CHAPTER-VII

CONCLUSION

This is an ethnographic research on a coastal Rakkhain community. The Rakkhain people immigrated in Bangladesh from Arakan of Myanmar. They have been living in this zone for about two hundred years. This ethnic group is traditional in their social life. The Rakkhain people had been derive out from Arakan to Bangladesh in the year 1784 by the Arakan king Bodofoa. This king had been torturing in the habit of common people of Arakan state. By this time some army high officials namely Mr. Pi Un Ang, Captain Mongri, Captain Umago escaped from Machnetang village with some people by wooden made sailing boat to southern coast of Bangladesh. They anchored their boat at Rangabali, Belkata Village in Patuakhali district. They were the first People who fought against the wild ferocious animal for protecting their lives. For the purpose of protection made Machang (high shelter house) by the shundare, gajaree, golpata, mangrove trees. They also had to face wild
ecological environment. They were the first initiators who introduced farming by cutting mangrove trees.

In 1947 after the independence of Pakistan the plain natives started to settle in this tribal area for purchasing land from the Rakkhains. Many plain natives came here to seek farm jobs and tried to engage themselves in fishing and business by disguising themselves from the law enforcing agency. Gradually the plain natives possessed most of the land property from the Rakkhains. In recent situation these Rakkhains are in declining position due to socio-economic and ethnic problems.

Most of the Rakkhain houses are made of mangrove trees like shundare, gajaree, keora, hetal, golpata and bamboo. They make traditional tong (wooden house) for dwelling. The poor people are living in small wooden houses. They use traditional anee (shirt) for male, sthekhan for women and paana angee for children. Women ornaments namely laikow (bracelet), laichot (ring), shewegro (chain). Hair dress is a regular practice of Rakkhain women. The Rakkhain people use hand made utensils.
Valuable wood, cane and bamboo are used for traditional utensils while some utensils are purchased from local market.

Rakkhain use semekhoal (clay made lamp) during night for lightening purpose. For taking meal they also use traditional puidan (dinning table) which is made of wood. It looks like a round table with short stand. The staple food for Rakkhain people is rice. They like sea fishes, nafi (dried fish), hloza (bini rice mixed with powder which is made of various roots of plants), cake, soup, noodles. All of them are fond of lafa (tea without milk and sugar) and some of them often drink wine.

The traditional music of Rakkhain community is lenga. They like their traditional dance Pegu very much. In the pegu dancing main highlighting point is drama. This drama series is divided into two parts. First part is full of joking, dancing and modern facts. The second part is composed of historical affairs and is being played at the social function. The Rakkhain male and female can participate freely in this folklore programme.
The family is a traditional unit in the Rakkhain community. There are two kinds of family type in this community. One is the patriarchal and the other is matriarchal. Basically ninety percent family type is patriarchal while the other ten percent family is matriarchal. The family type developed through marriage. Husband and wife can select their residence according to their opinion. In the patriarchal type of family father governs the family while in the matriarchal type mother governs the family.

In the property inheritance system sons and daughters get equal share but the urtas (elder son) gets partly more share of father's land property, because he takes care of his younger sisters and brothers. There is no divorce system in this community. The men and women can pray in the same temple. Society is bound by kinship ties. By this tie men and women get their right in the family and community. Agriculture is the subsistence economy in the Rakkhain community. In the earlier period of settlement, they converted mangrove forest into agricultural land for their survival. Due to landlessness most of the Rakkhain people have chosen other professions like small trade, service, fishing and business.
In present days, a few people cultivate their agricultural lands. The Rakkhains people are exploited by middlemen, because they depend on them for purchasing all sorts of necessary commodities. In that area previously they followed indigenous agricultural practices, but presently they trying to introduce HYV and modern agricultural varieties. Due to improper management of polder 48, rabi crop is being threatened as saline sea water is not controlled by the sluice gate. Still people depend on nature for agricultural activities. Rakkhain farmers are not quite aware of modern farming system.

There are very few educational institutions than necessary in the Rakkhain community. So the Rakkhain boys and girls have to go to the schools and colleges in the Bengali society. Due to bad communication the Rakkhain people have failed to provide education for their generation. It is obvious that there is no special course curriculum for the Rakkhain students. Due to financial crisis they cannot afford their educational expenses and cannot send their boys and girls to higher educational institutions. Though they are not well educated by modern standard, almost every body in Rakkhain
community is educated in the kiang based religious education and Rakkhain language.

All Rakkhains are Buddhists by religion. They believe in Buddha's four noble truths. The four noble truths are *Dukha, Smudyā, Nirodha* and *Megha* and these four noble truths are realized by everybody in the Rakkhain community for honest realistic life. They also believe in rebirth system and observe many social and religious festivals like *Waso-labray (Ashari purnima), Kasum phoea (Buddha purnima), Katting phoea* (presentation ceremony), *Waso phoea* (meditation festival). After birth of a child they practice some rituals e.g. first giving the child rice in the mouth and ear boring their daughters etc.

Marriage is an important institution to form a family in the Rakkhain community. After marriage a bride can stay in the groom's house and a groom can stay in the bride's. In the marriage system parents consider bride and groom's opinion. In this community marriage by capture is not accepted and if someone does that, he is punished. None can marry with
the person beyond their community and if he does he or she can not return to their own community.

The political administrative pattern of the Rakkhain society is of three tier. The local level administration is controlled by the *Matbor* (headman). The Matbor acts as a co-ordinator. He maintains liaison with Union Parishad representatives and Thana level administrators for development work. Old and energetic persons are selected for this position. The Matbor must be intellectual enough for governing a *para* (village). In any odd situation he calls a meeting for solving the social problems and social conflict between two factions in the Rakkhain community.

Usually Rakhkhan people do not take any food in the plain natives houses. But the Muslim young people often take food in the Rakkhain houses. Both the children of Rakhkains and plain natives go to the same primary and secondary level schools. In the local markets, both the Rakhkain and plain native people have their shops. Rakhkains are usually involved in the trading of smokes, ornaments, cakes, cosmetics etc. which are produced or prepare by themselves within their home. The Rakhkain farmers who can not cultivate
their total land; use to share with other neighbouring Muslim farmers for cultivation known as *pauton* (sharecropping). In this case, sometimes Muslim sharecropper try to exploit the Rakkhains without giving the due share. Both Rakkhain and plain natives invite each other in their ceremonies. Muslims are found moving frequently to the Rakkhains residential area but the Rakkhains are not moving frequently to plain natives area. They usually try to avoid the Muslims residential area.

In the recent period, various social and cultural changes are being observed in the Rakkhain community. The Rakkhain people are trying to maintain an adjustable life following both the life and value practices of the plain natives with their own one. Due to incorporation of new technology in agriculture, communication media, cosmetics, dresses etc. some significant changes are found very evident in the present day Rakkhain community. They are now found, using modern cosmetics, modern medicines, modern essential family amenities etc. with their indigenous items. Though they are clearly identifiable from the plain natives by their own way of life, beliefs and value practices, language etc., but often they are found accepting some cultural elements of the plain
natives. Due to this, both conflicts and cohesions are very evident among the people of this ethnic communities and the plain natives. There are some specific issues and areas, where Rakkhain are intolerable but for some cases they try to maintain a very cooperative relations with the plain land people.

Considering all these positive and negative aspects of Rakkhain community, it can be concluded by this term that due to the impact of modern technology, communication media and development programme interventions in the coastal region, many changes have been occurring in the recent time and the Rakkhains are trying to assimilate themselves with these social, cultural and economic changes as a whole.