2015, FEBRUARY

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled KAMTAPUR MOVEMENT IN NORTH BENGAL GEO-ETHNO ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Sushma Rohatgi, Department of Geography and Applied Geography, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

Soumendra Nath Nag
Soumendra Nath Nag
Department of Geography and applied Geography,
University of North Bengal
Rajaram Mohanpur
Dist Darjeeling
Date: 21.02.2015
CERTIFICATE

I certify that Soumendra Nath Nag is pursuing research under my supervision since 2009. Since he has opted for continuing her Ph.D. work under new ordinance of this University, a new registration has been allotted on 09.11.2012. He has prepared the thesis entitled ‘KAMTAPUR MOVEMENT IN NORTH BENGAL GEO-ETHNO-ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL PERSEPECTIVE’. He has carried out the work at the Department of Geography & Applied Geography, University of North Bengal. Her thesis is ready for submission. So, I recommended his case for pre-submission for her Ph.D. thesis.

Dr. S.Rohatgi, Associate Professor
Supervisor
Dept. of Geography & Applied Geography
University of North Bengal
Ethnic diversity as well as ethnic politics is playing a decisive role in functioning of modern states throughout the world. Our country is not an exceptional one. In case of India ethnic consciousness has risen mainly in post-independence era. The demand for formal recognition of the distinct identities often varies from legal and institutional safeguards and discrimination, cultural autonomy for identity preservation, increasing federalism of the state structure and decentralization of political power to separate independent homelands.

Particularly, along with the partition of India, North Bengal witnesses a series of changes in its social, demographic and economical fabrics. Sudden influx of refugees from erstwhile East Bengal, (Pakistan) later put a new pressure on the existing resources and competition among the inhabitants of this region. That ultimately led to some kinds of unrest on ethnic line and divide, particularly between the indigenous and immigrant population. So the economic, political and social unrest which are going on in North Bengal over last three decades need to require thorough scrutiny.

The primary objective of the proposed research is to examine the origin and development of Kamtapur movements led by Rajbanshis, the major ethnic group of North Bengal, from ethno-historical –geographical and environmental perspective. In particular, with reference to approach, the study will try to explore the ethnic dimension of the Kamtapur movement in a historical frame of reference and the logic of employing the term ‘KAMTAPUR MOVEMENT IN NORTH BENGAL GEO-ETHNO-ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE’.

The merger of the then princely state, Cooch Behar with West Bengal on 1st January 1950 and converted it from a state to a district of a province became a turning point in the history of North Bengal. Large part of Rajbanshi population in general was unhappy with the merge of so called independent princely state with West Bengal as a district of the province. Their unhappiness and discontent increased with the passage of time when they found that the successive government did hardly take any comprehensive steps for the socio-economic development of the region.

After the partition of the country on religious ground the social-political scenario of North Bengal abruptly changed. Various social groups were communally divided. Religious and ethnic identities vitiated the entire atmosphere. Large scale migration from the then East Pakistan to North Bengal greatly changed the demographic scenario of the region. All these aggravated the socio-political problems. The Rajbanshis were bewildered. The state government could not come forward with any comprehensive programme for the development of this area. The non-
Rajbanshis became dominant in all spheres of life. The peasants, workers and other section of people belonging to lower stratum found no way out to overcome this situation. The traditional working class and peasants movements could not properly deal with ethnic, linguistic and political issues. Ultimate fall out of which was the emergence of Uttarakhand and Kamtapur movement in recent past.

The separation of Goalpara from North Bengal and merger with Assam in 1874 is another important event as it divided Rajbanshi community after the division of traditional belt of the Rajbanshi homogeneity and because for the first time after 1874 a section of them has formed a common platform- Greater Kamta United Forum for the common interest of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya community of West Bengal and the Koch Rajbanshi Kshatriya Sammilani of Assam.

Notwithstanding the fact that a number of studies have been conducted on the ethnic unrest in North Bengal including the movement of Rajbanshi community for the formation of Kamtapur state yet there is scope to review and address problem.
The forward march of human life throughout the world has been passing in the midst of unrest reflecting the loss of confidence on each other which leads to an unrest in their social and political life. The understanding of relationship that were built up through a processes of social and economic condition are fragmented in to pieces like the glass vessels stumbling against the wall of desponding as if it breaking our heart in to pieces. The people and society as a whole are confused as they are failed in many cases why these are happening? The people or community who were subservient yesterday why there is a reflection of recalcitrance over the muscle of their face? Whether this is the appearance of the flame of the torch of rebellion of Spartacus or the awkwardness of the people who were accustomed to remain under the boot of the elite dominating class of the society? In to the guileless glance of yesterday’s faith the sign restless self confidence has rocked the notion of many traditional thought and belief of many people.

At the every stage of community life there has been started the process of introspection of self identity and the question of ethnicity becomes the most crucial question to be given answer not only by the social scientist but as well by the almost researchers and scholars of all discipline of science. The restless sound of the footsteps are echoing from every corner to raise one’ own triumphant history.

In the past few decades movement for ethnic autonomy has marked the political discourse not only in North Bengal and North East India but throughout the country as a whole even we describe it as problem of global phenomena. While some of them strongly advocating the need for autonomy within the present administrative set up, other resolutely expressed their support for more militant, secessionist ideas of political and geographical demarcation of territory.

The question of ethnic diversity as well as ethnic politics are playing the decisive role in question of social relation and watering the germination of the feeling of regionalism which ultimately led for the march of demanding a separate state to accumulate the political power to govern the region where they claim demographic majority within region. It is also playing a decisive role not only the functioning of sate power but also becoming the important factor in creating the social and political unrest in almost all countries of the world. India is not an exceptional one.

Several attempts were made and theories have been placed by so many social scientists to explore the root of the feeling of regionalism. Some of them based on social consideration. Other tried to find its root on the point of economic position and uneven distribution of the development. Other tried to formulate their theories on the cultural factors and linguistic issues. Very few tried to explore the geographical and the environmental impact upon this crucial issue.

It must be brought in mind that India has the complex situation which cannot be matched with any country of the world. One glaring example can be cited here which is enough to show this
complex condition. A single district like Jalpaiguri has 151 different languages and dialects. Such complex socio-economic and demographic position cannot be explained by any single theory. In the recent period of history of North Bengal attracted the attention of the scholars, politicians, administrator as it has become the focal point of political agitation on ethnic issues of variegated nature and characteristics. Keeping aside the Naxalite movements as it was a political movement having the different dimension, the G.N.L.F movement of the hills, Uttarakhanda, the Kamtapuri or the greater Coochbehar movement – all in sequence or contemporaneously reflected the complex realities of socio-political and economic condition of North Bengal.

Apart from hill areas of Darjeeling Dist. and a little part of adjacent areas of hills of Duars of Jalpaiguri Dist. the dominant racial origin in the rest of North Bengal is Rajbanshi community. Although this majority people of singular racial origin had given a new shape to their socio-cultural characteristic of this region many conflicting theories of their origin and identity were advocated by the both foreign and Indian scholars during the colonial period long before the remarkable work of Charu Chandra Saynal, entitled, The Rajbasnghi of North Bengal (A study of a Hindu social Group), published by the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, in 1965, where an attempt was made to throw enough light on their origin and identities. But his observation about the origin and the identity of the Rajbangshi as koches a non-Aryan in origin has been challenged by the strong section of the Rajbanshi community. The demand for a Kamtapur state or the Greater Cooch-Behar state by the Rajbanshi community is a riddle wrapped in ethnic controversy inside an enigma which demands a conclusion to be drawn in characterization of the nature of this movement taking in to the account of the socio-politico dimension.

Many theories have been advanced by social scientists for defining and identifying the nature and causes or ethno-national movements based on shared meaning of common descent, real or imagined that elites in the appropriates group formulates in order to mobilize political support for a variety of objective ranging from autonomy to secession to statehood.

It is well settled that ethnicities located in specific territorial boundaries have claim to be classified as regions and therefore have legitimate claim to the autonomy at apolitical and economic levels. In fact the, the urge for self governance and aspiration of economic development is at the root of such a claim (report of the regional Autonomy committee, 1999; 11 as quoted by S. Chaturvedi, the ethno and the Geo; Politics of Autonomy in a borderland named Jammu & Kashmir).

In general, it is explained, one of the most basic factors for the movement of self determination which is generally termed as secessionist movement is the uneven development in economic and social field within the state itself. Again, the cultural dominance by the dominant group may consider as another important cause for watering the germination of regional movement as it provoke the feeling of inferiority complex which ultimately give birth a psychological state of mind what is known as ‘identity crisis’. In this context it requires to examine whether in the
name of national integration the meaning of national integration should be another name for assimilation. It is again require to examine the very concept of ‘main stream’ identity as it has been seen that in the name of national identity an attempt is made to absorb the weaker section of the community in the fold of the stronger section causing the feeling of alienation by the former. This also may be considered as one of the cause for this kind of ethnic movement.

North Bengal along with a considerable part of Assam, the areas of the present survey is not merely a geographical region of this subcontinent but they offer a historical contrast. While discussing about the ethnic diversity and conflict in the survey area we must take the fact into account that the Eastern part of India were the most populated part of the subcontinent with its fertile soils. On the other hand, the northern part of West Bengal and Assam–Arakan basin and ringed by Southern Himalayas Rim, was the sparsely populated cross road for traders, migrating tribes and fortune seekers. It does not mean there is no similarity in the eastern part of subcontinent, there are still similarities as well, notwithstanding the fact, historically and culturally, the differences between the two regions are many. Similarities stem partly from the contiguous geographical location and partly from a shared colonial experience.

The primary object of the present study is to explore the source of the present ethnic conflict. We need to peep into the pages of history to understand the present situation reveals the facts that this region has long been the site of bitter conflicts over resources between strategic interest groups. During the national upsurge the ethnic conflict did not surfaced because during the colonial period the conflict was mainly articulated against the colonial ruler and their feudal collaborators.

Cooch Behar which was an independent kingdom for more than four hundred years before becoming a princely state during the colonial rule merged with the province of West Bengal after independence ignoring the fact that it nursed a distinct identity and culture for the indigenous people who rule this part for more than four hundred years under the umbrella of their kinghood. This conflicting condition still remain a factor that provoke the demand for autonomy either in the form of autonomous region or the form of statehood within the provincial boundary within the country.

The present study is to find out the source of this ethnic movement of Rajbanshis one of the major ethnic groups of North Bengal and a part of adjacent Assam. It also is needed to acknowledge the inherent attitude of man in general. The aspiration of population to determine its own destiny by itself has long been recognized by nations legitimised by the traverse history of human civilization. The persuasion for the demand of self determination in the form of a state as demanded by Rajbanshis community arises out of historically evolved distinct identities of different ethnic groups that gave birth to different socio economic formation.

The present study, while making an analysis of different approaches meaning and nature of ethnicity and nature of their conflict seek to explain the root of their origin in terms of specific
movement namely the Kamtapur movement. This study also seeks to find out the influence of environment and geographical factors upon this movement. It is again to see the impact of the change of the demography of the particular region taking into the account of changed demographic pattern of North Bengal upon the present unrest of this region.

North Bengal has its own history a part of which only is known by the common people as the dominant section of the people did not feel it necessary to include in the mainstream history inspite of its long traditional past. This area is equally rich in natural resources but not used for the development of the region, rather this part of the state treated as the source for the raw material supply. This region is the region of tea industry but why the local largest ethnic group like the Rajbanshis did not find any interest to join as the labour of tea industry although there was heavy demand for the labour is a matter to study. Except tea there is no other industry came into existence as a result the economy activity still remains in the hand of agricultural activity. The question bears the importance in determining the causes of the present ethnic problems in this part of areas because despite the high level of education land continues to be the main source of livelihood but immigrants encroach on it and that causes shortage of land. Local community resents the fact that immigrants prosper on the land by encroaching upon while they are left behind.

My present study is to examine the role of this changed demography to convert the situation in to ethnic conflict as the land shortage failed to create productive jobs. Moreover the strategic geopolitical position of this region should be taken in to consideration as if this unrest allowed to continue without finding its root it may turn in to explosive situation which may affect the national inters as a whole.

Against this background this present study takes into account the socio-political-economic-environmental and geographic variables with an aim to examine the nature of such ethnic conflict.

It is needless to mention that any study of on-going movement or unrest will face so many limitations. The present ethnic unrest is entering in to newer and newer forms and the strategies undergo abrupt changes and their goal deviates from its previous position the conclusion that one may draw is bound to be tentative. Knowing this limitation the present study will try to explore all possible variables to reach a tentative projection of the future.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The study seeks to find out the roots of the present ethnic unrest of North Bengal as well as the mobilization pattern of demographic changes, involving of an old, yet new ethnic community, the Rajbanshis / Kamtapuris in the multiethnic society of North Bengal.

As a man of the soil as I consider myself to be a man of North Bengal by my birth, notwithstanding the fact, that I belonged to a displaced family of the then East Bengal following the communal violence, I felt keen interest about the basic causes of the ethnic unrest of North East states of India, particularly, the Northern Part of West Bengal where such unrest was completely absent in the pages of history. Now, an atmosphere of distrust among the different communities has been clouded over the long harmonious relation between the different communities of this area.

I started enquiring and collecting the information from different sources from the whole of North East as I found that there was close ethnic bondage among the different ethnic groups of this vast area not only from the anthropological point of view but in the same time from the socio-historical account. I began to write about the issue in different magazines, newspapers, seminar, and published several books on the depicted matter.

My haphazard and unsystematic work got a theoretical shape under the efficient guidance and supervision of Dr. Sushma Rohotgi, the Head of the Department of Geography and Applied Geography, University of North Bengal. Without her proper guidance, constant encouragement, untiring efforts and sympathetic but pointed advice, the present study could not have been completed in the present form. Although I am in doubt, whether I have been able to fulfil her aspiration, still I like to keep on record my sincere respect, gratitude, honour and indebtedness to her.

In preparing this study, I have greatly benefitted by the wise counsel and invaluable suggestions from my revered teacher, Dr. Anindya Paul, D.Sc the Ex Head of the Department of Geography and Applied Geography, University of North Bengal. I am equally grateful to Prof Mina Pal, Retired Head of the Department of Geography of Siliguri College for her suggestion and guidance.

I wish to record my deep sense of gratitude to my teacher Prof. Chittaranjan Ghosh Dastider, Retired Head of the Department of Commerce, Siliguri College, now the member of the Guest Faculty of Gyan Jyoti College, Siliguri for his valuable suggestion. I convey my heartiest thanks to Prof. Rajat Subhra Mukhapadhya of Sociology Department of University of North Bengal, and Prof Bani Prasanna Mishra, Retired Director, Himalayan Study, University of North Bengal for their suggestion in doing my research work.
It hardly needs mentioning that a work of this nature would not have been possible without initiative, cooperation and help from number of sources. My sincere thanks to Prof. Raghunath Ghosh, the Ex Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of North Bengal, Prof. Dyutish Chakraborty, Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal, Prof. Debabrata Mitra, Ex Head of the Department of Management, University of North Bengal for their active help by rendering valuable suggestions for the study.

I am thankful to my colleagues of Gyan Jyoti College for their help and cooperation. I want to record my sincere thanks to the librarians of the college for assisting me with books and providing me a room to conduct my study. I must remember, Souvik Nag, my son and Somnath Nayak, my Son in Law, and Prof. Biswajit Bose, my Colleague of Gyan Jyoti College for their active cooperation in computer setting

I also thank Prof Joy Raman Suresh, Principal of Gyan Jyoti College and the members of the managing committee of the college who by their permission and cooperation helped me to continue my research work.

Soumendra Nath Nag

Siliguri
# LIST OF MAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map Number</th>
<th>Title of Maps</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map 1</td>
<td>North Bengal</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 2</td>
<td>Proposed Kamtapur State in relation to West Bengal</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 3</td>
<td>Map of Study Area (Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 4</td>
<td>Sample Study Centre – Jalpesh, Mekliganj and Dhupguri</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 5</td>
<td>Proposed Kamtapur issued by All Koch Rajbanshi Student’s Union.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Number</th>
<th>Title of Table</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 4. 1</td>
<td>Number of immigrants from 1901 to 1961</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4. 2</td>
<td>Leaflet No.1</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3</td>
<td>Leaflet No.2</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.1</td>
<td>Election Result of Uttarkhanda Dal (UKD)</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.2</td>
<td>Leaflet No 3</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.3</td>
<td>Anthropological measurement</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.4</td>
<td>List of King’s Queen and Son</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5..5</td>
<td>A Comparative study between the Northern And Southern part of West Bengal</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6..1.1</td>
<td>List of the Kamtapur Literature</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6..1.2</td>
<td>List of the Kamtapur Literature</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6..2</td>
<td>List of other Kamtapuri Ancient Books</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6. 3</td>
<td>List of Endangered Language</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6..4</td>
<td>List of Most Endangered Language</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7.1.1</td>
<td>Executive Members of Huitasadhani Sabha</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7.1.2</td>
<td>General Members of Huitasadhani Sabha</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7.2</td>
<td>The Legendary Folk Song by Abbas uddin</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7.3</td>
<td>List of Administration in Cooch Behar Kingdom</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure Number</th>
<th>Title of Figure</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fig 2.1</td>
<td>Dynastical Kamtapur account of Cooch Behar kingdom.</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 2.2</td>
<td>The Tista once the mighty river of North Bengal</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 3.1</td>
<td>The Palace of Cooch Behar King</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 3.2</td>
<td>Maharaja Nripendra Narayan.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.1</td>
<td>House no.1</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.2</td>
<td>House no.2</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.3</td>
<td>Once the owner of the land now became a rickshaw puller.</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.4</td>
<td>Siliguri Vivekananda Bidyalay</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.5</td>
<td>The Land of Siliguri College was donated by one Rajbanshi landlord.</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 8.1</td>
<td>Demand for Kamtapur State.</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 8.2</td>
<td>Collecting drinking water from the polluted river Murti.</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 8.3</td>
<td>Once landlord, now vegetable seller on the footpath.</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 8.4</td>
<td>Deforestation in the name of Eco-tourism.</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSTRACT</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAPS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER: ONE

### THE PROBLEM-CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Role of Language</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Ethnic Identity Consciousness in the Developing Countries</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Ethno Nationalism</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Development of the Ethnic Consciousness’</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 The role of the State</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 The Review of Literature</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 The Study Area</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 The Objective of the Study</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 Hypothesis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11 Data Source &amp;Methodology</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11.1 Field Work</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11.2 Rationale for the Selection of Areas</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11.3 Tools &amp; Techniques</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11.4 Period of Study</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12 Research Design</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13 Limitation of the Study</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 Change of Demographic Position 95
4.7 A Case Study 99
4.8 Case Study of a District (Jalpaiguri) 100
4.9 Dooars and Tea Plantation 102
4.10 Population Pattern of Jalpaiguri 105
4.11 linguistic Diversity of Jalpaiguri 108
4.12 The Role of the Bengali the Major Dominating Group of People Of North Bengal 109
4.13 The Role and Responsibility of Majority Community 110
4.14 A Case Study: Changes of the Name of a School from Darpanarayan to Vivekananda School 114
4.15 Partition of Bengal 114
4.16A Case Study: Tripura 115
4.17 The Land System of Cooch-Behar 117
4.18 Emergence of the Middle Class 120
4.19 Displaced and Rehabilitation 124
4.20 Movement of Kshatriyahood and the Role of the Bengali Community 126

CHAPTER FIVE
LOCATING KAMTAPUR MOVEMENT AMONG SOME OTHER ETHNIC MOVEMENTS IN NORTH EAST INDIA

5.1 Merger of CoochBehar to Dominion of India 129
5.2 Uttarakhanda Movement 130
5.3 The Anthropological Account of the Rajbanshi/Koch and The Bengali Community 134
5.4 Geographical Isolation 136
5.5 Inter Marriage 136
5.6 Common Features to all Races 138
5.7 The relation Between the Bengali and Rajbanshi in the light of Anthropological factors 138
5.8 The Identity of the Bengali 139
5.9 Koch –Rajbanshi and Koch versus Rajbanshi 142
5.10 The Regional Imbalance and its Impact on the Feeling of Regionalism 148
## CHAPTER: SIX
**ETHNO LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF THE MOVEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Role of Language</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Debate on Kamtapuri and Rahbanshi Language</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 The Ills of One Cantered State</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 The Search for Self Introspection</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Dialects and standard Language</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 The Riddle of 8th Scheduled</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 The Historical Account of Kamtapuri Literature</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8 Races and Languages</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9 Justice- Based</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10 Diversity Based</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11 The Ethno-Linguistic Background Behind the Hitasadhani Sabha</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.12 The Ethno-Caste –Linguistic Antagonism</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.13 The Forces behind the Linguistic Conflict</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER: SEVEN
**IDENTITY–AUTONOMY QUESTION AND THE STATE: THE KAMTAPUR EXPERIENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 From the Hitasadhani Movement to Greater Cooch-Behar Movement</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Class Composition of the Organization</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Factors Behind the Hitasadhani Sabha</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 The Role of the Royal FamilyTowards Hitasadhani Sabha</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Mass Support Behind the Hitasadhani Sabha</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 The Role of Hitasadhani Sabha Towards the Merger</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7 The Class Character of the Hitasadhani Sabha</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER: EIGHT
**CONCLUSIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 The Heterogeneous Nature of the Demographic Distribution</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Identity Consciousness in the Developing Countries</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Ethno -Nationalism</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Question of Identity</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 Community</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6 Identity and Nation</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7 The Transitional Account of the Rajbanshi Community</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8 Sanskritization</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9 The Reason Behind the Resistance</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.10 The Koches as A Caste</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.11 Ethnic Consciousness</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.12 Nation Building   Progress</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.13 Effect of Mobilization</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.14 Attitude of the State</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.15 population Influx</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.16 Kolkata Centrism</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.17 The Role of the Socio Economic Transformation of the</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koch –Rajbanshi in the Ethnic Unrest of North Bengal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.18 Summary</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prognoses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Literature &amp; Selected Bibliography</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published document</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER: ONE

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM-CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

In the past few decades movement for ethnic autonomy has marked the political discourse not only in North Bengal and North East India but throughout the country as a whole which even we can describe it as a problem of global phenomena. While some of them strongly advocating the need for autonomy within the present administrative set up, other resolutely expressed their support for more militant or secessionist ideas of political and geographical demarcation of territory.

Ethnic diversity as well as the geographical location and its environment along with ethnic politics are playing the decisive role in question of social relation and watering the germination of the feeling of regionalism which ultimately led for the march of demanding a separate state to accumulate the political power to govern the region where they claim demographic majority within region. It also is playing a decisive role not only the functioning of state power but also becoming the important factor in creating the social and political unrest in almost all countries of the world. India is not an exceptional one.

Geographical location which is one of the most vital factors in determining both the physical and mental environment including the population distribution and their economic activity and the question of development should take into account for the understanding of the problems. Further, geography played an important role in bringing about unity among different ethnic groups of different cultures and linguistic groups. The hills- plains dichotomy was frequently alluded to by the ethnic leaders in order to give their movement a distinct geographical identity.

In the recent period of history of North Bengal attracted the attention of the scholars, politicians, administrators as it has become the focal point of political agitation on ethnic issues of variegated nature and characteristics. Keeping aside the Naxalite movement – all in sequence or contemporaneously reflected the complex realities of socio–geopolitical and economic condition of North Bengal.

Apart from hill areas of Darjeeling District and a little part of adjacent areas of hills of Dooars of Jalpaiguri District the dominating racial origin in the rest of North Bengal is Rajbanshi community. Although this majority people of singular racial origin had given a new shape to the socio–cultural characteristic of this region. Many conflicting theories of their origin and identity were advocated by both foreign and Indian scholars during the colonial period long before the remarkable work of late Charu Chandra Sanyal, entitled, The Rajbanshi of North Bangal (A Study of a Hindu Social Group), published by the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, \(^1\) in 1965, where an
attempt was made to throw enough light on their origin and identities. But his observation about the origin and the identity of the Rajbashi as Koches, a non Aryan origin has been challenged by the dominant section of the Rajbanshi community. The demand for a Kamtapur state or the Greater Cooch Behar state by the Rajbanshi community is a riddle wrapped in ethnic controversy inside an enigma which demands a conclusion to be drawn in characterization of the nature of this movement taking into account of the ethno-socio-geo-politico dimension.

Many theories have been advanced by social scientists for defining and identifying the nature and causes of ethno–national movements based on shared meaning of common descent, real or imaginary those elites in the appropriate group formulates in order to mobilize political support for a variety of objective ranging from autonomy to secession to state hood.

It is well settled that ethnicities located in specific territorial boundaries have a claim to be classified as regions and therefore have legitimate claim to the autonomy at the political and economic levels. In fact, the urge for self governance and aspiration of economic development is at the root of such a claim. (Report of the Regional Autonomy Committee, 1999; 11 as quoted by S .Chaturvedi, The Ethno and the Geo-Politics of Autonomy in a Boarder land named Jammu &Kashmir).  

The question of autonomy in general relates to the complex interplay between the ethno—cultural moorings of the individual or group identity and a rather seductive of geo-political reductionism and territoriality (Chaturvedi). It cannot be denied that this issue is complex and no single theory is capable to explain its root and nature of the movement.

Territoriality is the attempt by an individual or groups to affect, influence or control people, phenomena and relationship, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area. It is a rather complex strategy and the device through which people construct and maintain spatial organization (Robert Sack; 1986; 19-20,216).  

No doubt geographical concentration of group or community is an essential factor to territorial autonomy but at the same time this particular consideration, in many occasions becomes highly problematic in places characterized by heterogeneity or mega–diversity or hybridity.

In general, it is explained, one of the most basic factor for this kind of movement in the uneven development in economic and social field within the state itself. Again, the cultural dominance by the dominant group may be considered as another cause of watering the germination of regional movements. Further, the geographical location may contribute fuel for firing the feeling of isolation from the main stream land which ultimately gives birth a psychological state of mind, what is known as ‘identity crisis’. In this context it requires to examine whether in the name of national integration the meaning of national integration should be another name for assimilation. It is again required to examine the very concept of
‘mainstream’ identity as it has been seen that in the name of mainstream of national identity an attempt is made to absorb the weaker section of the community in the fold of the stronger section causing the feeling of alienation by the former. This also may be considered as one of the cause for this kind of ethnic movement.

Language plays the important role in case of establishing the identity, glaring example of which is the creation of Bangladesh separating herself from Pakistan, irrespective of its demographic size and shape. In a multilingual country like India this factor also requires to take into consideration of ethnic movements.

North Bengal along with a considerable part of Assam, the areas of the present survey is not merely a geographical region of this subcontinent but they offer a historical contrast. While discussing about the ethnic diversity and conflict in the depicted survey areas we must take the fact into account that the Eastern part of India was the most densely populated part of the subcontinent with its fertile soil. On the other hand, the northern part of present West Bengal and Assam-Arakan Basin and ringed by the Southern Himalayan Rim, was the sparsely populated cross road for traders, migrating tribes and fortune seekers warriors. It does not mean there is no similarity in this eastern part of subcontinent. There were and are still many similarities as well, notwithstanding the fact, historically and culturally, the differences between the two regions are many. Similarities stem partly from the contiguous geographical location and partly from a shared colonial experience.

In search of the source of the present ethnic conflict we need to explore the pages of history to understand the present situation. History reveals the facts that this region has long been the site of bitter conflicts over resources between strategic interest groups. During the nationalist upsurge the ethnic conflict did not surface because during this colonial period the conflict was mainly articulated against the colonial ruler and their feudal collaborators.

Feudal structure of our country of course is not the creation of colonial rule but it was used by the colonial administration in the articulation of a different mode of productions. This ultimately formed a new form of social relations between different groups of peoples. After the end of colonial rule this are continued to simmer in the rural areas, with the conflict between different classes in the agrarian sector. This kept alive a process of renegotiation of resource sharing and social relation. Although it is difficult to see the struggle or movement as homogeneous and linear in its programmes but they still date remained the fulcrum on which the political changes are affected. It may be cited one glaring example as the Naxalite movement in North Bengal which signifies the ideological shifts and epistemological break in the understanding of aspiration of somewhat amorphous masses.

There are issues that emerge not only in the eastern part of India but also in North East India which should also be taken into consideration in this context. A small but significant part of the
Himalayan Rim is linked to this region and contributed certain issues which may be taken as a catalyst if not as a direct contributor for the ethnic disturbances in the plain. Darjeeling Hills may be cited as one glaring example to substantiate this contention.

It should also be noted here that, Darjeeling’s earliest link to metropolitan capital is signified by the fact that it was made a part of the province of Bengal while culturally it belonged to the Himalayan Rim. Similarly, Cooch Behar which was an independent kingdom for more than two hundred years before becoming a princely state during the colonial rule merged with the province of west Bengal after independence ignoring the fact that it nursed a distinct identity and culture for the indigenous people who rule this part for more than four hundred years under the umbrella of their kinghood. This conflicting condition still remains a factor that provokes the demand for autonomy either in the form of autonomous region or the form of statehood within the boundary of the country.

A question may be surfaced again how far is the movement of the autonomy autonomous itself? Whether both internal and external agencies are taking advantage of unique strategic position of North Bengal to their projected programme.

This question perhaps bear the importance in determining the causes of the present ethnic problems in this part of areas because despite the high level of education, land continues to be the main source of livelihood but immigrants encroach on it and that causes shortage. The Bengalis namely Bangladeshis are such immigrant group but not only one. A considerable number comes from the Hindi heart land of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Many local communities resent the fact that immigrants prosper on the land by encroaching upon while they are left behind.

The conflict begins with attacks on outsiders and slowly turns into ethnic conflict within the region. In the context of the land shortage by encroachment and failure to invest in productive job, as its exclusive rights so each community rewrites its history to claim on indigenous status and the exclusive rights over resources in a given area. Ethnic conflicts are direct consequences of such hardened ethnic identities and exclusive claim.

The present study is to find out the source of this ethnic movement by Rajbanshis, one of the major ethnic groups of North Bengal and a part of adjacent Assam. It also needed to acknowledge the inherent attitude of man in general. The aspiration of population to determine its destiny by itself has long been recognized by nation legitimized by the history of human civilization. The persuasion for the demand of self determination in the form of a state as demanded by Rajbanshis community arises out of historically evolved distinct identities of different ethnic groups that gave birth to different socio-economic formation.
1.1 ROLE OF LANGUAGE

Language always plays the vital role for the establishment of identity and becomes the most powerful instrument to ignite the emotive sentiment for the question of self determination.

It is even more powerful than that of religious fanaticism for the establishment of own territory as it is established in the formation of Bangladesh. The linguistic criterion which has been adopted for the identification for the group for federalist solution to the problem of right to self determination has largely fulfilled the aspiration of distinctive large population groups but in the case of smaller groups the same principle could not be applied.

Kamtapur or the Rajbanshi language is not the dialect as claimed by the Bengali intellectual, it is a principal language as the other principle language like Bengali was the initial voice of the movement of Rajbanshi community. Now the demand for separate Kamtapur state has placed its deep root in their mind and the movement is revolving around the movement for separate state and declared that their mother tongue which has been denounced by the Bengali community will be crowned as the state principal language of their proposed Kamtapur state. It is therefore required to examine the role of language in examining the present movement for the Kamtapur state.

An attempt has been made to accommodate their right to self determination. A generic identity has been conceived of under the nomenclature of ‘Scheduled Tribe’ and political space has been provided for them under the constitutional provision of Fifth and Sixth schedules. But the present crisis shows that these provisions are not the answer. So it needs further exploration to measure the fathom of the crisis as well as to the driving factors behind them to prescribe the remedy. The basic question knocks. How does one think? The question is important whatever the issue or the area of one’s concern, because of this thinking on the nature and adequacy, the ultimate effectiveness of how one acts, in the matter. It is the diagnosis of disease which determines its treatment. In the same way it is the explanation or understanding of social reality or aspect of it, which indicates the prescription, of the necessary, purposeful action from the part of the society as a whole.

1.2 ETHNIC IDENTITY

Ethnic conflict which ultimately turned into ethnic separatism within nation state demonstrated the spectacular phenomenon since the last century. The disintegration of mighty Soviet Union, break up of Pakistan, fragmentation of Yugoslavia, are the few glaring example of the manifestation of these centrifugal force in the recent history of international politics.
1.3 ETHNIC IDENTITY CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Ethnic politics is playing important role in the functioning of modern nation states, the world over. While the process of development had contributed largely to integrative tendencies in many states, it has produced tendencies in others. On one hand the developed countries has succeeded a lot in containing ethnic problems through process of nation building and modernization, on the other hand, in the developing poor countries it has worked the other way i.e. it has contributed to disintegrative process and given rise to large scale ethnic assertions. In case of India, ethnic group consciousness has risen in post independent era. On the context of terming these claims as law and order problems, the Indian state in most of the situations has acted in a repressive manner to counter these ethnic assertions, which have produced violence on large scale (Sing, 2008).

1.4 ETHNONATIONALISM

Brass defines ethno national movements as ideological movements based on shared meanings of common descent, real or imaginary that elites in the appropriate group formulate in order to mobilize political support for a variety of objectives ranging from autonomy to secession, to statehood.

On the one hand the ethnic minorities are the problem for the nation state where they are located in terms of their increasingly political assertion regarding identity, culture, language, religion etc. On the other hand, the nation state is a problem for them in terms of their perceived or genuine discrimination particularly regarding the fulfilment of their legitimate political and socio-economic aspiration (Sing 2008).

1.5 DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Notwithstanding the fact, the focus of the present study is to examine the Kamtapur movement ignited by the Rajbanshi community, the largest scheduled caste of West Bengal (Mukhapadhyay; 2003)6 the ethnic upsurge has become a challenging situation throughout the world both for multi-ethnic developed as well as developing countries. The very basic problems of most of the developing countries are more or less same. They have the plural societies and their territories were developed and marked to serve the interest of the colonial administration as most of them were under the subjugation of colonial rule. These territories were the conglomeration of different ethnic groups. Their aspiration and feeling had no any place to be considered. The aim of the colonial rule was only to exploit the resources by establishing their administrative authority over this area. When the anti colonial struggle reached to its pinnacle, the various ethnic communities, native to these colonized territories joined to this movement
with a hope that they can regain their lost authority as well as identity by the termination of the colonial rule.

The receding colonialist left this territorial dispensation with hard and defended borders. These borders were not the outcome of any painstaking effort of geographers but were the result of geo strategic and politico-economic consideration of the colonial masters. They were not built on any rational consideration. The receding powers left these occupied territories as lumped together diverse and antagonistic human groups or homogeneous groups were divided to suit the motives as convenient to them. So nation state in major part of the world did not come into existence through natural process of historical evolution as in case of Europe, but were artificial creation of outgoing master who left problems of ethnic minorities of all sorts unresolved in order to keep their hold intact in future. (Sing 2006 as quoted in H. Sing 2008)

India is not the exception as depicted above; rather it has more complexity than others having much more diversity in language, culture, religion, customs and geographical variation. Its attempt to build national integration along with nation and state building simultaneously but the same was blocked by the plethora of highly sensitive and emotional forces, political boundaries, problems of languages, ethnic conflict and violence, cultural identity and intra tribal relations. Without taking the account of the historical fact none can find the path to reach the destination. The present study for the Kamtapur Movement also demands the historical analysis of the country to understand the origin of its movement. In the same time the geographical location of this area should also be taken in to the consideration how far it has played as a catalyst in promoting the felling of isolation from the so called mainstream.

Before the establishment of colonial rule India was divided in to kingdoms and fiefdoms according to the linguistic, cultural and demographic variation. Every group had its own administrative freedom. But after the establishment of British colonial rule the colonial ruler tried to web India under a single administrative umbrella to consolidate their exploitation. So they brought various small territories comprising various ethnic groups keeping them aloof regarding the sentiments of ethnic communities under a same roof and in most cases merging them with big province.

There is no scope to deny the fact that before the advent of colonial rule large numbers of ethnic communities were historically never a part of what is called Indian mainstream, rather they were enjoying autonomy, independence during those period. Before leaving India the colonial ruler amalgamated these ethnic communities with the hard borders. In that case neither the British ruler nor the nationalist leader paid any attention to consider any natural and demographic division. The dominant community at that time exploited emotionally the minority ethnic groups and asked them to be part of the vast nation as partner of the united front of nationalist movement against the colonial ruler with the assurance they will be allowed to enjoy
the freedom to represent themselves in the socio-economic and political matter and must have proper sharing in the administration and governance of state. Their identity will be preserved and their customs and culture will find the due prestige without the interference from any corner.

It appears that ethnic minorities become more concern about their identity and demand their separate ethnic identity and reacted against the steps of encroachment on their affairs. In that case language appears to be the strong instrument in question of establishing the identity. In support of the above contention the recognition of the language may be cited here. According to the census report of 1961 the total number of languages in India were 1652, among them one fourth of the total number were the mother tongue of the tribe communities. During the period of 1971 and 1981 census this figure came down to 221 and 106 respectively. It was done in response to the instruction of census department that if the number of speaker of the particular language is bellow 10000 it should be excluded from the list of independent language and that should be included in the name of that language that they use to speak outside their territory. The said contention is supported by the fact that 48 mother tongues had lost their position in the census list and incorporated in Hindi alone as a result the Hindi speaking people jumped from 29.67% in 1971 to 39.94% in 1981. It should be bear in mind that India is not a monolingual nation like USA. It ought to be taken in to the account that the attempt to assimilate minor language in the so called major language may emerge as counterproductive near or distant future as it has already been pronounced in many part of the world. The emergence of Bangladesh from the grip of Pakistan is a glaring example. Apart from geographical and economical factors the Bengali nationalism ignited like catastrophic fire against the imposition of Urdu upon them. It again requires examining the role of the dominance of the Russ language over the other languages of the then the Soviet Union for the fragmentation of the mighty nation and emerges as the separate states according to the respective mother language. Mother tongue is the symbol of glory and identity of the community. No community whatever may the demographic position be able to accept his mother tongue to be recognised as the sub-language of the language of any other community. In the case of Kamtapur Movement which is under this study initially peeped its head with the demand for the recognition of Rajbanshi/Kamtapuri language as an independent language denying the official version as it is a sub language of Bengali and require to examine its role to convert this movement from the recognition of language to the demand of a separate state under the jurisdiction of Indian constitution.

