of inspiration for him. Nandalal was very much impressed by his efficiency and intelligence, Das offered him a trainee's post in his organization. He became an

employee and no less than his son. Nandalal was *guru* cum guardian for Paresh.

Paresh married Binapani Devi, daughter of Narendranath Chatterjee of Munsirhaat of Howrah district. Paresh was living at 10, Durgacharan Banerjee Street, Kolkata, near the rail track in Kumartuli area. They have two sons Amarnath and Taraknath, and two daughters Sagarika and Madhabi. His young son was interested in his father's work and sometimes he helped his father for line drawing or sometimes for making a drawing on genealogy chart as a creative work. For economic crisis, Binapani Devi also worked in the clay toy industry in Kumartuli and Taraknath also worked in a tannery for earning money for school final examination fee. In later period Taraknath, joined in Custodian of Enemy Property Office in Kolkata as a contingent employee. Paresh did not encourage his sons to take up his profession. There was no minimum wage or remuneration in this profession. Pareshnath was living in a rented small house in north Kolkata at 30C, Shyambazar Street, Kolkata-700005 from 1966 to 1999. After a few years Taraknath has sacked from his job. Paresh was felicitated by the many social welfare organizations in Kolkata for his devotion to this unusual profession and great contribution in this field. One short documentary was made on Paresh and his works by Jalal Group of Company, Kolkata during 1998 just after he came back from the R.G.Kar Medical College and Hospital, where he had been admitted for treatment of his heart problem. Paresh the passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1999 at R.G.Kar Medical College and Hospital at the age of 79 years.

Paresh *babu* (the word *babu* is used here as honorific used in case of Bengali gentlemen) collected 250 *Kulagranthas* for his work. He would start by paying a visit to the village or town of the client's ancestors. The first ancestry undertook to trace was that of Pramatha Nath Bandopadhyay, an ordinary resident of Behala. He traveled 200 villages, prepared genealogy of at least 800 families and made the genealogy upto 36 generations of Brahmin (priesthood occupation) and Kayastha (clerkship occupation). In case of other communities, he traced only upto 12-15 generations. This is because many upper caste families had a custom of maintaining records of their pedigree for posterity. The other communities, on account of their general backwardness, can not boast of similar records. He said "*truth is the main capital of my work*". His journeys have taken him all over West Bengal and some places in the then Bihar and Banaras in Uttar Pradesh, where widows were living. He was the rare combination of knowledge and simplicity, hard work and determination. His profession involves meticulous detail, extensive traveling to tie up loose ends, trace out at least 150 years of the past to prepare an ancestral table or chart for the client. Perhaps it is this rare combination of simplicity, self-respect and hard work which holds the key to success cashed in on by those who are willing to spend far less as they only wish to satisfy their curiosity about their family history.

## INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

### **Bani Mandir Anusandhan Bibhag**

The *Kulagrantha* was preserved by the Brahmins and Kayasthas, which helped immensely in tracing the ancestors of many families right up to the time of *melbandhan*. The *melbandhan* was a movement peculiar to Bengal. From these books, it was not easy to understand the family history by a layman at the time of marriage and it was very difficult to add some information or to add the latest information on the new generation. In this situation, a noted genealogist, and founder member of the Bani Mandir Sahitya Sabha or *sahityakar* Nandalal Das in Kolkata thought about this matter seriously and established an organization named Bani Mandir Anusandhan Bibhag (*anusandhan*-quest/investigation and *bibhag*-department) in north Kolkata for creating data base for genealogical works. It was established in 1926 at 259, Upper Chitpur Road, in Kumartuli area, Kolkata just opposite the Siddeswari Kali *mandir*(temple). It is a corner house and well known as *Bhatia bari*. Nandalal was the owner of this organization. He decided two main objectives of the organization like tracing the lineage of well-known families and preparing a genealogical table/chart for giving a clear picture of the history of the family. Therefore, he was the pioneer in the field of preparation of genealogical records in both handwritten as well as in print in the glossy white paper. Printing papers were purchased from Japan, printed in Sri Krishna Press, Kolkata. Size of the genealogical table are 30 inches X 20 inches and 26 inches X 19 inches. The symbol of the organization is very interesting. It was an *om* on a centre of the lotus at top border, one lotus leaf and it was below one duck on water, these were all in a mono-colored (blue) arranged in a circle. The Bani Mandir Anusandhan Bibhag (written in Bengali) was found in two halves of the circle. But its inner significance nobody of the present family members of Pareshnath *babu* knows. Four borders of the genealogical table had floral designs. The address of this organization and date (Bengali calendar) of printing was mentioned in the top right corner of the chart.