1.6 THE ROLE OF THE STATE

The Indian state had often questioned the separate ethnic existence of minority groups while ignoring their demands. This has generated a type of urge in them for the identity furtherance and thrust on its exclusivity. Had the state followed a proper policy of nation building, rather than the state building, a common identity could perhaps have emerged as its identity (Baljit in Singh, 2008).
The role of development and distribution of resources by the state machinery should also be taken into consideration in explaining the ethnic movement. The state should provide the opportunity to the people to participate in development programme. It does not mean people’s participation in a particular field. It means open access of the people in wider range of social, political and economic programme. Participation in economic field not only provides the requirements for their survival but it also enables people to realize their potential and offer their contribution to the society. It also gives them a strong feeling of self respect and dignity which can be considered as vital to the participation to all other aspect of life. Economic growth is meaningful if it can be translated in to betterment of human life which ultimately becomes the cementing force for the feeling as an honourable partner of the society as a whole.

The uneven development had resulted inequality in sharing the fruits of development due to which certain groups and regions are at the receiving end. Due to this discrimination and development (actual and perceive) these ethnic groups are being alienated from the national mainstream, indulged in a type of political strangulation perceiving themselves as internal colonies (Singh). The majority dominating centre is being termed as oppressor. So these socio-psychological, cultural and economic variables have further strengthened the politicization of ethnicity, which had given fillip to its mobilization effort (Singh).

1.7 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the purpose of present study the literatures which have been used may be divided into the following three categories.

1. Theoretical writings on cultural territorial movements.

2. Scholarly contribution on ethnic questions of India and the issues of nation states.

3. Writings on Kamtapur movement and the historical account of the Rajbanshis

A large number of theoretical works available on the problems of cultural-linguistic-racial-territorial mobilization and political movements as experienced in recent years. But from these studies no single conclusion can be achieved and how ethnic unrest could be solved.

D.P.Moynihan’s ‘Beyond the Melting Pot’ (1963) may be considered as one of the pioneering contribution to the field of cultural-racial identity and mobilization in U.S.A. It is also a ground breaking study that pointed out how strongly America’s various ethnic groups have resisted assimilation. D.P Moynihan argued that the level of deviance in US society had increased beyond the point that it could afford to recognize. As a result, it has been redefining deviance so as to exempt much conduct previously stigmatized and also quietly raising the ‘normal’ level so that behaviour seen as abnormal by an earlier standard is no longer considered
to be so. This publication helped to understand the concept of racial identity in the present study although it was done in different context and historical period.

N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan edited ‘Ethnicity, Theory and Practice,’ (1975) deserves special mention. They present a paradigm shift. Multi–culture flourishes in apolitical economic milieu of unity of power elite drawn from different sector of the society. According to Glazer and Moynihan ethnicity is a distinct category of social process and social differentiation. But in a society articulation and social mobilization will follow ethnic lines. From their observation it appears that cultural-racial identity or ethnic identity is a universal social phenomenon and ethnic mobilizations are as natural as class movements. They argued that conceptually any group of distinct culture and origin must be regarded as an ethnic group. According to them an ethnic group should have the following characteristics:

(a) Must have distinct identity which helps mobilization;

(b) Some objective factors like culture, race language, religion do exist but not essential;

(c) Such groups are forms of social life

A.D. Smith and J. Hutchinson in their ‘Ethnicity’ (1996) classified various conceptual works on ethnic cultural movements in to two categories; 1) primordialist and 2) instrumentalist. The article ‘Integrative Revolution’ by Clifford Geertz in his edited volume ‘Old Societies and New States’ (1963) may be classified as a primordialist as he finds that primordial ties, like, race, language, religion, culture, region are the most influential factors to provoke public action despite the establishment of modern state. Instrumentalist, on the other hand observed, ethnic mobilization is a weapon for the pursued of political and economic goals. D.L. Horowitz’s ‘Ethnic Groups In Conflict’ (1985) and L. A. Desspre’s ‘Ethnicity and Resource Competition In Plural Societies, (1975) may be included in this category. In their works they tried to identify the connection between cultural–ethnic movements and political–economic interest. Fedric Brarth in his ‘Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, The Social Organization of Culture Difference’ (1969); argued that ethnic identity was a means to create boundaries that enabled a group to distance themselves from one another. To Berth ethnicity was a perpetually negotiated and renegotiated by both external ascription and internal self determination. Berth’s view was that ethnic groups are not discontinuous cultural isolates or logical a priori to which people naturally belong. He wanted to part with anthropological notion of culture as bounded entities and ethnically as a primodialist bonds, replacing it with a focus on the interference between groups.

Jean Phinney in ‘Ethnic Identity and Acculturation (2003) and ‘Ethnic Identity’ (2000) maintains that, ethnic identity is dynamic multidimensional construct that refer to one’s identity or sense of an ethnic groups (2003). From her perspective one claims on identity within the context of a sub group that claims a common ancestry and shares at least a similar culture, race, religion, language, Kingship or place of origin. She goes on to add that ethnic identity is not a fixed categorization, but rather is a fluid and dynamic understanding of self and ethnic
background. Ethnic identity is constructed and modified as individual becomes aware of their ethnicity, within the large (socio cultural) setting (2003)

Paul R. Brass in his ‘Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison’ (1991) subscribes the instrumental thoughts. As a matter of fact Brass made a strong pointed critique of the position as opposed to the primordialist one. The distinction in Brass the primordialist and the instrumentalist point of view is very important. Brass draws our attention to the fact that ethnic identities are variable, and hence his larger anti primordialist point; there is nothing inevitable about an ethnic conflagration. In Brass’s view, the military officers, professionals, the landed and urban middle classes, are all member of the elite category. When ethnic identities are created and released by these manipulating elites, the identities are not pristine in character but are significantly distorted for combative purposes. Brass observes elite conflict for resources as the main cause of ethnic mobilization.

M.Hechter study ‘Internal Colonialism’ (1975) locate the ethnic problem in a phase of particular type of economic development. He argues that the capitalist domination is the basic cause of ethnic conflict.

In comprehending the problems of ethnicity in India some of the writings appeared quite useful. Among them M.R.Barnet’s ‘The Politics of Cultural Nationalism In South India’ (1976) needs to mention. Here he explained the Darvida movement in Tamilnadu from the point of view of cultural nationalism. UrmilaPhadnis in her ‘Ethnicity and Nation Building in South Asia’ (1989) and R.A.Schermerhorn’s ‘Ethnic Plurality in India’ (1978) explained its ethnic cohesion in a multi-cultural society.

Myron-Weiner’s ‘Son of the Soil’ (1978) explained the problems of cultural-territorial movements in Assam from the angle of ethnicity. A.Majeed’s ‘Regionalism; Developmental Tensions in India’ (1984) and SajalBasu’s ‘Regional Movements’ (1992) tried to locate the socio economic causes behind such movements. Susana B.C.Deville’s ‘Discourses of Ethnicity and Protest in Jharkhand’ (1992) and Dipankar Gupta’s ‘The Context of Ethnicity’ (1997) offered valuable insights on ethnic movement in India taking in to the account of Jharkhand and Sikh consciousness in Punjab respectively. H.Gohain in his remarkable contribution; Assam; ‘A Burning question’ (1985) and N. Senguptas ‘Fourth World Dynamics; Jharkhand’ (1982) should be mentioned in this context where both of them took the economic factors to explain the ethnic problems in historical context.

With reference to ethno-historical background of the Rajbanshis in general and Kamtapur movement in particular the following literature are found quite important.

Charu Chandra Sanyal’s remarkable study entitled ‘The Rajbanshiss of North Bengal ‘(1965) deserve special mention. Dr. Sanyal in his study described the culture and customs of Rajbanshis community with a beam of light how their ethnic identity began to change with the progress of time.
Dharma Narayan Barma’s ‘A Step to Kampta Behari Language ‘(1991) is an attempt to establish the Rahbanshi language as the principal language and is the driving force behind the ethnic unrest in North Bengal. Gunadhar Burman’s ‘Kamtapur Katha’ (1991), Ranjana Roy’s Uttarbangla BhasaSamasya’ (2003) are directed to the same direction.

Upendra Nath Burman’s ‘Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas’ (1388 B.S) demanded that the Rajbanshis are carrying the Aryan blood. His argument purely based on mythological description.

Khan Chowdhury Amanalulla Ahmed’s ‘A History of Cooch Behar (1936) may be regarded as one of the documentary evidence and help for knowing the history of Rajbanshis kingdom particularly, the history of Cooch in detail.

‘Uttarkhanda Movement A Sociological Analysis’ (1987) by Rajatsubhra Mukhopadhyay is valuable contribution in locating not only the basic sociological factors but also the historical causes that have contributed greatly to present ethnical unrest in North Bengal. Conservation Vs Construction: A Discourse on Hindu Identity of the Rajbanshi (2008) is an in depth study to understand how the ethno-religious and the historical as well as the political factors played the role for the Rajbanshi community to embrace Hinduism. It is again, ‘A Note on the Cultural Background of Kamtapur Movement in North Bengal is‘ an important study in the field of Kamtapur movement to examine the social and cultural factors which are supposed to be the instruments that ignites the desire of cherished statehood named Kamtapur and launch the movement to achieve their goal.

Ethnicity, Ethnic Movements and Social Stricture in North- East India (2007) by B.K.Roy Barman observes that ethnic entities/or ethnicity need not necessarily be seen only in terms of conflictual relationship and that their dialogical relationship and potential to the creation of a non-hegemonic social order from local to global level should also be recognized.

‘Ethnic Identity Problem and Administrative Efficacies in North-East India’ (2007) by R.k. Bhadra presented the ethncal account of the indigenous inhabitants of North East India which provides useful ethno–historical factors to understand the ethnic relation of the indigenous people of North Bengal particularly Rajbanshi community under this study.

The unpublished thesis of Dhirendra Nath Das , entitled ‘Ethno-political Aspect of Regional Movements: A Study In The Context Of Some Regional Movements In The Plains of North Bengal’ (1999) is a useful contribution in explaining the present ethnic unrest in North Bengal.

Manuel Castles in his ‘The power of Identity ‘(1997) gave, perhaps the most cogent definition of identity and conceptual analysis. According to him, identity, as refers to human being in society, is the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes that is /are given priority over other source s of meaning.
Manning Nash, contributed a rich explanation in his ‘The cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World’ (1989) where according to him the concept of ethnicity is also fuzzy in the large body of literature on the subject, there appears to be no consensus on what ethnicity is.

GopalGuru, ed, (2011); ‘Humiliation; Claims and Context’ is a notable contribution where he defines the concept of humiliation within the interdisciplinary frame work.

Javeed Alam (2004) discusses the process of identity formation among the oppressed castes, whom, borrowing a phrase from Partha Chatterjee, he describes as having been and experiencing ‘collective unfreedom’

There are,good number of research works on ethnic movements in India but little (often sporadic) attempt has been so far made to study Kamtapur movement led by the Koch-Rajbanshis from ethno-historical perspectives. The proposed research is an attempt to fill up that gap.

1.8 THE STUDY AREA

North Bengal, as the name implies, is the northern part of a larger regional entity, namely West Bengal, which is a state in the Indian Union. The North Bengal lies between latitude 24° 40´ 20´´ to 27° 13´ in the northern hemisphere. The easternmost extremity is marked by the 89º 54´ 35´´ east longitude and its westernmost extremity by 87º 45´ 50´´ east longitude. Six districts comprise the whole region and these are Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda. (Map No. 1.1)

The All Koch Rajbanshi Student’s association had proposed the Kamtapur State which covers the districts of North Bengal and part of Assam State also. (Map No. 1.2)

The origin and development of Kamtapur movement backed by the Rajbanshi, the major ethnic group of North Bengal mainly exist in two districts viz. Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar and the people of these districts had an ethnic bondage with North Eastern states of India. (Map. No. 1.3)
Map No. 1.1

Map No. 1.2
1.9 THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

North Bengal of today constituting the district of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda. Three districts namely Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling as a whole had an ethnic bondage with North-East India. So the economic, political and social unrest which are going on these districts over three decades need a through scrutiny. Further, North Bengal is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups like Rajbanshis, Nepali. Mech, Rabha, Oraon. Munda, Santal, Malpahari, Toto, Kharia, Jugi, Khen, Pan, Paliya, Nasya-Sekh etc. Many of them still preserve their ethnic identity and language/dialects.

The primary objective of the present research is to examine the origin and development of Kamtapur movement backed by the Rajbanshi, the major ethnic group of North Bengal. This study also intends to throw some lights on how the problems of marginality have been grown up in the sphere of language, demographic composition, cultural homogeneity that ultimately led to an asserted move in demanding a cherished statehood, called Kamtapur.

The separation of Goalpara from North Bengal and merger with Assam in 1874 is another important event as it divided Rajbanshi community from the traditional belt of Rajbanshi homogeneity and because for the first time after 1874 a section of them have formed a common platform Greater Kamta United Forum for the common interest of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Sammilini of Assam.

It has been found that a number of studies has been conducted over the ethnic issues covering the regional movement of Rajbanshi community or the formation or Kamtapur state but there is hardly any comprehensive study which addresses the following question;

How the Rajbanshi community as a whole feel alienated from their land firstly by the tea plantation which caused the influx of labour forces from the adivasi belt namely, central part of India then by different project works and pine apple plantation, besides, by the land grabbing by the land syndicate for the speculative trade forcing them to become the land less labour?

Why does the Rajbanshi community feel in general that their history and culture are gradually marginalized in the present geographical boundary of West Bengal?

All these aspects need an enquiry with reference to ethnic question in the case of Kamtapur movement from historical perspective. From the available literature it appears to me that majority of studies on this ethnic movement generally put emphasis on single factor. Of course there are few studies where attempts had been made to accommodate more than one factors and some studies have also stressed on the historical and contextual elements.
The aim of the present study is to explore and address the problems of Kamtapur movement from political, historical, sociological, geographical and economic frame of reference. The objective of this study may be concentrated as depicted below:

1) To examine the background evolutionary history of the demand behind the movement of Kamtapur Movement.

2) To examine the social, political, economic and geographical and other factors those have greatly contributed in demanding for a separate state.

3) To examine the influence of other ethnic movements of the neighbouring states including the demand of Gorkha land state over this movement for creation of a Kamtapur state.

4) To examine in what extent the history of this region is playing a part to ignite the emotional aspiration for separate state.

5) To examine the inter relation between the various factors which are responsible for creating the separatist sentiments as reflected in this movement.

The primary objective of the proposed study is to examine the emergence and growth of Kamtapur movement in ethno historical context. It will investigate in detail the factors which have been exploited greatly in mobilizing the indigenous people in favour of that movement on ethno-cultural and territorial terms.

1.10 HYPOTHESIS

The present works tries to assert the truth or falsity of the following proposition:

1. Ethno-Cultural identity is the root cause of Kamtapur Movement in North Bengal.

2. Marginalisation has given birth and development to the Kamtapur Movement in North Bengal.

1.11 DATA SOURCE & METHODOLOGY

As my object is to understand the ethnic unrest of North Bengal, the impact of socio-geographical environmental factors on that issue especially on the movement of Kamtrapur was necessary both for paper works and field study. I have gone through the books and articles on this issues including the related books and literatures to know and understand the ethnic problems and the contextual explanation on the subject explained by different scholars.
I thought that, in order to understand the problems and read the mind of the concerned people it is necessary to study the life of the Rajbanshi people at close quarters by living with them so as to get an insight into their social life and how they are affected by the influx of the new comer known as the Bengali Refugees with their advanced culture and dominated demographic position so as to get an insight into their social life and how it is affected. By merely interviewing some members of the community on specific points one cannot cover the sentiment of the whole community. Moreover, the results may not be very accurate as there is a difference between what people say and what actually exists. This happens mainly when opinion are sought. Certain facts are not influenced by the opinion of the respondents, like the type of the family or household, or the number of inter community marriages that has taken place. These exist on their own and a census will give the correct answer. But if I want to know whether the inter community marriages especially between Rajbanshi and Bengali are encouraged or not, or whether dependent parents are responsible for their children or not or whether the Bengali neighbour wanted it or not I presume that I should not rely entirely on interviews. Because, in such case there is a tendency to express the ideal and not the actual condition. So I thought it to be necessary to select three places to stay for the sample survey for my study.

1.11.1 FIELD WORK

Method adopted: In this section attempts have been made to give an idea about the method, tools, and technique adopted, selection of areas, pattern of analysis, period and limitation of present study.

Sources of Information: For the present study both primary and secondary sources of information are used. However, emphasis has been given on first hand information directly collected from the areas which I adopted for my research study.

Primary data has been collected personally from three areas with the help of the field guide. In my study the area is the unit of enquiry not the object. It is not the comparative study of the Rajbanshis living in three different areas that I have adopted. The principal aim is to study the socio-ethno-geo-environmental impact upon the historical events that provoked the Rajbanshi community to feel them being deprived in relation to the Bengali community and ultimately led them to organise ethnic movement throughout North Bengal. In my study the knowledgeable persons of each areas under my study like the elected representatives, village headman, educated person, senior members of the locality, and number of common people across all the sections of the population were my key informants in providing first hand information. In these areas, I
have selected the houses of the each selected areas when I used to stay in these areas. All of
them are interviewed with the household scheduled containing a set of questions, like name,
age, education, marital relation, whether inter community marriage, their feeling about the past
heritage, opinion about mother tongue, ethnic relation amongst the different communities,
whether in favour of merging with West Bengal or prefer to remain as a separate state, opinion
about the medium of instruction in the education, whether connected with any organization etc.
Besides these, some random questions according to the situation which gave me a chance to ask
more about information following their answer to my questionnaire.

Secondary data have been used as and when required mainly to inspect the historical
background of the community and evaluate their social transformation. Census documents have
been used for demographic details and social classification of the Rajbanshi community.
Ethnographic details have been collected from the available books and literatures. History of the
community has been critically examined from their earlier literatures, history, folktales and even
heresy.

1.11.2 RATIONALE FOR THE SELECTION OF AREAS

Mekhligang has been selected because of its active participation in the movement for both
the Greater Cooch Behar and for the Kamtapur State movement. Most of the Rajbanshi leaders
of the ethnic movements hailed from this area. Once a completely agricultural area now becomes
a trade centre and mixed population having the domination of the Rajbanshi community inspite
of the influx of the Bengali refugees settled here. This area is well connected with the district
headquarters, Cooch Behar and enjoys both the rural and urban flavour.

Jalpesh: It is a village (J. L. No. 68) of Mayanaguri police station. It is situated on the bank
of the Jhorda River and famous for its Jalpesh Temple reconstructed by Pran Narayan, the king
of Cooch Behar. This area was selected for taking into account of its historical background and
pattern of its mixed demographic position.

Dhupguri: The third area that was selected is Dhupguri, the birth place of Utterkhanda Dal.
It is a densely populated area of Jalpaiguri district and connected both by road and railway
transportation system.

All these three centres have purposely selected on practical consideration and convenience.
Studying just one station intensely, one cannot generalise the sentiments of the community as a
whole. This was not our intention either. A study of this sort would be at the most a journalistic
attempt and a piece of sociological research. My stay at the selected stations gave me an insight
into the sentiment of the community of my study. With this background I was able to continue
my investigations in other neighbouring areas also. (Map No. 1.4)
Map No. 1.4
1.11.3 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

In order to achieve my objectives I have collected both qualitative and quantitative information.

Quantitative informations have been gathered from each of the house hold. As two areas, namely, Dupguri and Mekhliganj were big urban areas and densely populated I have considered both the census technique and sampling that are suitable for the purpose. The area Jalpesh is a small village and sparsely populated. Here I have considered census technique most suitable than sampling. All the areas have been enumerated with the help of household schedule. Household level primary data have been obtained by direct interview preferably with the head of the family.

During this conduct of the field study I find close observation that seems more suitable and feasible than that of participatory observation.

Some time I participated in a variety of social, cultural, religious and ritual events organised both at the individual and social levels.

1.11.4 PATTERN OF ANALYSIS

Data collected both from the primary and secondary sources have been later analysed and presented in simple tabular forms. No sophisticated statistical techniques are used for the study. Secondary data collected for demographic profile are used to show the status and position of the Rajbanshi in North Bengal.

The qualitative information gathered from the field survey, key informants, linkman, and literatures are analyzed and interpreted mostly to judge their social and historical position in the present context. All information provided by the key informants are put to cross examination and analysed minutely to get the most appropriate result. Observation regarding the areas of the community are being discussed with field guides and key informants to get their opinions. The elected representatives and the elders of the community are consulted to gather qualitative information and their opinions. A number of cases have been recorded and analysed with due importance.

1.11.5 PERIOD OF STUDY

I have divided the project in to two broad phases, collection cum processing of data and analysis of data. Secondary data have been gathered much before going to the field survey for collecting primary data. Available literatures have been reviewed at the initial stage of the study.
In choosing of the field study I have covered some months for each of the station depending upon the area and the demographic volume of the selected places.

1.12 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research work is spelt out into eight chapters and these are as follows:

Chapter: I - Introduction –The Problem-Conceptual Frame Work

Chapter: II-The Region and the People

Chapter: III-Kamtapur Movement: Genesis and Social Context

Chapter: IV-Evolution of the Movement and Present State

Chapter: V-Locating Kamtapur Movement Among Some other Ethnic Movements in North East India

Chapter: VI-Ethno Linguistic Aspects of the Movements

Chapter: VII-Identity–Autonomy Question and the State: The Kamtapur Experience

Chapter: VII-Conclusions

1.13 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

I cannot claim that this study is complete analysis of the origin and causes of the ethnic unrest of North Bengal. No one can claim complete perfection and ours is not exception to that. In the present study I have tried to identify the origin and the influence of economic, geographical, environmental and historical as well as social influence upon the present ethnic unrest of North Bengal. Any question centring on social formation needs to be examined from multi dimension taking into consideration their economic, political, social, historical, linguistic, anthropological and religious angle. Historical dimension is only one aspect of such concept. As the present study is time bound and individually organised and financed we could not take into account of the aspect of social formation as the part of the study. Only few outlines have been discussed when and where it became necessary.

As all the movements of the Rajbanshi took their historical past as the base points for the establishment of their identity and claimed a geo-political boundary for their own in the name of the state, I have explained mainly the historical background of the Rajbanshi community and the
present influx of the refugees of East Bengal in the first phase and in the later phase the migration of the same community from the then East Pakistan. Besides, historical background, the impact of the influx of the incoming refugees are given due weightage.

I have purposely selected three stations of different areas from two districts. So that one sample result should not influence the other. All the three stations have mixed populations and the Rajabanshi community demographically occupy the dominating position. So it enabled me to get a complete picture of the social transformation in the Rajbanshi community.

As indepth interview and not participant observation seems to suitable, many aspects of social relations and attributes peculiar to the society can only be investigated through touch with the community. Many aspects of such society may be very symbolic or happen without any apparent causal relation with other. The best method I consider for such happening is close observation and direct interaction. But I could not do justice because of my certain limitation which I could not overcome inspite of our best effort

Reference

1 Saynal Charu Chandra; The Rajbanshi of North Bengal (1965) Kolkata, Asiatic Society.

2 Chaturbedi Sanjoy; (2005)‘The Ethno and the Geo; Politics of ‘ Autonomy ‘ in a Borderland named Jammu & Kashmir in Autonomis in the North and the North East (ed), Kolkata , Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group


5 ibid


7. Singh .H ibid

8 Singh Baljit; (2006); Politics of Identities; Global south Asian and Indian Perspective’ the Journal of political Science. Vol 67, No.2, 2006, p207
CHAPTER: TWO

THE REGION AND THE PEOPLE

The area of the ethnic unrest under the present research study confined within the boundary of North Bengal. This chapter depicted the historical and geographical account of naming this northern part of West Bengal as popularly known as North Bengal, notwithstanding the fact no such name has administrative sanction officially but used as Uttarbang or NorthBengal even in the ancient scripts and also in different administrative organization of present setup. This chapter described the geographical location of North Bengal which was epicenter of different historical events during the period of early historical age and even during both the middle and modern ages. It also dealt with the brief account of the history of the Rajbanshi, the most dominant ethnic community in this area before the partition of India with the historical account of the Koch–Dynasty and the ethnic relationship between the Koch and Rajbanshi to explore the facts behind the difference of opinion in question of their ethnic identity.

2.1 HISTORICAL BACK GROUND

Before going into details let us have an idea about North Bengal as no such name has been officially recognised. Still the name of North Bengal has been widely known and even accepted in different officials’ description. For example, North Bengal State Transport, North Bengal University, North Bengal Medical College, I.G North Bengal etc. It has therefore become imperative to give a brief description what is called North Bengal.

The toponymy of a place gives the historical, geographical, and social account of that place which provides immense help in in-depth study of that area. Name of the many places in the districts of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Darjeeling bear the name either Bodo and Austric origin or Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali origin. The name of Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Dhupguri, and Mainaguri are the Indo-Burmese (Bodo) origin. Similarly, Darjeeling, Kurseong, Sonada, Kalimpong etc are the names of Lepcha Origin. The origin of the name of the place signifies the history of the past and supports the demographic account of the areas including the geographical features of a particular place. Prof. Sukumar Sen remarked in his book ‘from the toponymy we can have many historical facts of Bengal since the 5th century.’

Few examples are given below in support of the statement.

*Badmatam* derived from Lepcha word the bamboo of padam variety as this land was covered with this type of grass.

*Chongtong* is also Lepcha word means the confluence of the two rivers

*Kursong* Lepcha word means the place of white cane.

*Sivak–Sevok*, Lepcha word, means place of cool air.

*Senchal or Sinchal* Lepcha word means hill covered with fog.

*Gidha pahar* Nepali word means hill of vulture.

*Ambhutia*, Nepali, means place of mango and so on
2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LANDSCAPE OF NORTH BENGAL

Geographically North Bengal located between 27° 13' N to 24° 13'20" N latitudes and between 89° 54'35" E to 88° 47'40" E longitudes. It has an area of 21855 sq. Km and a population about 120,36,292 of which male population is 62,36,108 and female population is 58,00,118. The density of population in North Bengal is 560/sq. Km being the highest density population in Jalpaiguri and lowest in Darjeeling district (census 1991). Rajbanshi, the largest number of ethnic community of North Bengal is concentrated in Cooch Behar and lowest in Darjeeling. 31.19% population is scheduled castes and 10.47% population is scheduled tribe of total population of North Bengal. There are 59 sub-castes list of scheduled castes and 38 sub-castes list of scheduled tribes.

Location, accessibility and geographical setting played a very important role in giving the shape of the pattern of interaction of North Bengal. Here diversity of human geography displayed two notable characteristics in the processes of interaction. Firstly, it influenced the pattern of the inhabitants of the region and secondly it influenced the elements from the outsides of the areas. These geographical factors moulded the perception of the inhabit, that the different terrain conditions along with the lack of accessibility and limited resources promoted to grow the isolation feeling of the local population of this area from the mainstream social process of the country as isolation and inaccessibility led to limited level of contacts and interaction with elements outside their respective environs.

It is found from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the puranic literatures that this areas were at that time was known as Prag-Jyotish, Poundra, Kamrupa etc. The reason for the name of Prag-Jyotish was believed by some scholars that astrology was first started in this area. The present Bangladesh and the entire of present North Bengal were within that region. Subsequently a part of which was known as Poundra and the rest as Kamrup. River Korotoya which was flowing on the west of present Jalpaiguri district was the border of those two regions. The area spread along the western bank of the Korotoya was Poundravardhan. The Korotoya is still regarded as sacred river for the Hindus as it is that river which was mentioned in the ‘San Mantra ‘related to the holy bath or ablutions of ‘Tithi Tatwa’ by Raghu nandan Bhattacharjee a great logician of Bengal. Poundra–Vardhan was also equally vast and took place in the pages of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata including in other ancient Sanskrit literatures. They were given importance in the epic and mentioned in the Mahabharata that Poundra was born along with five brothers namely Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Sunkhma and Pundra of Sudeshna, the queen of king Bali, legally begotten by Rishi Dhirghatama. Five kingdoms in the eastern India were named after the name of the sons of king Bali. Historians also believe that Mahashangarh near Bogra is the relic of Presidency Dacca, Chittagong and some other parts of West Bengal were once part of this region. The region which was known as Varendra Mandal or Varendri was also under this Poundra–Vardhana. The name ‘poudra’ came as it is believed by some peoples that the
word Punda came from pulp of sugar cane, as this area was also famous for the production of sugar cane. Here we come across the two names of Kamtapur. The kingdom established on the bank of the Brahmaputra towards the end of 13th century was known as Kamtapur. Another Kamtapur kingdom was established in the southern part of present Cooch Behar in the 14th century during the reign of Niladawaja Kamteswar and last of all, Cooch Behar, established by Biswa Sing towards the end of 15th century.

It is opined by some scholars like Dharma Narayan Barma, authors of several books based on several scripts and verses gave an account of the history of Kamtapur dynasty. There he stated in one of his article under the title ‘Kamta Language – A brilliant and Tragic End’ published in Socio Political Movements in North Bengal edited by Dr. Sukhabilash Burma published from Global Vision Publishing House N. Delhi (2007) as under:

‘In the 13th century the name of the kingdom Kamrup was changed on shifting the capital of Kamrup to Kamtapur, fifteen miles south to Cooch -Behar city. Henceforth the name of the state became Kamta, and from that time down to the end of 19th century Kamta became the political and cultural centre of eastern India.

The Kamta kingdom was ruled by native kings successively beginning with Sandhya Roy in 1255 A.D.to Nilamber 1482 A.D. After that Pathan Chieftain Hossasin Sah, conquered Kamta but could not retain this land not more than 12 years. In 1515, Biswasingha attacked the kingdom and vanquished the Pathan ruler. Then Biswasingha ascended the throne of Kamta in the year 1496. Markendeya Purana, in 35th panda says:

“Kamta Nagare Biswasingha Narabar. Priohanda Pratap Raja Bhoge Purandar.”

Indeed, Biswasingha became the ruler of Kamta after the pathan. Twenty two kings of this line ruled over Kamta and lately Cooch Behar, for 454 years continuously from 1496-1950 which is the longest dynastical rule in India. Although stray reference to the land and the people of North Bengal are available in the Ramayana, Haribvansa, Brahamanandapurana, Vishnapurana, Raghubavamsa, Brihat–Sanghita, Yoginitantra and the Greek work ‘Peeriplus of the Erythrolean Sea of the first century A.D is the valuable document for its ancient past. The name of Bhagadatta, the king of Kamrup has been mentioned in the Mahabharata, described as a king of the Mlechhas, taking part in the battle of Kuruskhetra on the side of the Kauravas with his army of Chinese and Kirata.

It requires explaining a bit why it becomes necessary to give the account of the past history of North Bengal. As the present crisis is very much related with the feelings of marginalisation in the minds of the Rajbanshis community not only in question of their language and culture but their historical position also. So it becomes necessary to throw some light on the glorious past of North Bengal or Uttar Banga in the pages of history.
2.3 ORIGIN OF THE NAME

If we go back to the pages of history we come across the name ‘Banga’. But at that time this name did not bear the same identity of whole of Bengal. After the establishment of Bengali language in the areas as the inhabitant of Bengal was divided into whole areas for long century – known as Gour and Banga.

Uttarbanga denotes the areas covering Rajshahi, Maldaha, Bagura, and Pabna known as Barendra Bhumi. On the otherhand, Birbhum, Murshidabad, Bardhaman, Hoogli Howrah, Bankura, and Midnapur known as Rarh. Moreover, Bangladesh denoted the areas situated by the side of the river Padma and the Northeen part of that river. They are Maimansingha, Sreehotta, Cachhar, Kumilla, and Chattal or Chittagaon.

The history of North Bengal has its long tradition. Up to the extent of 1576, North Bengal was the epicentre of political centre of the then Bangladesh. There was believe in the mind of some scholars like Dr. Ananada Gopal Ghosh, that after the conquer of Banga by the Mogul Emperor Akbar and shifting the capital from Rajmohal to Dacca was the beginning of the sunset of the political position of North Bengal. But whether this believe is acceptable Prof Ghosh himself cast some shadow of doubt. Because inspite of the fact that there was the downfall of North Bengal (comprising Malda, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Bagura and Pabna) the northern part of North Bengal (Comprising Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Goalpara) was emerged as the powerful political centre under the banner of kingdom named Kamta–Cooch dynasty which converted from a mere kingdom to vast powerful empire. That empire had close relationship with the ancient kingdom like Pragjyotishpur, Mithila and Magadh.

If we go back to the ages of ‘Pouranic era we can find the name of that dynasty as was mentioned in the great epic like the Mahabharata. The two kings Birat and Bhagadatta of Matsyadesh and Pragjoytishpur respectively took part in the Armageddon of Kurakhetra. Both of those kingdoms were the part of greater North Bengal. Birat supported the Pandobs and Bhagadatta took the side of Kauraba. Taking into account of this back ground the inhabitants of North Bengal can reasonably claim that they are carrying the inheritance of ancient glorious tradition of history.

In this context we may remind the remarkable remark of Dr. Ahmed Sharif that he made in his book named, Bangla, Bangali, O Bangalitta’ (pages 12) where he said that in comparision to Eastern and Southern Banga the ‘Rarh and’ Barendra’ were more ancient in the historical perspective. The present North Bengal is the inherent part of the said Braredra Bhumi.

Another scholar Akhyay kumar Maitra wrote in his essay in the magazine Proabashi,(Jaistha, 1308) that North Bengal once upon a time were widely known for the Buddhist culture.
Habibur Rahaman, the famous historian of Bangladesh wrote in his essay (*Gangaridhhi*, p 11) that if the research work is done extensively there is every possibility to prove that ‘Pandru’ was the most ancient city of Bengal. At that time the ‘Rarh’ which is presently known as South Bengal had no connection with the rest of India specially with North India. Naturally, the history of Bengal can be claimed as the history of the then North Bengal until the establishment of the Mughal dynasty. Notwithstanding the fact, the name of Poundrabhardhan, Barendra, Gour, Gourbanga, and Kamta-Cooch dynasty are no more existed to-day, but the present North Bengal is the derivative of three historical land masses. Nobody can deny the fact that North Bengal has the glorious historical past. But the historian who wrote the history of the ancient and Middle Ages did not bother to consider this history as the integral part of history of Bengal. Even so many research works were done but the readers of history could not find the due position of the history of that part of present Bengal in the course study of graduate and post graduate syllabus.

It is true that the present North Bengal was annexed with the province of Bengal after the battle between English and Bhutan during the period of 1864-1865 but that could not erase the past history of North Bengal. Unfortunately that had happened for the northern part of present Bengal. On the other hand, the same treatment was made for the Bengali speaking dominated Surma Valley which comprised of the then undivided Shrihattra and Cachhar districts annexed with Assam province during the British period as the history of those two places could not find any place neither in the pages of history of Bengal or Assam.

Although there are four geographical regions of Bengal namely Purba Banga, UttarBanga, Dhakin Banga and Panchim Banga that are known for us but it is very difficult to say which division may occupy the position as the oldest in terms of their historical context. Prof Ananda Gopal Ghosh rightly said that Panchim Banga is the youngest. Dhakin Banga is not popular name if we compare with the other two names, Purba Banga and Uttar Banga. The name of Purba Banga became popular in the year of 1905 when the British ruler created two states Eastern Bengal and Assam by making the partition of Bengal. Although there was no official recognition of the name of Uttar Banga but it became the popular name and were used from old days in the lips of common people. (Ghosh; *Uttarbanga Namer Sandhyane*, p:17)

We can find several organizations bearing the names of Uttarbanga. The name of Uttarbanga that we can find in papers for the first time in ‘*Sanjibani* (2nd part edited by Kanilal Chattopadhyay) in the year of 1806 (Bangabadha 1292) where they mention the name Uttarbanga in the context of speech of Kumar Rajendra Narayan Roy, the zaminder of Bhowal and published under the title ‘*Uttarbanga Nirab Keno?’

In the essay written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay under the title ‘*Banglar Hitihas Samband, 1902*’. Similarly we came across several magazines and books that were published after wards where the name of Uttarbanga took an important space.
Organizationally we find Rangpur Sahitya Parishad which was established in the year of 1905 first recognized the name of Uttarbanga. We quote from their statement:

‘From the very beginning Akshoy Kumar Maitra and Pundit Koklileshar Bhattacharya Vidyaranta, MA. The well known writer and professor of Sanskrit, Cooch Behar Victoria College, became Associate Member of Rangpur Sahitya Parishad. Besides, Rai Calica Das Dutta Bahadur C.I.E, Dewan of Coochbehar became Associate Member---Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, the Piller of North Bengal----(Uttarbanga Namer Sandhane, p 40).

In the year of 1870 we came across the name of Northern Bengal when the British Government set up ‘Northern Bengal State Railway’. Again, in the year of 1882 a commercial establishment in the name of ‘Northern Bengal Tea Corporation ltd.’ was established at Jalpaiguri town. Northern Bengal Mounted Rifle was established in the same town in the year of 1908. At the end of the 19th century the British government began to use the term North Bengal taking into account of using North Bengal instead of Northern Bengal. In the year of 1901 .C.E. Buckland in his book ‘Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors’, wrote ‘He (Raja Promothonath Rai Bahadur of Dighapatia) founded the Rajshahi Association for the amielioration of the people of North Bengal. (Bengal Under the lieutenant goveonors, Vol-II- p.10 p. 89.) J.A Vas who published his Rangpur Gazetter in the year of 1911 used the word North Bengal. In census report that was published in the year of 1901 where E.A.Gait used the term North Bengal in several times.

The business community also used the term of North Bengal. For instance, in the year of 1910, North Bengal Jute Company was established. North Bengal Assurance Co. Ltd. was established in the year of 1934 by some businessmen of Haldibari who had their head quarters at Jalpaiguri town.

Prof. Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay the national professor, used the term North Bengal in his widely acclaimed research work published under the title ‘Kirat- Jana –kriti’. From the above depicted examples it is cleared that the term North Bengal was widely used much before the independence.

My present study to examine the roots of the unrest of North Bengal particularly the Kamtapur movement where it becomes necessary to see the geographical identity of North Bengal.

At present, North Bengal has six districts, namely, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda. Before the British rule there were no existences of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts. These two districts were created by the British ruler; the district of Darjeeling was created after the annexation of land from the king of Sikkim including some parts taken from Bhutan which was annexed with Jalpaiguri.
The Korotoya River which is flowing over North Bengal played an important role in demarking the geographical boundary of North Bengal. The eastern part of the Karotoya river included the present Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Rangpur Dist which is now in Bangladesh was included in the Kamtapur kingdom which was also known as Pragjoytishpur in the past. In the middle age the Kamtapur kingdom and in the later part of the Middle Ages the Cooch Behar dynasty comprised of this land. But this boundary was never static. It changed its boundary off and often either due to the political or natural reasons. The rivers of North Bengal played a very important role in changing the said geographical boundary.

At the beginning of the British rule Goalpara now in Assam province was the subdivision of Rangpur Dist. It was at that time named as Rajsahi-Cooch Behar Division. The present Murshidabad Dist was under that division. The geographical boundary of North Bengal thus changed from time to time. During the British period North Bengal represented the areas from the northern part of the Ganga and extended up to western part of the river Brahmaputra.

Prof. Hemchandra Roy Chowdhury in his ‘History of Bengal’ Part 1 page no 2 published by Dacca University mentioned “North of main branch of the Ganges now known as Padma and west of the Brahmaputra lies the extensive region of North Bengal which embraces the modern Rajsahi Division and the state of Cooch Behar.” Again if we go back to the middle age we can find the mention of North Bengal in ‘Aini- I- Akbar written by Abul Fazal where he wrote’ Northly from Bengal is the province of Coach(Koch), the Chief of which commands 1000 horses and 100,000 feet. Kamtapur, which is also called Kiamtah, makes a part of his dominion’. (Dr. Burma: North Bengal and its People’)

From the minutes of Rahbanshis Kshatriya Samiti (1917) it is known that there was a bank established at Rangpur in the name of ‘North Bengal Bank’. So many scholars mentioned the name North Bengal during this period. In the year of 1922 an article was published in the ‘Journal of Anthrpological Society, Bombay under the title, ‘On the Cult of Rain god of North Bengal (vol: XII, No 4). In the year of 1931 Dr. Rebati Mohan Lahiri wrote in the Modern Review under the title ‘The After math of the North Bengal Flood’. Again in the same year Sarat Chandra Mitra in the reference journal of the Asiatic society of Bengal under the title of ‘On the Worship of the Diety Jalpeshwar in the district of Jalpaiguri. (Vol: XXVII, 1931)"

2.4 USES OF THE NAME OF NORTH BENGAL

Now we can give the examples the name of North Bengal that is used by government as follows:
- Post Master General, North Bengal & Sikkim Division.
- B.S.F. North Bengal
- S.S.B North Bengal and Sikkim Division
The concept of North Bengal or a discourse building about North Bengal though is not a novel one the concept has also not been of much political significance until recently; the broad concept more or less has been geographical, demographic and administrative in denotation and connotation both; and formative discourse is still far from being stabilized owing to further prospect of its change in the tunnel of ongoing political transitional probabilities in gestation. (Dr, Debnath; Essay on Cultural History of North Bengal)\textsuperscript{12}

As we find from the above depicted facts that in the earliest time North Bengal more or less corresponded with the northern half of what used to be called Poundravardhana. Its capital is now identified with Mahasthangarh now in Bangladesh. We are now very much familiar with the term Varendri or Varedra bhumi which comprised the areas of Bogura, Rajsahi, Murshidabad, Malda and Dinajpur. Although the present North Bengal represents a quite different geographical boundary from the past but without taking the account of the history of Poundravardhana it will not possible to understand the roots of the present unrest where the question of cultural identity occupied a vital position in question of the self introspection and establish their ethnic identity.

The kingdom of Poundravardhana ruled for several centuries, began from the Mauryan period to the end of the Gupta period. Several inscriptions that were excavated clearly proved that the continuity of the Poundravardhana’s political history. North Bengal played a very important role during the period of Sashanka and during the period of Palas dynasty. North Bengal again surfaced as the learning centre of Buddhist culture with the establishment of a number of Buddhist College and academic monasteries in Rajsahi, Malda, and Dinajpur. During the period of Sena dynasty North Bengal lost their cultural dominance with the establishment of emergence of Nadia as the alternative centre of politics and culture.

In the 18\textsuperscript{th} century Kamtapur a place of North Bengal emerged as the important centre of political and cultural activities with the establishment of powerful kingdom known as Kamtapuri dynasty that existed up to the last decade of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. At the initial stage it was also a great Buddhist learning centre but the Brahmanical Hinduism made their head way cornered the Buddhist culture. When Iqtiar Uddin Mohammad Bin Khiliji centred his administrative activity centering Gaur and Pandua in Malda, North Bengal again turned to be politically important centre during the Mughal period.

The present Bengal as we know now was not the same even few years back. It was divided in to two parts – Gour and Banga. Gour included Uttarbanga and West Bengal. Here again, Uttarbanga included Barendra Bhumi- namely, Rajsahi, Maldaha, Bagura and Pabna and Rarh comprised of the districts like Birbhum, Murshidabad, Burdhamam, Hooghly Howrah Bankura and Nadia.
Besides, the name of Bangladesh included the districts like Maymansingha, Sreehatta, Kummilya, and areas of Chattal. All of them either situated either on the left bank of the river Padma or on the right side of the river.

The present Banganam (what as we see it today) comprises of these two parts—Gaur and Banga. It should be kept in mind that these two names were very popularly used from time immemorial. The names Gour and Banga were mentioned in the great epic, the Mahabharata. The national professor Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay told in search of the origin of these two names that the three names like Anga, Banga, and Kalinga which were uttered at one breath had their origin from three distinct non Aryan tribes (most probably, Kol origin). Although different scholars have different opinion regarding the origin of the name Gour. Prof Sunity Kumar Chattapadhyay explained the source of the origin of the name of Gour. In his opinion, this area was famous for the production of cane sugar and produced raw sugar known as ‘gur’ so the name of this region had been known as Gour. Other thought its name came from the ancient non – Aryan race, probably Dravidian linguistic tribes and from their word ‘gonda’ the name Gour’ had been derived.

By the name of Gour it was known the areas of West Bengal and middle part of North Bengal. On the other hand in the name of Banga it was known as the areas of East Bengal and South Bengal. But during the Hindu rule of ancient and middle period of history ‘Gour-banga’ indicated the whole of Bengal. In the thirteen century when the muslim ruler conquerd West Benga they used Bangal or Bangalaha for the whole of Bengal and from this word the name Bengali came to be known as it is generally believed by many scholars.

During the middle age the word Gouriya’ was used to denote the identity of the people of West Bengal. It was known that when lord Sri Chyatanya went to Puri from Nabadwip he was called Gouriya not by the name of Bengali .Raja Ram mohan Roy gave the title of the book of grammar written by himself for Bengali as Gauriya Byakaran’ but not Bangla Byakaran.

Bengali gave their identity of their birth place by the joint name of Gour and Banga. Such joint names are found in different part of the country. For example, Chech+Slovaak=Chechoslovakia, can be mentioned.

South Bengal and North Bengal that are now used to denote the demarcation of two parts of West Bengal after the partition of Gour Banga may require explaining in the near future.

The present study is not to give any account of the historical background of Bengal or Bengali but it required to mention as depicted above as the present unrest that surfaced on the northern part of the present state of West Bengal is directing against the hegemony of the Bengali culture over the others community particularly after the partition of Bengal as the influx of Bengali refugees engulfed the whole of the state. Here it should bear in mind that the impact
of the refugee influx over North Bengal was completely different from the southern part of the state. The southern part of the state bears the same Bengali language and culture with a slight variation of dialects, on the other hand, the dominant racial group of North Bengal was Rajbanshis who claimed themselves as a quite distinct group having their own languages and culture.

The present study is to examine the factors that are motivating the present ethnic unrest dividing the line between Bengali and Rajbanshis identity based on their culture and language. In search of the source of the present ethnic conflict we need to explore the pages of history to understand the present situation. History reveals the facts that this region has long been the site of bitter conflicts over resources between strategic interest groups. During the nationalist upsurge the ethnic conflict did not surface because during this colonial period the conflict was mainly articulated against the colonial ruler and their feudal collaborators.

Feudal structure of our country of course is not the creation of colonial rule but it was used by colonial administration in the articulation of a different mode of production. This ultimately formed a new form of social relations between different groups of peoples. After the end of colonial rule this are continued to simmer in the rural areas, with the conflict between classes in the agrarian sector. This kept alive a process of renegotiation of resource sharing and social relation. Although it is difficult to see the struggle or movement as homogeneous and linear in its programme but they are till date remained the fulcrum on which the political change are affected. For example, the Naxalite movement that was ignited on the soil of North Bengal which signifies the ideological shifts and epistemological break in the understanding of aspiration of the somewhat amorphous masses.

The question of autonomy in general relate to the complex interplay between the ethno-cultural mooring of the individual of group identity and rather a seductive of geographical reductionism and territoriality (Chaturvedi). It cannot be denied that this issue is complex and no single theory is capable to explain its root and the nature of the movement.

Territoriality is the attempt by an individual or groups to effect, influence or control people, phenomena and relationship, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area. It is a rather complex strategy and the device through which people construct and maintain spatial organisation (Robert Sack 1986; 19-20,216). No doubt geographical concentration of a group or community is an essential factor to territorial autonomy but in the same time this particular consideration, in many occasion, becomes highly problematic in places characterized by heterogeneity or mega-diversity or hybridity.

In general, it is explained one of the most basic factor for this kind of movement is the uneven development in economic and social field within the state itself. Again, the cultural...
dominance by the dominant group may consider as another important cause for watering the germination of regional movement as it provoke the feeling of inferiority complex which ultimately give birth a psychological state of mind what is called as ‘identity crisis’.

In this context it requires to examine the facts whether these factors are also playing any role on the ethnic unrest that are now becoming the focal point of discussion of this problems.

First of all we have to throw some light on the pages of history of the local inhabitants and whether that was given due position in the pages of history of Bengal. The most dominant local inhabitant was the Rajbanshis community, came to settle here in the ancient past and expanded their settlement over a vast region covering the North Bengal and a wide area of the Brahmaputra valley by clearing the jungles and converting this area into a fertile agricultural land.

It is an urgent need to open the pages of history in the search about the root of the feeling of isolation in the mind of the Rajbanshi community as they are complaining that their tradition and glorious heritage and heroic historical past are constantly marginalised by the dominant Bengali intellectual class by dint of their demographic majority. The history of Bengal is not only the history of kings and sultans of Bengal. The history of Bengal is the history of the aborogential peoples of North Bengal which is the integral part of whole of Bengal.

2.5 A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE RAJBANSHI COMMUNITY

It becomes necessary to give an account of the history of the Rajbanshi as the point of disputes has one of the issues whether they belong to any one of the sub group of the Bengali community and in consequence their language is a dialect of Bengali language. In question of establishing the self identity of Rajbashi and self determination which is the focal point of present unrest in North Bengal it has become imperative to peep in to the historical fact as well as anthropological observation on the question of their origin.

The Rajbanshis were the most dominant social group before the partition of India but still today they are one of the dominant social groups, notwithstanding the fact of the influx of Bengali refugees followed by the partition of Bengal. No clear picture was, however, available except the ancient scripts and literatures about the origin and identity of this dominant group. Long before Charu Chandra Sanyal in his monumental work entitled ‘The History of Rajbanshis of North Bengal (A Study of a Hindu Social Group) published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, in 1965, had attempted to throw light on the views of several scholars and writers relating to the origin and identity of Rajbanshis community. Before that during the colonial period many theories were floated by the British and Indian scholars on the same issue. Compiling all these views Dr Sanyal tried to reach a conclusion that ‘the koches are non–Aryan in origin. Some of them adopted Hinduism and became Rajbanshishs latter on claimed to be kshatriyas.'
A long and complex social assimilation process which took place in course of time gave a new shape to the socio-cultural profile of this region. The pans, Palias, and Deshis, of Dinajpur and Koches of different districts of North Bengal and Purnia districts of Bihar were categorised as ‘Hindu Social Groups’. The Muslim population had grown out of the conversion of Rajbanshis, Koches or their subdivisions. Both these groups spoke the ‘dialect called Rajbanshis or Kamtapuri. (Dec, 2007).16

The theories propounded by the British or the non–Rajbanshis Indian authors about the origin and ethnic identity of Rajbanshis were strongly denied by the present Rajbanshis intellectuals. They demanded that the Rajbanshis had no affinity with the Kochese, Paliyas, and Bodo. They based on the Hindu scriptures and epics and argued assertively that the Rajbanshis were Kshatriyas of Aryan origin and demanded their status of a separate caste in the Hindu Social Polity. The census report from 1872 to 1941 had thrown such light on the antecedents of the Rajbanshis that confusion still remains about their identity. The census report of 1872 1881 and 1891’ enumerated Koch, Rajbanshis, and Paliyas etc under one head Koach.’ It is found in subsequent census reports that these reports recorded the Rajbanshis in a separate manner. All subsections of the Koch were recorded as Rajbanshis in the census reports of 1911 and 1921. Even many Rajbanshis were recorded as Kshatriyas in 1921. So it revealed that the census reports it selves showed a contradictory position and could not come out to a decision about the ethnic identity of Rajbanshis and thereby become the responsible for the social tension of this region. The Rajbanshis elite launched a social movement for the recognition of their ‘bratya kshatriyas’ status.

2.6 THE EARLY HISTORY OF KAMTAPUR AND THE RAJBASNSHI AND KOCHES

The history of a particular race or tribe cannot be completed without the knowledge of its ancestors. So it is very much important to study about the origin of the Koches and to find out the present disputes between the Koches and the Rajbanshis. It is evident from different historical accounts Kamtapur with its capital of Goshanimari a place nearly 15 kilometres to the south of the present Cooch Behar was the important centre for culture and political power in North Bengal, besides Mahasthangarh, Gaur, and Pandua.

Vaskarvarman ruled over the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam and a large portion of North Bengal. It is known that he was the contemporary to Harshabardhan of Kanuj and King Shasanka of Bengal. In the opinion of Prof sunity Kumar Chatterjee that this seventh century king was a Kirat or an Indo–Mongoloid. He was devotee of lord Shiva which was taken as conclusive prove that he embraced the Hinduism and naturally Hinduisation and Sanskritisation of the leading section of the Indo–Mogoloid people had taken place by the seventeenth century. Hieu-en-Tsang the famous Chinese traveller also described that the kingdom of Vaskarvarman
included the whole of Assam valley and extended up to Karatya river of North Bengal. In the
nineth century it came under the rule of Pal Dynasty. His domain were included Vanga and
Vareendra.\textsuperscript{17}

By the end of the tenth century another dynasty emerged. They were the Kambojas who
captured the certain parts of varendri of North Bengal. It was opined by the different scholars
that the Kambojas might have been originally an Indo-Mongoloids tribes speaking one of the
Tibeto–Burman languages but in course of time they embraced the sanskrit language as their
court language as is evident from the stone pillar inscription of a Siva temple at Bangarh of
Dinajpur. It thus appeared that successive waves of Indo–Mogoloids had become Sanskritised
and Hinduised.

It should be noted here that ‘before the emergence of Kamptapur since the historian gets no
reliable trace of any composite political as well as well as social; culture in Cooch Behar and
Jalpaiguri and no mention of Koch culture and Rajbanshi culture, the rise of Kamptapur certainly
may be considered to have marked a new beginning in the area of North Bengal sandwiched by
the powerful Kingdom of Gaur and Kamrup.’ (Debnath; 50).\textsuperscript{18}

The kingdom of Kamrup as mentioned earlier is believed to be emerged as an independent
political unit in the first half of the eighth century but until the fourteenth century its history
remained under so many speculations. The ruler of this region might have been independent or
feudatories either of the ruler of Kamrup or of Gaur from time to time. In that case some clues
are found in the Bhutanese Chronicles like Gyalarb Selvimelong and the Namthars. They threw
some lights on the history of North Bengal in the eighth century. Many of the Bhutanese
chronicles stated that in the eighth century a king named Sidhu of Indian origin ruling in
Bumthang of Bhutan fell ill and to save him his courtiers invited Guru Padasambhava of Nalanda
University. Guru Padmasambhava or Rimche entered Bhutan across the kingdom of the Khens or
Khyengs (Khen Nabje Korpu and Ogyen Dang). Most probably, Sindhu Raja himself had a big
area of the plains under his control for which he had to conflict with another ruler of the plain
named Nabadura. It is believed that Guru Padamsambhava persuaded them to bring peace
between them and both of them embraced Buddhism and made arrangement to spread Buddhism
both in hills and plains but the genealogy was incomplete. So it became very difficult to establish
between Sindhu Roy and and Sindhupati, the first two rulers of Kamtapur as their names could
not be found categorically anywhere nor is there any time period of their ruling. On the other
hand, there are ample evidence in Bhutanese chronicles that the Khem used to live in Shamgong
of Bhutan from where they used to come on plains for tending their cattle. They were also
agriculturists and many of them began to settle there for that purpose. At that time there was no
such political boundary between the hills and plains. So in coming to plains and going back to
hills according to their convenience was not any matter. But the situation completely changed
after the coming of Tibetans to Bhutan and established their political control over there. There is
every reason to believe that this new power might have ousted the Khens from Bhutan who forced to come down from the hills and made their new settlement on plains. It can be taken as granted that Sindhu Raja and Sindhu Roy was the same person who happened to be the first ruler of the kamtapur. But here it should be mentioned that no strong historical evidence of beyond doubt can be placed in support of this conjecture. In the present context it can be said that Kamtapur was known as the widely known learning centre for Buddhist culture. During the Pal period Kamtapur was under the attack from the two sides; one from the Kamrup and another from the Pal dynasty and lost its independent status during the period of King Deva Pal and might have been reduced to a feudatory under the Palas. After the fall of the Pal Dynasty a major change might have been taken place in Kamtapur. It is believed that from different accounts some descendants and scions of the family of Laxan Sen the ruler of Gour might have taken refuge in the capital of Kamtapur and even the areas encircling it. They occupied the high post in the Kamtapur court. They were bitter anti Buddhist and gave the leadership in building the pro Brahmanical religious culture which ultimately turned into revolt against the Buddhist ruler. That revolt might have led to the assassination of king Singhadhwaj by his jealous minister Pratapdhwaj.

At the end of the thirteenth century, a feudatory chief named Dulavnarayan became the supreme king of Kamrup. It is learnt from the Rudrasingha’s Buranji, Durlavnarayan invited many Brahmins and Kayastha from the Gangatic plain and made them settlement in Cooch Behar and Brahmaputra valley. It should be mentioned here that the famous Vaishnava poet and great preacher Sankara Deva who born in 1449 was the lineage of those kayastha. Durlavnarayan’s line could not survive long and they were uprooted by the Dhwaja kings namely, Niladwaja, Chakradwaja, and Nilambar with their capital of Kamtapur at Gosanimari.

The dynasty of which Niladhwaj was a scion may be called Kanteswar or Kamateswar dynasty for all the rulers of dynasty virtually used the title Kanteswar or Kamateswar irrespective of their original names. But the most of the historians prefer to call them Khen or Khyan dynasty. The origin of the Khen or Kanteswar dynasty is still shrouded in mystery. It is believed that several dynasties ruled over Kamtapur. The list of which is mentioned below as it appears important to study the historical account of the demand for a separate state.

From the above list it should be noted that from Sidhu Roy to Singhadwaj belonged to one dynasty; and from Pratapdhwaj to Nilambar belonged to another dynasty. It also to be noted that although Pratapdhwaj, who was the minister in the court of Singhadwaj that does not mean that later, belonged to
another family. In those days generally such kind of important post in the court was awarded to the nearest member of the royal family. As such it may be presumed that Pratapdwaj also belonged to the same family. Although there is still controversy, but it can be taken that the rulers of Kamtapur dynasty belonged to Khen dynasty and the Khens were supposedly akin to the Koches. One interesting point should be mentioned here in support of the above contention that in present Dinhata and Goshanimari those who claim the Khen lineage for themselves they use their title Sen; so Sen and khen stand synonymous to each other. One reason for that might be taken in to the consideration during the Turkey invasion they migrated to this region after their discomfiture in the hands of the Turkey invaders and settled in Kamtapur and maintained their identity with the Khens who were already in power. This view finds at least some solid foundation as greater Brahmanical influence that in architecture and sculpture witnessed tremendous achievement in making stone statues of Hindu god and goddesses. A great enmity developed between the muslim ruler of Gour and the newly grown Brahmanical dominated dynasty of Kamtapur. It was with their advice well protected fortresses were built around the royal palace and the city of Goshanipur which took long twenty years for the army of Hussain Shah to break the defence of the capital of Kamtapuri.

Fig: 2.6.2 The Tista once the mighty river of North Bengal
Let have a look on the history of attack against the Kamtapur kingdom by the powerful turkey ruler of Gaur which will prove the mighty presence of the Kamtapur dynasty during this period.

Ghiyasudin Azam Shah (1389-1409) the Illayas Shahi king of Gauda invaded Kamrup but could not advance beyond the Tista – Karotyoa, being resisted by the joint force of Kamtapur – Kamrup and Ahom King. Again, Rukunuddin Barbak Shah (1459-1474) sent his general Shah Ismail Ghazi to war against the king of Kamtapur – Kamrup but Ismail faced a terrible defeat in a battle nearer to Santoshpur in Dinajpur in 1498. This proves that there was a close bondage among Kamrup Kamtapur and Ahom. This also indicates they had the feeling of ethnical bondage among them.

2.7 ESTABLISHMENT OF KOCH-BEHAR DYNASTY

Alauddin Hussain Shah (1493-1519) launched a massive campaign against Nilambar the king of Kamata pur. His one Brahmin minister instigated Hussain Shah to invade Kamtapur capital because the king gave death sentence to his licentious son. With the help of that Brahmin minister of Nilambar Hussain Shah could gain entry in to the inner citadel and captured Nilambar after a long battle. He then proceeded towards Ahom Kingdom but without success.

Husain Shsh could not hold the rule over Kamtapur long, rather immediate after the fall of Nilambar, Haridas Mandal alias Haria Mandal became a powerful feudatory chief and his son Biswa Singha waged war against the powerful neighbouring Bhuinya and consolidated his rule over their territory. He then crowned himself as the Kamteswar king of Kamtapur – Kamrup. He declared himself as the follower of Hinduism and his coronation was held in accordance with the Vedic rites performed by the Brahmin priest and attended by Brahmins, Kshatriyra, Vaishyas and Sudras to acknowledge the sovereignty of the king. There he formally declared himself as Hindu with his large number of both the civil and military officials. Many of the scholars are of the opinion that it is through Biswa Singha that the large scale sanskritisation of the Koches began which eventually led to their assumption of the caste name Rajbanshi.

The kingdom of Koch- Behar thus founded by Viswa Singha in 1496 or in another opinion in 1509A.D. His son Naranarayan extended the border of Kooch Behar kingdom to the extent of Eastern India and converted this kingdom an empire.

The history of the Koches is available from various sources- Bansavali of Darang Rajas, Assam Buranjis, Gurucharit katha, etc. According to these sources Haria mandal was a Mech Sardar. He married two sisters Hira and Jira. They belonged to Hazo community. They had two sons by them namely Bisu the son of Hira, Sisu the son of Jira. Bisu was a man of extra ordinary courage and had skill in warfare. Thus from this account it is seen that Biswa Singh, the founder of the Koch dynasty was originally a tribal leader, having defeted the other tribal sarders
of western Assam brought them under his suzerainty and established the Koch–Rajbanshi kingdom. According to scholars like Prof. Sunity Kumar Chattopadhyay, quite a number of Bodo Tribes of the North Eastern region having been influenced by the Brahminic Hindu culture had undergone sanskritisation and adopted Hinduism and changed their identity to Koch.

In the cultural history of Assam, B.K. Barua gave the following account:
‘Biswa was a man of exceptional enterprises, courage, military and administrative ability. With the assistance of his brother Siva Singha, he crushed the Bara Bhuiyan and set up a strong, united and independent monarchy. When the Muslims were supplanted by the combined pressure of the Ahoms from the east and Koches from the west, Biswa Singha organised a vast army and organised his unquestioned authority over his newly built kingdom bounded by the Karatoya on the west and Barandi on the east’

It again invites to inspect about the origin of Koches as it has become now the focal point in order to find out the root on the issues of debate about the relation between the Koches and the Rajbanshis.

It is evident from the different sources that a process of sanskritisation and detribalisation was going on from the early part of the history of Kamrup. But as fresh batches of tribal people from the hills were settling down increasingly in the villages of Assam, the process was continuing and within the giving situation of the hills-plains continuum the early semi-tribal, semi-feudal formation progressively acquired marked anti–tribal features. A converted tribal of these groups of Assam first became a sharania then developed in to Koch. Koch was accordingly an omnibus caste, which accommodated within itself tribal neophytes from different Tibeto-Burman linguistic groups.’ (Burma; 9)

Edward Gait in his ‘A history of Assam said that the word Koch is a term of some ambiguity. It may appear as ambiguous in the mind of Gait but it is clear that Koch in Northeast India represents a distinct group of people or a particular community. In Rava language the meaning of Koch is ‘Huma.’ Gait in his same book (page 46) said, in Assam the term Koch had been used to denote the name of Hindu caste who converted to Hinduism from the rank of their Kachari, Lalung, Mikir, and other tribes. Some of the scholars, both colonial and local believed that a few Mongolian Tribes especially the Kacharis or Bodo had join the rank of Koch or by another name Rajbanshis after being converted into Hinduism.

A.C. Chowdhury a celebrated personality from the Koch Rajbanshis community and author of many books on the Koch Rajbanshis has admitted that his forefathers were originally Mech or Kacharis who elevated themselves to the rank of Rajbanshis. He also wrote that a section of the Rabha community after becoming ‘Pati Rabha ‘ elevated to Rajbanshis by adopting surnames like Rai, Barman, Sarkar etc. (Das p30)
According to Greirson the Koches and Kochaeries (Greirson used Kochaeries instead of Kachari probably to denote a link between the two term Koch and Kacharis) are of the same ethnic groups. He also wrote ‘The very name Koch has lost its original significance and has now come to mean a Bodo who has become so far Hinduised that he has abandoned his proper tongue and in particular what he eats (Chowdhury 30)\textsuperscript{22}

Sir Herbart Raisely in his book ‘The Tribes and Castes of Bengal’ mentioned some legends about the origin of Koches. One limbu legend appears interesting. It may not consider out of place if it is mentioned here to denote the relationship with Mongoloide culture. According to this legend the ancestor of the Koches, Meches and Dhimals were the brothers. They were first dropped by the God from heaven and fell on Benaras and from there they made their journey towards the north east and ultimately reached at the foot hills between Brahmaputra and the Kosi River called Mule or Kachar by the Nepalese. The youngest brother prefers to settle in Kachar and became the father of the Koches, Meches and Dhimals. The other two brothers went further in to the hills and became the forefathers of Limbhus and the Khambus of Nepal\textsuperscript{23}.

If all these comments are taken to be accepted then there is no other option but to accept that the Kocheses are nothing but the Hindunised Kacharis or other Hindunised tribes. In the midst of so divergent opinions it is not possible to reach a single conclusion especially when the emotion prevails upon the situation in absence of definite historical fact.

Even the modern western scholars they are not in the same opinion about the racial origin of Koches inspite of the general opinion that the Koches includes Meches, Kacharies, Bodos, Rajbanshis, Garos etc. While Colonel Dalton considered the Koches to be Dravidrian, Raisely considered them as the intermixture of Mongoloid stock and the Dravidian stock. In the opinion of Gait this confusion was due to the use of the term Rajbanshis. Where this term was originally referred to the distinct community of Dravidian affinities but the confusion caused afterward when the Koches west of the Manas River adopted and they atoned to Hinduism and took the caste name of the Hinduised community in the neighbourhood. Whatever divergence of opinion in question of the racial origin of the Koches but more or less a general consensus has been arrived that the term Rajbanshis is of recent origin. This term Rajbanshis neither found in the Persian records nor found in the foreign records or not even in the dynastic epigraph of the time where they mentioned Koches as the Rajbanshis. The Darang Bansavali the genealogical account of the Koch royal family did not mention the term Rajbanshis. The opinion of the scholars like Dr. Jatin Barua may be considered to be accepted where he registered his opinion in ‘Rangta Garo, Raja Mahendra Narayan Aru Ambica charan Choudhuri Jivan Kriti’ (Assamese) edited by him and published from Bongaigaon (p’7) ‘it is possible that when the Koches became conscious of their past ancestral glory at later period, they began to call themselves as Rajbanshis- meaning descendants of royal Kindred and made them feel somewhat superior to the rest of the others.'
The renowned Rajbanshi scholars like Upendra Nath Burman and Dharma Narayan Burma in their books like ‘Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas’ and ‘Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itibritta Banam Tribal Andolon’ strongly opposed the opinion that Rajbanshis and Koch are the same racial group. Rather they claimed that the Rajbanshis are carrying the pure Aryan blood while the Koches belonged to tribal groups.

We may come into conclusion that the early Koches had been akin to the Dravidians and through the processes of social transformation, as a rule of social science there took the blood mixture with the people of Austric and Mongoloid origin. The same history covers the history of the Hindu civilization if such civilization in that is recognized at all. Co-mingling of the Aryans and non Aryans culture, thought, trends and practice which gave birth of the present Indian society as whole is the product of the social process not only for India but throughout the human history of the world. The present Rajbanshis community cannot be the exception of this social process. There is no purity in question of blood of Aryan and non Aryan. So the question of Hinduization does not arise at all, though many historians emphasised on this point either deliberately or because of their myopic views of Hinduism. Similarly it can be said the name of Rajbanshis is also the germination of the seed of the pluralistic Hinduism in gestation. Over the centuries not only the Koches but all the races who came from different part of the land converged into each other not adopting only the culture, language, customs and practices but also with mingling bloods of each other. Who can deny the fact whatever the origin of the Koches in the distant past over the centuries they adopted more and more prevailing Hindu practices and rituals on account of cross-cultural fertilization and contact with the people of mainland. In that context one glaring example may be cited from the great Epic, the Mahabharata which is not only a mythological description but this great epic is also valuable account of the social transformation of the Indian society. Sri Krishna, here not as god but represented the most dominating class of that period and became the key factor of the permutation and combination of the social amalgamation of the whole episode. He belonged to the Non Aryan Dasyu family from his mother side, Kanshy, a ‘Dasyu ‘King being his maternal uncle from his mother side on one hand. On the other hand, he belonged to Aryans races; Basudeb being his father belonged to the Aryans. Thus Krishna is the unique creation of the mixed blood between the Aryans and the Non- Aryans and that is the history of the present social structure of India today.

Here one pertinent question to be answered, what are the originating factor which led this vast community to convert themselves into Hinduism. During the Pala dynasty Buddhism had been the most dominating religion of Pundravardhan or Varendri. During that period most part of North Bengal and the northern districts of the then Cooch Behar was under the rule of Pal dynasty. So it can be presumed during that period most of them followed the religion of the ruler. Again during the period of the Sen kingdom many of this part were under the rule of Sen Dynasty. As a consequence, Hinduism took the commanding role. But how even before the
establishment of Koch kingdom, how they became the strong votaries of Brahmanical Hindu tradition that is now an important query that has to be enquired. That area was adjacent with Kamrup where the Brahmanical worship was strongly prevailed. Or there might have been another powerful ruler who ruled over there and votaries of Brahmanical practices. As no definite proof of the existence of such ruler until now there is reason to believe that the influence of the Khen Dynasty who played the important role in spreading the Brahmanical practices in Kamrup before the establishment of both the Pal and Sen kingdom. It is therefore in order to find out the root of the cultural history of Cooch-Behar it is not possible to do that without taking in to the account of the history and its influence of the Kamtapur dynasty.

The above statement appears to be true from the fact that in the first phase of the Koch rule, the Brahmins who came to Koch–Behar were Kamrupi Brahmin. Afterwards more Brahmins from North India came and settled here but the majority of the Brahmins came from the Varendrabhumi and they are called the Barendri Brahmin. It was found that the Kamrupi Brahmin were mainly devoted themselves in the religious activities, on the other hand, the Vrendendri Brahmin were involved in administrative affairs. Taking the advantages in the administrative post the Varendri Brahmin grabbed land and exerted influence upon the common people. Although these Varendri Brahmin were responsible for many woes of the common people of Koch–Behar but they contributed a lot for the spread of education and other sphere of social life and helped the peoples for their intellectual developments.

The demarcation line between the Rajbanshis and Koches was drawn during the Kshatriya movement in the 20th century. But those advocated that the Koches and the Rajbanshis are not the same racial group they based on their argument mostly on the mythological stories. Panchanan Burman the great scholars and the leader of the Kshatriya movement along with Hara Kishor Adhikari were among the Rajbanshis leader who claimed that the Koches and the Rajbanshis were not the same.

Let I conclude this debate taking the views of Edward Gait expressed in his ‘A history of Assam’ (Guwahati) where he said ‘There seems, however to be no doubt, that the true Koches were Mongoloid race very closely allied to the Meches and Garos; and we find that in Jalpaiguri, Cooch-Bihar and Goalpara, the persons now known as Rajbanshis are either pure Koches, who though dark have distinct Mongoloids physiognomy, or else a mixed breed in which the Mongoloid elements usually preponderates’.

Before concluding this chapter I like to present here an interesting experience that was given by the scholar Arup Jyoti Das in his Book ‘Kamtapur and the Koch Rajbanshi Imagination’ while he was travelling by Dadar–Guwahati Express. He met a youth who was travelling from Dupguri of Jalpaiguri District to Gujarat where he was working as labour. From his appearance Prof Das could easily recognised him as a member of Koch–Rajbanshi community. Prof. Das
asked that young man whether he call himself Koch or Rajbanshi. He smiled and told that it
depends on the nature of question. He answered that if somebody asked him whether he was a
Koch his answer would be yes, he was. And if he was asked whether he was a Rajbanshi, then
too, his answer would be yes, he was Rajbanshi. The surname of the youth was ‘Roy’ with a
distinct Mongoloid appearance ‘ After a pause the man told him with a dim tone ‘ there are no
Rajbaris (palaces), no Rajas (king) at present , everybody has gone,--there is no reason of calling
ourselves Rajbanshis ( Descendent of King), actually we are all now Prajabanis (subject). Prof
Das wrote ‘He did not wait for my reply; he looked outside through the window of the train;
most probably his destination was coming. But he surely made a good argument about Koch–
Rajbansi and the present condition of them without a degree from any University’.

2.8 KAMTAPUR DYNASTY

Before giving the accounts of Kamtapur dynasty it requires to give an explanation about the
necessary to bring the history of Kamtapur Dynasty in this study. In North east India it is find
that there are several ethnic upsurge erupted at different times and the demand for either a
sovereign state or state within the boundary of the country in the name of their homeland. The
proposed homeland is generally named after the name of their community. For example Bodo
land for the Bodo community, Naglim for the Nagas, Dimaraji of Dimasas, Gorkhaland for the
Gorkhas and now the Kamtapur for the Kamtapuris. Here it should be noted that neither the
demand for ‘Kochland ‘ or Rajbanshi land ‘ has been echoed either by the Koches or The
Rajbanshis , although for Kamtapur state tried to rock the soil of this Northern part of West
Bengal and the demand for the creation of Greater Cooch Behar state again surfaced almost in
the same back ground of the Kamtapur state.

It is therefore become imperative to bring the history of the Kamtapur Dynasty to examine
what is the relation between Koch Rajbanshi or Kamtapur or why they are identify themselves
with Kamtapur?

Although the name of Kamtapur is heard recently, Kamtapur was very much in the pages of
history. Even Hiuen Sang during his visit in India he visited this place during the rule of Bhaskar
Burma between 606 to 648 A.D. The capital of Kamrup was Kamtapur. In the ancient period
there was no big town or cities like today and the capital of the kingdom or the country does not
appear to have been a place of importance. So in most cases the historian mentioned only the
location of the capital where the king lived.

From the masterpiece work of Khan Chowdhury Amanullah Ahmad ‘Kochbeharer Itihas
‘(Bengali Ed) gave the description of Kamtapur. In the 15th century, Kamtapur the prosperous
capital of the kingdom of Kamrup was situated on the west bank of the river Dharala
(Gosanimari). It has vast fort. According to Edward Gait, it was situated about 150 miles east of
Paundra Vardhan. Cunningham, after identified the place with Pabna (Gait; A history of Assam p 26). Amantullah Khan clearly identified the place 14 miles south west of Cooch Behar 5 miles west of Dinhata railway station now known as Gosanimari.

Dr. Bukanan Hamilton also suggested the same location and after visiting the place he gave a description about the fort. From his account it is known that it was a big fort with well arrangement for its protection. There were several ‘Duar’ or doors of the fort named like “Shil Duar”, ‘Bas Duar’, ‘Joy Duar’, ‘Sannyasi Duar’, ‘Hoka Duar’, and ‘Nimai Duar.’ There were two trenches one encircled the inner fort and another encircled the outer fort. In the centre of the fort there was alter like platform named ‘Rajpat’ It was bounded by bricks construction. The height of it was 60 feet and a square shaped of 360 feet of each side. The Rudra Sing Buranji of Assam stated that two kings named Tipam and Tmang took the shelter of the king of kamrup after defeated by the Ahom King. Chao Fha Sudang the king of Ahom kingdom took it as the disrespect to him and marched against the Kamteswar, the king of Kamrup. The Ahom queen requested Kamteswar for the peace treaty with Ahom king in order to avoid the bloodshed. Kamteswar responded the request and established the friendship with the Ahom king. That relation was further strengthen with the marriage relation with the daughter of Kamteswar to the Ahom King. After that he established the friendship with the king of Gour and married his daughter Sushidhi and gave the honour as the queen–consort.

Srutidhar Rupnarayan, the disciple of Shankar Deb described in the genealogy of Kamteswar named ‘Kamteswar Kulukarika’ that they are the descendant of the Rajya Bardhan. In this genealogy it is said that the five sons of Bardhan fled for the fear of Parashuram took the shelter in Rantanapith and abandoned the principle of Kshtriya hood and named as ‘Bhagna Kshtriya’.