This organization was mainly run by Nandalal *babu* and Pareshnath *babu*. Pareshnath was employed as a genealogist. He traced the family tree of anyone who cares to know more about his or her ancestors. The Bani Mandir Anusandhan Bibhag depended on generous donations from grateful clients for its survival. Both Nandalal *babu* and Paresh *babu* worked together for about three decades i.e. from 1934 to 1964. Paresh *babu* was the last genealogist trained in the tradition of Bani Mandir.

Bani Mandir Anusandhan Bibhag was closed down soon after the death of the owner and founder Nandalal Das in the mid 1960s. Nandalal's daughter Dipti was not interested in continuing this organization. Therefore, she sold all materials like wooden almirahs, old and rare books, genealogical charts along with tin containers to Anil kumar Basu Mallick at Rs.500.00 only. Anil *babu* was a residence of Kartik

Basu Lane, Calcutta. Then Paresh *babu* was very much shocked. He had some attachment to this organization as well as attachment to this profession. Many clients came to Paresh *babu* and requested to draw the genealogical charts. But he had no scope to see the previous genealogical charts/record and to consult the essential genealogical books. Sometimes he went to Anil *babu's* place to see the essential records on earnest request. But after a few times, he was refused to do it and was insulted. In the meantime all materials purchased by Chittaranjan Mandal of Chandannagar, Hooghly from Anil Kumar Basu Mallick at Rs.3000.00. Chittaranjan was a small businessman. He had a glass shop in Shyambazar. Paresh *babu* had no source of income and regular engagement. In this situation, many wellwishers and clients came forward. Some of them were journalist Ranjan Bandyopadhyay, advocate Kaliprasannya Bandopadhyay, Anath Krishna Das. Kaliprasannya Bandyopadhyay took initiatives to assemble others three times in Sobha Bazar Rajbari and raised funds from 70 clients/people. This money was utilized to get back the materials from Chittaranjan Mandal and to handing them over to Paresh *babu* for continuing his profession as well as keeping all genealogical records which consisted of 742 printed genealogical charts along with 33 cylindrical tin containers (height 21 inches and diameter 5.5 inches) and 30 valuable rare old books.

The first published work from the Bani Mandir Anusandhan Bibhag was the family tree of the Burra Bazar Ganguli family. All information printed in Bengali scripts and Bengali numerical figures. Some of the clients are illustrious and eminent which include like *Sahitysamrat* Bankimchandra Chottopadhyay, *Kaviguru* Rabindranath Tagore, *Kathasilpi* Sarat Chandra Chottopadhyay, Father of the Indian Renaissance Raja Rammohan Roy, noted scientist Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy, literary giant Manmatha Mohan Basu, the family trees of freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, *Rhishi* Arobindo Ghosh and W.C. Banerjee, the first president of the Indian National Congress, Justice Monmohannath, famous cinema actor Victor Bandopadhyay, King of Natore, *Rastraguru* Sir Surendranath Bandopadhyay, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, Smt. Bharati Ganguli, Sri Sattabrata Ganguli, Rikardian scholar Lalitkumar Bandopadhyay, Pandit Harinath Nayaratna, Gopal Chandra Bandopadhyay, Asoke Kumar Bandopadhyay of Pathuriaghata, Sivaji Banerjee(Ratanda), Stiveder Saradasundar Chottopadhyay, and many others. Majority of the charts (about 70% ) belonged to Barendra and Rardi Brahmins and 30 per cent belonged to the Kayasthas of two categories i.e. Dakshin Rardia and Uttar Rardia.

### **Banshabali Anusandhan Kendra**

Pareshnath Chakraborty was determined to continue his profession as genealogist independently from his office-cum-residence located at the end of typical narrow lanes and serpentine alleys taking one to the ramshackled door inscribed with an address on it: 30C, Shyambazar Street, Post Office Hatkhola, Kolkata-70005. Paresh

*babu* founded Banshabali Anusandhan Kendra in 1972. The house is a sticking example of 19th century's architecture of residential building, a central courtyard space surrounded by damp cloistered rooms. In one of the dimly-lit room sat Paresh*babu*, bending on a sheet of paper to draw the family tree of a client almost totally oblivious of his mundane surroundings. After demise of Paresh *babu* his young son Taraknath practiced his father's profession, but could earn only a little amount to make a living.

Taraknath obtained little training at a young age and learned overall knowledge of genealogical work on his interest by assisting his father through trial and error method. After father's death, Taraknath shifted his family i.e. wife Usha and two sons Bholanath and Dipankar from Kolkata to Sreerampore, Hooghly in 2013 in a rented small house at 65/L/1, Firingi Danga Road, Vivek Palli, P.O. Mallickpara, Hooghly, Pin-712203, West Bengal. He also carried all belongings of his father. Due to lack of proper space in small rented house and it was beyond his economic capacity to restore these valuable things he proposed to donate all genealogical charts and books to the Anthropological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Kolkata for its academic works and research (dated 22nd September, 2015).

### COLLECTION OF GENEALOGICAL DATA

Tracing down a bloodline is certainly not easy. It involves extensive traveling and a good amount of reading. Genealogist Paresh *babu* was meticulously tracing the details, looking into cracks and crevices, traveling far wide to add up the loose ends and build up the genealogical tables that enable people of this generation to bask in the glory of the past generation. He personally visited the place of origin, where the main sources of information are client himself or elderly residents who remember the family. For initial information Paresh *babu* asked about names of the people in previous generations, the year of settlement in this area, the location of their residence, who lived there, social status, profession of the family members and so on.

However, Paresh *babu* also asked questions to an old family member(s) of the client to know about the *gain* and *santamel*. Here *gain* means where this family was started living with family and *santamel* means allowed to marry boys and girls in particular clans, surnames, and areas. This is called the invention of the link. Then he asked about the *samaj* and *parichoy* for knowing the family history of the Brahmin like Chottopahyay, Mukhopadhyay, Kanjilal, Ghosal, Ganguli, Halder or Barendra Brahmins. For example, the present generation of Mukhopadhyay family traces out through Vishnuthakur and their *mel* like *khardahamel* or *phulemel*. How and when change the *mel* from *phulemel* to *sarbanandamel*. But they are originally Mukhopadhyay. However, *parjai* and *samaj* are a very important clue for knowing the family history and to draw a genealogical record for Kayasthas that have surnames like Ghosh, Bose, Mitra, like *Pabna/Bari/Keka/Barisasamaj*,

etc. The genealogist used some common terms like *paltighar*, *banshalatika*, and so on and tried to trace out/find out its answers. From these questions, genealogist collects the information and consult the previous books and *punthi* or treatise like *Samandhanirnoy*, *Banger Jatiparichay*, etc., land records, tax payment receipts, etc. From these references, genealogist visited other rural or town areas to trace out the generation as well as family history. However, this is often inadequate and he has to meet several members of the family again and again. In some cases Paresh *babu* visited to distance places and stayed in the residence of claimant at village or town for few days for collection of relevant genealogical information and sometimes went beyond the boundaries of the state. Lastly, he settles down to desk work. Hours of reading, reference work i.e. mainly regarding the social and cultural history of India, go into his research work. All this helps him in tracing the origin of a family. *Kulagrantha* to link the branch lines with the main one. In the case of Brahman and Kayastha, he traced more than 30 generations.

The *Melbandhan* was a social movement peculiar to Bengal. It was initiated by Debibar Bandhopadhyay to check the Hindu exodus to Islam right after the Turkish invasion of Bengal. For other communities, Paresh *babus* go back 12 to 15 generations. He had often had to stop work because of inadequate information. Then he prepare a draft copy of the genealogical table and it is approved by the client after alternation or adds the information. Then it is published from the Bani Mandir Anusandhan Bibhag. Sometimes the other family members or relatives request or demand the said copy for their purpose then they pay a little amount for this.

### **Consultation of periodicals and preparation of genealogical tables**

There are many royal, educated and higher castes rich Brahmin, Kayastha and Baidyas families in undivided Bengal have maintained their family records in writing on paper for their many purposes i.e. from the selection of bride and groom, social relation, the inheritance of property, socio-religious performance and so on. The common surnames of the Kayasthas are Bose, Basu, Moitra, Mitra, Roy, Das, Dutta, Ghosh, etc. The surnames of the Brahmins are like Bandopadhyay, Banerjee, Mukhopadhyay, Mukherjee, Chaturjee, Chattopadhyay, etc. and surnames of the Baiyas (traditional healer) are Dasgupta, Sen, Sengupta, etc. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century many Kayasthas and Brahmins published separate books about their family history. There are 250 *kulagranthas* and *Kulakalpadrum* or ancient hereditary periodicals in Bengali dealing with the history of some higher castes. These are published from Dhaka by Chandrakantha Debsharma almost a century back and *Bangshaparichay* and *Kayastha Karika* [karika ?] by Lalmohan Bidyanidhi. Some other publications are like *Baidya Jatir Etihis* by Basanta Kumar Sengupta, Calcutta in B.1320; *Bharat Gourav*, Volume-I, by Surendranath Basu, Calcutta in B.1323; *Bandhya Bangsa o Mukho Bangsa* by Lalmohan Mukhopadhyay in B.1332, Dhaka; *Pulshitar-Mitra Bansa Parichoy*, edited by Beni Madhab, Calcutta, *Bangalar Paribarik Etihis*,