In another script named ‘Bromoni Tantra’ said that the sons of Bardhan renounced their principle of Kshatriyahood took the shelter in Ratnapith (Kamta) and took their title Rajbanshi or Koch. Niladhwaj, one of the king of this dynasty shifted his capital from Gauhati to Kamtapur. After Chakradwaj Nilambar became the king during the period of the middle of the fifteenth century. It is believed he established the goddess Kamteswari in his capital. He constructed many roads from his capital to the extreme end of the boundary of his kingdom. During his regime a road was built to the north-west up to the extent of Jalpesh Temple. A road in the northern part of Rangpur is still known as Nilimbari Road.

2.9 THE LAST HINDU KING OF BENGAL

Raja Prithu, a descendent of Baidaydeeb became the king probably in the year of 1195A.D. During his reign the Kamrup Valley and the whole area of the Korotya land was under his rule. It is known that Baktiar Khiliji elevated his position from the Jaigirdar to the sultan of Bengal. He had a plan to invade Kamtapur and reached nearer to the capital of Kamrup. He invaded the king of Gaur and at that time laxman Sen was the king. There is the rumour that Baktiar Khiliji came
with the nineteen numbers of his cavalry. Laxman Sen fled from the capital without any resistance. But Baktiar Khiliji was defeated in the hand of Raja Prithu and Baktiar was badly wounded and died on his way to his capital. This study has no any interest to describe the battle as well as whether the King of Gaur really fled from his capital for the fear of the sound of the hoof of the cavalry of Baktiar was a fact or not. But this study gave the importance about the description of the many historian of modern Bengal where they described Laxman Sen the Last Hindu Raja of Bengal. The question automatically surfaced who was Raja Prithu then? He was the king of the Eastern part of the Present Bengal, and a true devotee of Hinduism. Laxman Sen was not true sense a Bengali in origin as they hailed from Karnataka. If the defeat of Laxman Sen could be termed as the last Hindu king of Bengal then what would be the place of Raja Prithu in the history of Bengal? This question become the question of the present Koch or Rajbanshi community, if the so called main land historian of Bengal do not find it necessary to consider the glorious role of King Prithu and give him the proper place in the history of Bengal as the Hindu Bengali king then how they can claim that the Koch and Rajbanshi belonged to the main stream of Bengali community and their mother tongue, either Rajbanshi or Kamtapuri are dialects of Bengali. It should be remembered that every group of community hopes that he should be given the position at par both in the society and in the pages of history. Here it would be not out of place to a give very short description of the brilliant military skill that showed by King Prithu which his descendents reasonably hoped that the glorious role of their king should find a proper place in the history of Bengal. What the historians of Bengal did not think to give the place in the history of Bengal that should be known at least in a brief so that one should know why the present generation of this vast community felt insulted and hurt their feeling being marginalised by the dominant Bengali intellectuals.

King Prithu was also old at that time. He kept keen watch over the movement of Batkiar Khiliji. The Sultan came with his strong experience forces. The king Prithu allowed the invaders to march them into the deeper part of his kingdom. In the meantime all the residence was shifted with their belongings including the every grain of food. Nepolion, the French Emperor faced the same situation after some hundreds years of that military strategy. So nobody could claim that Prithu followed the strategy that was shown by the Russian General Kutuzev at the time of the March of the emperor Naplotion against Russia.

Baktiar sensed the danger. There was not a single grain for his solders. Not a single fodder for his horse. He tried to retreat. But on his way he found that the bridges over the swift stream disappeared. And the solders of Prithu already took the position there. Khiliji took the shelter with his forces in a temple ground. Prithu being the devotee of Hindu cult did not attack him as he and his solders took the shelter of the temple of god. But he ordered his solders to construct the wall made of bamboos around the temple to encircle the enemy so that they even unable to fetch water to drink.
Finding no other alternative, Khiliji tried to escape from the besieged condition by swimming across the river. But the showers of arrows from Prithu turned the river in to the killing field for Khiliji. Almost ten thousands solders including the horses were killed before they cross the river Puspabhadre. Kiliji, however, could escape his life with serious injury. Sir Usli Heg remarked about the defeat of Kiliji which recorded in Cambridge History of India—(Vol VIIIp-50) ‘Armies had been defeated but Iktiaruddin force had been all but annihilated and it would have been well for him to have perished with it.

Very few instance of such humiliating defeat of a Sultan in the hand of a Hindu King can be cited. Here it is not the question of the Hindu and Muslim. It is a question of historical account that should given due position in the main land history. A new wave has started to inspect the self search to establish the identity of every community. When the present generation who searched their identity and find that their glorious past could not find the entry in the history of Bengal a feeling of isolation would take the place in their mind. The student of Rajbanshi community when read the history of Laxman Sen in their text book but could not find the history of Raja Prithu naturally a discontentment knock their mind which ultimately may turn into the trap of separatist thinking. They may reasonably ask if they are the part of Bengal then their glorious past should have been the part of the history of whole Bengal.

After the defeat of Khiliji, the kingdom of Prithu was again under the attack of Giasuddin yuaj. But here also Prithu showed his brilliancy in battle strategy and Giasuddin faced the similar humiliating defeat.

Kamtapur kingdom again faced the attack of Nasiruddin Mahamud who invaded the kingdom with his big forces. In order to save the capital he constructed many strong forts outside the capital and he arranged his army at Panchagar near the border of present Jalpaiguri and Rangpur. His son Sandhya Roy took the charge of the capital. In Panchagar there were four forts and walled with black earth all along three kilometres around the boundary. After that there was a wall of sands. Inside it there was a barricade of bamboo built wall. At last, to give the protection of the members of the royal family he built a strong protective wall made of bricks and stone and stored a huge amount of food grains and arrangement for drinking water by digging big ponds inside the core area of the fort. Inspite of this protective measure and the heroic resistance, the big forces of Nasiruddin outnumbered the army of the king and could break the Protective wall. The king Prithu preferred to die to be captured in the hand of the enemy. He jumped into the pond and died.

After his death his son Sandhya Roy took the charge of the kingdom and agreed to pay tax to the Sultan. But as soon as Nasiruddin left the place he declared his freedom and began to fortification his kingdom because he apprehended that Nasiruddin will attack again in retaliation.’ He shifted his capital near the area of present Dinhata of Cooch Behar. After the death of Nasiruddin he took the advantage of the political disorder of Gaur and captured the vast territory of Gour and declared himself as the ‘Gaureswar’.
In the year of 1251 Mallick Ittaruddin became the Sultan of Gaur. He attacked Kamrup with his large army. The number of soldiers of Sandhya Roy virtually negligible in comparison with the number of solders of Ujbek. But Sandhya Roy did not surrender and prepared to face the Sultan. He had the experience of the battle warfare from his father. He asked the cooperation from his subjects. The response that he got from them was unprecedented if it is taken the account of the history of the feudal system where the king was regarded nothing but the oppressor and the subjects had nothing to do with battle. They usually considered it as if it is a battle between the two oppressors. But here in this case the subjects of the Kamtapur kingdom responded to the call of their king and deposited their food stock in the king’s store and destroyed their surplus grain so that not a single grain could be collected by the invader.

Malik Ittaruddin entered into the inner part of the kingdom without facing any resistance. But he could not imagine that an artificial famine could be more powerful than any army. The condition of Malik can be seen from the description ‘Tabakat-i-Nasari’ written by the contemporary writer Minhajuddin.

The plains land was under the flood water. The roads were controlled by the Hindus. Sensing the danger Malik wanted to escape from this land with the help of a local path finder. He took the path along the hills. He reached near a narrow pass. He found that both end of this pass had already been under the control of the Hindus. At that time two elephants were engaged in fighting at the front of the pass which created panic among the army of Malik and a confusion swift over them. The Hindus took that advantage and showered arrows. An arrow struck the chest of Malik and he fell from the back of the elephant. He captured along with the members of his family in the hands of Sandhya Roy.

The wounded sultan was brought before Sandhya Roy and he expressed his last wish that he should be allowed to give up his last breath in the lap of his son.

It is from my study I find that very few even among the Bengali Intellectuals are aware of this remarkable historical event that the ruler of Bangla–Bihar–Ayodhya faced such crushing defeat in the hands of a king the mother tongue of the descended of whom is claimed as a dialect of Bengali and denied their claim as their separate identity. Such indifferent attitude towards the glorious past has every reason to cause injury to the sentiment of the Koch–Rajbansi community as a whole and provoke to response to the call of the separatist sentiment to establish their own identity and glorious past.

After the death of Sandhya Roy his son Sindhu became the king of Kamtapur (1260). During his regime he was attacked by the two fronts of his kingdom; one from the king of Ahom from its eastern front and from king of Laxnabati from its western front. Sandhya Roy made a treaty with the Ahom king by agreeing to pay tax to him. But after defeating Mahiuddin he stopped to pay the tax.

After the death of Sindhu his son became the king of Kamtapur. After him his son sat on the throne. But he was killed by his own minister named Manic and occupied the throne and crowned him as Pratpdhwaj. His kingdom lasted only five years. After his death, Dharma Naryan a descended of Baidyadeb occupied the throne of Kamrup. He declared himself as
Gaureswar and shifted his capital from Kamtapur to Dimla of Rangpur. At that time Durlav Narayan gave the leadership in the massive revolt that surfaced on the eastern part of his kingdom. After a long battle between two they last agreed to divide the kingdom among them. The areas comprising the eastern part of his kingdom including Kamtapur went for Durlav Narayan and areas from Maymansingh to Rangpur went for DharmaNarayan. Durlav Narayan was one of the ablest kings of Kamtpur Dynasty. The son of Ahom king, Chan Pullai revolted against his own father and being defeated he took the shelter of his maternal uncle, King Durlav Narayan. In support of his nephew Durlav Narayan invaded the Ahom Kingdom and annexed Atgow and establishes a fort there. At that time they got the information that Mahmmad Bin Tughlak, the Sultan of Delhi Marched with his one lakh cavalry proceeding to attack Kamtapur. Durlav Narayan approached a friendship treaty with the Ahom king who immediately responded to the request and made joint defence plan against the invader. It is again, when the enmity between Joychand and Prthiraj took an important place in the history of India in the face of the foreign invader. The unique example of friendship between two kings of North East India forgetting their enmity in the face of the invader did not find place in the pen of historian of so called main stream history. From the account of ‘Alamgir Nama (p 731)’ it is known that Md. Bin Tughlak attacked Kamtapur from the side of Eaniatpur (present Maymansingh). This statement is supported by the discovery of the coins of Bin Tughlak bearing the mark of the year 1332A.D. in an around Eniatpur. From the description of Alamgir Nama it is known that the big armies of Bin Tughlak were completely defeated in the hand of King Durlav Narayan. The Sultan again invaded Kamtapur in the next year and from the same account it is known that this was similarly crashed by the king Durlav Narayan. During his regime no such attack was made and he reigned up to 1350. After his death his son Indra Narayan became the King but he lost his throne to Aramitra or Shanka. There is a controversy about the identity of Aramitra or Shasnka. But many of the scholars believed that he was the descended of Baidyadeb family. After Aramitra his son Gajanka and after Gajanka his son Shrukranka became the king. During the period of Shuranka war began with the Ahom King. But when Giasuddin, the king of Gaur attacked his kingdom he made a friendship treaty with the Ahom king and gave the marriage of his daughter Bhajani to the king of Ahom. The sultan of Gaur faced a defeat in the hands of the combined forces of Ahom king and the king Shuranka. After the death of Shuranka his son Mrikanka became the king. He had no son or daughter. After Mrikanka a new dynasty emerged named Khen Dynasty.  

2.10 THE KHEN DYNASTY  

The Khen Dynasty needs to discuss in order to understand the ethnicity of this area as the identity of Koch or Rajbanshi is closely related with it. From the Kamrup Burunji it is learnt that Niladhwaj the founder of Khen Dynasty initially a king of a very small area named Sigamari. His political foresight gave him a chance to establish his dynasty. After ascending the throne Niladhwaj declared himself as Kamteswar. He built a
strong fortress. He was succeeded by his son Chakradhvaj in 1460 A.D. During his reign his kingdom was attacked by Sultan Barbak but was defeated by the former. After Chakradhvaj his son Nilambar the most famous king among the kings of Kamata ascended the throne. During his reign the kingdom of Kamata extended from Korotoya in the west to Barandi on the east. He constructed a long road from Kamtapur to Ghoraghat. During his reign the most famous ruler of Gour (Bengal), Nwabab Hussain Shah invaded Kamtapur. But the Sultan could not defeat Nilambar in direct battle. So he adopted a deceptive way. He sends the message to the king that he wants a friendship treaty with him. Nilambar agreed and allowed the men of Nawab to enter in the fort. Moreover Dulal Ganji, the general of Nawab suggested that the female family members will meet the royal female members in order to establish a permanent relationship between two kingdoms. King Nilambar could not realise the tricks and allowed the visitors covered with burqua. The guard of the fort did not think to examine the person by lifting the veil from their face. But those people were originally the solders of the Nawab. They took chance of the belief of the guard of the king and as soon as they enter into the king palace they opened their sword. True, there is a proverb, in war and love there is no wrong; but the win though such deceptive way at least is not befitting for Sultan like Nawab Hussain Shah. So king Nilambar lives traditionnally in the minds of the people of Assam and North Bengal.

The downfall of Nilambar was eventually was the end of the Kamata dynasty founded by Sandhya Roy. The rise of the Koch power was the beginning of the new chapter of this region which changed the history of Kamata in the latter centuries.

REFERENCES:

3. Markendya puran 35 Padas
5. Sharaf, Ahmed;’ Bangla; Bangali O Bangalitta Dacca, pp12
6. Maitra, Akhyay; Kolkata “Prabahsi’ Joisthya, 1308
7. Rahaman Habibur; Gagaridhhi’ quoted by Dr Ghosh in ‘Uttabanga Namer Sandhaney Siliguri pp xvi
8. Ghosh Ananda Goppal ibid
9. Chattapadhyaya Sunity Kumar; (1352 BS) ‘Kirat Jana Kriti, Kolkata, Asiatic Society
10. Chowdhury Hemchandra’ Dacca; History of Bengal, Part I Dacca University pp 2
15. Sanyal Charu Chandra (1965), ‘The Rajbanshis of North Bengal. Kolkata the Asiatic society
17. Chatterjee Suniti kumar ;( 1974)’Kirata Jana Krti’ ibid
24. Gait Edward ibid
25. Hamilton Buchanan; Eastern India
CHAPTER: THREE

KAMTAPUR MOVEMENT; GENESIS AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The Kshatriya Movement which was one of the most remarkable social movements in the early part of the 20th century. The role of Thakur Panchanan Burma in taking the leading role of this movement which was aimed to elevate the Rajbanshi Community in the caste status of the Hindu caste system is also an important event of this movement. The biography of Thakur Panchanan Burma is depicted here to show how he had to face the evil practice of the caste Hindu which led him to take leading part in the Kshatriya Movement. It also dealt with the account of sanskritization in the Rajbanshi society which inspired them to embrace the Hindu ritual and customs and led to form the Kshatriya Movement which played a pivotal role to inspire the Rajbanshi community as a whole to raise their voice to elevate them in the second rank in the caste based Hindu society in one hand and on the other hand, made them to believe that they had been originated from the Aryan blood. It is therefore, becomes imperative to give the account to evaluate the critical observation of this movement. This chapter also depicted the historical account of the Koch Dynasty and their branches that ruled in different parts of East Bengal and Assam.

3.1 THE KSHATRIYA MOVEMENT

The 20th century has been regarded as the turning point for the establishment of ethnic identity of the Rajbanshis of North Bengal. In the colonial literatures the Rajbanshis were generally as purified group of Koch, a semi aboriginal tribe who had adopted Hindu manners and customs by renouncing some of their traditions and cultural practice. The Kshatriya movements initiated by Panchanan Burman the first intellectual in all respect under the title Kshastriya Sava can be described as the torch for the self introspection which ultimately gave them light to search about their own identity and historical background. Although this movement is not free from controversy but this movement can be taken as the age of the forward movement of the Rajbanshis community as Young Bengal movement of the Bengali during the period of 18th century which is considered as the turning point of Bengali rejuvenation in their modern socio-political history.

3.2 THAKUR PANCHANAN BURMA: HIS ROLE IN THE MOVEMENT

Panchanan Burman, regarded as the father of Rajbanshis community, originally named Panchanan Sarkar born on 13th February1872 AD and lived an active up to 19th Sept.1935. The name of the village where he was born was Khalisamari located under Mathabhanga subdivision of Cooch Behar district. His father, Shri Khosal Sarkar was a respectable personality of this locality having big agricultural land. On that day the person having a respectable amount of
agricultural land and education used to work in estate of landlord or zaminder for maintaining accounts and official records had been designated as ‘sarkar’. ‘By virtue of his education and respectability in the society Shri Khosol Sarkar endowed with the surname Sarkar.

Panchanan Barma from his very childhood showed his extraordinary talent. After his primary education from his village primary school he admitted in the English medium school at the nearest sub divisional town Mathabhanga. His brilliant result in the School Board Examination in 1855 AD was reported by the Educational Superintendent Shri Kalidas Bagchi. Shri Bagchi reported:

‘

Panchanan Sarkar, a native of Cooch Behar, who passed in Matriculation Examination in the first division from Mathabhanga School, succeeded to secure the first place in the general list of the Rajshahi Division’. After the middle education Panchanan Barman was admitted in Jenkin High School of Cooch Behar town which was the only English medium high school in the district. From there he was admitted Victoria College of Cooch Behar town. After obtaining the bachelor degree he obtained both his Master and Law degree from Calcutta University. Here it should be noted that he was the first post graduate and law graduate among the Rajbanshis of that time.

Panchanan Barma experienced caste hatred from his childhood. In his early life he touched by mistake or out of curiosity the Gita of his family priest during his visit in his house. He was shocked that even the conduct of an innocent child was grossly condemned through an alarm of hue and cry. He was cautioned that being a non Brahmin he had no privilege to touch a holy book that too written in Sanskrit, the ‘Deva Bhasa. (Mandal, 2002,1 Almost simultaneously another incident took place in the Normal School hostel at Mathabhanga. One Rajbanshi boarder put one step into the hostel kitchen for something. The entire cooked food of the hostel was thrown away because the caste Hindu demanded that those foods became polluted due to the entrance of a Rajbanshis student into the kitchen. Ironically, the teachers’ community came in support of the demand of the caste Hindu student. The entire cooked food of the hostel was thrown away in the street and fresh food was cooked after performing ritual practice in purifying the kitchen.

Even after establishing himself as a brilliant lawyer in Rangpur court he faced the same caste hatred. Once in Rangpur court, Panchanan Burma by mistake put on the hat of his colleague named Mr. Maitra, who happened to be a caste Hindu. Mr. Maitra subsequently refused to use that hat by an open declaration that ‘I hate to use a toga used by a Rajbanshi, (Mandal) 2.

During the early 19th century the whole of the nation saw a new wave of national spirit not only in question of political sphere but also in the field of social status. The movement against the untouchable practice of the caste Hindu and demand for the improvement of their position in
the rank of the caste Hindus. The application submitted to the census commission in the 1911 will support the statement.

Panchanan Burma obtained the highest degree from Calcutta University but he was not given the honour what he deserved even by native state ruler of Cooch Behar not to speak of the dominating Bengali community. He was not given any honourable post in the court of Cooch Behar; rather he was expelled from the state on the pretext of silly matter. He took an exile to Rangpur, a neighbouring district and started his law practice and built their own association which became the pioneer to initiate the Kshatriya movement the seedling ground of present movement for the establishment of their self identity.

Panchanan Burman was fearless and a man of full energy. He had an indomitable urge to work for complete awakening and regeneration of the downtrodden of his region in general and the Rajbanshis in particular. He initiated his movement for regaining the racial glory, eradication of poverty, enriching the Rajbanshis Language and highlighting the glorious past of their culture and finally for complete empowerment.

After arriving at Rangpur he established the Uttarbanga Sahitya Parishad. He had the belief that the cultural and philosophical foundation can make consolidation among the community to build the movement to achieve the destination. He became the editor of the journal published by the Rangpur Sahatiya Parishad. He began to write articles on the racial past and historical glory of the Rajbanshis community. He was no doubt a powerful writer and his pen became the powerful weapon in mobilising the Rajbanshis community for the cause of the establishment of their self identity. His articles also earned the appreciation from the scholars of different shades and communities. Renowned scholars like Nagendra Nath Bose in his appreciation wrote ‘Panchanan Burma’s scholarly pursuit is like bright flame and his work on language provided me with more research materials.

The bitter experience from his boyhood about the caste prejudice in the society drove him to fight against this ugly social practice. Notwithstanding the fact, that he belonged to a well-to-do family but he could not escape the caste hatred. He took a different method from the other reformers as they fight against the untouchability accepting the lower position of the so called lower caste in the Hindu society. He began to search the past glory of his community to establish that the Rajbanshis community was also belonged to the upper caste of the Hindu community. In order to establish his demand he began to cultivate the historical back ground of the Rajbanshis. He founded an organisation called ‘The Rangpur Bratyak Kshatriya Jetir Unnati Bidhiyayani Sabha’ in Rangpur under the Chairmanship of Mr Harmohan Roy (khajanchi), the zaminder of Shyampur in Rangpur District. He initiated his famous ‘Upanayana’ movement, a symbolic Kshatriyahood on the bank of holy Korotoya River in 1912 AD. He adopted the thread of Upanayan to demonstrate themselves as the Kashatriya a warrior class among the upper strata of
the Hindu community. He declared that through this movement his community not only would be able to establish their caste and social position but also their glorious past in the history of modern India and in the same time would obtain some kind of relief out of the ‘Kshatriya Upanayan’ from the hinduistic social hatred. He changed his surname from Sarkar to Burman as a mark to belong the warrior community of Kshatriya race.

This kshatriya movement shall be taken as turning point of self identification movement for the Rajbanshis community. During this time the whole of Bengal were primarily dominated by Hindu upper caste society in social, political and economic respect although this state was demographically overwhelmingly dominated by the Muslims and so called lower caste in the Hindu community. The lower caste people were used to be socially persecuted and denied their human dignity by the economically powerful upper caste Hindu community. Their occupation used to be determined by their caste identity. The more the lower position in the Hindu society more the disrespectful and straineous used to be his job. They were used to be engaged for the most laborious productive and service oriente work such as farming, fishing carrying, cremation work etc. The lower caste manual labour never used to get the wages so that they feel economically comfortable condition to lead their social life.

The conditions of Rajbanshis were peculiar. There was no such caste division as it was in the Hindu society. But when the non Hindu Rajbanshi king became the ardent followers of Hinduism the whole of the Rajbanshi community was placed in the lower strata in the Hindu community. The Rajbanshi kings tried to become more and more nearer to the caste Hindu by inviting the caste Hindus in the higher royal post in the court as well as other important administrative service of the kingdom that marginalised the own community. When Panchanan Burman being the first post graduate and lawyer among the Rajbanshis community demanded the deserved administrative post in the royal court the native king of his own community denied to accept him. It has every reason to believe that the upper caste Hindu who was already in the respectable administrative position in the royal court influenced them against him and the king obliged them as they recognised his position in the upper strata in the Hindu caste society. The rule of the land was virtually in the hands of the upper caste Hindus.

Thakur Panchanan Barman, no doubt the most eminent leader of the Kshatriya Andolon but this movement was initiated earlier before he took over the leadership of the second phase of the movement during the period of 1901 to 1919. This movement was begun by the Rajbanshis of North Bengal in the last phase of 19th century and continued all through the half of the 20th century. Here it should be remembered that the Brahmo propagation followed by the royal family inspired a section of educated Rajbanshis of North Bengal to build up the movement known as ‘Rajbanshis Kshatriya Andolan for caste-cultural identity of the Rajbanshis. Although it originated in Rangpur but became popular throughout North Bengal, and part of Assam including Cooch Behar state the then a princely state. This movement could be classified in to two phases. Firstly, they renamed themselves Rajbanshis, lineage of the Raja or king. Secondly,
in the association with this renaming they announced themselves as kshatriyas, warrior class of the four caste system of the Hindu Society.

There were several direct and indirect causes which inspired this movement to get the momentum; and of these causes the most important one was that the migration of many Bengalis from East and south Bengal and being patronised by the king himself changed the social strata of this region. Most of them were upper caste Hindus and followed the caste division practice and placed the Rajbanshis in the lower strata in the Hindu caste system. The Rahbanshis felt the heat of discrimination and hatred. Even how Ray Saheb Panchanan Burman was dishonoured by his fellow lawyer in the law court of Rangpur was described here. So it can be easily imaginable what was the social condition prevailed during this period. However, this discrimination in Cooch Behar was not as discernible in the rural society as the Rajbanshis were overwhelming majority in villages. So the movement against this discrimination and recognised them as the Kshatriyas in the Hindu society was initiated by the educated Rajbanshis of urban areas and the villages flock simply responded to the call of their leaders.

3.3 SANSKRITIZATION

Some of the researcher like M.N. Srinavas stamped this movement as of sanskritization syndrome. But their argument could not find the sufficient ground. As it is evident from the historical fact that Northern Bengal had been culturally more advanced even than many other parts of Bengal in the ancient time. Long before the beginning of the movement the Rajbanshis had been Hindus. It has been argued that the Rajbanshis might have been branched out stock of the ancient Dravidians having blood mixture with the Australoid and the Mongoloids. Now, it cannot be denied that Hinduism was not a contribution of the Aryans only. The Dravidrian stock of people also contributed a major role to the development of Hinduism. So Hinduism when generally denotes the synonymous with the Aryans it is nothing but the distortion of history. The Rajbanshis therefore, when declared them as kshatriya it should be taken granted that this declaration was the beginning a sanskritization movement, rather it may termed as the beginning of the tradition bound movement asserting higher position in the caste hierarchy of the Hindu society. Sanskrit culture had already been the very part and parcel of the culture, faith religious practice of the Rajbanshis way of life. They did not have to be sanskritised, since they had the officiation of Brahmins in their worship of Hindu pantheon. The Rajbanshis used to worship the god and goddess as the Hindu worship the same in different parts of India. For example, lord Shiva (believed originally a non Aryan god and latter included as the most popular god of the Hindus, particularly for the so called lower caste community of the Hindu society) had been the most attractive and prevalent festival among the Rajbanshis long before the origination of the Kshatriya movement.
Originally, in the social custom, there was no strict caste division as prevailed in the Hindu society before they came into the fold of orthodox Hindu customs and practices. But when their king began to associate himself with the Hindu Brahmmonal society and invited them with offering royal post and land he began to alienate him with common masses as this new influx of the Hindu upper caste introduced the practice of the division of the caste system placing the Rajbanshis in the lower strata of the Hindu caste system. This alienation of the Rajbanshis from their Royal Family of Cooch Behar kingdom also one of the cause to stimulate them to switch their movement into Kshatriya movement.

It is again, in search of the present ethnic unrest and the division among them in question of the Kamtapur and Rajbanshis, one has to go in to the depth of the social context that were prevailed during those period centring Cooch- Behar on one side and Rangpur on the other side. In the same time the role of Goalpara at that time and the effect of separation of Goalpara, a Rajbanshis dominated region annexed with Assam should be taken as important factor in this context.

Nripendra Narayan, the king of Cooch Behar married to Sunita Devi, daughter of Kesab Sen a Calcutta based intellectual. He was also one of the pioneers of Brahma Samaj. It was obvious the royal family became Calcutta (now Kolkata) bound and under the influence of Keshab Sen who was the renowned educationist and social reformer, Raja Nripendra Narayan inspired to establish the western education in the state. During the period of Sultan rule Dacca had the important role for the administrative position. It enjoyed that position even during the first period of British company rule. It was also not only the political centre but also the learning centre almost parallel with Calcutta. But when Calcutta became the capital of British Crown and enjoyed the political and economical supremacy. Dacca lost his importance both in political and cultural areas. The upper caste of the Hindus of East Bengal mostly belonged to land owner class known as zaminder and talukder who played the important role and position in the administrative centre of Dacca lost that position and their sons began to search new areas for their resettlement. At that time the British ruler annexed Assam with their colonial territory after discovering the potentiality of the tea emperor and took the massive programme for set up the railway lines. That gave the opportunity for the educated Bengali who was searching new areas for their employment. At that time either in Assam or in Cooch Behar educated middle class was virtually absent. Bengali educated youths filled those vacancies. Those who came and settled here most of them belonged to upper caste of Hindu society. It was obvious with their coming and with the direct patronage of the royal family the Brahmmins came to settle and they were gifted landed property for their subsistence. But still the Rajbanshis population was overwhelmingly majority in the state. So, caste discrimination although very much there but it could not so discernible as in Rangpur.

On other hand, the condition of Rangpur was far behind in comparison with Cooch Behar State. Because Rangpur was populated by multi–caste people and exclusiveness between the
castes were more intolerable than in Cooch Behar. They still had their unquestionable allegiance to the royal family. But a difference of invisible screen began to emerge between the royal administration and the Rajbanjis of Rangpur for the reason as at that time, when the Koches or Rajbanshis became victim of inner caste hatred and humiliation they hoped that the royal family would extend their help and redress their agony as they often requested them to do so.

This apathy brought the frustration among the local people on one hand and on the other hand gave more opportunity to the educated people of Calcutta and other parts of Bengal in the post of Royal administration and in the judicial system. That was because the English educated king of Cooch Behar heavily guided by the British in all respect and followed the English judicial procedure replacing the traditional customs. For that reason they needed the English educated people who knew the English rules for administration and English judicial system but at that time English educated middle class in the Rajbanshis community was in very initial stage.

With the emergence of the educated middle class, as a rule of history, they found that almost all the key position in the administrative post, including others important social fields had already been occupied by those people. That phenomenon was the common feature not only in this region but the same picture could be traced almost all major part of the North East states. The reason was more or less same for those states also. An anti Bengali feeling that were found among the newly formed educated masses of the different ethnic groups of the North East region had been originated as they thought that due to the presence of those Bengali people they are not getting their opportunity without taking into the historical back ground of this position.

The Rajbanshis began to feel the ill of discrimination in one side and on the other side they felt that they were denied their legitimate right to be absorbed in the administrative post at least in their native state taking the consideration as they are the man of the soil. Such feeling added some stimulation to ignite the fire of movement. At the first phase of this movement it was not at all intensive and confined within the small pockets, especially in Rangpur. It did not enjoy any support from the royal family. Rather they were against that movement. That was the main cause for not providing the proper post for Ray Saheb Panchanan Burman in the royal administration of the princely state of Cooch Behar. Even he was expelled from Cooch Behar by the order of the king.

In the first phase of the movement it remained confined within the rename of Koch to Rajbanshis that could be revealed in the census report of 1891. During the census, F.A. Skyne, the Superintendent of census operation stationed in Rangpur directed to record the name of all Rajbanshis as Koch only. But the objection came from the Rajbanshis, particularly, from Rangpur with the claim that since the ancestors of the king of Koch Behar had been akin to the ancestors of other Koches in the states, therefore, following the lineage of the king, they all should be named ‘Rajbanshis’.
‘It may be assumed that, perhaps, at that time the Kocheses had been looked down upon by others, consequently, they disliked to be identified as ‘Koch ‘ - a sense of collective or group-ego might have passed them all and a strong intention propelled the learned among them to assert the claim of kshatriyahood, of course just following the footsteps of their king, as though, all of them were off spring or at least clan of Raja or Kin’, (Debnath) 3

That protest was not fruitless. In the census of 1901 Koches were named only Rajbanshis. But the renaming the Koch into Rajbanshis did not give the desired result as it could not elevated the position of the Rajbanshis in the upper caste of the Hindu society. Therefore, the second phase of the movement started (1901to1918). This movement got momentum with joining of Thakur Panchanan Burman.

3.4 EXTRANEOUS FACTORS

Some extraneous factors might be taken in this context. The impact of the modern education and westernisation of thinking still remain virtually absent in the Koch or Rajbanshis whatever the name they were called. On the other hand most of the amenities of the modernization were in the hand of the immigrants in Cooch Behar, the reason has already been discussed. The original inhabitants of Cooch Behar namely Koch /Rajbanshis had already been exploited socially by the Varendri Brahmins in the states as those Brahmins were possessive of the lands of the kingdom and the local inhabitants were simply exploited tenants or peasants. With that situation the tillers of the land, however, could manage their living although with great difficult but somehow tolerable adjustment.

The introduction of the so called modernization under the control of the caste immigrant Bengali made the situation worst by not only exploited them economically taking the advantage of their primitive agricultural practice but on the same time hatred discrimination on the caste basis. One glaring example may be mentioned here how the Rajbanshis were looked downwardly. It was the custom in the Rajbanshis Community that the elder of the family called the junior as “Bapu He”. The Bengali people polluted that address as ‘BAHE’ to show the disrespect and marked them as the down caste people of the society. At that situation the Koch /Rajbanshis whether living in Cooch –Behar or Rangpur or Jalpaiguri lost their level of tolerance and for the amelioration of their condition responded to the call of the movement which kept on evolving in a few stages of transition nearly for sixty years. The first stage may be termed as formative stage where simple demand was placed to the census department to be registered as Rajbanshis as in the census of 1891 recorded them as ‘Koch’. Here the most significant fact was that the leaders of the movement separated them from the Koche and identified them as separate community by describing themselves as ‘Rajbanshis’.
Such demands separating themselves from the Koches were perhaps placed forward with the apprehension that the Kocheses had been looked down upon by the ‘Bhadralok’ Bengali and the only way out of that ignominy was to establish the claim to higher caste–origin by adopting the name of Rajbanshis’ (Debnath).^4

After the joining of Panchanan Burman in the movement it became the turning point of the movement. A brief account of the early history of Panchanan Burman had already been mentioned in this study. He was Master of Arts in Sanskrit and Bachelor of Arts of Law. But this bright degree could not invite the attention of the king to offer him a proper place in the administrative post. Out of disgust and frustration he left Cooch Behar and joined at bar in Rangpur. The caste humiliation that he received from his own colleague prompted him to begin to contemplate upon the possibilities of retrieving the prestige and dignity not only for him but also for his whole community. He reorganised the movement with the aim to re-establish the glorious past and place them in the upper caste position of the Hindu society. He was a Sanskrit scholar and used his scholarly knowledge in the effort of detecting a way out in order to upstage the position of the Rajbanshis. He founded the Kshatriya Samity. He studied the Sanskrit literatures including the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Purans and other Vedic literatures meticulously and came into conclusion that thousands of Kshatriyas for fear of Parashuram who took the vow to eliminate the kshatriyas form the earth fled the eastern part of India and renounced their way of life as a warrior and took the practice of cultivation by clearing the forest. Under this changed circumstance they devoid of rites and rituals and other activities as prescribed for the Kshatriys and fallen to be degraded off their previous stature of kshtriyahood. This fallen state was called as ‘Bratya kshatriya’ and thus he claimed that the Rajbanshis should be placed in the census list as Bratya Kshatriya. Panchanan Burman took the help of the Brahmins mainly from Bhatpara of Nadia who regarded as the guardian of caste Hindu of Bengal. It should be mentioned here that the Royal family of Cooch Behar invited the Brahmin from Ujjain, another school of Hindu caste society.

It should not be taken easily that the Hindu society will take everybody who wants to be the part of the Hindu mainstream, particularly in the series of upper caste. Here it was easier to leave the Hindu identity rather to come in. It needs the sanction of the upper caste of Hindu specially Brahmans. Inspite of this restriction number of races and tribes Garo, Rava, Lalung, Mech, practicing many old practices and food habits like the eating of beef had to be given up. Even obliging all this conditions they were not placed in the upper caste list of the Hindu society.

The social transformations in the Rajbanshis community also deserve to be examined. Dr. Cambel, the then superintendent of Darjeeling attended the ritual practice on the death of the king Sarbba Deb and wrote in his opinion on 20th January 1848 in the matter of dispute on the legal authority of the throne:
‘The Raja could not properly be called a Hindu although ambitious of being considered within the privilege pale. His family is the Koch Tribe now, however, designated as Rajbanshis and affecting to be equal of the Chattris, although retaining many usages and habits quite irreconcilable to their pretentions.

The 18th ruler of the Raikat dynasty Jogendra Deb died on 1878. The dispute again raised in question of the legal heir to the throne which went up to the Privy Council. The privy council gave their verdict upon the argument of the plaintiff;’

‘Although the Baikunthopur family had nominally come under Brahamanism, they had at the same time retained customs inconsistent with their being closed as Hindus, not being by race, and some other customs at variance with Hindu Institution.

Privy Council in his judgement agreed with the argument with King Phanindra Deb in saying that,
The family property cannot be divider as it done in the Hindu society,
The practice of adaptation of son is not legal like as in Hindu society.
The wife cannot claim the right of property after the death of her husband like Hindu widow.

The Privy Council passed their judgement. ‘The Baikunthapur family, the head of which bore the title Raikat, belonged originally to the Koch tribe in the T. W frontier of Bengal and was not Hindu (sanyal)

On the plea that they were not Hindu and was not guided by the Hindu property act and Raja Phindra Raikat could retain his throne. But the same Raikat family took the completely opposite argument in the year of 1956 before the Calcutta high court in the same matter.

After the death of Prasanna Deb the 21st Raikat in the year of 1946 his wife inherited the landed property of her husband. Ashrumati Debi had no son. After her death her daughter Prativa Debi inherited her property. She married to a upper caste Hindu (S.K. Basu, happened to be the elder brother of renowned political personality like Jyoty Basu, ex chief minister of west Bengal). Smt Dipti, the daughter of Prativa Debi also married to another upper caste Hindu, Mr. Dilip Roy Chowdhury. In that case their authority to heir the property of Prasanna Deb was challenged taking the judgement of the Privy Council as depicted above by some members of the Raikat family. In that case the defendant placed their argument that during the course of time the Koch family by adopting the Hindu ritual and practices and establishing the marriage relation with the upper caste Hindu duly recognised by the Hindu Brahmanical society they have now become the integral part of the Hindus. Honourable High court agreed with the argument.\footnote{5}
In response to the call of the time and with the progress of the courses of social transition different races along with their culture gave birth a new history. These two examples may be taken as the glaring example of the above contention.

In the second phase of the movement under the leadership of Roy Saheb Panchanan Burman was to exculpate the Rajbanshis of their sins of being fallen from the Kshatriyas duty. In order to achieve this goal a large number of Brahmins were invited in order to officiate the performance of rite of exculpation and atonement. Panchanan Burman called upon the Rajbanshis to perform the ritual by shaving of the head and wearing the sacred thread named ‘Paita’ as the symbol of Kshatriya identity. This performance was known as the ‘upanayan’ a ritual practice performed by the upper caste Hindus. Thousands of Rajbanshis responded to this call and assembled on the bank of the Korotoya and performed the Upanayan. Again a remarkable step was taken. In order to mark them as the member of the caste Hindu under the leadership of Ray Barman they renounced their ancestral titles and adopted the titles of Kshatriya like Roy, Barman, Singha etc. Previously, following the funeral ritual practice of the lower caste of the Hindu society in case of penance where the son has to perform for thirty days after the death of his father or mother. On the other hand the upper caste Hindu performs this penance for fifteen days and less in case of Brahmin. After adaptation of Kshatriya hood the Rajbanshis were instructed to perform the penance for thirteen days as a mark of their social position at par with the upper caste Hindu.

To represent the characteristic of Kshatriya hood Panchanan Burman asked the Rajbanshis to demonstrate their virility, courage, and mettle in the battle field. He believed that the First World War gave them the scope for that demonstration. He inspired them to join the Royal army. In response to his call few hundred of young Rajbanshis joined the army. He himself applied for the same. Known as introvert by nature who were reluctant even to go out beyond their own territory this incidence was a remarkable progress for the Rajbanshi community which was duly acknowledged by the British Government by conferring Panchanan Burman under the title ‘Ray Saheb and M.B.E.

The Rajbanshis Kshatriya Samiti was a centrally controlled organization. In order to spread the movement into the grass root ‘level different sub branches were formed under the respective names. Village level organization was named Patti. Ten to twelve pattis formed a Gadiani. Five to seven Gadiani formed mandalis. A few mandals formed Maha-Mandal. According to the available documents such 300 Mandal Samitis came up between the periods 1913 to 1926. The Mandalis were entrusted to function as court to settle the socio-religious disputes. They were also given the task to look after the economic progress and the development in addition to the task of preaching the ritualistic reforms. The mandalis and the Kshatriya Samitis encouraged for the better agricultural practice and entrusted with the task to look after the education of the children of the peasants’ family. They made arrangement for the scholarship for the serious and
intelligent students. In short, the Kshatriya Samiti became a social organization for the poor community among the Rajbanshis. Naturally it appeared a parallel organization in the eyes of the ruling section of both the colonial as well as the native princely ruler.

The third phase of the movement started after the end of the First World War. In this period two important incidents happened. The death of Thakur Panchanan Burman the pioneer of the movement in the year 1935. Pancahan Barma had a hope that he would return a good service from the British ruler as had rendered his service to the government during the war. Another important incident was the Government of India Act 1935. After the war the Montegue-Chemsfold Act spelt out reservation facilities in government service for people who were lagging behind in term of economy and education. Amebedkar the doyen of dalit movement in India started his movement after the War and laid the foundation for the facilities given to Scheduled Castes and Sceduled Tribes. It has to be noted that because of the arousal of the Rajbanshis leaders to this new situation, the Rajbanshis were also declared as Scheduled Caste and entitled to get the service in the reservation quota.

Another important characteristic that marked the third phase of the movement was the participation of the Rajbanshis women in the movement. These new phenomena included training of women flock for martial art and physical training for self defence. Panchanan Burman formed two women wings; one Nari Raksha Sevak Dal and Nari Raksha Vivag within the Kshatriya Samiti. Abduction of women and robbed of their chastity happened in many occasions. The women were inspired for their self defence in remembrance of the Mahabharata specially the inspiring character of Chitrangada. Panchanan Burman along with Govinda Roy of Dinajpur composed many inspiring poems to the effect of apprising all people about women’s dignity, chastity and respectable position in the society. The Rajbanshis women used to put on a piece of long cloth reaching down the knees tightly bound over the breast. The unmarried girls used to put on ‘rihe’ (lower garment) and mekhla (upper garments). The Kshatriys Samiti also directed the dress code of the women befitting for the modern society. They asked all the women to put on saris and not one piece of cloth or ‘rihe’ and mekhla. This dress code might had been done to keep the modesty in the modern society, but they also restricted the women to go to the market place for selling goods and buy other commodities. This later step, no doubt was the regressive steps for the women which was no doubt contrary to the progressive programmes that were taken by the Samity though it was argued that it was taken for the safety of the women to save them from the abduction and lost of their chastity. No doubt male dominated societies always take the same plea against the freedom of women.

Thakur Panchanan again be remembered for his contribution in the field of publication of journal. Under his able leadership a monthly journal named ‘Kshatriya ‘began to publish where articles on socio-economic and political condition of the country published regularly. It also gave the news of incidents of abduction which indicates such incidence became a factor in the society.
Thakur Panchanan with the collaboration of Surendra Nath Roy Chowdhury, a notable intellectual personality of Rangpur formed the Uttarbanga Sahitya Parishad. Under the auspices of the Parishad a monthly journal, named Sahitya parishad under the editorship of Thakur Panchanan began to publish.

Panchanan Barman wanted to make the presence of the Rajbanshis Kshatriya Andolon in national level. In view of this intention he along with some of his fellow men including Upendra Nath Barman, notable personality of Jalpaiguri attended the All India Kshatriya Sammelan held at Alower and Indore respectively in 1924 and 1928. That exposure brought him in the national arena and gave greater awareness while ultimately gave them a newer and better field of understanding, and that was Indian Politics and the condition of the oppressed class of the country as a whole. Before that, the movement for kshatriyahood was confined within the narrow space of recognising in the Hindu caste system, now this broader understanding opened their mind to grasp earnestly all facilities given to the depressed classes in colonial India and after wards to the Scheduled caste in free India. In order to avail the prospective facilities given to the depressed class of people and the Scheduled castes, Thakur Panchanan felt it necessary to establish solidarity in right earnest with other depressed classes of Bengal. He joined with the ‘Bangiya Jana Sangha’ an organization of the back ward class of the state. That can be regarded as also a remarkable part of the movement as in that phase the Rajbanshis Kshatriya movement crossed their narrow geographical boundary and show their eagerness to join in the mainstream of the movement of the backward classes of West Bengal. Thakur Panchanan was honoured in the Bangiya Jana Sangha as one of their head and on behalf of them he submitted a memorandum to the Indian Franchise Commission in 1932 and extended their support for the provisions for reservation of seats and separate electorate for the depressed classes and separate electorate for the Rajbanshi. Later on this demand was modified in the Poona Pact-Reserved seats but Joint electorate.

The most important contribution of the third phase of the movement was the evolution of the political ideas and consciousness in the Rajbanshis community and participation in the electoral politics. Thakur Panchanan took part on national politics. He attended the Bengal Provincial Conference in 1905 held in Maymensing. As he was more concern about the development and the social position of the Rajbanshis than that of the national politics he withdrew his devotion from national politics and devoted himself for the cause of the Rajbanshis. For this purpose he consolidated his Kshatriya Samiti rather than to represent any national party and organise the Rajbanshis through electoral politics. He along with Nagendra Narayan Roy contested the election and became members of the legislative council of Bengal in 1920, 1923, 1926, and 1929. After his death in1935, Upendra Nath Barman of Jalpaiguri represented the Rajbanshis in the legislative council. But Poona pact in 1932 became the turning point of the Rajbanshis as from this pact the leaders of the Rajbanshis began to think that they need national support in order to accept from the part of the government. It was this continuity of national contact that
brought dividend in the long run. We can summarise the Kshatriya movement in three phases; in the first phase it was for the name of the ‘Rajbanshis; in the second phase to recognise as the Bartya Kshatriya; in third phase electoral participation and relation with national stream.

3.5 A CRITICAL OBSERVAIION ON THE KSHATRIYA MOVEMENT

As the Kshatriya movement was the turning point for the political and social position of the Rajbanshis and a stepping stone to move further and ultimately reached to the present position it needs a critical eyes on the movement to find out the motivating factors to drive the present ethnical question which ultimately led to the ethnic unrest over this region. The first question who are the Rajbanshis? Who are the Koches? What are the difference between the Koch and Rajbanhis? Above all what are the relationship between the Rajbanshis and Bengali? All these questions need to solve to find the solution of the present problems.

At the very outset let see what are the basic foundation about the claim that the Rajbanshis was originally belonged to Aryan tribes and they are not related with the Koch. Again why the Brahmins also conceded to their claim of Kshatriyahood. Kshatriya, according to the caste division among the Hindus who were the warrior class.

H.H Risley said ‘there was no historical foundation for the claim of the Rajbanshis to provincial variety of the Kshatriyas”. Others scholars like Ramaprasad Chanda, Rakhal Das Bandopadhyay, Sunity Kumar Chatterjee, and Nihar Ranjan Roy opined that the Kambojas later on came to known as Koch. Edward Tuite Dalton also pointed out that since the Koch King Viswa Singha having been apostatized to Hinduism took the title ‘Rajbanshis”, therefore it could be a clue afterwards for all the Koches to take for themselves the name Rajbanshis7 But according to Hadgson, J.N Bhattcharya and N.N. Acharya suggested that the Koches king of the Cooch Behar till the end of their dynasty rule consistently introduced themselves as Koch and not Rajbanshis. They also suggested that the Rajbanshis were Mongoloids origin.

It needs to give an explanation about the necessary to give an anthropological account of the origin of the Koches or Rajbanshis. The present problems of North Bengal related to the issues of identity of Rajbanshis as well as the relation with the Koches invites elaborate discussion. Firstly, the question of the language of Rajbanshis and its recognition as an independent language as claimed by the Rajbanshis and counter claim by the Bengali as it is as their dialects needs to be solved as it becomes the focal point of disputes between the two communities which ultimately turned for the demand of separate state in the name of Kamtapur State .Here again, a sharp disputes surfaced regarding the characteristic of the language of Rajbanshis /Koch. A large section of the Rajbanshis claimed that this language is not only the independent language but older than Bengali and should be called as Kamtapuri language. On the otherhand, other section of the same community claimed this language as the independent language as believed by others,
but they called it is not Kamtapuri but Rajbanshis. It should be kept in mind that difference has some significance in question of present ethnicity as two demands has been surfaced in the same time, one for the creation of Kamtapur State other demand for Greater Cooch Behar State.

Prof. Sailen Debnath in his ethnographic and linguistic study about the origin of the Rajbanshis alias Koches has put forward the argument ‘that the Rajbanshis or the Koches were a mixed people but in the ancient time it had originated from a Dravidian stock of people ‘He further argued ‘that the original religious faith and beliefs of the Rajbanshis had much similarity with the religious belief and practice of the early Dravidians.’ He further argued that the Koch Royal family of Koch-Behar originally from the paternal side Mech and from the maternal side Koch.

Here also an interesting point to be noted that Viswa Singha the founder of the Koch Dynasty discarded his original title ‘Mandal’ and adopted the title ‘Singha’ and his progenies adopted the title ‘Narayan’. If we take into account of this fact then the claim to Kshatriyahood would find the historical support.

The question now comes about the role of the Brahmins who came from Mithila to the invitation of Koch- Behar King and the Brahmins from Bhatpara of Nadia to the invitation of Kshatriya Samiti on the occasion of the ritual function of Upanayan. Both of the Brahmin group accepted the claim that both the groups either the Koch King or the Rajbanshis belonged to the Kshatriya Samiti were Kshatriya and belong to the caste Hindu.

Similar facts found in the pages of history. For example it can be mentioned the fact about the Rajputs. The Rajputs of India so far the history reveals the fact that they are the mixed origin of all the invaders like the Greeks, Sakas, Kusans, Parthians etc to India. They established their powerful position in India and even establish their kingdom and patronized the Brahmin taking into the account of their social position of North India. The Brahmins were intelligent enough for their self interest and could easily judge their strength and wealth. So they were not hesitant to recognize them as the caste Hindu and included them in the second higher caste position in the Hindu society by accepting them with the Kshatriyahood. Similarly Sibaji was not given at first instance to be recognised as in the upper cast fold of the Hindu society by the Maharstrian Brahmins and declined to perform the rituals involved in the coronation of Sivaji as a king because Sivai was a Mayal community by his birth. So the Brahmins from Mithila were invited to perform the ritual and an offer of huge wealth was given. Rajbansish were not powerful as Rajputs or Chattra pati Sivaji but their number could not be ignored. Priest hood of such vast number of peoples might had been their point of consideration. Moreover, the king of Cooch Behar enjoyed both power and wealth at that time.

As a general rule and the call of the social transition that the caste barrier and the importance of the recognition of the Brahmins becoming meaningless. The movement for the caste
recognition gradually diluted. Now the question which has become the most important in determining the social position is the economic position accompanied with the scope of establishing their cultural identity has now the focal point of the social movement.

In post independent India North Bengal faced different problems. A problem of losing the cultural identity of the man of the soil. Political and cultural and economic activities became more and more Calcutta based and controlled by the high caste urban elites. A new Brahmin replaced the religious Brahmin. They are the city based elites. These phenomena not only found in North Bengal it is a general phenomena throughout the world. What once the movements against the religious priesthood in the middle and even during the period of the mid 20th century it turned now into the battle between the section of the people who by dint of their demographic majority or by their political and economic power tried to ignore the culture and racial identity of the others and those people who tried to re-establish their identity.

A time comes when the situation demands the evaluation of the past. As such the kshatriya movement needs to evaluate in the light of the present state of ethnic unrest of North Bengal bearing in mind that every present has its past. The kshatriya movement started in the period when India witnessed progressive Renaissance and thinkers like Dayananda Saraswati and Vivekananda preached the idea of against the caste system of the Hindu society. They were preaching against the low and high caste system in the society and preaching for the equality not in question of economic field but also in the social system abolishing the caste system. A question may arise whether the Kshatriya Movement was progressive or regressive in the light of the social movement taking account in to the fact that when the society was fighting against the untouchability and abolishing the caste system the movement for the restoration of the caste system in the name of Kshatriyahood was an attempt to strengthen the caste distinction rather than eradicate this ill system. Moreover, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe presented the ideas of humanism, naturalism, liberalism, reason and above all the spirit to fight against the priesthood. Although the Renaissance of Europe had far reaching influence upon the light of progress of the human march for future but it may appear that the leaders of the Kshatriya Movement seemed untouched by the great changes round the world. It could not be denied that many of the Rajbanshis of Cooch-Behar, Jalpiguri, Dinajpur, Malda were reluctant to join the movement and even opposed to it, that does not indicate they did it as they imbibed the spirit of the European Renaissance or the thinking of the Indian social reformers. The present study will examine whether this movement has any contribution in germinating the seeds for the present movement.

In this context it should be noted that inspite of the reluctance in supporting the rite of Upanayan by a section of people as depicted earlier but they showed their complete unanimity when the Rajbanshis representative in the legislative assembly placed their demand for declaring the Rajbanshis as Scheduled Caste showing that they were not against the basic objective of the
Kshatriya Movement. Their reluctance or their opposition to the movement were not based on any higher thoughts of philosophy. One thing must be taken in to the account in this discussion the role of the Royal Family of Cooch Behar Kingdom. The royal family of Cooch Behar under the regency of Indira Debi not only opposed the Kshatriya Movemenent but also asked Thakur Panchanan Burman to leave Cooch Behar as he criticized the queen for her alleged proximity with the upper caste Hindus. The Rajbanshis in general was loyal to the king but knowing it fully well that there was no blessing from the royal court to the said movement they took part in the movement and to some extent it achieved their goal. It is therefore one must admit that although there was no such noble ideas of humanism carried in the movement people in general extended their support and challenged the caste hatred and discrimination prevailed in the society with the blessing of so called upper caste members of the Hindu community specially from the immigrants Bengali elites. No one deny the fact, although Bengal feel proud for her progressive thinking not only in case of against the colonial rule and even for the social reform under the leadership of so many great noble men but the curse of the caste system could not be abolished even from the mind of the present society. A movement ends but it planted the seeds for the germination for the future generation. So the movement that was initiated during the nineteenth century and afterwards under the leadership of Thakur Panchanan Barman which culminated with the organization of the movement of Upanayan must have their relevance in the present study.

3.6 ETHNO-CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE KOCH IN NORTH BENGAL

The present study is to examine the roots of the ethnic unrest that are now vibrating the soil of North Bengal. It is not possible to discuss the problems without bringing the historical accounts of the aboriginal inhabitants of this land. North Bengal, including the North Eastern states of India is rightly called the ethnological museum. One example may be sufficient in support of this statement. Jalpaiguri, a small district of North Bengal has 151 languages and dialects and at least 35 of which is yet to be classified.

Apart from the Darjeeling hills, the majority population of a singular racial origin in North Bengal belong to Rajbanshis community. But a dispute remains who are the Rajbanshis and whether there is difference between the Rajbanshis and the Koches. The North Bengal and the North East Sub Himalayan states including its plain areas are inhabited by different stock of people namely, the Koches, Nagas, Bodos, Ahoms, Khasis, Mizos, Manipuris, Lusshis, Mikirs, Mech, Bhutias, Nepalis Lepchas etc. Ethnographic categories and other distinguishing criteria may find a similarity one to another for each of the races except the Koches. A general view are prevailed that the people of North Eastern India belong to the Mogolide blood but the same cannot be said in case of the Koches or the Rajbanshis. Naturally the question arises what are the origin of the Koches or Rajbanshis. Answer of this question is necessary in order to explain the ethnic unrest of North Bengal.
Here the eminent scholars placed the divergent opinions about the origins of the Koches and they are even expressed their divergent views on the question whether there is any difference between the Koches and the Rajbanshis.

Prof. Sunity kumar Chattapadhyay in his book ‘KIRATA–JANA–KRITI’ regarded as one of the most authentic document on ethnology wrote “The masses of North Bengal areas are very largely of Bodo origin or mixed Austro-Dravidian-Mongolide, where groups of peoples from lower Bengal (Bhati-Desh) and Bihar have penetrated among them. They can now mainly be described as Koch, i.e, Hinduised or Semi Hinduised Bodo who have abandoned their original Tibeto-Burman speech and have adopted the Northern dialects of North Bengali (which has a close affinity with Assamese); and when they are a little too conscious of their Hindu religion and culture and retain at the same time some vague memory of the glorious of their people, particularly during the days of Viswa Singha and NaraNaryan, they proud to call themselves Rajbanshi and to claim to be called kshatriyas; yet they are quite content at the same, for the sake of political advantages, to be classed as a scheduled caste, among the lowly in the Hindu society whose past disabilities are now sought to be atoned for by giving the some special privileges. Nothing much is definitely known about the Koches of North Bengal prior to the 16th century; they may be described as Western Bodos, an extension of the great Bodo race of Assam and East Bengal which at one time occupied the entire Assam valley from Sadiya right up to North Bengal, the Garo Hills, Maimansingh, and Sylhet districts, Kachar district and Tippera (Comillah) district and Tripura State, forming a ring round the Austro (Mon-Khmer) area of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and flanked in the east and south-east by their near kinsman the Nagas and their distant cousins the Kuki-Chins” (Chatterjee;112)

Prof. Chatterjee further stated in the same book ‘during the rule of the Palas in Bengal—the Koches were gathering strength, and, like their kinsmen in Assam, had become, at least outwardly, Hinduised and it would appear that by the middle of the 10th century A.D. they ousted the Pala ruling house from Gauda and established themselves as rulers, at least in North Bengal’ (ibid).

Charu Chandra Sanyal in his monumental work entitled ‘The Rajbanshis of North Bengal (A Study of a Hindu Social Group) published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, in 1956 stated that the Koches are non Aryan in origin. Some of them adopted Hinduism and became Rajbanshis. These Rajbanshis later on claimed to be Kshtriyas’.

At present the Koches inhabit the Brahmaputra valley and the districts of Darang, Kamrup, Sibsagar Cachar and Goalpara in Assam, the districts of North Bengal. They also live in Meghalaya and some part of Sikkim and lower Bhutan.
In the Western Sikkim there is a group of people named Kirati living in some old villages they have been identified with the Koches. The practice, usages manners and religious belief of the hilly Kirat are apart from those of other Sikkimes-the lepchas, Nepalis and Bhutias. The Kiratis use cow dung and worship God Siva. (Sailsbery, Debnath p 42).

In North Bengal they have been living from an unknown past. They were once regionally dominant political power and founded many several powerful kingdoms. Their precise origin, status folk history, however still remained obscure. Though they are a homogeneous people without caste division, there are amongst them, on the basis of regional differences, some sub groups namely-the Pani Koches, Polliyas, or Polayitas and the Khens. But now hardly difference is observed due to the social inter course throughout the ages. The Koches are now called ‘Radiances’. In order to challenge the caste Hindus they got their changed in the nineteenth century and took the title Rajbanshis as they belonged to the race of the king or Kshatriyas. But this newly adopted name as they did in exigency has not been weighty enough to brass out their past identity in all discernible characteristics. (Debnath P 25).

H.H Raisely stated that there was no historical foundation for the claim of the Radiances to provincial variety of the Kshatriyas.

The existing history is largely based on the accounts left by the colonial administrators and colonial ethnographers on one hand, on the other hand, the most of the Rajbanshis /Koch scholars depend on the mythological accounts of their origin and strongly denied their argument about their ethnic identity. In that case they based mainly on quotes from the Hindu Scriptures and epics for the support of their argument. When the argument and the counter argument now took place in the present situation of ethnic unrest, the present study cannot deny the importance to examine both the argument where one tried to base on the anthropological argument and other based on the mythological narration where emotion prevails strongly to determine the present demand for a separate state by one section of the Rajbanshis and recognition for the Kamtapur/ Rajbabhish language as an independent language.

The literary evidence that we find that ancient Bengal known as Paundravardhana or Varendra and Kamrup are inhabited by people other than the Aryans. They were called by different names in different times namely, Paundras, Kiratas, Kambojas and Kaibartas etc. The Aitareya Brahmana described the Paundras as the most degraded catse in the Hindu society and brethrens of other non- Aryans people like the Sabars, Pulindas, Andhras, a Mutivs. The Aryans called the non Aryans ‘Das’ or ‘Dasyus’. From the Manu Smriti it is seen that it did not discriminate between the regional name and the racial names. Manu regarded the Khambojas and the Kiratas were the same people. Both the Kambojas and the Dravidas did not consulted the Brahmin and omitted their dictation to perform the rites thus they were fallen in the same downward caste in the eyes of the Brahmin during that period. No distinction was made between the Kambojas and the Dravidas for they were akin to each other. Scholars like Rama Prasad
Chanda believed that those who once were called Kambojas later on became known as the Kochs. He was supported by others scholars like Rakhal Das Banerjee, D.C.Sarkar, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and Nihar Ranjan Roy. If that view is accepted then it may be taken into granted that the Kaivartas too who lived in North Bengal and Assam, were not a people apart from the Kambojas or the Koch. Thus it may be concluded that the Kirats and the Khambos were the same stock and later on they were called the Koch.

In searching the pages of the history, it demands the open mindedness embedded in the phenomenon, its negotiable locus and it’s ever–contesting nature. The new times dispensing new positioning to different ethnic groups would necessitate a new reckoning of identities of their part, indeed a new politics of identity, a new politics of position which, as Sturat Hall observes ‘Has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental ‘law of origin. (Dr Roy p155).’

The Rajbanshis were no exception.

The notable scholars and the leading personality among the Rajbanshis community Prof. Girindra Narayan Roy observed that the struggle in the post colonial context has proved to be more complex giving rise to more of heterogeneity within the community itself rather than a discursive and ideological consolidation, but it has certainly been more politicized and culturally more aware and active in terms of a more sharpened politics of difference. (Roy p156)

It was this politics of difference that provided the Rajbanshis with the discursive dynamic to establish their identity as kshatriyas as against the denomination of Koch that hung on to them from both a Puranic and the historical past. At least they had to swallow this ascription as it was made public by the modern historical, anthropological and philosophical scholarship, especially because of their fallen condition Vis –a Vis the Hindu cultural milieu (ibd).

A systematic study that was started in the mid nineteenth century by the western ethnographers. All of them arrived at the conclusion these people were Koches and abandoned their original culture and adopted Hindusim when the first Koch king Viswa Singha embraced the Hinduism. B. H Hudson who was supported by W. W. Hunter came their conclusion that after the conversion of Viswa Singha named his kingdom ‘Behar’ and the people who lived there came to be known as Rajbanshis. Although, the Rajbanshis now the most popular and widely accepted identity of this vast population but this name could not found in the history of the distance past and not even in the modern history. The reference of this name is absent neither in the Persian books of account nor in the Assam Buranjis or in Darang Raj Vamsabvali, a genealogical account of the Koch royal family. Even in the Brahmavaivarta Purana which contains the exhaustive list of mixed castes there is no mention about Rajbashis though there is reference to the origin of the Rajbanshis. Herbert Risley, E.A. Gait and Dalton were in the same opinion that the Rajbanshis were of the Dravidian stock with an intermixture of the Mongoloid blood. But in that case they had in their mind of the Rajbanshis of Rangpur in one hand, and on
the other hand, those who lived in Goalpara, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri. But it is very interesting to note that these different views of the educated elites among the Rajbanshis community put them in the both advantage and disadvantage at the same time. Dr. Roy narrated the both situation in his articles ‘The Rajvanshis Identity Politics; The Post Colonial Passages’ As an advantages, it facilitated their identity movement in terms of a politics of difference, a difference that they tried to establish on evidences of history, anthropology and culture in order to secure a higher status in the Hindu caste hierarchy as Kshatriyas to separate themselves from the Koches who were considered aboriginal and untouchable. Now from the Rajbanshis standpoint it was difficult and dangerous to draw such a line of difference between the Koches and the Kshatriyas within the community. On the Other hand the disadvantage in the fact that the Koches are as real entities whose difference was to be articulated by the Rajbanshis for their identity as Kshatriyas did not exist. They were as much Rajbanshis and hence as much Kshatriyas as the movement makers claimed themselves to be. So it was the denomination that was wrong and had to be changed. So the quest for identity easily crossed the Rubicon of the first decade of the sixteenth century when the Koch kingdom was established and looked as far as back in to the past as possible.

It is the natural phenomena that in question of establishing the identity a recovery of the past and its glorification becomes the strong instrument. In the case of national movement in India nationalist leaders did the same thing by glorifying the Hindu past in a bid to challenge the colonial projection of it inferior to them. Similarly, in the case of establishing the separate identity of the Rajbanshi, they also brought the heritage worth the name beyond the present fallen state but also tried to establish their history of the Kshatriya kings in the regions of Pragjyotishpur, Kamrup and later Kamtapur and Behar.

In order to examine the roots of the ethnic movements we need to examine the colonial attitude towards the different ethnic groups as the present ethnic crisis not only in North Bengal but throughout the country is the result of their treatment to serve the colonial rule.

The great revolt of 1857 not only shocked the British company’s rule over India and established the direct colonial rule in India but in the same time they began to think about their future danger. It should bear in mind that the great revolution of 1857 did not change their attitude but it changed their way of rule. They now tried to understand the feeling of the people of India as the introduction of Enfield Cartridge was the sparking source to ignite the anger against the British rule which forced them for the anthorpologization of colonial knowledge to adopt the policy of non intervention in the tradition, customs and convention. They realised that ethnographic knowledge could explain why such massive rebellion could occur and how to avoid such dissatisfaction in future. So they tried to find out the new ways to earn the loyalty of their subjects on the basis of their customs, and culture through the study of their historical past. That historical knowledge ultimately inspired them to convert it into anthropological knowledge. It is observed from the district level manual and gazetteers that the devoted major part of their
chapters to the ethnography of caste and customs where caste became a central object of investigation which ultimately through the imperial survey becoming the representing character banishing history from the Indian sensibilities.

The impact of this approach was very much noticeable. Caste ridden Hindu Society got a tremendous boost along this caste line. Castes hitherto considered lower in the hierarchy and fuzzy demanded to be accorded a higher niche by the colonial ruler and that was enumerated accordingly in the census. The caste system and classification on caste basis was very much dominated position in the Hindu society and of course there was discontentment among the lower caste of the Hindu Community as a result of which large number of the Hindu population belonging to the lower niche converted in to Muslim. But with the onset of the census operations the whole situation assumed a new dimension. Those who are coming up from below looked to the Census Commissioner for public recognition of their higher status, for it would ensure a soft attitude from the indigenous society (Bandopadhyay; 1990, 99-100). 

So far as the Rajbanshi caste movement was concern it was not the Rajbanshis alone but many other communities all over the country who also in different times claimed Kshatriyahood. However, they did not simply look to the colonial census; they secured the opinion of the Brahmanic Law givers in their favour.

‘If identity politics is about expressing one’s agency and creating new forms of collective agency, then the Rajbanshis did that by playing on the politics of difference and of identity at the same time. Their caste movement was a negotiation of difference to register an alterity from the projected view about themselves as Koches. But in virtue of that alterity what it aspired to be identity with high ups in the Hindu caste hierarchy. Since caste ranking is necessarily interactional rather than purely attributional, the Rajbanshis required a long process of social and discursive interaction on this score. But another counterforce queered the pitch for them, so much so that it was engulfed in it, proving there by the presence of a more compelling imperative in them to act as a community / ethnicity rather than a caste. It was enlisting them as a scheduled caste and joining the movement. This inevitable contradiction as much as contemporary politics soon eroded the edge and credibility of the Kshatriya movement. No wonder, their history happened to be more of a fulfilment as a scheduled caste rather than as Kshatriya. It was from this contradiction and failure of resolution that the post colonial phase of their identity movement got its different start’ (Roy’ 161).

### 3.7 KOCH DYNASTY OR COOCH DYNASTY

The district of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri comprises of both the plains and hills. Cooch Behar is their neighbouring district. The slope of the hills also gives a touch of the district Cooch Behar. The breeze of the Tista and Brahmaputra is blowing over this state. So like the waves of the earthquakes the vibration of one area vibrates the other places. The heat of the Gorkha land movement heated the water of Tista of Jalpaiguri and the water of the Torsa of Cooch- Behar similarly creates the ripple in the flow of the Punarbhaba of Dinajpur and the Mahananda of
Malda. The current of the river Brahmaputra splashed over the layer of the demographic pattern on the man of the soil of North Bengal. So the billows of the current of the Brahmaputra may try to make a concert of the unrest over the whole area. To understand the nature and the source of the ethnic unrest of North Bengal one should not only peep into the door of the mind of the Koch–Rajbanshi but also visit the places from where they were originated leaving the present political and geographical boundary. The Koches emerged as a very strong political power in early 16th century, in the Kamata region with the establishment of the Koch kingdom by the Koch chieftain Biswa Singha.

3.8 FOUNDER OF THE COOCH DYNASTY

Haridas Mandal was the first person of the history of the Koch dynasty. Mandal was denoted as the chieftain of the community. It was known that the region of present Goalpara, situated between area of the Manas river on the east and the river Sankosh on the west and the Himalayas on the North reigned Haridas or in other types of the kings/ruler/ Mandalesh or Mandal is one of them. Among them whose income was more than ten lakhs ‘Karjya’ (Kahan) was elected as Mandalik. By dint of their seniority the Mandalik could be elevated as the king. In that case it needed to have the approval of the subjects.

In the end of the 15th century the local landlord Haridas (Haria) Mandsal and his sons established the kingdom. This dynasty was a unique in the sense that the long tenure of a dynasty which emerged from the root of the soil. While one Hindu dynasty one after another lost their existence due to the invincible of the Muslim attack and the several dynasty disintegrated due to the inner conflict this dynasty that emerged from the core of the soil lasted without any interruption for more than 435 years. This should be taken as the rarest example in the history of
the dynasty. Especially on the face of the ever increasing power of the sultanate dynasty of the then Gour (Bangla) they were able to exist their independent position inspite of constant conflict with the mighty sultan. It must be taken not only as their inherent strength in the dynasty but in the same time it is a rare example of the indomitable spirit of the freedom of the subjects. When the relation between king and subjects were oppressor and the oppressed and the subjects did not find any of their interest in case of the battle taking it as a conflict between the two oppressors the subjects of the Koch Dynasty always stood with the side of their king to defend them and took it as the attack against their freedom. This rare example cannot be ignored in case of the study of the present ethnic conflict where they again in the name of the Koch Behar king demanded the Greater Cooch Behar State. Here also the ills of the dynasty like the conspiracy for the power, and oppression were very much existed but when the question of preventing the invaders the subjects stood in defence of their kingdom. Knowing the fact that the history of the dynasty and their royal family can never be the history of the common people; the smile of the king is not the smile of the subjects, on the other hand, the tears of the subjects does not reflects in the eyes of the king, but there is no option but to place the history of the Koch Dynasty or the history of the Cooch - Behar kingdom in search of the root of the ethnic unrest of North Bengal for the reason as already been depicted above.

In the anthropological context the Koches has been originated with mixing of blood between the Dravidian and Bodo racial groups. But as we have already seen the scholars of different schools in different opinion in this regard, many of them prefer to give importance on the opinion of the different mythological texts to anthropological evidence. Like all the Dravidian and the Austric groups of northern India, this isolated Koch racial groups also accepted the Aryan languages. After that when they mixed with the incoming inflow of the Bodo racial groups along the path of the Brahmaputra basin there formed a new race which is now called the Koches.

It should be bear in mind that the identification on the basis of the Anthropological data are now unable to give the specific answer. It is just like the water of the vast ocean. Almost countless rivers and stream of different origin converged into the ocean and lost their individual identity. If one wants to identify the water of the stream taking out of the some of the water of the ocean it will prove fruitless except for academic discussion.
Bengal accept the gold and silver coins introduced by king Naranarayan was used throughout vast areas of North Bengal and even Assam and Bhutan till the beginning of the British era. Maharaja Naranarayan entered a friendship treaty with the Moghul Emperor Akbar. When Akbar himself accompanied with his general marched with his army to attack Daud Khan, the king of Gaur in 1774 Maharaja Nara Narayan helped the Moghual Emperor by sending big army for the battle. Taking the advantage of the treaty he could extend his kingdom up to the bank of the Ganga. From Akbarnama it is found that the area of the Cooch Behar kingdom was extended from Trihut (Mithila) on the west, Tibet on the north, jorhat and hilly region on the south. After the death of Naranayran his son Lakshinarayan became the king (1587-1627). He was a weak ruler and tragically enough he had spent his entire life fighting with his cousin, Raghudev the ruler of Koch Hajol. He could not retain the area of the kingdom. He brought the engineer to construct the newly shifted capital Atharo khota of the present Cooch Behar. Though Lakshinarayan never had the vision and ability of his forefathers, he still could be remembered by the people of North East India particularly Assam as one who declared ‘Vaishnamism as the Rajdhrama of his kingdom (Chowdhury p 151) Madhadeb, the chief disciple of Sankardev took assylam in Kamta after Raghudeb Narayan turned hostile against Vaishnavism and asked Madhadeb to leave his kingdom. Here it is also a very interesting irony in the history of Chilari, the father of Raghudev Narayan was the chief patron of Vaishnavism and saved Sankardev from the wrath of his brother king Narayan. Damodardev and Vaisnavite saint also faced the same sequence and took the shelter in Kamta. Damodardev wrote Bhakti Ratwanwali and Krishna Janma Rahashya and Govinda Mishra translated Madbhagavat Gita with the patronage of king Lahsninarayan. In later period these creation has been regarded as the valuable treasures not in Bengali literatue but in the literature of Assam. It is again interesting to note thatSivrarti kaumadi and Gauhan Kaumadi which were written by Sidhanta Bagish by order of Lakshinarayan became the part of Bengali literature. After the death of Lakshminarayan his son Bir Narayan ascended the throne in 1632 A.D. During his period no remarkable incident took place but the power of the Koch dynasty decreased day by day and during his reign, the king of Bhutan stopped paying the tribute. Pran Narayan became the king on 1632 A.D. after the death of his father Bir Narayan. He would be remembered in the history of the Koch–Kamta as he tried to recapture the lost territory of the undivided Koch–Kingdom which went in to the hands of the Moghul during Laksinarayan time. He even captured Dhaka the capital of Bengal for a short period while Suja, the subedar of Bengal was way from the capital for fighting a battle against Aurangajeb in 1661. But he was defeated by Mirjamulla the governor of Bengal and fled from the city. He recovered his kingdom when Mirjumal was heavily engaged in war with the king of Assam.

After the death of Prannarayan in 1665 his son Modhnarayan ascended the throne and ruled up to 1680. He died leaving no issue. His nazir Yaga Narayan tried to capture the throne with the help of the Bhutan king but the ministers of the royal court did not extend their support to him and sent the message for help to the brothers of Raikat of Jalpaiguri. They helped Basudeb Narayan, step brother of Modan narayan to occupy the throne. Yaga Narayan again attacked the
capital with the help of the Bhutan king. Actually from this period internal politics of Biswa Singha’s dynasty became more tragic due to the internal conflict in the royal family which gave the scope for outsiders to interfere in the Koch Politics. The Bhutanese directly interfered the political arena of the Koch politics and they take the advantage of making the king of the kingdom. Mahendra Narayan ascended the throne. At that time Mahendra Narayan was a boy and taking this advantage the employees of the royal court became unruly and autocratic. The premature death of Mahendra Narayan made the situation more badly. Jayga Narayan who was the son of the brother of Maharaja Bir Narayanrayan again claimed the throne. The Raikat of Baikhantapur dynasty who was the staunch enemy of Jagya Narayan attacked him but in that time they were not only defeated but were also killed in the battle. After that Kumar Rup Naryan became the king and the throne again came back from the dynast of Sisha singha to the hands of the dynasty of Biswa Singha.

During the reign of Rup Narayan the Moughal attacked his kingdom and captured its eastern part of the kingdom including Boda and Patgram. Maharaja Rup Narayan shifted his capital from Athara Khota to Guriahati. This Guriahati is the present Cooch Behar town. ‘He will be remembered also as he established the famous Madan Mohan temple and the Idol. The throne was succeeded by his son Upendra Narayan. After the death of Upendra Narayan his son Debendra naryan who was then a child of five years old became the king. Here the tragic end which was the traditional incidents in almost every dynasty happened here. When the child king was playing in the Royal garden the hired killer killed the child king. After that tragic incident when there was conflict and uncertainty was about to turned into civil war the members of the royal family and the others members of the court tried to avoid that dangerous situation by election for the successor of the throne. The nephew of Maharaja Upendra, Kharga Narayan’s third son Dhajendra Narayan, was elected unanimously as the successor of the throne. Dhajendra Narayan had a fear that his elder brother may revolt and try to overthrow him from the throne. He invited his elder brother Ramnaranay in his palace pretending himself as ill and killed him by his own hand.