Volume-VI, Suryakanta Basu; *Bangsa Parichoy*, Volume-V, edited by Jnanendra Kumar, Calcutta in B.1333; *Paschattya Vaidik Bangsabali* by Shyamacharan Roy and Shyamananda Bhattacharya in B.1333; *Banger Jatia Etihis-Barendra Kayastha Bibaran*, Volume-II by Nagendranath Basu in B.1334; *Sodgope Jatir Bangsamala* in B.1334; *Banglar Paribarik Etihis- Hooghly o Howrah*, Volume-II by Pandit Sibnarayan Sashtry in B.1335; *Banger Jatia Etihis-Uttar Raria Kayastha Bibaran*, Volume-II by Nagendranath Vasu, published from Rajsaraj Amritalal Smriti Pathagar in B.1336; *Paribarik Etihis-Hooghly o Howrah*, Volume-III by Pandit Shibendra Narain Shastri in 1937; *Banger Jatir Etihis-Dakshin Rario Kayastha Kanda*, Volume-I by Nagendranath Basu in B.1340; *Kayastha Karika-Ghosh, Bode o Mitra*, Volume-III; *Dakshin Rario Kayastha Samajer Etihis o Samalochona* by Nagendrakrishna Mitra in B.1341; *Krishnatrayo Datta Rajbansha*, first edition in B.1344; *Parichoy (Bangaja Kayas thaganer Samajik etihis sahadaksh in Faritpurer bilpradesher bibaran)* by Dinobandhu Roy Choudhury and Satindranath Roy Choudhury in B.1344, Calcutta; *Kashyap Gotriyo Maitra o Notore Rajbangshabali* by Purnachandra Maitra, Nadia in B.1356; *Kayastha Koustav* by Sudhir Kumar Mitra in B.1359, etc. Most of the books were published from Kolkata and different parts of the then Bangladesh by someone of the respective caste members. Sometimes clients sent some latest information by inland letters and post card in office address for necessary addition or alteration in genealogical tables.

### CAUSES OF DECLINE OF GENEALOGIST'S PROFESSION

No genealogist can equal skill to Paresb *babu*. But he has no successors to carry on the work after him and is afraid his art will die with him. This genealogical office and profession both are abolished due to many reasons. According to the Taraknath Chakraborty 'we have never seen good days'. The main impediments of this profession are like

- i. The Financial insecurity in this profession was the most important factor that caused its decline.
- ii. Meager earning was in no way enough to support the family of a genealogist.
- iii. The disappearance of rich patrons was another reason.
- iv. Lack of interest of the present generation in their past which affected genealogist's work adversely.

In addition the above mentioned causes, it appears that the low remuneration compared to the labour invested in the work was another major cause of the decline of this profession. Genealogist generally managed to get a meager Rs.300/- to Rs.700/- for a job done. Later it was increased to as much as Rs.1,500/-. But this too seemed to be a meager amount as a genealogist was rapidly losing patrons. Since January 1994, when Paresb *babu* finished the genealogical chart of the Ghosh family of Pathruriaghata, he could get only one client. And he would have, at the most,



three to four orders a year. Hence maintaining a family became extremely difficult.

It can also be stated that the changed social condition has also contributed to the dying down of this profession. The role of detailed and essential caste consideration for marital exchange has lessened to a great extent nowadays. The need of genealogy for socio-religious purposes and property division has also significantly decreased. Still the study of genealogical records has other importances particularly with regard to anthropological studies.