Ramnaranay had a good relation with the Bhutan King. This treacherous killing grew indignant not only in the mind of the Bhutan king but in the same time discontentment spread among the subjects as a whole. So he wanted to attack Koch kingdom to capture Dhajendra Narayan and place his brother Rajendra Narayan on the throne. Before doing this he obtained the permission from Stisu Lama the King of Tibet. After the death of Rajendra Naryan, the son of Dhajendra Narayan, Dharendra Narayan was placed on the throne by the court members of the King ignoring the suggestion of the Bhutan king that the son of Ramnarayan who was assassinated in the palace be given the post of kingship.

The king of Bhutan attacked the Cooch Behar kingdom and the queen mother fled with her minor son king Dhreandra Narayan to Rangpur and sought the help of the British Collector of
the East India Company. The English Force engaged with war with the Bhutan king and rescued Maharaja Dhajendra Narayan from the prison of Bhutan King.

Dharendra had to sign a treaty with the East India Company to get rid of the troubles from the Bhutan forces. 5th April, 1773 is a black day for the Koch–Behar Dynasty. It lost his independent position which they enjoyed several hundred years since the establishment of the dynasty and became the native state of British India and continued so till it joined with Indian Union.

The history of Cooch Behar dynasty is the history of Native state of Cooch Behar. When Cooch Behar was included in the British Empire Rangpur was taken out of the Koch–kamta Kingdom as a result of the treaty. Again in the later period between 1900 to 1908 during the period of King Nripendra Narayan Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling went to the British as it is claimed by Rajbanshi Scholar and important leader of the movement of Kamta–Behari language of North Bengal in his article ‘Rajya Cooch-Behar; Jela Cooch Behar in Prag’ there he wrote that while king Nripendra naryan was in England, Kalika Das Dutta exchanged Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling with Bhola and Chakla with the British Government. It is believed that he signed a treaty with the British regarding this most probably in the year 1908. When the king returned from abroad, he got angry, but there was nothing left for him to take any effective step. After a few days, he went to England and died. Although Dharama narayan, Burma claimed that Darjeeling was a part of the Cooch Behar dynasty but no record supported this claim.

After becoming the native state the history of the Cooch Behar dynasty is the history of other native state of India. The role of the native state and the role of the native king do not bear any significant influence in question of the ethnic upsurge. So in that context this study will confined in mentioning the names of the native kings only although some them may need to mention as per the demand of the discussion.


3.9 THE BRANCHESE OF THE COOCH BEHAR DYNASTY

The movement of the Kamtapur or the demand for the Kamtapur state no doubt an ethnical upsurge of one of the most ancient ethnic group of North Bengal. But from the above discussion it is cleared that although it is now confined within the geographical boundary of North Bengal but as the ethnicity has the characteristic to make the ripple like in the ponds it may cause the
similar ethnic ripple even among the ethnic community of the same origin of races which is now detached from its epicentre. As the issue is the issue of the ethnic identity it is necessary to trace out the branches of this ethnic race. In keeping this view not only the dynasty of the Cooch Behar kingdom established by Biswa Singha is enough to measure the depth of the present unrest but it also demands the other branches of the same clan which was formed by the brother of Biswa Singha to be brought in to the light.

The brother of Biswa Singha (in other opinion, his step brother) Sisha Singha although initiated the Baikantha Pur Kingdom but there is reason to believe that he could not build the king palace there. He was so busy with his elder brother to expand his kingdom and for the establishment of administration it was very much difficult for him to engage himself to build the houses for his own. Most part of his life he remained with his elder brother. For the security of the kingdom he constructed a fort on its western border. There the Baikantha Pur kingdom was established. At first its capital was established at Sialikguri (Siliguri) of Dabgram Mouza. After that it was re named as Nij Baikhanda pur. From its initial history it is found that these two branches of the kingdom originated from the same source marched with hand to hand with each other. After the establishment of the Baikantha pur Dynasty the ruler of the dynasty did not declare as the king rather they retained their title Raikat. The king of Cooch- Behar adorned themselves by the title Naryan but the ruler of the Baikantha pur did not use this Naryan title as mark of their allegiance to the cooch Behar dynasty. The history of the later period of course is the traditional history of the Royal family where conspiracy, lust for power and jealousy etc. were the common character.

After Sishwa Singha his son Manikya Deb became the second Raikat, after him the Raiklat was his son Maruti Deb. Shib Deb the elder son of Maruti Deb was the fourth Raikat. After the death of him two sons of Mahadeb, Bhujdeb and Jaideb Raikt earned fame during their tenure as Raikat. After Joy Deb Bhiswa Deb became Raikat After the death of Biswa Deb his brother Dharma Deb became the Raikat by killing his two nephews. Dharma Deb shifted his capital from Baikanthapur to Jalpaiguri. It is learnt the present Raikat of Jalpaiguri are the descendents of that family.

The elder son of Dharma Deb, Bhup Deb, and after him his brother Bikram Deb became the Raikat. But the disputes rose in question of the legality of the inherance of Bhop Deb for the position of the Raikat. His brother Darpadeb became the 12th Raikat. After that his son Joyanta Deb and the Minor son, Sarba Deb became the 13th and 14th Raikat. As Sarba Deb was minor his uncle was appointed as his guardian but after some years serious disputes surfaced between them and Sarba Deb apprehended that his life would be danger in the hand of his uncle and took the shelter in Rangpur. The Mushidabad Provincial Court gave their verdict in favour of Sarba Deb.
After the death of Sarba Deb again the disputes arose between his two sons. The claim of Markat Deb was challenged by his step brother Rajendra Deb, on the ground that the mother of Markat Deb was not the same origin of their caste. She belonged to Gope community as such her son cannot claim the Raikat although he was the elder son of his father. But the civil court approved that inter caste marriage and Markat Deb became the 15th Raikat.

After the death of Sarba Deb his youngest brother Chandra Shekhar Deb and then his youngest brother, Phanindra Deb became the 16th and 17th Raikat respectively. The youngest son of Sarba Deb Raikat Phinidra Deb Challenged Jogendra Deb in question of the Raikat ship in 1866 may be mentioned here to demonstrate the rapid social change in the Koch-Rajbanshi community.

In the year of 1800 A.D. after the death of Joyanta Deb his minor son Sishu Singha became the 14th Raikat, but his uncle Pratap Deb raised the objection in the Provincial court of Murshidabad that they are not governed by the Hindu Succession law and such according to their Koch-Rajbanshi custom in case of death his brother will inherit family property not the son of the deceased person. Though the court passed their verdict in favour of Sarba Deb but in the same time they agreed that the members of the Raikat family belonged to the Koch–Rajbanshi and therefore the custom that the property will be inherited by the brother of the deceased inspite of the fact that his son is there cannot be ignored.

After the death of Sarba Deb the claim of Duga Deb for the throne was again challenged by one of the son of Sarba Deb. In the court he put the argument that the mother of Durga Deb was not the legal wife of Sarba Deb. On the other hand, he is the son of the legal wife of Sarba Dev because this marriage was solemnized through ‘Phul Biya’ which is the recognized practice of marriage in the Rajbanshi community. But the second son of Sarba Deb Makaranda Deb Challenged this argument in the Rangpur Court that his mother was the legal wife of Sarb Deb as this marriage was solemnized through the religious practice of ‘Gandharba Marriage’. The court in their verdict recognized both the marriage as legal and awarded in favour of Markand Deb.

The ‘Phul Biya’ is just the Baidik practice of the marriage. This marriage is recognized in the Rajbanshi community in general. In this marriage the presence of an ‘Adhikari Brahmin’ is must and who can afford he can engage the ‘Kamrupi Brahmin’. On the other hand “Gandharba marriage ‘ is somewhat different from the Hindu Practice of marriage. In Hindu practice, the brides choose their bride groom, but in the Rajbanshi society the guardian of the boys and girls arrange the marriage and here no religious practice is performed. The bride and the bride groom exchange their garland before a lighted candle.

Dr. Cambel, the Superintendent of Darjeeling attended the condolence meeting of Sarba Deb at Jalpaiguri on 20th January, 1848 and wrote in his Comments:
‘The Raja could not properly be called a Hindu ambitious of being considered within the privileged pale. His family is the Koch tribe now however; designate as Rajbanshis and effecting to be equal of the Chattris, although retaining many usages and habits quite irreconcilable to their pretensions.’

The 18th Raikat Jogendra Deb was died on1878 (March). The disputes on the heir-apparent on the throne went up to the extent of the Privy Council of England. The contesting parties of this dispute were Phanindra Deb Raikat, the youngest son of Sarba Deb on one side and the adopted son Gadididra Deb on the other side. The Privy Council in their judgment passed the following verdict in support of the argument of Phanidra Deb as follows:

“Although the Baikunthapur family had normally come under Brahmanism they and at the same time, retained customs inconsistent with their being closed as Hindus, not being by race, and some other customs at variance with Hindu Institutions’.

In support of Phanindra Deb Raikat, the Privy council rejected the claim of the adopted son on the ground ‘The Baikunthapur family, the head of which bore the title Raikat, belonged originally to the Koch Tribe in the N. W frontier of Bengal and was not of Hindu origin’.

Raikat Phanidra Deb argued on that occasion that they did not belong to the Hindu origin and obtained the verdict of the Privy Council in his favour. But in another case in the year of 1956 the same Raikat family placed the complete opposite argument before the Calcutta High Court.

After the death of the 21st Raikat Prasanna Deb his widow Ashrumati Debi (daughter of B. Chowdhury belonged to Rabha community), inherited the property of her husband. Ashrumati devi had no son. She died in 1954. Her Daughter who married to a high caste Hindu S. K. Bose (the brother of Jyoti Basu Ex. Chief minister of West Bengal). The daughter of Pratibha Debi, Dipti Debi married to another high caste Hindu Dilip Roy Chowdhury. In that case the question of inheritance of property came before the High court. Here from the defendant side argued that the Koch Family during this period adopted the Hindu customs and practices and by establishing the marriage relation with the caste Hindu and they are now the part of the high caste Hindu community.

During the course of time and the social progress the different races and their custom transformed in to a new form and gave birth a new identity. These two examples are the glaring example of this social phenomenon. Five hundred years ago from today Biswa Singha the founder of the Cooch Behar Dynasty created a post of Raikat meaning the commander of the fort for his brother. That post in course of time has converted an identity as well as title of a family and the identity of their genealogy.
3. 10 PANGA DYNASTY (RANGPUR)

Most of the scholars in course of their research study confined themselves within the frame work of the study of the Cooch Behar Dynasty and their family forgetting about the other branches of the Koch Dynasty who originated from the same source. If we fail to look upon the other branches of the dynasty the study will remain partial.

The eldest son of King Biswa Sing, Nara Singha was the founder of this dynasty. This Dynasty practically was like a zaminder (Land Lord) and never surfaced except in the litigation during the period of Raikat Sarba Deb. Now the members of that dynasty, it is found during the field study of this research work are living in Jalpaiguri almost unrecognizable in the present crowd of Jalpaiguri town. If anybody still residing in Rangpur that is not known to this researcher.

3.11 CACHHAR DYNASTY

The brother of Maharaja Narayan, Kamal Narayan was initially the representative (Morangi) of the king at Lakhipur Dist. He became the first ‘Dheain’ or the king of Cachhar. He was very polite, religious minded and peace loving in nature. He divided his clan into eighteen classes and each class was assigned for specific job. They are still doing more or less same jobs in Cachhar district. About 17th century the descendant of Kamal Narayan virtually disappeared and his general Udit Narayan ascended the throne. The last Raja of that dynasty Gobinda chadra was killed by the unknown conspirator. The East India Company took the charge of this area directly in their hand.

3.12 DARANG DYNASTY

In the beginning of the 17th century, Raja Parikhit Narayan was captured by the Moughal forces and kept captive in their prison. His brother Bali Narayan established a kingdom on the west of the Darang district. That was known as the Darang kingdom. The king of Ahom established a friendship treaty with him and honoured him by awarding him the title ‘Dharmanarayan’. During the period of Indra Narayan the fifth king of this dynasty the Darang kingdom extended upto the Subarnasree on the east, Goi Kamal Ali on the north, Bar nadi on the west and the Brahmaputra on the south. After the death of Indra Narayan family conflict made the kingdom split in to two. But that could not bring the peace. Taking the advantage of that situation the East India Company took the direct control of this kingdom.

3.13 BIJANI DYNASTY

From the family of Kumar Chandra Narayan (Bijit Narayan), the son of king Parikhit, two kingdoms were formed named Bijani and Beltala Dynasty. When king Parikhit was captured by
the Moughal forces and put into their prison Chandra Narayan was then minor. Chandra Narayan waged war against the Moughal forces but ultimately he accepted the terms of the Moughal Empire. But Chandra Narayan was not a man of to accept the authority of others and again engaged with the war of the Moughal forces. He died in the battle field and his son Joy Narayan became the king.

The forest of the Bijanir was famous for the elephant. At first the king of Bijni paid Rs 5998 rupees as yearly tax, thereafter in lieu of this money they gave 68 elephants to the emperor. This practice had been continued until the East India Company took over the charge of the dynasty.

3.14 BELTALA RAJBANSHA

The grandson of Raja Parikhit was Joy Narayan. The sons of Joy Narayan, Hara Narayan, (In another opinion, Gaja Narayan) under the control of the Ahom king establish the Beltala Dynasty near the southern part of present Guwahati. But this dynasty has no contribution to be mentioned.

It is to be noted that the history of Kamtapur, Koch kingdom or the history of Ahom kingdom cannot be understood with the present political boundaries of the states. For example in order to explain the history of Bengali it needs to break the political boundary between the West and East Bengal and has to take the whole territory of two Bengals together. Similarly, in order to understand and evaluate the present sentiment of the Koch-Rajbanshi who are the man of the soil of this region the present state boundary between west Bengal and Assam needs to be overlooked. It was thought that the Berlin Wall has been the permanent division between the East and West Germany. But the political boundary could not become the boundary of the heart beat of the Germans. They again came together. The mighty wall has turned into rubbles. The history will tale whether the communal boundary which turned into the political boundary dividing the Padma and the Ganga in to two separate stream will merge again to unite the heart beat of the Bengali into one and the history will be re write a matter of guess. Similarly, whether the aspiration of the establish of the ethnic identity of the Koch–Rajbanshi community will emerge through a new boundary of a new state by rearranging the present state boundary of both the state of West Bengal and Assam is a matter of conjecture for future. But nobody can deny the fact that neither the present geographical boundary of Assam is the reflection of the past nor the present boundary of West Bengal represents its near past also.

The present Ahom Kingdom was confined within the limit of upstream of the Brahmaputra. The Koch kingdom covered from Kamrup of lower Assam to the northern part of the then undivided North Bengal. Both Assam and west Bengal have been formed by the bifurcation of this vast race and at the same time their history and the ethnic identity also bifurcated. So it should not be termed this unrest is the unrest for the separatist attitude rather this unrest is the unrest for the establishment of their lost glory and identity and make them into a united fold. It is for this reason one should search their history to reach the core of this ethnic unrest.
As it is true that the Cooch dynasty since their inception they began to accept the Bengali culture but it is also similarly true that in the anthropological context the Cooch Behar was more nearer to the Bodos than the Bengalis. Prof. Sunity Kumar Chatterjee told in his book, ‘The place of Assam in the History and civilization of India, ‘King Naranarayan of Koch Behar geographically belongs to Bengal, but ethnically as North Bengal is an extension of the Bodo Land of Assam and East Bengal and as he had under him a good part of Assam and Bengal and culturally also with the rest of India’

REFERENCES

1. Mandal, Ranjit Kumar (2002); ‘Ray Saheb Panchanan’New Delhi, All India Forum for Development of Rajbanshis pp27
4. Debnath, Sailen ibid pp111
5. Sanyal, Charu Chandra (1965); The Rajbanshis of North Bengal, Kolkata The Asiatic Society
10. Debnath, Sailen ibid pp4
11. Debnath, sailen ibid pp 47
14. Bandopadhya, Rajat Subhra; (1997) The Rajbanshis of North Bengal; A Demographic Profile 1951-81, North Bengal University Review (Hunainties and Social Science) 1997
16. Chilarai; Souvenir (Assamese), Guwaahati, 2002 pp 23
CHAPTER: FOUR

EVOLUTION OF THE MOVEMENT AND PRESENT STATE

Partition of India was not only the most unfortunate events in the history of last century but it also destroyed the demographic equilibrium over the vast region of Indian subcontinent particularly in the Punjab, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and some other states of North East India. The unprecedented influx of Bengali refugees from the then East Pakistan in 1947 and then again in 1971 completely disturbed the demographic setup of North Bengal particularly in the districts Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and a large part of North Dinajpur where the Rajbanshi ethnic community was the largest population from the ancient times. Besides their demographic majority they had their own culture, tradition, and language with a rich history. But the waves of the refugees as depicted above submerged not only their demographic position but also their culture, tradition and language as they were forced to surrender before the advanced culture and language of the waves of the Bengali population in absence of the strong educated middle class among the Rajbanshi community. Now with the emergence of strong educated middle class among the Rajbanshi community they are trying to reestablish their own identity as a general rule of social science defying the authoritarian position of the Bengali community which form the ethnic conflict between the majority and the minority complex.

4.1 BENGALI REFUGEES AND THE IMMIGRANTS OF BANLAGADESHIS

Whatever may be the causes of the division of Koch and Rajbanshis or whether they are really different races of origin, but there is no room to deny that both of them have imbibed their sprit from the Cooch Behar kingdom. One of the rare example of any kingdom in question of expanding their area of territory, long range of their reigning, their culture, their heroic past create the wave of emotion in their blood. It brought them to the memory of the royal court. An emotion knocks them, ‘here there was their king, and their land was the land of their king. In their subconscious mind they feel the imaginary touch of the king’s sceptre although most of them had no any scope even to see any king of Cooch dynasty. They feel thrill in seeing their similar appearance with the king. They heard the heroism of their king but they do not know the oppression of the king. They lived in the imaginary paradise.

When they came down to the soil of the reality the poverty and oppression is waiting for them. They heard they had the land but now they are landless. They heard that they had plenty of grains in there granary now there stomach is empty. They now ask where all of them had gone?

4.2 THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTER OF NORTH BENGAL

It should be kept in mind about the basic difference between the southern part of West Bengal and the Northern part of it. The social combination of North Bengal and South Bengal
was completing different. So when the influx of the refugees came from the East Pakistan they not only took shelter in the southern part of West Bengal but they also came to the Northern part of the state causing the same economic burden on both part of the state.

If the basic difference between the two parts of the state is not taken in to the account in discussion about the effect of the influx of the refugees in relation to the demographic set up and the consequence there in, the present ethnic unrest of North Bengal will not be understood.

For the partition of India, more specifically, the partition of Bengal if it is said that the refugees of Bengal only lost their homes it will be a mistake. The man of the soil, the Koch – Rajbanshis also lost their most precious things that are their identity as they are outnumbered with the incoming of the Bengali refugees. The devastating flood water washes what are on the surface on one hand, and on the other hand, it covers the soil with the incoming silt. Similarly, the unprecedented influx of the Bengali refugees not only outnumbered the demographic position of the Rajbanshis and marginalized them in question of their political strength, their culture, there language their history which had been developed though the ages of history lost under the incoming of the advanced Bengali culture and their language.

The refugees of Bangladesh were the victim of the political circumstances upon which they had no control at all, rather, they were the worst victim of the political decision for the Partition of the country and forced to leave their mother land leaving all their belongings. How many refugees came to India from East Bengal it is beyond of guess. But it cannot claim that the incoming of the people from Bangladesh has stopped. Those people who are still coming from Bangladesh crossing though the porous border between the two countries are not now call the refugees, they are now called the immigrants.

After the partition of the British India in 1947 into two independent countries. India and Pakistan, 15 million people crossed the newly defined border to maintain the sovereignty of the newly created two states. This exodus of the human waves was termed as the greatest migration ever recorded. In west Bengal alone received an estimated 30 lakhs refugees entered by 1960. That is not all. In the 1970s the state witnessed another human exodus from the then East Pakistan. But what has perplexed many that a little attempt has been made to evaluate the socio –political impact on the demographic position of the country specially in west Bengal and more specific in North Bengal where the Rajbanshis (Koch) communities were the dominating races and they had been going marginalized day by day for the influx of the population having different culture, language, and economic activities in the social structure.

Even after the formation of Bangladesh this incoming human flow crossing the border is still going on. These immigrants are spreading across the vast areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and many other parts of the country. In the year of 1972 the total number of voters in Assam was 63 lakhs. In the year of 1979 this figure reached 87 lakhs. The fear psychosis that swept in the
minds of the Ahom people that they are going to be outnumbered with the coming of this Bengali speaking refugees like the Tripra of Tripura which led them to form All Assam Student union (A.A.S.U) and Assam Gana Parishad (A.G.P). Their demand was to remove the Bengali speaking refugees from the soil of Assam.

No doubt, West Bengal was the largest recipient of refugees for reasons of her natural and geographical proximity to East Bengal; of course not all districts of the state were equally affected by the problems. The concentration of refugees was so high that they constituted nearly one tenth of the total population. Further, their concentration was the largest in three districts of 24 Paraganas (both North and South), Calcutta and Nadia.

In this context, one should remember that the refugees from East Bengal began to come to west Bengal even before the partition when the ugly Nowakhali Riots started against the Hindu community. From that time the upper caste well to do and middle class of the Hindu community began to come to the Hindu dominated West Bengal. At that time many of them could bring some money with them. Whole of North Bengal was sparsely populated. So a large portion of them prefer to this part of west Bengal mainly from the adjacent districts of East Bengal. The local Rajbanshi community sold their land as they found abrupt rise of the value of the land and could not restrain from the response to the beckon of the cash money without considering the effect of their future. Thus a considerable part of the agricultural land was handed over to the incoming peoples. Because of the physical proximity of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur, and Malda to East Bengal besides Tripura and Assam they prefer to resettle in those districts of North Bengal.

During the study and from the records it is found that the refugees of East Bengal mainly concentrated to their respective adjacent districts. For example, most of the refugees of Maymansing and Rangpur dist. concentrated themselves in Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri districts. On the other hand, refugees from Dinajpur prefer the then West Dinajpur district. Although the concentration of the refugees was the largest in three districts of the then undivided 24 Paraganas, Calcutta and Nadia, there also showed such preference; most of the refugees who settled in Nadia, 24 Paraganas and Calcutta were from Joshahar district. The refugees of Kustia had the choice for Nadia district. That were the general trends of the refugees but the most of the refugees had no scope to exercise their choice even to settle in west Bengal. The unending stream of refugees that swamped over West Bengal had no where to stay not speak of choice for most of them. It is almost impossible to ascertain the exact number of people by and large Hindu who have crossed into West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya. According to Prafullya chakraborty in his book ‘Marginal Man’ (Calcutta 1990, p3) recorded the figure that one time it totalled 3.5 million by the end of 1950¹.
Behind the ethnic unrest this influx of refugee waves played a pivotal role as the Rajbanshis who were the major ethnic groups on this land suddenly saw that they are not only marginalized demographically but also all sphere in the social life.

Since the total number of refugees was never evenly spread over the period under review, the government appeared to have been taken by surprise at every point. They were in such a perplexed condition that they were at fix whether this unending wave of human race will be defined as displaced or refugee. The government of India declared this unprecedented inflow of millions of distressed peoples who were the victim of the political lust for a few politicians and forced to cross the border of the newly state and enter into territory of free India. In their declaration they stated ‘A displaced person is one who had entered India (who left or was compelled to leave his home in East Pakistan on or after October 15, 1947) on account of civil disturbances or on account of setting up of the two dominions of India and Pakistan. The leaders of India new fully well that the exodus of the people from East Bengal started before the partition. Even Mahatma Gandhi had to rush Noakhali of the then East Pakistan to stop the mass killing and rape of Hindu community by the communal section of the Muslims. But by giving this definition India Government kept the large section of the Hindu community beyond the definition.

4.3 REFUGEE AND MIGRATION

In the declaration of the U.NO. the definition of the refugee was given in 1951. There it is stated.

“A refugee is a person owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or to such fear is unwilling to avail himself of that country’.

For India another problem was there. Pakistan was not declared as the enemy country. Moreover, the incoming flows of population were the citizens of both the countries. So there was some legal binding to declare them as the refugees. Same was to define the migrant. Migrants mean those who change his place of residence willingly.

As the state statistical bureau in one of its reports on the refugees submitted in 1955 pointed out, ‘Migrants in this report means any person who actually came over to India from Pakistan on or after 1st October 1946 in the case of those coming from the district of Noakhali and Tipperah and 1st June 1947 in the case of persons coming from all other district of East Pakistan. Any family having at least one migrant has been taken to be a migrant family. (Statistical survey1955, Calcutta p 1).
But there were uncounted number of peoples who out of fear of imminent partition and riots in different districts also account for massive out flow from many other parts of East Pakistan even before India actually became independent and partitioned in to two.

Government decided to shut off all relief and transit camps existing in west Bengal by 1958 and refused to recognize any immigrants as displaced person beyond that date but the continuous flow of refugees although not in such magnitude was there. In the year of 1964, a fresh state of violent communal riots on the issue of Hazaratbal started in many parts of East Bengal and again an exodus of Hindu community swarmed over the Indian Territory because they became the target of the Muslim communal forces. So the government forced again to reopen the rehabilitation camp and noted them as migrants. Thus the official discourse did not seem to have taken any notice for those who were to cross over the border between 1\textsuperscript{st} April 19 58 and 31\textsuperscript{st} December 1963. In the word of Prof. Prafulla Kumar Chakraborty ‘whose work on refugees is still regarded as the point of departure for any understanding of the subject. His review, according to him, shows that, ‘the government work in this field was one of the non performance and in simple word that ‘Government simply forgot them.’

Here, again, a comparative study between Punjab and West Bengal on the refugee issue may be mentioned here as both states are the victim of partition and the influx of refugee problems. First of all, the numbers who left for Pakistan is much more than those who came to East Punjab. Of the 49 lakhs of the refugees who came from West Pakistan only 24 lakhs settled themselves in East Punjab. While 40 lakhs left for Pakistan. On the other hand, in West Bengal alone 30.9 lakhs refugees came from East Bengal by 1956 and 2,58,117 Muslims evacuees who had migrated to East Pakistan came back by 1952 to add to the magnitude of the problems. Secondly, a substantial amount of evacuee property in the form of land and houses was available for the rehabilitation of refugees from West Pakistan. On the contrary, in west Bengal every refugee here is an additional number to the existing population and has to be fitted into the state with an over–burdened economy where the density of population was the highest among the ‘A’ class states (Das p 16).

Government sought to put a stop to nearly unlimited immigration across the border by introducing passport system in1952. But not only travels documents were forged but those who came to India with legal passport a big number of them did not go back to Bangladesh.

The then minister of West Bengal Sri Manab Mukherjee gave the statement in the assembly based on the Home Department report that between 1972 to 1992 those came to India from Bangladesh with the passport but out of them 6,75,195 did not go back. Those who remained 4, 81,368 were Hindus and 1, 89,068 were Muslims. This number who came to the state and registered their name with the emigration centre on west Bengal border only. According to the
minister, the number of immigrants who are living in this country without visa was about 27 lakhs.

The exact number of the unauthorized immigrants is not known. Different sources mentioned different numbers. Prof. Amalendu Dey in his book titled ‘Prasanga: Anuprabesh’ mentioned the facts from different sources. ‘According to Sanjay Hajarika this number between one core to one core forty lakhs (The Tegraph, 6th February, 92). Prof Shanti Mohan Roy of the Center for south Asian Studies said that within this decade at least one core Bangladeshi immigrated in this country.

The Ananda Bazaar Patrika, a leading Bengali daily in his article published on 27th March 1991 where the fact was given how the immigrant got the ration card and subsequently became the citizen of India in connivance with the powerful political forces.

The Number of ration card was issued in the Garden Reach area was 3lakhs 12 thousands in the year of 1988 but the number of voters in this constituency was 1laks 32 thousands 5 hundreds. In Sealdah constituency the total number of voters was 75 thousand in 1987 but the total number of ration cards was issued 1lakh 90 thousands. The total numbers of voters of Belgachia East and west together in 1987 were 3lakhs and 14 thousands the total number of ration cards were issued for these two constituencies 6 lakhs 80 thousands in 1988. The vast areas of these constituencies were known as the safe zone for the immigrants. How and under whose instruction such large number of ration cards was issued that remains a question.

4.4 EXODUS FROM EAST PAKISTHAN / BANGLADESH

From the census report an acceptable account may be taken. In the 1941 census the areas which constituted the East Pakistan had a population of 41,997,297. Among them the number of Muslim was 2,95,24,099 and the number of Hindus was 1,18,85,235. In percentage the Muslim was 70.3. From the 1991 census it is found that the percentage of the Hindu population came down to 12.6 percent. During this period out of total population 10,79,93,962, the number of Muslim was 94,385,882 and the total number of minority community of Bangladesh was 1,03,67,080. So during this 50 years the Muslim population of Bangladesh has been increased by 60,861,783(219.5 percent) whereas the number of Hindu population has been increased during the same period 533960 only.

Father R.W.Timan in his presentation title ‘State of Human Right’ stated based on statistical analysis that taking the average growth rate of 2 percent the total population of the Hindus in Bangladesh would have been at least 3.25 crores. According to this calculation it can be presumed that at least 2 core Hindus left Bangladesh and took shelter in different parts of India presumably in West Bengal. Father Timan is not alone other scholars like Mahiuddin
Ahmed in his article ‘The Missing population published in the *Holiday* on 7th January, 1994 gave the detail about the demographic situation.

Prof. Ahmed stated

‘The first census of independent Bangladesh registered the proportion of Hindus 13.5 percent of the total population. This proportion dropped down to 12.1 1981 and 10.5 in 1991. While the proportion of the Buddhist and the Christian remained stable, 0.6 and 0.3 per cent of the total population respectively in successive census years. The proportion of the Muslim population, however, increased from 85.4 percent in 1974 to 88.3 in 1991.

How to interpret this phenomenon? Population cannot wither away. In demographic terms, the situation has to be addressed using relevant parameters of fertility, mortality, growth and migration. The situation may be analyzed with the help of simple statistics.

It has been found that the total fertility rate (TFR) among the non Muslims is relatively lower than the Muslims, difference ranged from 7% to 8% in the eighties. It has never been claimed that Hindus have higher mortality rate. It is likely that they have lower mortality rate due to higher extent of immunization among their children (ref. Bangladesh Contraceptive Prevalence Survey 1991).

A 10% lower fertility rate for the Hindu population would be a safe proposition. Taking into the consideration of the extent of lower fertility and assuming uniform mortality rates the size of the Hindu population based on ‘natural growth’ can be estimated. Based on adjusted census data of 1974, the Hindu population was estimated to be 10.31 million. During the 1974-81 periods, the Muslim population registered an annual growth of 2.56%. A 10% lower fertility rate for the Hindu community would correspond to an annual growth rate of 2.30% during the period, and the population should have been 12.10 million in 1981. But the actual Hindu population in 1981 was 10.88 million which corresponds to an annual growth rate of only 0.77% during the 1974-81 periods. Such a growth is comparable to several European countries. and even lower than the United States, Canada and Japan where growth rate was 1% or more in the seventies.

Thus we encounter a scenario of ‘missing Hindu population in the successive census periods. The extent of this missing population was about 1.22 million during the period of 1974-91. As many as 475 Hindus are disappearing every day from the soil of Bangladesh on an average since 1974. How this phenomenon would be interpreted in term of demography? The relevant parameter is obviously ‘migration’ which provides a clue to the missing link.

The importance in discussion of the population of Bangladesh needs an explanation. Bangladesh is our neighbouring state. The expulsion of the people from Bangladesh means inclusion to our population. The refugee influx in 1946-47 then in 1964 following the Hazratbal
incident then again in 1971. Each time this wave of refugees disrupted the normal life and threatened to disturb the demographic scenario in the border states mainly west Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya. According to one estimates out of 7.1 million refugees who entered India by the end of July 1971 West Bengal alone received 5.3 million and another 1.2 million moved into Tirpura. Meghalaya, a small hill state was practically swamped by a population of over 0.3 million refugees (Bandhopadhya p 35).

West Bengal of course, bore the main brunt of the influx which raised the density of population of the state from 507 to 600 people per square Kilometre. In West Dinajpur district, the existing population and the migrants turned out to be of the same order, namely 1.8 million each. In the border district of West Bengal, the refugees at one point of time constituted 32% of the population.

Let the present study be concentrated within the limit of North Bengal. As it has been told earlier that a considerable number of Hindus mainly belonged to high caste left the then East Pakistan following the Noakhali communal Riots. Most of them could bring money with them and many of them settled in the urban areas of North Bengal. If the population pattern is to be looked into the towns of North Bengal like Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Alipurduar, Balughat, etc it will support the statement. The incoming migrants not only began to dominate the local people economically but by dint of their advanced position both in education and cultural field their word became the last word.

Before the independence, for example, Siliguri, the largest town of North Bengal was the half like town. The local Rajbanshi was the main inhabitants of this locality. The areas of the town were known by the name of the identity of the particular Rajbanshi community. The refugees who could bring money with them purchased the land mainly belonged to the Rajbanshi (the price of the land appeared to be attractive at that time for them) and renamed the areas according to their choice. The identity of the Rajbanshis thus erased from the name of this town.

From the revenue record of 1930 it is found that the name of the present Deshbandhu Para was Rajeswari Jot, the name of the present Hakimpara was Braja Singh Jot, the name of the present Bharat Nagar was Jogen Jot, Lomba Das Jogen jot was for the present Mahananda para, the name of the present Babupara was Sabur jot.

The present researcher is also belonged to a displaced family who came from Maymansingha just on the eve of the independence whose father purchased a land from one Rajbanshi. A group of Brahmin and Kasthya family also did the same thing. The Brahmins tried to rename this area as ‘Brahman para ‘ but the Kasthya groups to oppose it put the sign board in the name of Netaji the ‘Subhash Pally’ and hence this locality now known by that name.
How the identity of the original inhabitant, the Rajbansi has been lost being outnumbered by the incoming influx of human waves came from East Pakistan can be placed here from the own experience of the present researcher which was recorded in his published book ‘Bichhinater Utsya Sandhane Kamtapur Theke Uttar Purba Bharat’ (p 383) 3.

4.5 A CASE STUDY (SANTU ROY)

The place is College para, of Siliguri town, now a posh area of this town. Previous name of this para was Kaliprasanna Jot by the name of a Rajbanshi.

Time of this experience some 45 years back. (1965)

It was winter morning of the month of December. At about 5 a.m the town was still sleeping in the midst of chilling cold. I had to go to purchase an emergency medicine from Hill Cart Road where I knew that a medicine shop provides day and night service. On going to Hill Cart Road when I was passing by the side of a big building at College Para I saw a rickshaw was standing in front of the gate of the building. Three persons were there. Two of them one old man and another was an old lady. The third one was a young man. All of them belonged to Rajbanshi community. I presumed that the young man was the rickshaw puller and came to him for my approach whether he is willing to go to Hill Cart Road and return. Seeing me it appeared that he got nervous. I saw that a lighted candle and some flowers and ‘Batasa’ (a sweet, made of sugar) which clearly showed that they were performing some ritual practice. The young rickshaw puller agreed to go if I am in a position to come back within short time. Out of my curiosity I asked the young man what they were doing in so early morning of the chilling winter. The young man told, the old man and the lady were his grandfather and grandmother. They were the owner of the land of the building in front of which they were offering the puja. His grandfather and grandmother still believed that their tutelary deity still living in the one part of the land where once they had their hut to live. The land was sold 75 rupees per khata, the present
market value of which is now more than 30 lakhs per khata. The purchaser of the land at the
time assured them they would be allowed them at the particular date and they used to come on
that date to offer their puja for their God. They were allowed to do the practice for some years.
But after the death of the karta of that family his son did not allow them to enter in to the house
and even when they came they were physically driven out by his sons. Still the old couple
bearing their faith in their mind used to come on that day every year at early in the morning
before they awake and left the place. The young man also said that he agreed to carry me
because he thought that I might shout to give the alarming call to the owner of the house. The
name of the young man was Santu Roy as he said. Now they were living at Rangapani a 10
kilometer distance from this town. There his grandfather purchased a piece of agriculture land
but the yield of this land is not sufficient to provide the food. His father cultivates the land and he
pulls the rickshaw.

After some years when I was writing the book on the ethnic unrest of North Bengal I liked
tenquire about the present position of Santu as a follow up of my previous experience I
gathered another striking experience that Santu was again displaced from this place as this
area was acquired by the Tista Barrage Project uprooting the inhabitants like Santu.

I don’t know whether Santu is still alive. But if so when Santu, the rickshaw puller carry the
passengers and passes by the side of the house he surely remember those days when his
grandfather used to come in front of the gate of that house like a thief and offered the puja. When
he pushes the paddle of his rickshaw with his tired legs and crosses the posh areas where
they once lived and now becomes a foreign land for him thinks within himself that they were
the lord of this land, now he is a rickshaw puller carrying the ‘Bhatias (the Rajbanshi community
used to call the Bengali Refugees as ‘Bhatia ‘ as they came from the land of ‘ Bhati’ the lower
stream of the river). To him the Bengali refugees appeared as the root of their misery. The word
of national integrity will not give the soothing feeling over his wounds of loosing of identity and
the displacement without having alternative for their subsistence except to become a daily labour
or the rickshaw puller like him. All the discontentment and the suppressed anger triggered
against another distressed peoples who were the victim of the forced circumstances upon which
they had no control. Most of them were ill clad and hungry people. But a section of the refugees
who were educated and some means to earn, they by dint of their educational skill and the money
whom they were able to bring with them purchased the land and change their fortune. That
section of people became the part of the representative of the Bengali refugee in the eyes of the
Rajbanshis community.

When the issues of deprivation raised in relation to North Bengal many of the people tried to
equate the problems with the economic position of the other districts of South Bengal without
taking into the consideration of the ethnic position of the three districts namely Cooch Behar,
Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and partly both the South and North Dinajpur and a part of Malda district.
The economic arrangement was also different from the other part of West Bengal. From the census report of 1890 not a single name of Bengali land lord was found. Nobody claim that people of Bankura, Purulia or Birbhum enjoy more economic benefit than the people of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri or Darjeeling but the culture and the identity of their people have not been lost by the incoming of the new coming influx of refugees as it has been experienced by the man of the soil of North Bengal like Santu.

4.6 CHANGE OF DEMOGRAPHIC POSITION

‘One important aspect of the refugees that has rarely been addressed either by the government or by the scholars is the cultural dimension of the refugee hood. It is erroneous to view the simply economic problem because the refugee’s self–identity is often anchored in on’s past, what he or she was than what she or he has become. What is true for the refugees of East Bengal it is similar true for the case of the Rajbanshis community.

From the state of record of the West Bengal Assembly that 1, 93000 refugees entered West Bengal between May to December of 1952. Most of them were the farmers of Barishal and Khulna districts of East Pakistan. Passport system was introduced in the year on 15th October, 1952. At the initial stage the rate of inflow of coming the refugees were comparatively lower but the government himself admitted that the number of immigrants was 1, 27,799 in 1954. In the second phase of the inflow most of them were land less labour of Bangladesh and belonged to the lower strata of the caste system of the Hindu community like Namashudra, Mahishya, and Sodgop. The Namasudra caste came to India at latest part of this influx because their leader Jogen Mandal who initially find a bondage with Muslim Community of Bangladesh as most of the converted Muslim belonged to the lower caste strata of the Hindu Community before their conversion. But at the end of the 50’s he also left East Pakistan and instructed his community to follow the same.

Besides this a large number of refugees having lost everything to sustain they took the shelter in different refugee camps. Among them there were many educated middle class and the people having different occupation. They organized the refugee movements. Under their leadership they occupied uncultivated barren land and established colonies over there. Virtually for their presence the local culture lost their presence. From the occupation of land labour to the small business went into their hands. The local inhabitants who lived there marginalized and forced to accept their supremacy. The influx of the refugee waves not only changed the demographic set up of North Bengal only but they did the same in some other states of North East India.

In that context the example of Tripura a tiny state of North East India will be a glaring example. Post–partition migration of 0.6 million had already resulted in complete migration of
Tripura’s original settlers, i.e. the tribals. To make matters worse, another 1 million people from East Pakistan entered in to Tripura during 1969 March 1971 leading 36.3% rise in its population against an all India average of 24.5%. The 1971 influx added another 1.45 million refugees and raised the density of population per kilometre from 60.91 to an incredible 195.95 during 1971-81 (Tripura Dist gazetteers New Delhi, 1975, p129). A government of Tripura publication (1972) maintained that the state with a population 1.55 million (1971) accommodated more than 1.3 million refugees (from Bangladesh) in camps sprawling over the entire state. This shows that refugees threatened to outnumber the existing population of Tripura in 1971. Almost the same crisis gripped Meghalaya too. Refugees there formed 70% of the original population which was around one million in 1971.

An alarming call has been echoing throughout the North East states against the Bengali speaking population as they apprehend for becoming the outnumber by the inflow of the migrants as they were the witnessed of the present situation in Tripura.

There was no scope to deny that from the census report we can have a picture about the demographic position of the country but it does not reflect the real position in all respect. The census workers during the work of enumeration they ask regarding their age, place of birth, from where they came etc. and the answering person gives his reply according to their suit, so that he should not put in into difficulty by disclosing the fact. If he is the same language of people he can present himself as the man of that locality. In other case he can establish him as a citizen of this country by producing ration card or any other identity which he procured by any means. The enumerator has nothing to do except to record his name.

In this context Assam is the glaring example. The lion share of the refugees and the immigrants were Hindus in west Bengal but it was not so in Assam. There the Bengali Muslims were the immigrants at first phase. By the end of the 19th century the Muslims in large number began to settle on the Brahmaputra valley. In the census report of 1931 it is found that the Bengali Muslim Population stood 30% of the total population of the state although they were only 4.9 % of the total population of the state in 1891. Those immigrants coming from East Bengal were mainly farmer and settled in the fallen land. Their appetite for land had no any limit and they began to encroach the government reserved land and the land of the local people. So the government of Assam introduced a demarcation line. Under this rule the Bengali Muslim were not allowed to purchase the land of the Ahom. The Bengali speaking Muslims raised their protest against this declaration; on the other hand, the Hindus of the Ahom extended their support in favour of it. The Muslim of Assam supported the Bengali Speaking Muslim to spread their religion.

After the independence the immigrants problems still remained in Assam and in addition a part of the Bengali speaking Hindu refugees find their way to settle there. At the initial stage the
Hindu Ahom did not raise protest against the Hindu Bengali refugees to settle there to counter the Muslim population of the state. The rate of growth of the Hindu and the Muslim will speak the truth. During the period 1951-1971 the rate of growth of the Muslim Population was 81.25 and the growth the Hindu population was during the same period was 83.25. In explaining the reason behind that Dr. Bhupen Sharma stated in his article ‘Immigration on an Politics in Assam ;Question relating to Human Rights’ he noted that 7 lakhs Bengali Hindu refugees settled in Assam during that period. The Ahoms were on the cross roads They were apprehending of being outnumbered in question of religion and seeking the presence of the Hindu Bengali and on the other hand , apprehending for being marginalized in question of linguistic group which provoked them to launch the ‘Bangal Khedao’ (drive out Bengali) movement in Assam. Besides, the middle trade and business, like shops, whole sell, and contactor were in the hands of Bengali traders. The traditional Marwari business class were far behind them. Many of them, it is believed that they extended their support to ignite the anti Bengali feeling behind the screen. In that discussion one more important point should be remembered. The Marwari business community is the leading business community throughout the country but they confined themselves within their business arena and do not come out from this circle to interfere over the cultural field of the others. But the picture for Bengali is quite opposite. They do not confine themselves within their circle of profession but try to establish their cultural supremacy over the others. At the initial stage when the socio–cultural position of the local community is not so developed they will accept the cultural supremacy of the others until the education is developed to produce the middle class intelligentsia to lead their cultural movement. This the universal phenomena of the social history. The conflict begins from that point. When the educated middle class of the aboriginal people of Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and lastly, North Bengal, the area of the study of the research emerged in strong position they find that culture, history and even their identity in some extent has been subdued by the supremacy of the Bengali culture. Even the chairs of the administrative office including the mercantile organization and the educational posts which are generally the focus points of the middle class generation have already been occupied by the Bengalis who by dint of their educational and cultural advantage are placed in the pivotal role to determine the culture as a whole. It cannot be denied that during the 19th century the Bengalis specially the Hindu Bengali took the advantage by accepting the western education and their culture .That is why the Bengali could took the leadership throughout the country at that period. Now the situation has completely changed. With the emergence of strong educated middle class in other province now in a position not only to challenge the Bengali but even superseded them in many respect.

This is the process of history. The Bengalis were invited at that time to fill the vacuum of the intellectual work like to teach, administer the administration, to treat the patient, to do the practice in law. The Bengali responded to this invitation because they were also searching to employ themselves in different fields and contributed a lot to develop the educated middle class of the local community. Now when this newly emerged educated middle class wants to move
along their desired path they find that most of the path have already been occupied by the Bengalis. Naturally they cannot accept the position by remembering their contribution towards their development, rather, they will treat them as the most obstacle in their progress.

What is true for Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura it is equally true for North Bengal where a different race of aboriginal community lived with their glorious past. When the social problems become the political issue for the sake of the poll politics searching of the roots of the problems do not find their place in their agenda. The present researcher has narrated elaborately the problems of immigrants from the neighbouring Bangladesh but as the present research study has been centralized within the limit of North Bengal the discussion may come back to that area. As the refugee influx caused the complete change of the demographic position of North Bengal I take the help of the experience from the other neighbouring states only to understand the impact of the refugee influx over this territory.

Siliguri is known as the self declared capital of North Bengal although no comparison is possible between Siliguri and the capital of the state, Calcutta, or any other capital of A class state or even the second or third city of many states of the country. However, Siliguri is known as the town of rickshaw. The Municipal Corporation of the town cannot give the exact number of rickshaw that is running in the town although they are the sanctioning authority of the Rickshaw for the town. From the corporation source although it is learnt that near about eight thousands rickshaws got the license but near about 40000 to 45000 rickshaws are operating in the town. Previously, almost all the rickshaw pullers were Bihari community coming to this town from Behar but now almost all of them either Rajbanshi or Bengali. Further, from the conversation during my field study for this research work it is revealed that most of the Rajbanshi rickshaw puller came to this town either Rajbanshi dominated villages of Cooch Behar or Jalpaiguri and most of the Bengali Rickshaw pullers came from Bangladesh crossing over the border by paying money to the agents. Keeping aside the corruption and the political implication it indicates a grave social scenario of this region. The Behari community ceased to come indicating that they are either getting employment in their own state or they get the offer to fetch more income by the other state for other attractive opportunity. On the other hand, the incoming of the flow of the Rajbanshi from the villages as mentioned early an indication of the poverty that they have faced in the villages. Rajbanshis were predominantly farmer by their tradition and introvert by their nature and tried remain in their native place and engaged in agriculture. When they are coming to Siliguri or any other towns of North Bengal it is a clear indication that they are becoming more and more land less labour and finding no job in the village they forced to migrate to the towns and take the job for the rickshaw puller for hire rickshaw.

Same can be said for the Bangladeshi who crossed over the porous border and entered the town and in many cases they have changed their Muslim identity and named Hindu name in
order to conceal their original identity and throw dust in the eyes of the administration from their Bangladeshi identity. One experience of this researcher in this context may be cited here.

4.7 A CASE STUDY

A young married woman was engaged as maid servant in my house. She identified herself by a Hindu name, had the ‘Sindur (vermilion) on her Hair-parting and the shell-bangle on her hands as a mark of the married Hindu Family. She not only works in my house but she did the same for number of houses. She often asked the members of my family, ‘being a Hindu family why we are not performing any ritual Hindu practice in our house as if she is an earnest devotee of Hinduism. It was noticed by some other house where she also worked that she is not taking any food during the holy Idd. In the next year when she was observing the Idd by not taking food during her work one house lady noticed it and directly asked her whether she is Hindu or Muslim. When that lady confessed that she is a Muslim not Hindu and came to India through the Fulbari Border as they had no any means to sustain their life in Bangladesh. The land lady of that house was a bigot Hindu and she immediately asked her to leave the job. I do not know whether and how she purified herself as she has taken the water from the hand of a Muslim. That lady came to my house to know whether she would be allowed to continue her work in my house because she was threatened by that Hindu lady that no Hindu house will allow her to work in their house. When my family assured her that she would be allowed to work as usual she gave us thanks but on the next day she ceased to come to my house. I tried to locate her house where she told she live but informed by their neighbour that with her husband (who worked as rickshaw puller) she left without telling them where she was going and even their neighbour (mostly Hindu) was not aware of their religious identity. Most probably she left that place out of fear that after disclosing her identity she would be pushed back to Bangladesh by the police.

Fig: 4.7.1 Once the owner of the land now became a rickshaw puller.
The carrying capacity of Bangladesh as stated by Begum Khaleda Jia the then Prime minister of Bangladesh in 1991 on the occasion of the World Population Day was 13 cores. Her warning was if the population crosses this carrying limit Bangladesh would be in severe danger. At present the population of Bangladesh is near about 1,622,210,000 more than the carrying capacity. (Manorama Year Book 2010) The danger not only for Bangladesh the danger like the flood water brought the devastating effect over India.

If the accumulation of water in the dam crosses the carrying capacity in order to save the dam it has to open the flood gate of the dam otherwise the accumulated water will explode the dam and bring the catastrophic effect over the vast areas and will not bind by any limit of the boundary. The situation of Bangladesh is now like that. In the first stage they forced the Hindus to cross over the border and take shelter in India and that has been narrated earlier. Now they are indulging the Muslims to follow the same to ease the explosive population pressure over the country. Even a section of the Bangladesh people demanding the ‘Labe Sroun’ theory for Bangladesh following the theory of Hitler for the greater land to live for the Germans. Their demand also a greater land to accommodate the vast population of Bangladesh.

Keeping the above fact one should examine the impact of the influx of the refugees on the local people and their role in the ethnic unrest of North Bengal. For that reason I am submitting the study on Jalpaiguri dist of North Bengal which I have selected taking the account of its historical background and ethnic diversity.

4.8 CASE STUDY OF A DISTRICT (JALPAIGURI)

Jalpaiguri Dist was a part of both the Kamtapur and Cooch Behar dynasty. So the history of this district is the history of those dynasty. The unique variety of the demographic distribution and the contrast in geographical features Jalpaiguri earned the name of a district of the museum of ethnic diversity. Jalpaiguri has 151 dialects and languages of which 35 are yet to be classified. Here one can find the hill tribes on one side and in another side it can be find the population came from the east along with the tribal peoples of the middle part of the country. Above all the refugees of East Bengal came in waves. So the heart beat of this district are multi faced.

Sishu Singha, the brother of Biswa singha, the founder of the Cooch Dynasty established the Baikanta pur Dynasty. He did not stay in this dynasty because he had to stay with his elder brother, Biswa Singha in the capital of Cooch Dynasty to expand that dynasty and to keep the security of the capital. In order to protect the fort on the Western border of the Cooch dynasty he built the fort and appointed his son as the authority of that fort. Here emerged the Baikantapur dynasty. Firstly its capital was established at Siliaguri (Present Siliguri) of the then Dabgram Mouza. At that time its name was Nijabaikantapur. After that during the period of Joyanta Deb the capital was transferred to the present Jalpaiguri. The history of the Baikantapur dynasty has already been discussed earlier.
The Nayeb of Rangpur during the reign of Suja attacked Baikantapur and took Bikram Deb and Darpa Deb as captive and put into the prison in Rangpur. The Moughal ruler converted the Baikantapur dynasty in to a paraganas, the area of which was 380 sq. miles out of which the area of the cultivable land was only 222 sq miles.

During the last period of Sirajuddla, the Nawab of Bengal both the political and economic position became worse. Kashem Ali the Fauzdar of Rangpur released Bikram Deb and Darpa Deb after seven years and again posted for the post of Raikat. But immediate after that the Bhutan army attacked Baikantapur taking the advantage of the inner conflict among the Raikat family and annexed the land from the foot hills of the mountain to a vast plain of Baikantapur kingdom. This area is known as the Duars or the Duar. The area of this duars is 1863 sq. miles.

During this period a group of people known as ‘Sanayasi’ gathered near the border of the Baikantapur kingdom. Although they were called Sanayasi because of their dress and hair but they were not at all Sanayasi or the hermit. They made their settlement between the river Mechi and Mahanada of Terai which was known as East Morang. This area was at that time part of Sikkim and the ruler of Sikkim was too weak to maintain the law and order from his capital. Taking the advantage of both the administrative and military weakness a large group of people in disguise of the hermit of the ‘Giri’ community and Fakir took the shelter in that inaccessible forest cover land. They lived in a group under a particular leader. They used to plunder in the areas of company and returned to this shelter before the rainy season.

The English company complained that the Raikats indulging the Sanasysis by giving shelter and even employing them in their army and sent the troops against the Baikantapur kingdom. Darpadeb fled from the capital and after living incognito for more than one year he sent the surrender proposal before Warren Hastings. Hasting approved his appeal and imposed more tax for that. From that period the name of Jalpaiguri began to use widely. In the year 1773, 3rd February, Captain Robert Sturat used the word ‘Julpiguri’ in his letter sent to Milners Decars of Rajmahal on a matter of Darpadeb. No doubt this ‘Julpiguri is the present Jalpaiguri. (N.B. from the present research work on ‘Sannyasi’ rebellion contradicted them as plunderer as claimed by the English ruler and some of the research work even claimed it is really a rebellion against the colonial rule. However, this issue is out of place here, it is mentioned only to denote the geographical as well the political context of Jalpaiguris).^5

In the discussion of Jalpaiguri or the Baikantapur dynasty the relation between Bhutan and Jalpaiguri and also the relation between Bhutan and the Company become an automatic choice to be discussed. Because the present Jalpaiguri and the distribution of demographic pattern and the present area of the district closely related with Bhutan.

The issue of conflict between the Colonial rule and Bhutan even after the rule of crown was the trade relation with Tibet. For that reason the ‘door’ of Bhutan which presently known as
Dooars was so important for both the Colonial ruler and Bhutan. The traders of Bhutan belonged to the royal family of Bhutan. So the interest of trade and the interest of the country became same. For the English they prefer to establish trade relation with Tibet rather to expend their territory over this region. The English force engaged with battle with Bhutan to save the Cooch Behar dynasty from the attack of Bhutan but when the request came from Stashi Lama of Tibet on behalf of the defeated Bhutan the company immediately responded that request. The company ruler accepted the demand by handing over the areas on the bank of the Tista, namely Jolpesh, Kranti, Ambari Falakta of Baikantapur to Bhutan. Even when the Bhutan army occupied a portion of territory beyond those areas the company remained silent in the hope that in exchange of that area Bhutan would allow their territory for them for the trade with Tibet. When there was war between China and Nepal in the year 1775, the company acted neutral inspite of the request of Nepal to extend their support in that war because of the request came from Tibet to remain neutral in this war. The company hoped that by doing this they could win the heart of Tibet and would open their door for them for the trade. In doing this the company helped to establish the influence of China over Tibet than that of England.

In the year of 1816 Nepal was defeated in the hands of the English Army. In the next year, i.e. in 1817 in the month of February, the company entered with a treaty with Sikkim which is called Tatulia agreement. Under this agreement the areas between the Mechi and the Mahananda river known Morang which was taken way by Nepal handed over again to Sikkim. But the relation between Bhutan and the company could not remain friendly. The army of Bhutan under the direct participation of the members of the Royal Family used to attack the princely state that the company rule had the obligation to protect. So the Crown Rule marched their army against Bhutan in 1864. The English ruler realized that through this dense forest it would not be possible for them to proceed further but from the they began to think to establish the administrative set up on the border of Sikkim to watch the political situation of the kingdoms of the Himalayas. To achieve this objective they required the Dooars as mentioned earlier.

4.9 DOOARS AND TEA PLANTATION

The area of the Dooars was 1860 sq. miles. the revenue earned from this area during the period 1866-67 was 1laks 3 thousands rupees. In exchange of the Dooars the Company agreed to pay the compensation to Bhutan 25 thousands rupees per year and it had been increased from the subsequent years 35 thousand, 45 thousands and on the fourth year 50 thousands.

The colonial ruler organized the Dooars into three divisions:

(1) the areas between the Tista and the Torsa rivers marked as the first division, and its administrative office was in Mainaguri.

(2) the second division was between the river Torsa and Sankosh, Its administrative office was in Alipurduar.
(3) The third division was the hilly areas which was known as Dalimkot. The administrative head of those division was designated as the Deputy Commissioner.

1st July of 1867 Dalimkot was annexed with Darjeeling. Under the jurisdiction of the deputy commissioner of the West Dooars were Boda, Sannyasikata, and the Fakirgang police station of Tatulia of Rangpur. The revenue department was under Rangpur. In the year of 1869, 1st July Tatulia subdivision separated from Rangpur and annexed with the Dooars and that area took the place in the map as the district of Jalpaiguri.

If one wants to compare Jalpaiguri dist with any of the district of West Bengal he will find that this district has no mach with any other district neither in respect of its geographical features nor in respect of demographic distribution or languages. This district is comparable with its own only.

The ratio between the total number of population and the tribal population it is higher among the other districts of the states. In the year of 2001, the total population was 34, 03,204 out of which 5, 89,255 was the tribes, in percentage 21.04 of the total population; 10,35,917, belonged to scheduled caste representing 36.99% of the total population. As it has already been mentioned that in this district there are 151 mother languages. Out of which 8 are classified as foreign languages, 35 languages yet to be classified. Out of the remaining 101 languages 46 belonged to Aryan groups of languages, 24 belong to Bhot-Chinese, 19 belong to Austrian, and 12 belonged to Drabidian group of languages. In one word, Jalpaiguri district is the little edition of the Indian subcontinent.

With the establishment of the tea gardens in 1874 the labours from the other parts of the country were brought to this place to clear the forest and plant the tree bush. The local Rajbanshi community were not willing to join in the plantation. Not a single worker in the tea garden in Dooars was found from Rajbanshi community. At the initial stage labours from East Nepal was brought but they could not withstand the humid and hot temperature of the plains. So the planters had to engage the agents known as ‘Arkati’ to bring the labour mainly from poverty striken tribal areas of Chhotanagpur Plateau and Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

In the year of 1874 the first tea garden of Dooars was at Gajoldoba which was washed away due to the change of the course of the Tista. In the hilly areas of this district the inhabitants were the tribes like Bhutias, Doara, Toto, Dupka etc. In the plain land of the south of this district the inhabitants were Mech, Rava, Garo, Toto, Tundu, Doara, Pani, Koch, Khenia, Lepcha, Jalda and some others. Those inhabitants were engaged in shifting cultivation. Land was plenty although the vast areas were covered under forest. Their demand was minimum. Everyone has their own language. And mostly confined within their own territory. Here the geographic factor played a very important role in their social distribution. As it was densely forest and separated from each other by rough terrain so every community circled within the narrow space of their own territory.
After the establishment of the tea garden and with the rapid speed of their expansion more and more tribal labours were brought to clear the forest and prepare the land suitable for the tea gardens. Those tribes were brought from the middle part of the land for which they are still called ‘Madeshia’ by the local people were, Oran, Munda, Santal, Kheria, Asur, Mahali, Bhumij, Kora, Nagasia, Shabar, Ho, Malpaharia, Parhaiya, Birhar etc.

From the very fact that it was very difficult to collect the labours for the tea garden in absence of the non participant of the local peoples. That may be an interesting point of discussion for the social scientist as well as the geographer to study the factors in establishing the industry of a region, particularly which industry is labour oriented industry. In almost in all plantation economy the labours are required to bring from the outside specially where the local population is sparse. For example, banana plantation of Philippines, Coffee plantation in Brazil, Sugar cane plantation in Cuba and tea plantation in Ceylon. In every case there find at least a section of participation from the local people. But in the case of tea plantation of Dooars not a single name could found in the list of the tea plantation worker who belonged to the Rajbanshi and other aboriginal community of this region.

The agents could collect the tea labours from the tribal belt of Chotanagpur and Orissa because during that period no mines was practically discovered in this area. On the other hand, the land was not fertile at all. It was the poorest area of the country. So the labour was also cheapest. But they had no idea the pathetic environ of the Dooars. Wild animals, snakes lichen black fever, malaria above all unbearable exploitation by the planters. Many labours were died in the plantation areas. From the book titled ‘History of the Indian Tea History’ it is found that from 1863 May to 1866, 1st May, during this three years number of labours from the tribal areas were brought for the plantation work were 84,915. Out of which 31476 were died.

The tea plantation in North Bengal was first started in Darjeeling. The English planters could realize that this area would be the paradise for the tea plantation. The Palatation of tea Act was passed stating that the planters had to give tax for the leas land which had been given for the tea garden. But the tax was so minimum it was almost free for the planters. Taking the advantage of this act Bruham first established the tea garden in the Dooars area at Gajoldoba which was washed way due to the change of the course of the river Tista. After that one by one tea gardens like Fulbari (1875), Dalimcot (1876), Bagracot (1876), Kumlai (1877), Damdim (1877), Washabari(1877), Manbari (1877), Money hope (1878), Patabari (1878), Ranichora (1878) and others tea gardens were grown. And by 1930 there were 150 tea gardens find its place in the map of only in Dooars.

The Dooars can be divided into two: West Dooars and the East Dooars. The East Dooars includes Kumargram area and the West Dooars includes Mal and Bagrkot area. Here it should
be noticed that the number of tea gardens of West Dooars was far more than the East Dooars. One of the main reasons for that Mal or the western Dooars was trade route for the trade from India to Bhutan and Tibet. It was connected with Jalpaiguri over the Barnish Ghat of the Tista. In the year 1878 this area was connected with Jalpaiguri through the Northern state Railway. For the need of the tea growers Bengal Dooars Railway was established in the year 1896. In case of Eastern Dooars, the rail connection was made far later.

Initially tea garden was not allowed to establish in the agricultural land. But under the pressure of the tea growers’ government began to allow the agricultural land for the tea plantation. As a result, more and more farmers were uprooted from their agricultural land and became the landless labour. The Rajbanshis were farmers by their birth. They could not think any other profession except the agriculture and its allied items. Being uprooted from the agricultural land they became the landless labour but no one joined in the plantation work.

4.10 POPULATION PATTERN OF JALPAIGURI

Before the partition many peoples from East Bengal were coming to get the agricultural land as there was plenty of land for agriculture. From the census report of 1881 it is found that from Darjeeling, Dinajpur, Rangpur, and Cooch Behar the number of 44118 peoples came to settle here. The number of this incoming population increased day by day. In 1881 the Rajbanshi community in Dooars was 45% of the total population. But in 1992, it came down 30 % of the total population.

The ownership of the land also went from the hand of the Rajbanshis to the incoming people. From the field study and from the enquiry from the most of the local people revealed that most of the new owner were money lenders. That means they used to lend the money at higher rate taking the advantage of their poverty and ignorance and ultimately grabbed the land. From the records it is found that in 1905 only in Falakata the number of 205 Jots were sold. The purchasers of those lands were Marowari, Non Bengali traders and Kabuli. In Totgaon, Udalbari, Sangaon, and fulbari of Mainaguri Tahasil 102 jots were sold at the same time Most of the purchaser of those lands were money landers (Grunning).

Let’s have a look about the increase of the population of this newly formed district. From 1872 to1921 the rate of the increase of the population of this district was 244.2% at the same time the increase of the population of Alipurduar subdivision was 1042.3%. The major part of this incoming population was farmer. Most of them came mainly from Rangpur, Dinajpur, Pabna, Malda, Rajsahi, Bagura, Goalpara and Mayamansingh. Land lords of this district welcomed them because they were eager to convert the forest land in to the agriculture land and the local labours were not available. The problems started after 1920. The fallen lands were distributed. The
incoming farmers were the experienced farmers so they could produce the surplus product and thus earned the money to purchase the agricultural land of the Rajbanshis. The incoming population on one hand and on the other hand, losing the agricultural land the local Rajbanshis becoming land less ‘Refugees’ in their own home land.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>95,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1,52,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1,63,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>1,58,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1,56,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>2,78,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>4,54,177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the census report of 1961 it is found that 2, 14,381 persons of this district were born in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. From the same census it shows that a number of 1, 71,617 immigrants coming from the then East Pakistan made their settlement in the villages of the district.

At the time of the independence the Jalpaiguri district was also victim of the partition not only in question of the burden of refugees but also in question of the areas as a vast part of the district went to East Pakistan. The west part of the Tatulia P.S, Panchagar, Banda, Debigang, and Patgram covering an area of 672 sq. miles went to East Pakistan. At that time the numbers of Hindu refugees were almost equal to the number of Muslims who went to Pakistan but after 1951 the picture was completely reversed. The number of the Hindu refugees crossed over the border to settle here was several times more than the Muslims who went to East Pakistan. This was reflected in the population growth rate of this district. During the period of 1951-61 the rate of growth of the population was more than double than that of the average growth rate of the population of the state. From the census report of 1971. It is found that the population of the district was increased by 3, 90,867. Out of which the increase of population in the villages was by 3, 46,601 and in the same time the increase of the population in the urban areas was marked by 44,266.

It should be noted here that most of the Rajbanshis were farmer and they were confined in the villages. But this pressure of incoming population made the Rajbanshis more and more landless peasants and driven them from the village in search of work. It was beyond of the
imagination some decades ago that the women of the Rajbanshis community coming out from their orthodox society and doing work as a ‘jogali’ (helper) of mason.

Jalpaiguri was the divisional town and in the divisional office so there needed number of educated administrative stuffs. From their records it revealed that none of them from the Rajbanshis community. Those who joined in the administrative post most of them belonged to upper caste Bengali Hindu. They came mainly from East Bengal. The lawyers of subdivision or the district court were also from the same place.

It is the irony, the district which was developed with its vast population, imagined its golden economy with the establishment of the tea gardens, brought the labours by sending the ‘arkati’ to the central part of the country now becoming a dying a town. In the year of 1951 the total number of the tea garden workers in Jalpaiguri was 1, 76,196. In the year of 1980 this number came down to 1, 43,022. This retrenched workers tried to make their shelter in the villages. The conflict between the Bodo and the Santal is the result of this new phenomenon. The number of the Santal tea workers in the tea plantation represents a lion share. Many of the members of their family also engaged in the farming occupation. A group of the retrenched tea workers entered into the area of Assam which was adjacent to West Bengal and dominated by the Bodo community, The Santals entered the forest area and began to clear the land for the cultivation. The Bodo used Shifting cultivation and they were apprehending the losing of their shifting cultivation land, the consequence of which both the tribal community engaged in to conflict which took some life.

From the name of the Paras of Jalpaiguri, like Hakimpara, Keranipara, Babupara, Ukilpara, etc. indicates that the employees coming from the outside took the leading role in cultural field of the town. Another notable things may be brought into the account, inspire of the rule of the Rajbanshis for more than 400 years a very few of them engaged in the tea plantation. Except two or three names like Raja Prasanna Naryan and Bhoji Narayan Singha no others name could be found in the list of the tea planters of this district.

The cultural activities in town and villages which gave a name of Jalpaiguri a district of cultural district the local Rajbanshis had no place in it. Under the dominance of the Bengali culture the Rajbanshi culture was becoming more and more marginalized and they even forgot their mother tongue. So uprooting from the land on one hand, on the other hand, being marginalized in the cultural field their conceit turned in to the utter grievance.

Demand for the recognition of the Kamtapur language as the principal language needs a separate chapter to discuss. But before going into that chapter lets have glance over this subject in the context of Jalpaiguri.
4.11 LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY OF JALPAIGURI

In the census report of 1961 it is found that 7, 40,829 out of the total population of 13, 59,292 i.e. 54.5% had enrolled their mother tongue as Bengali. Most striking feature is that, not only the Bengali speaking Hindus and Muslims had stated Bengali language as their mother tongue but most of the Rajbanshis, a sustantial number of the Mech also among them who enrolled their mother tongue as Bengali. At that period the total number of the Rajbanshis of the district was 3, 16,020. Out of which only 18,687 means only 6% of the total Rajbanshis of the district stated that their mother tongue was either Koch or Rajbanshi. Rest of them recognized Bengali as their mother tongue. The number of the Mech at that time was 13,178. Out of which 9,936 or 75.39% of their total population recorded their mother tongue as Mech (Tibet-Burma) After Bengali language the Kuruk language occupied as the second largest language of this district. The number of the Oraon at that time was 1,61,953 and 89 % of their total population recorded their mother tongue either Oraon, or Kuruk Oraon or Kishan Kuruk or Lohari Kuruk.

In the Gokhaland movement in the same way, Subhas Gising, the Chairman of the DGHC. claimed their language is not Nepali, but Gorkhali. The total number of Nepali during this period in Jalpaiguri was 1, 13043. Out of which only 60 people declared their mother tongue is Gorkhali. 296 noted their mother tongue is Gurung , 75 recorded their mother tongue as limbu, 5 recorded Kami, 495 noted Mongar,1,09,253 recorded their mother tongue is Khaskura Nepali, 28 Newari, 109 Rai, 46 Shera ,2,667 Tamang.

Another interesting matter that is found in this district is that 76,610 Munda declared their mother tongue as Sandri. This language that has evolved in Jalpaiguri which can be compared with the formation of Urdu language. The origin of this language is recent time. Ho and Munda of this district specially in the tea garden area speak in the newly formed Sadri language. Near about one lakh Ho or Munda live in the tea plantation area of Dooars. ‘They live in scatter way. In the tea garden majority of the workers are Oraon and they are the dominating group. In outer field they have to use either Hindi or Bengali. As a result a mixed language of Oraon, Mundar, Bengali and Hindi have been originated known as Sandri.

Another matter is that 76,610 Munda declared their mother tongue as Sandri. This language that has evolved in Jalpaiguri which can be compared with the formation of Urdu language. The origin of this language is recent time. Ho and Munda of this district specially in the tea garden area speak in the newly formed Sadri language. Near about one lakh Ho or Munda live in the tea plantation area of Dooars. ‘They live in scatter way. In the tea garden majority of the workers are Oraon and they are the dominating group. In outer field they have to use either Hindi or Bengali. As a result a mixed language of Oraon, Mundar, Bengali and Hindi have been originated known as Sandri.

The present discussion is not aimed at the language formation or the distribution of language in the district of Jalpaiguri. So there is no need of giving the statistics of each language of this district. But in the discussion it will be an inevitable point of discussion that when the most of the Rajbanshis community declared their mother tongue as Bengali in the census then how the very language Rajbanshi now playing the most powerful catalyst in the formation of the such emotive outburst for the demand of a separate state.
When the Rajbanshi declared himself as Hindu they adopted more and more Bengali culture to become more and more Hinduised. The Royal family adopted Bengali as their royal language.

During the Muslim period to know Pharsi and during the period of English rule to know English was the symbol of pride and in the same time those two languages were the instruments for the entry into the establishment in the administrative field as well as for the elite society. Similarly when the royal family of the Cooch Behar dynasty adopted their court language Bengali, this language also became the pride for the newly grown educated middle class in the nineteenth century. Even now a section of the educated Bengali feels pride in saying that his son or daughter cannot speak in Bengali but very much strong both in speaking and writing English. Under the tremendous domination of Bengali culture the Rajbanshis as a general rule accepted Bengali culture including Bengali Language. Now with the emergence of the educated middle class intellectual in the Rajbanshi Community and the question of identity and their glorious past as a general rule of the social history become the strong weapons of the Rajbanshi community.

4.12 THE ROLE OF THE BENGALI THE MAJOR DOMINATING GROUP OF PEOPLES OF NORTH BENGAL

In the west the demand of Jharkhand, in the plains of north the demand for Kamtapur and in the hills there is cry for the Gorkha land. The Bengali is the major group of population and now feels the responsibility of being the majority community. They are now between two fires. Both the hills and the plains are looking at the majority group of population of the state. In their eyes Bengal is for Bengalis. The capital of West Bengal is the capital of Bengali. Two stages are formed in this state. On one stage there is the Bengali, the majority group of population and on the other stage there are the minority groups of the people. Two stages are looking each other with utter suspicion. One stage suspects that although economically weak but culturally advanced the Bengali population with the advantage of their demographic majority will grab their cultural and historical identity. Other stage suspects the minority groups of population trying to disintegrate their authority by demanding the separation in the name of self determination and identity. A state of distrust influenced the whole environment. One front being displaced from their homeland known as the refugee is trying to resettle here. On the other hand, the others front try to consolidate themselves against this incoming peoples out of fear that they will not only lose their identity but may be forced to be displaced with the wave of the influx of the incoming peoples.

So the issues are social, economic, and cultural. The issue of the settlement of one group of population and on the other hand, it is the issue of losing the identity of the others. The problems circling around the focal point of these issues. So the problems are mental, social, historical, economical, environmental and geographical. So these problems cannot be solved in the name of separatist movement and cannot be curbed taking it as a law and order problems.
4.13 THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF MAJORITY COMMUNITY

It should be remembered that the democracy as it is accepted by the majority it may not beat the same feelings for the minority. The majority by dint of their demographic supremacy can implement of their wishes. So to him, oppose the decision of the majority means against the democracy. He considers him as the main stream and takes the other as the sub stream of the main stream. As a result, when the minority group of races challenges the decision of the majority races it amounts in the eyes of the majority as the disobedience from the part of the minority.

On the other side, when the minority feels that their sentiments and opinions are not getting the due weight by the majority a sense of inferiority complex may grow in their mind. They think that they have to revolve around the mercy and decision of the majority like a satellite moving around the planet. This feeling ultimately produces the two fronts, one ‘they’ and the other ‘us’. Conflicts thus start. This conflict between the ‘us’ and ‘they’ not only in West Bengal or India but beating the war drum throughout the world.

To prescribe the proper medicine against the disease it requires finding out the root of the disease. Similarly, to solve the conflict before it turns into armageddon between the two one should try to understand the basic causes of this conflict without any pre conceived conjecture.

Who were living in this north eastern part of Bengal is the archaeological subject to dig it out but the ancient inhabitants of this part of Bengal is the Koch /Rajbanshi is the reality of to-day. If they find that their symbols are erasing from the history under the pressure of the incoming flow of the community that will hurt their sentiments, this reality has not find in the minds of the major groups of the population.

The aboriginal people of North Bengal similarly feel a pain when they see that the incoming weaves of the new peoples of different origin of races not only turned them in to a minority group of population but also removing the names of the places and the institutes bearing their symbol of identity to install the names and the identity of the new comers. No races of the world accept such kind of obliteration of their identity due to the cultural invasion of the other.

Here lies the difference between the North and South Bengal after the partition of the country and the impact of the influx of the refugees in this stare. Where the culture, language, and tradition of the local peoples were at stake even in the South Bengal they raised their voice against the incoming peoples to save their culture and tradition. But the situation in that context in North Bengal is such acute and deep that no comparison is possible to measure the fathom of their gravity between these two parts of the state. It should bear in mind that the demographic patter of the North and South of the state is quite different from each other.
During my field study on this issue I came across a glaring example in this context which was duly recorded in my books Under the title ‘Bichhinater Utsya Sandhyane Kamtapur theke Uttat Purba Bharat’ (P 204).

4.14 A CASE STUDY: CHANGE OF THE NAME OF A SCHOOL FROM DARPANARAYAN TO VIVEKANANDA SCHOOL

The place is Siliguri. The name of the area is Hakim Para. The present price of the land is 30-40 lakhs rupees per khata. There is a school named Vivekananda School. This school was constructed on the land of near 40 khatas donated by Sarat Burman belonged to Rajbanshi community on the condition that this school would be by the name of his father late Darpa narayan. The committee members all belonged to Bengali Community and agreed this condition and named the school after the name of his father ‘Darpa Narayan School.’ But after five years without giving any prior information to the donor of the land they changed the name of the school from “Darpanaryan School” to “Vivekananda School.”

Fig: 4.14.1 Siliguri Vivekananda Bidyalay
There is another school in this town in the name of Terai Tarapada High School. One tea planter named Tara pada Banerjee donated some money with a condition that the name of the school would be such name as it mentioned.