### **IMPORTANCE OF GENEALOGICAL RECORDS**

Genealogy is like a written history of some particular royal, rich and educated families like Brahmins, Kayasthas and Baidyas in undivided Bengal. It depicts family history as well as social history of a particular period. It says about the social system, social structure, caste rigidity and its change according to time and situation. Even many common or ordinary people tried to make a genealogical chart just after the partition of East Pakistan from India. Many people migrated from East Pakistan to different parts of India and abroad and settled there for better living. For tracing the roots and keeping the record of their family members, migrated people from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) still inquire about the genealogical chart. In a few cases, people came to the genealogist to trace the names of the family members for any dispute related to the sharing of property and to fix the legal hier. It is commonly found that some Brahmin and Kayastha people came to Taraknath's residence just before *Tarpan* i.e. a holy offering to the past generation on the day of *Mahalaya* and some people came to know the family history, marriage alliances whether permissible within two clans in the same caste among the Brahmins or Kayasthas.

### **Information in a Genealogical Chart: An Illustration**

The name of the community, surname, *gotra* or clan, a brief migrational history and cultural area e.g. *Barendra*, *Rardi*, etc are written in a chart. Personal names of the prominent figure or famous person of any generation are mentioned. More than 30 generations informations are found in these charts. Here the genealogical chart of Nityananda Bandopadhyay (*eksedh karika*) has been given below as illustration. Nityananda was a family member of Raja Rammohan Roy, the great reformer of renaissant Bengal.

Rammohan was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1772 in Radhanagar village in Hooghly district of Bengal Presidency and died on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1833. His father was Ramkanta and his great grandfather's name was Roy Krishnachandra Sikdar, a Rahri Kulin Brahmin, claiming decendence from Narottama Thakur, a follower of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Bengali Vaishnava reformer Lord Chaitanya. Raja Rammohan Roy is considered to be the 'Father of the Indian Renaissance' by many historians. He was one of the founders of the Brahma Sabha, the precursor of the Brahma Samaj,

a socio-religious reform movement in the Indian subcontinent. He was given the title of Raja by Akbar II, the Mughal emperor. He was known for his efforts to abolish the practices of *sati* and child marriage.

The genealogy of Raja Rammohan was published on 8<sup>th</sup> Aswin, 1354, Bansabali No.18, *Maharshi Sandilya gotra*. This section of Brahmins is one of the best five Brahmins of Kanouj. The king offered a village Bandyaghat in Bankura of Rarh area in West Bengal and this Brahmin is called Bandyopadhyay as *Upadhi* or title after the name of the village. Now this village is called Bondighat. There are 34 generations in this chart. The naming pattern varies from one generation to next. The symbol (\* ) was used for no offspring.

**TABLE: INFORMATION IN THE GENEALOGICAL CHART OF RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY'S FAMILY.**

Generation	Name (Here only one name of each generation is mentioned)	Change/ use separate title or surname and family	Famous person and place
1	Bhattanarayan		
2	Adibaraha		
3	Subuddhi		
4	Bainoteyo		
5	Bibudhesh		
6	Gau		
7	Gangadhar	Created Akandal Banda family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nayadhapak Basudeb Sarbbobhoumo, Chandicharan Deb Roy, Raja of Naldanga.</li> <li>• Barister Aswinikumar Bandopadhyay, lived at Entally, Fulbagan, Calcutta.</li> <li>• Bhupendranath-Rengune</li> </ul>
		Created Bhattacharya in Narit village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mahamohopadhyay Pandit Moheshchandra Nayaratna.</li> </ul>
8	Pashupati		
9	Shakuni		
10	Maheswar		
11	Mahadeb		
12	Durbali		

RECORDING GENEALOGY - NOTE ON A LOST PROFESSION 101

13	Sanket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created Chakraborty surname</li> <li>• Created Shastry surname</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ananta-Narayan Bandopadhyay of Beleshikhira village, Rai Rajendrachandra Shastry Bahadur &amp; journalist Panchkari Bandopadhyay.</li> <li>• Hari-village Sagardiya, created Chakraborty surname, Poet Hemchandra &amp; Rangalal, Sir Surendranath, Rai Bahadur Ramtaran, Bhupendranath &amp; Bholanath. Shibchandra Bandopadhyay at 20, Gariahat, Calcutta-, Satyendranath and Bomkesh Bandopadhyay at 55, Durgacharan Mitra Street, Calcutta</li> <li>• Narayan-Haraprasad Shastry, CIE</li> <li>• Bhaskar-Started the family of Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar</li> </ul>
14	Utshaha		
15	Raghupati		
16	Nityananda( <i>Chayanarendri mel</i> )		
17	Babai		
18	Gobinda		
19	Kamal Misra( <i>Suraimel</i> )		
20	Radhanath		
21	Sunarracharya		
22	Parashuram		Shikosha, Murshidabad
23	Shriballat		
24	Roy Krishnachandra Sikhdar	Established Roy family	Radhanagar, Khankul, Krishnanagar, Hooghly.
25	Anandachandra		Atpur, Hooghly
26	Ramkanta		
27	<b>Raja Rammohan Roy</b>		Father of the Indian Renaissance
28	Rai Bahadur Ramprasad Roy		Justice
29	Pyarimohan		Baikuntha-Atghara, Helan, Hooghly Motilal-Malgram., Bardhaman

30	Dharanimohan		Birendranath-100/1Sibpur Road, Howrah Sachipati-19,Balaram Basu First Lane, Calcutta Dharanimohan-85, Amharst Street, Calcutta
31	Shachidramohan		Shachindranath-Choudhury para, Chatra, Sreerampur, Hooghly Jnandramohan-Chatra, Seerampore, Hooghly Pramodapasannya-Jalepara, Bally, Howrah Madhusudhan-24/1, Haldar Bagan Lane, Calcutta Sarashimohan-1,Parshi Bagan Lane, Calcutta Fatikchandra-14C, Pal Street, Calcutta Girijapasannya-74,Bijanbihari-Neel Cootage, Banaras
32	Shibsankar		Bhudarchandra-Salkuni, Sahebganj, Barddhaman Dharanidhar-Radhaballavpara, Saiadabad, Murshidabad Dr.Chintamoni-Isvarbabu Lane, Saiadabad, Murshidabad
33	Bipatbhanjan		Kshitischandra-8C,Chandra Lane, Kalighat, Calcutta Anilkumar-Krisnaraipara, Saiadabad, Murshidabad
34	Bimalkrishna		Damrul, Dahapara, Murshidabad

The above table gives an idea of the contents of the genealogical table and its importance. There are male names of each individual of 34 generations. The original surname was Bandyopadhyay and the surname was changed to Roy in the 24<sup>th</sup> generation represented by great grandfather of Raja Rammohan Roy. And his name was Roy Krishnachandra Sikhdar. But before that separate families emerged from this family tree with surnames like Chakraborty, Bhattachaya and Shastri. However, a few generations also earned the title like *Rai Bahadur*. The family members were distributed in six districts of West Bengal like Hooghly, Howrah, Barddhaman, Murshidabad, Bankura and Kolkata. A few family members also lived in Baranasi and Mynamar. The family members contributed in different fields of

literature, jurisprudence, medical science, journalism, social-reform and so on. One can enquire into the social and cultural contexts behind the change of surnames, getting *upadhi* or title and emergence separate lineage.

### CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it appears that some zaminders and high-class families would keep genealogical records with the help of professional genealogists. These records were sources of information on the history of the family, its origin of family, dispersal of family members, migration, change of surname, earning of title, profession, evidence of power, property inheritance, marriage records etc. Here we also found the transformation or changes of personal names, surname, naming pattern, number of offspring, marriage, marriage distance, migration, education, social position, social network, social ties, and so on. The names of the male members were only mentioned in genealogical charts. But during the late sixties of last century genealogist started incorporating female names in genealogical charts as desired by clients. They do not use male and female symbols as followed by cultural anthropologists.

In early time people of the same family observed the birth and death pollution up to 10 generations and through their participation in this rituals, they would know who were the heirs. The later period i.e. during mid 1950s zamindari system is abolished in West Bengal. The speedy disappearance of the joint family and the tough competition for existence left present generation with no time to think of their past. As a result, the number of clients was reducing day by day. Genealogical charts and rare books are very much useful for further research on the Bengali society in general and illustrious or famous personalities of higher caste Brahmins and Kayasthas in particular. These are part of our cultural heritage, serve as data repository, and give some new light on Indian diaspora.

**Acknowledgements:** Author is grateful is to Late Taraknath Chakraborty and his wife Smt. Usha Devi for their kind co-operation during visit of their residence at Sreerampore, Hooghly in two times i.e. on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015 and 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

### *References*

- Chakrabarty, K., et. al. (2012). Genealogical Records and Traditional Knowledge System: A study in Jagannath temple of Puri. In Amitabha Sarkar, A.V. Arakeri and Suresh Patil (eds.), *Traditional Knowledge in Indian Society*, pp.396-406. Kolkata: Anthropological Survey of India.
- Smith-Seymour, C. (1986). *Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Appendix