The name of Swami Vivekananda is a name of utterance of a great person, no doubt, but if a Rajbanshi young of today raises a question, is there anybody will dare to change the name of Teri Tarapada High School to rename it after a great name of great personality? He asked me, If the name of that school would have been in the name of any name of a Bengali instead of Darpanarayan whether there is any body to dare the change of name without having a prior consent from the donor? So many examples of this nature are there. . The Rajbanshi community of today now thinking that as they are now being marginalized with the incoming influx of the Bengali community they are losing their identity and their names are obliterated by the new names.

The names of the roads, newly constructed bridges are named in town or other locality by the names of the great names. These names are almost chosen from the names of the Bengali personalities. But there were so many names in the Rajbanshis community who had a great contribution in the history of these regions. Their names did not find any place in the mind of those authorities who were taken the task of naming the same. For example, Siliguri College is now a college of reputation in the state. A big area of land covering several acres were donated by one Rajbanshi educationist of Siliguri, named Biren Roy Sarkar. This area is a posh area of Siliguri town. The present price of the land is not less than 40 lakhs per khata. The question is not the price of the land, Question lies elsewhere. The members of the family of late Roy Sarkar expressed their opinion during an interview with this researcher that you the Bengali refugee did not bother to remember the name of Biren Roy Sarkar. So many names are ascribed in the college but no where there is a single mention of the name of Biren Roy Sarkar who donated the land for the college.’ These feeling of deprivation not only knock the heart of the Roy Chowdhury family but it knocks sentiments the door of the whole community.

Fig 4.14.2 The land of Siliguri College was donated by one Rajbanshi landlord.
Raja Rammohan Roy the pioneer of the renascence of the 19th century. He is memorable of every one. But history never tells that he ever visited North Bengal. The name of the place where the North Bengal University is situated is newly named after the name of Raja Rammohon Roy, Raja Rammohan pur. Perhaps, at the time of naming that place those people who named it never thought another great name of Thakur Panchanan Burman the pioneer of the Renascence of North Bengal. He was a great educationist and social reformer. Very recently a university by his name just going to set forth his journey which is a welcome step no doubt. If the said gesture was shown a few years back when the feelings of deprivation was just in the nascent state it would not get the scope to germinate in to the ethnical unrest. The very name either of the place where the University of North Bengal is established or the name of the first university of North Bengal would be given in the name of Thakur Panchanan Burman as said by so many educated youth during the interview that was made for this study.

Throughout the centuries the Rajbanshis of North Bengal kept the flame of their independent identity and their culture when the other dynasty one after another surrendered their independence in the hands of the mighty invaders. The new comers, mainly the wave of the Bengali refugees if paid an attention to keep the cultural identity of the local people the relation would have been otherwise. There are so many roads in Siliguri but at least one main road should be contributed for the remembering of Thakur Panchanan Burman. The culture and the integration of different communities develop on mutual respect and mutual recognition of each identity.

It is often found that the middle class educated people take the other classes who were behind then in respect of education and culture in disrespectful eyes. The Bengali refugees were not exception. In the Rajbanshi community the senior member of the family or the society called their junior ‘Bahe’. This address was like as the ‘Bapu He’, which usually used by the elders to their junior members of the family. The incoming Bengali refugees began to address the members of the Rajbanshi community as ‘Bahe’ and then again as ‘Bau’ just to mark as the disrespect towards them. Even the little boys and the girls of the Bengali community used this word without taking in to the account of the impact of such disrespect.

The researcher of this study during his boy hood heared such address made by the Bengali in general. This was just the defamatory addresses ‘Native’ or ‘Nigar’ made by the colonial ruler towards the subjects.

Now the Rajbanshi community raised the very basic question whether they are Bengali or not, which answer needs to be given by the Rajbanshi Community itself. The Bengali needs to introspect why after so many years living side by side and taking themselves as the part of the Bengali as a whole, why the Rajbanshis now feeling alienated from the Bengali and even feel to need a separate state for their own as they are the major community like the big brother of the family. It was the primary responsibility of the Bengali community not to indulge such behaviour
toward the minority community so their sentiment should not be hurt because the minority as a general rule has the feeling of insecurity from the majority.

The Bengali could not claim that they are secular and united in general. An experience narrated by Prof. Baniprasanna Mishra of North Bengal University during his visit at Meghalaya which I included in my book as depicted before. He told that while he was travelling by a car his driver during some conversation said that the Bengali are very dubious in nature. Prof Mishra out of his curiosity asked the reason of this remark against the Bengali. The khasi driver replied that the Bengali could not remain united. They divided their land in the name of the Hindu Bengali and the Muslim Bengali into East Pakistan and West Bengal. Now they are trying to teach them about the national integrity and advised them to remain united.

Prof Mishra told that almost an uneducated Khashi tribe appeared to him as the eye opener. He told that the customs and the non secular image which he proudly kept in his heart for long years would be exposed in such miserable condition in the eyes of an uneducated taxi driver that was beyond imagination of Prof. Mishra.

What would be the answer of him, Prof. Mishra asked himself. How he claimed himself as a Bengali that that Bengali is a true secular by their culture. Bengali Should a Bengali only. But they could not break the wall of religious division the Hindu Bengali and the Muslim Bengali by creating two separate identities West Bengal and East Pakistan.

4.15 PARTION OF BENGAL

Let have a glance of the pages of the history of that episode where the Bengali were divided in two separate identities as mentioned earlier. It was 3rd June 1947. The Viceroy of India, Lord Mount Batten divided the provincial assembly of Punjab and Bengal into two (excluding the European members). In this division there would be the representative of the Muslim dominated districts and on the other division there would be the representative of the Hindu dominated districts. The population would be taken according to the census report of 1941.

Whether the province would be divided would be decided on the opinion of the divided representative of the respective districts. If one division of the divided assembly passed their resolution in favour of division of the province by a simple majority of votes then the province would be divided.

If the decision is taken the province would remain intact then the all representative of the said province would take the decision to which country, either India or Pakistan they prefer to join.
In 1947, 29th July, the assembly of Bengal was held. In this assembly, the Muslim league was majority. They adopted the resolution to keep the Bengal intact and join with the Pakistan by simple majority of votes. After this resolution the representative of the Hindu majority areas and the representative of the Muslim majority areas sat separately and passed the resolution that the Hindu majority areas would join in the Union Territory of India and the Muslim majority areas would join in Pakistan.

One may give so many explanations in support or against the partition of Bengal. But in the eyes of the Kashi taxi driver that the Bengali community as a whole divided their mother land on the basic of communal division and they are now advocating for the integration and asking the others to maintain the communal harmony so that everybody should remain close to each other.

The neighbouring states are very much anxious about the Bengali. During my field study a young man of Assam told me, ‘you Bengali people could not live together for long time. You quarrelled. You even divided your country still you have an international recognition. You have your language even in the United Nation. Bengali as a nation, the Bengali language as a language. The Bengali song as the national song has been recognized. If India disintegrates in the far distance or due to any other reason you can call for a greater Bangla but what will be our fate?

A fear psychosis to lose their identity against the Bengali community in the North east states is clearly visible in the minds of the local people that like as Tripura the Bengali influx will one day make their state a Bengali majority state.

To understand the ethnic unrest one need to understand the very basic reason of this fear psychosis of the aboriginal people. For this reason I made a sample survey in some states of north east India like Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya where the ethnic unrest in many occasion aimed at the Bengali community. I like to see whether the ethnic unrest of those state have influenced the present unrest of North Bengal.

4.16 A CASE STUDY: TRIPURA

At the very outset let me present here one experience that I earned during my interview with a young man of Tripura at Maharani near the extreme eastern border. That young man disclosed his political identity but he did not say his real name although it was an appointed meet with the extremist organisation of Tripura. The said interview was published in my Book about which I mentioned earlier.

It was small tea stall of Maharani Bazar of Tripura. On the appointed time the said young man appeared there. We got a code language to know each other; the detail of the interview will
be out of place in this study. I like to mention only a few lines of the interview. My question was 'Why you prefer the path of violence where there is an avenue of democracy to move to fulfil your demand?"

The reply from the young man was dramatic, He replied, 'Democracy'? There was a little pause, then he again began, 'Democracy produces a sweet sound to your ears because you are 72 percent of the total population of the state. We are man of the soil and this land was ours. Now we are only 23 percent of the total population of state. He continued to say, 'if Democracy is the meaning of the voice of the majority it has a meaning to you but it produces the different meaning to us, the meaning of acceptance of the suzerainty of your will. That is why we have taken other voice. It is the voice of the 'gun'."

More or less the same sentiments were echoed in other states like Assam and Meghalaya. Most of them apprehending the danger from the Bengali community. An in depth study as revealed it to me that most of the cases the middle class educated youth took the initial lead in this ethnic movement. The reason behind this that most of the administrative post in both the government and the merchants office were occupied by the Bengali educated people from the past when there was no local candidate was available due to the absence of education at that period. Now the situation has completely changed. The educated young middle class has strongly emerged from the local community. As a general tendency of the educated young to fetch a job either in the government office or in the merchant department. In finding the jobs they see that this chair was already occupied in many cases by the educated Bengali People. They also in dominating position in the cultural front. The newly emerged middle class of the aboriginal people thinks that these Bengalis are their competitors and are the sole cause of their deprivation without taking the note of the historical background of coming of these Bengali people in the state and their leading role in building the middle class intellectual of the local people of the state.

What is true for the states of North East of India it is similarly true for North Bengal. It has been already stated that the present North Bengal, specially three districts, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar has the special history which is quite different from the rest of the districts of the state. The demographic pattern of these three districts was also quite different from them. Majority people of these districts belonged to the separate group of origin of the races whom had different characteristic from the incoming people.

Not very much is known about the Khen dynasty who reigned before the Cooch dynasty. But it is known that the society was completely based on the agrarian economy. The land lord was himself a farmer who till his land by his own hand. During the period of Kamata dynasty this area went under the Muslim Rule for a short period. At that time some people converted in to Muslim religion. Those converted Muslim was known as 'Nasya Muslim'. This sect of Muslim
only seen in this part of Bengal. Although they converted into Muslim but they retained their most customs that were practiced when they were Hindus. So the difference between the Hindus and the Muslim are very little in comparison with the Hindus and Muslim of the other districts of the states.

The geographical features of North Bengal are also shows a great contrast in comparison with the South Bengal. The northern part of North Bengal is hill region and covered with dense forest. Moreover, there were series of invasions of the Bhutanese army. As a result no population growth was there on the North and the North West of Northern Bengal. With the progress of the tea plantation and annexation of Duars with the East India rule population began to grow in this region. From the east and west people came from Gour Banga. The peoples from Assam and Northern hill region came here from the east. In question of their livelihood there were great differences from each other. Peoples of Gour Banga and Assam were expert in agriculture. They cleared the forest land for the cultivation. If necessary they could get the uncultivated land as there was plenty of land for cultivation. The forest was infested with the wild animals. In order to clear the forest to convert it in to the agricultural land there need to live together and that was shown from the beginning. The head of the group was called ‘Dewania’. He was land lord in one hand and in another hand he was a farmer who tills his land. They were all in true sense farmer. So there was no caste division in that society as it prevailed in the other part of the Hindu society of West Bengal. The internal communication was very bad. As a result the surplus product could not be transported for marketing. But the farmers of Rangpur and Dinajpur could sell their surplus product in the nearby market. So they were more affluent than that of the farmer of the east. That was the reason why Rangpur became the cultural centre of the Rajbanshi Community after wards.

The remarkable difference that was found in the social system of North Bengal in comparison with the other districts of West Bengal was the harmonious relation between the Hindu and the Muslims. The shadow of communal feeling could not cast over the relation of the people of North Bengal. The reason for this unique social relation was that both the Land lord and share coppers plough their land. Zamindari attitude as it was found in the rest of Bengal was not found here.

4.17 THE LAND SYSTEM OF COOCBHEHAR

The land system and the characteristic of the owner-ship was completely different from the other districts of Bengal. So the change in the social life was also different from the others. In the feudal system the non agricultural land lord used to take leading part of the extortion in one hand, and on the other hand, they also take part in many cases in the processes of social reform. That type of landlords got the education. They spent whatever small it may be from their profit
for the purpose of social causes like the digging ponds, set up educational institute, cultural front etc.

Here, both the land lord and the share coppers used to tilt their land. The mode of life of both of them were almost similar and their demand and need for their daily livelihood was minimum. Besides, the surplus amount was also less and they consume it by themselves. Moreover, there was a long stable dynasty like Cooch Behar. As a general rule no dynasty encourage the individual thought and endeavour rather it treated as the rebellion against the dynasty and try to suppress this attempt. Every program evens the digging of pond and well needed the prior permission of the king.

The measurement system and the demarcation of the boundary were primitive. There was plenty of uncultivated land. The boundary of the land was marked by some natural objects. That practice continued up to the first part of the 19th century. The tax collector was called ‘Sajoal’. In the second part of the 19th century the English ruler peeped their nose into the rule of the kingdom. They abolished the Sajoal system and introduced the ‘Ijaradari’ System. This system completely changed the land system. After the introduction of this system, a new system was introduced known as ‘Lagani’ system. Under this system the land lord used to hand over the ownership of the land in the hand of the ‘Ijaradar’ and plough the land under him.

Here we can find another land distribution system. It is known as ‘Bhagiari’. If there are more than owner of a land the owners handed over this land to others for cultivation. This system is known as the Bhagiari. And under whom the land is given is known as ‘Dewani’. If any poor relative of the land lord used to cultivate his land the required implements for the cultivation are given to him by the land lord. This farmer is called ‘Praja’. This praja in course of time converted in to ‘Adhiar’.

Here, the land was more than the demand. Moreover, if one asked the forest cover land for the cultivation it was granted easily. As a result the land distribution was made directly. Another remarkable characteristic of this region which differentiated in question of the basic nature of the social system of other districts of West Bengal must be remembered in this context. In South Bengal. Most of the land lord or the Zaminder were not farmer by occupation and were not directly related with the land. They used to live away from his Zamindari mostly in urban areas and the ‘Nayeb’ (rent collector) was entrusted with the responsibility to look after the Zamindari on behalf of them. But in this region almost all the landlord were the farmers by their occupation and they used to plough the land along with the other cultivators in the field. ‘One can note the fact that the number of conflict between the land lord and the farmers were minimum in comparison with the South Bengal because of the basic character of the land lord and the farmers of that region.’
Here, another type of resistance gradually took the shape which was absent in the South Bengal. The dynastical oppression was very much present here. The administration was in the hand of person most of whom came from the outside. They collected the revenue and imposed the law. In the eyes of them they were the administrators and the oppressors. So when the protest and resistance and number of direct conflicts against the landlords were seen in South Bengal, here the farmers and the Jotders (landlords) combined together against the officials of the Royal administration. Because they were the symbol of the oppressor. It is true that the anger against those outsiders administrative staffs although belonged to Bengali community did not turn into communal conflict but from the beginning of the 40s of the last century, started to take the political shape. That culminated in the form of the Kamtapur movement.

Here again, a remarkable characteristic was seen in the social system of the Rajbanshi/Koch community. In the villages of the most part of West Bengal the Brahmins the highest position in the caste dominated society occupied the prime position in the society. Here such supremacy was absent in the Rajbanshi/Koch society. The Koch kings brought the Brahmins from Varanasi. They were Vaidic Brahmins. There was a difference between them and those Brahmin came from Nabadwip and Shrihatta. The Brahmins of Varanasi were ‘Kaunaji’ Brahman. They followed the Vaidic practices. They were not strict to the stricture of the Smriti Samhita but they allowed to continue the local practices of the Rajbanshis community when they introduced the practice of the Hindu religious rituals. So one can find a local practice or prescription in the Hindu religious system which is different from the Nabadwip – Bhattapalli prescription. In course of time in demarking the Koch and the Rajbanshi when the Kshatriya movement started in Rangpur and the presence of the Brahmins of Nabadwip, whether is the result of the conflict between the two schools of the Brahmins as described here is the matter of study for the social scientists. Those Kaunaji Brahmin who came to Cooch Behar in response to the invitation of the Cooch royal family prescribed the practice taking in to the account of the local environment that were written in books in eight volumes named Kaumadi. Those Kaunaji Brahmin are now permanently settled in Khagrabari of Cooch Behar. Here one can find a Brahmin known ‘Adhikari’ Brahmin. They performed the Hindu rituals mainly in the villages. This adhikari Brahmin is only finds in the Rajbanshi community.

Here again, one can find a different social strata which played an important role in forming the social movement. Both in East Bengal and South Bengal the Brahmins along with Kasthya, the two dominating high caste Hindu were the most influential class of the village society. They ultimately emerged as the strong middle class to establish the social movements. In the village society of Cooch Behar no such predominating caste was emerged. So no such middle class could be developed as in other part of West Bengal until first decades of 40s, to mobilize their aspiration.

In order to search the roots of the ethnic unrest one should cast the light over this phenomena of the society. Because in building the movement for the establishment of the identity and the
self rule, this middle class at the initial stage play the pivotal role. If the middle class in the Rajbanshi community had been marked their strong presence as it was seen in other places of West Bengal the history of Cooch Behar would have been written other forms. It can be easily presumed that would not demand either to merge with Assam or Bengal. There would have been a strong demand for the greater Kamtapur state before the independence and before the separation of Goalpara from their dynasty and annexed with Assam.

Taking the advantage of the absence of such middle class in the Rajbanshi society the educated Bengali went to that region and got easily the employment in different sectors specially in the administration in the Royal Court. They came from the higher society in question of the western education and cultural field.

Those peoples specially who belonged to the higher caste of the Hindu society were not farmer by occupation. So they settled in the urban areas. Those who acquired the agricultural land by taking the advantage of their position in the administration they never plough their land like the Kochs and they thus introduced the zamindari nature which was absent in the Koch land system but very much present in the other districts of West Bengal. But due to their presence urbanization process started with their settlement. From the settlement pattern it is found that the Kasthyas began to settle firstly in Dinhata and Mathabhanga. After that, Vaisya (a trading Class) came this areas from Maymansing and Manikganj of Dacca.

The Muslim society also marked a special characteristic. In the village they were not treated out caste as the member of the society as it was seen in the other part of West Bengal although their number of population was not negligible at all. From the census of 1891 it is found they represented 30% of the total population of the region. Most of them were Naisya Muslim. And the number of Pathan and Sayed were very negligible. Most of them came from Rangpur – Dinajpur districts. As there was not very difference in question of social and economic position between the land lord and the cultivators the communal harmony showed a exceptional example in relation of the other part of the state.

4.18 EMERGENCE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

As it has been said earlier in my study that the middle class plays the most crucial role in the development of the urban civilization and Cooch Behar is no exception. Like as the urban centres of the other region the urban societies were grown in Cooch Behar with the coming of the educated middle class as depicted earlier. Many of them came from the Bengal Civil Service. Their aim was to introduce the English system of administration in the administration of Cooch Behar kingdom, so that the English rule could be easily introduced in the kingdom. The Dewan of Cooch Behar, Kalika Das came from Dacca. The law and the administration system converted in to the British form. So the lawyers who knew the English laws were invited in the courts of
Cooch Behar. Before the introduction of the British laws in the Rajbanshi society faith and the word of mouth were the common practice in the village society. But to follow the complex English laws and its jurisprudence the role of the incoming lawyers became very important.

The business followed the two streams. The Bengali traders made Mathabhanga as their centre of trade. They mainly came from Pabna, Sirajganj and Narayan ganj and deals in jute and tobacco. The non Bengali traders were in the business in money landing and lease hold property. They maintain their relation with Calcutta.

Nobody can deny the contribution of the incoming caste Hindu population for the growth of the towns of Cooch Behar including the Cooch Behar town itself. The most of those caste Hindus came from the districts of Dacca, Faridpur, Maymansingh and Pabna. They were educated and for their initiative the educational institutes were set up in different parts of Cooch Behar Kingdom. They were all Bengali and for their influence Bengali language began to use widely as the instruction of education and media for cultural expression. As a result the local Rajbanshi language became more and more cornered and on the verge of oblivion due to the non use of the local language.

The middle class of Cooch Behar could not give the leadership in building the social and Cultural Revolution because those who supposed to give the lead, the educated middle class at that time were the administrator of the state. They were confined within the bindings of the service conduct rule of the Royal kingdom. Without the prior approval no collective or the individual initiative could be taken in the kingdom. This restrictions were imposed through the incoming high caste Hindu bureaucrat who happened mostly Bengali. During the British rule Cooch Behar kingdom became the tributary state. Under the strict vigilance of the king the middle class of the Cooch Kingdom could not make connection with the middle class of the other state not even with the middle class of Cooch Dynasty. So when the wave of national movement spread throughout the country it could not touch the heart of the people of the kingdom. When the legal practitioners of the country took the vital role in building the social movements their counterpart of the kingdom had no any scope to do the same because they had to move within the boundary of limit prescribed by the king. But with urbanization the civic facilities which were not at all within the agenda of the feelings of the people now they began to feel. The urban demands are derived by the extortion of the rural wealth. The principal source of the extortion is the tax imposed upon the land. More the tax upon the rural resources more the anti feeling against the Bengali bureaucrat as if they were imposing the tax.

In Cooch Behar kingdom both the land lord and the cultivators were engaged in the ploughing of the agricultural land so the caste Hindu bureaucrat appeared to them as the class enemy as they had no idea about the role of the caste Hindu in the national movement. To them the leadership of the caste Hindu, and the basically Bengali bureaucrats appeared as the same in
the eyes of them. After the independence large section of the Rajbanshi of Cooch Behar kingdom was reluctant to join with West Bengal the reason of which might be out of that sentiment.

After the independence the influx of Bengali Hindu refugees converged in this region mainly from Rangpur, Mayamansingh, Pabna, Dinajpur, and Dacca including from other districts of East Pakistan. They came from the developed areas both in agriculture, education cum economic position. Their cultural sense and the agricultural skill were much higher than that of Cooch Behar–Jalpaiguri zone. The Rajbanshi community reached at the bottom line under the pressure of the advanced incoming waves of the Bengali refugees.

The other districts of the state were the part of West Bengal. The Cooch Behar kingdom was the independent kingdom for more than 200 years and another 200 years as a tributary state and never a part of West Bengal.

The demand was raised for the Greater Cooch Behar state merging the Dooars of jalpaiguri district. In this context a leaflet that was published in the Madhuparni of their Jalpaiguri special Number may be placed here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2</th>
<th>Leaflet No.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘My Brothers of West Dooars’</td>
<td>‘The English are leaving India. Under this circumstances Cooch Behar, the land of peace and prosperity of our forefathers is our source of strength and shelter. We think it a proper to include Dooars in Cooch Behar kingdom in order to keep our tradition and civilization. Let come, we together pray before the King of Cooch Behar by appearing before him. We hope that His majesty will fulfil our desire and merge the Dooars with Cooch Behar.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year, 1354, 12th Shraban</td>
<td>yours sincerely,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Bidhu Bhusan Karjee</td>
<td>Shri Tarini Kanta Roy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Pabor Par</td>
<td>Village Roy Cheng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Gopal Chandra Roy</td>
<td>Shri Tarakeswar Basunia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village: Silbari</td>
<td>Village: Kheti Phul Bari’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3</th>
<th>Leaflet No.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘To Rajbanshi and the Muslim Brothers,’</td>
<td>‘Today is not the day for the Rajbanshi and Muslim brothers to sleep. It is a day for great wake up. All of you know that the Dooars was a part of Coochbehur before the British rule. During the British regime the Dooars was separated from the Cooch Behar Kingdom. Now the British are leaving so we demand to get back the Dooars, land of our forefathers, before the Maharaja of Cooch Behar. To fulfill this demand the Raibanshi and the Muslims of this land should unite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To understand the demand of the Kamtapur state one should understand the history of the demand. This area was always outside the territory of West Bengal. The language, culture, and the economic structure of this region were quite different from Bengal. This area was also outside of the administrative jurisdiction of Bengal. This area could be merged with West Bengal because of the presence of the majority number of Bengali people who came from outside of Cooch Behar. If any invitee come and join in the family it becomes the responsibility of the host family to provide more comfort so that they should feel ease in the home and opt for stay.

A large section of the people of Cooch Behar was against the merger with West Bengal. But leaders of West Bengal by their political influence could win over the leaders of the centre to merge it with their state. They brought the land and their people under their political boundary but when the question came to recognize their culture, language in their cultural and literature they put it in the culture and literature of Assam.

After long persuasion when the central government informed in the month of December, 1949, that they had taken the decision to merge Cooch Behar with West Bengal, Bidhan Chandra Roy the then Chief Minister of the state expressed his gratitude through a letter addressed to Sarder Ballav Bhai Patel the then Home minister of government of India stating the fact that this inclusion was not only for the growth of the state but it would be an addition of psychological strength to the state.

On 1st January 1950, Bidhan Chandra Roy, the then chief minister of West Bengal came to Cooch Behar to accept the deed of the merger of Cooch Behar with west Bengal from Nan Jhanna, the administrator of Cooch Behar. In the air port besides Nan Jhanna, Lalit Baxi, the Chief Secretary of Cooch Behar government, and Kumar Gautam Narayan, the family member of the Royal family and many others were present to receive the Chief Minister of West Bengal. A public meeting was organized on that occasion. The chief Minister of the state declared Cooch Behar as a special district. He declared that until the provincial assembly election is held two nominated representatives would represent in the assembly. Thos two nominated representatives were Umesh Chandra Mandal and Satish Chandra Singha Roy.

If today they feel that the Cooch Behar was annexed with West Bengal only to establish the over lordship of the Bengali community over the minority Rajbanshi community it is the primary task of the Bengali community, being the majority, to remove the inferiority feelings of the Rajbanshi.

It will be a great mistake if one tries to judge the unrest of North Bengal in the eyes of law and order problems. It should be judged on the social perspective.
4.19 DISPLACED AND REHABILITATION

After the independence of our country more and more lands are acquired for different projects uprooting the people from the soil. It is found that among those who had uprooted from their soil most of them are the man of the soil Walter Fernandes, J.C. Das and Sam Rao gave a detail account about this displacement in their article ‘Displacement and Rehabilitation-an Estimate of Extent and Prospect,’ published by Indian Social Science 1989 where they mentioned that up to 1989 a number of 1,65,00,000 people were displaced, from their soil and only 39,50,000 people were rehabilitated.

After the tea plantation a wave swept over a vast areas of North Bengal for the plantation of pine apples. Large number of agricultural land mainly the plains of Darjeeling district, North West Dinajpur district and part of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar district were taken over by newly emerged Bengali and Marwari pine apple planters. Most of the land owners were Rajbanshi. They sold their agriculture land to the pine apple planters to get instant money with the assurance of getting the employment in the pine apple garden as workers. At the first instances there was a boom in production of pine apple, thanks to the use of chemical fertilizer, ignoring the warning of the environmentalist for the devastating effect of the near future. Now it shows twine effect. Firstly, many of the pine apple gardens are now abandoned being lost their fertility to yield. Many of the newly formed pine apple planters lost their all capital due to the wrong choice of land and application of chemical in the hope to get more production. Secondly, those people after selling their land, most of whom were Rajbanshi and as a general rule spent their cash in the consumer market and became the land less labour. In the pine apple garden they lost their job and moved to Siliguri or other urban centres to pull the rickshaw or other manual jobs like the helper of the mason.

Again, a mad rush has been found in small tea plantation in the agricultural land even ignoring the stipulation that it needs to prior approval of the government to convert the cultivable land in to the tea plantation As a result land syndicates are now operating in this area to purchase land not only for the tea plantation but also for the speculative purpose. Its social impact proved dangerous. The local people mostly Rajbanshi are losing their land and becoming the landless daily labour.

The alienation from the land and alienated from their culture and language produce a sense of isolation from the so called mainstream which are dominated by the Bengali community by the position of their majority. This sense of isolation produce a sense of separatism which ultimately gave birth the call for a separate geo-political boundary for their own community as they hoped that such boundary would establish their lost glory and prosperity.
The demand for a separate Kamtapur state was first heard in 40s of the last century which has already mentioned in this study. The waves of the Tibeto-Burmese origin of the Mongoloids races, desperately tried their entry in to the Brahmanical society. But they could not make inroad in that society easily. For that they had to satisfy the Hindu Brahmins in many ways. For example, the Kachhari, Garo, Lalung, Koch, Mech Rabha all belongs to Indo–China races of origin. They had to give up the habit of eating of beef and to accept the Hindu Brahmin as their priest to get the passport for the entry into the Hindu Brahmanical society. Still, the poorer sections of the Rajbanshi were not accepted by the caste Hindus. At the beginning of the 20th century Nagendra Nath Basu published his encyclopaedia, where he mentioned the Rajbanshi as ‘Barbar’ (uncultured) and ‘mlechha’ (Untouchable). In the year of 1911 by an order the entry of the Rajbanshis community were forbidden in to the Puri Temple.

The attitude of the high caste Bengali naturally ignited the anger in the minds of the newly emerged middle class of the Rajbanshi Community. This anger and sentiments were burst out through the movement of Thakur Panchanan Burman. If one is included in the Hindu society he would get the proper respect such broadness is not expected in the caste Hindu society. As a result the Rajbanshi community had to launch their social movement to establish their position in the Hindu society. The demand for the recognition as the Bratya Kshatriya intiated in the year of 1891 was its example. The wearing of the sacred thread is also another example to establish their position in the caste rank of the Hindu Society.

Although through the caste movement the Rajbanshi were trying to establish their position in the Hindu caste society but this movement brought the division among then in the name of Koches and the Rajbanshi and they drifted apart from each other. But the irony was that when the Rajbanshi community separated themselves from Koches demanding that Koches are not Rajbanshi and Rajbanshis are the Bratya Kshatriya and thus they belonged to the caste Hindu, a section of the caste Hindu jumped to oppose their demand actively. In the year of 1912 on 10th February when the Rajbanshi were performing their wearing of the sacred thread as a mark of the Kshatriyahood at Perolbani of Rangpur the high caste Hindus organized to attack them to baffile their programme. In order to give them protection a large police forces under the command of G.S Miller, the district magistrate of Rangpur had to present there.

This social difference between the Bengali and the Rajbanshi creating a feeling of some short of anger throughout the years. At the initial stage the Rajbanshi were introvert and passive but with the contribution of the Royal family in education the Rajbanshi community became a dynamic modern community. Mainly with their direct patronization the Bengali Intellectual who came there to settle and spread the education. The education does not move alone it moves with his culture. The English education came to Bengal but simultaneously it brought the English culture also. Similarly with the influence of Bengali intellectuals the newly emerged Rajbanshi community not only educated themselves from the Bengali intellectual at the same time they
imbibed the Bengali culture also. With their influence the Koch languages and their culture went back behind the screen but at the same time this helped to minimize the difference between the Koches and the Rajbanshis.

Now the Language could be the bridge between the relation of Koches and the Rajbanshis. Although what would be the name of the language becomes a debatable points between the Rajbanshi community; one in favour of naming it Kamtapur language and another section prefer to call it Rajbanshi language. Whatever may be the difference in naming the language the very language is the bridge between the Rajbanshi and the Koches as both of them accepted this is their mother language. One should remember the fact that every community loves his mother tongue and sees his identity through his language. The movement for Bengali language in Bangladesh is the glaring example of this statement. The said Bengali when sitting in the glass house and taking the advantage of their demographic position declared the Kamtapur or the Rajbanshi language is the dialect of Bengali he should not forget his own glorious past in establishing his mother tongue when there was an attempt to belittle it by the ruler. The fight for the prestige of the mother tongue ultimately gave birth a new sovereign country Bangladesh.

There is yet to give the definition of the dialect and the language for the commonly accepted. Those languages are termed as the dialect and placed in the secondary position at one time; almost all of them through the progress of social transformation either converted in to standard language or went in to obliteration. The English is the glaring example which once a language of Germanic tribes now becomes the strongest language of the world. So it appears meaningless to invite the conflict and hurt the wounds of the community by describing their mother tongue as the dialects of Bengali, rather this produced a sentiment against the Bengali community as expressed by many Rajbanshi during my interview with them.

In this context it is necessary to see what are the views of the peoples of the aboriginal people of the areas under my survey.

4.20 MOVEMENT OF KSHATRIYAHOOD AND THE ROLE OF THE BENGALI COMMUNITY

The relation between the Rajbanshi and the Bengali community requires to be examined as both community feel a sense of misunderstanding one from the point of majority complex and another from the point of the minority feeling. The difference of understanding initiated from the demand of the Rajbanshi community, although there was no reason to make it a point of confrontation between the two communities.

The Rajbanshi community claimed that they originally belonged to the Kshatriya caste of the Aryan tribes. They left their original places of birth when Parasuram the mythological character of the epic of the Mahabharata took the vow to destroy the Kshatriya from the soil and took
shelter on the sacred river, the Sankosh. According to their own explanation Rajbanshis belonged to the Aryan races which are quite different from the origin of the Bengali. They never claimed during the movement of their Kshatriya hood that they belonged to the Bengali community and such the claim might appear as the anathema to the caste system of the Bengali Hindu. The kshahtriya although not present in the Bengali caste system but it was very much with the all India Caste phenomena. So the Bengali Hindu had no reason to oppose this movement and thus entered in to a confrontation with the Rajbanshi Community.

In North Bengal where the Rajbanshi community hold a very large number of their population faced a strong confrontation with Bengali community of Rangpur. When the Rajbanshi placed their demand to register them as kshatriya in the census report the upper caste Bengali community raised their protest claiming that no such caste is existed in the Bengali caste system. But the Rajbanshi Community asked them to be registered as the ‘Bratya Kshatriya’ as they were defected from their original place of living and renounced their profession of ware fare for the Kshatriyas of Aryan origin. So the Bengali community had nothing to do with this demand placed by the Rajbanshi community. But in doing so they brought a sharp division between them.

The Bengali community was very critical about the demand of the Kshatriyahood of the Rajbanshi community on the plea that the Hindu Bengali society is composed of Brahmins, Baidya, Kaysthas, and Sudras. It is believed that this caste hierarchical belief has created a psychological war between two communities, because in the mean time a sizeable number of upper castes Hindu Bengali came and settled in Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri besides Rangpur where they settled much before. The Hindus of the upper and even lower caste Bengali residing in this area usually did not drink from the hand of the Rajbanshi community. A psychology grew in the minds of those Bengali that if the Rajbanshi is elevated in the caste position in the Hindu caste system they may claim the equal position in the caste arrangement.

But the basic question rose by many post–modern subaltern scholars in this regard. It is seen in the Hindu caste society that there are four castes, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Baishya and Shudra. Theoretically the Baidyas and the Kayasthas were included in Sudra Caste (Ghosh). But in Bengal, the Baidyas and the Kayastha demanded higher caste status and they enjoyed it without social and sastra’s sanction. Now those are widely accepted even by the orthodox Brahmanical society of different schools. The kayastha and the Baidyas of the Bengali community are very influential caste in question of their education and economic position and earned the respect from all the society. This unsanctioned social position of the Baidya and the Kayastha of the Bengali community never faced any question from any quarters of the Hindu school but when the question of recognition of Kshatriya hood for the Rajbanshi community the same Bengali community raised their head in protest.
A psychological cold war which began in the colonial era in question of the recognition of the Kshatriyahood status of the Rajbanshis where the so called upper caste Hindu Bengali was reluctant to accept it and even the post colonial era the same ‘bhadralok’ Bengali intellectuals are hesitant to show their impartiality with regard to the Kshatriya status of the Rajbanshi.

The cold caste war exposed into open caste war when the Rajbanshi community submitted to the government to include them as the Kshatriya in the census report in one hand on the other hand to include them in the Schedule cast category status. This contradictory demand, elevation of the social status and simultaneously to enjoy the benefit of the scheduled caste status created the field for the conflict of interest which ultimately became a social tension and a point of dispute between the ‘Deshi’ and the ‘Bhataia’ in Cooch Behar and its surrounding areas. The Cooch Behar which includes all the aboriginal community finds that their demands are echoed in the memorandum of the Hitasadhani Sabha.

REFERENCES
1. Chakraborty, Prafulla, (1990), The ‘Marginal Men’; The Refugees and the Left Political Syndrome in West Bengal, Rahara
7. Chowdhury, H.N (1903) Cooch Behar and its Land Revenue Settlement p 441
8. West Bengal District Gazetteer; Koch Bihar Durgadas Majumder 4
CHAPTER: FIVE

LOCATING KAMTAPUR MOVEMENT AMONG SOME OTHER ETHNIC MOVEMENTS IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Merger of CoochBehar dynasty to the Dominion of India is remarkable event in the history of North Bengal after the partition of India. This merger did not come in a smooth way. There was serious difference in opinion among the Rajbansi community in question of the merger with West Bengal. Uttarkhanda Dal a strong organization of the Rajbansi community opposed this merger. Some of them even advocated to join with Pakistan and a dominant section of the Uttarkhanda Dal was in favour to remain as independent state and another section was in favour for Assam. Here a sharp difference surfaced in question of their origin and their identity as a section of the Rajbansi community claimed that they are carrying the pure blood of the Aryan races thus they differ from the Koch and superior to them in question of their racial origin which ultimately influenced their demand one for Kamtapur State and another for Greater Coochbehari State. Following the difference in naming their language Kamtapuri language and Rajbansi language.

5.1 MERGER OF COOCH BEHAR TO DOMINION OF INDIA

The Maharaja of Cooch Behar sent the Chief Minister of the state, Himmat Singh Maheswari in the Constituent Assembly of India as state representative and formed an advisory Committee, consisting of Satish Chandra Roy Singha Sarkar, Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah Ahmed and S. K. Bose Majumder, member of the state Legislative Council to assist him.

Both the dominions of India and Pakistan were trying to get Cooch Behar with them. The peoples of Cooch Behar were divided in to three groups: one for remaining as independent state, another for merger with India, and third one for Pakistan. The pro Pakistan groups of Cooch Behar even without waiting for the decision of the Maharaja hoisted the Pakistan flag on the soil of Cooch Behar. Maharaja could realise that he had to take the instant decision either to join with Pakistan or India knowing fully well that the independent position could not be survived being a land locked small piece of land. Accordingly an agreement was signed with Governor General of India and the Maharaja of Cooch Behar kingdom. Naturally, the Hindu king had no other option but to prefer Dominion of India to a declared Muslim state, Pakistan. According to the agreement, the transfer of power completed from the Maharaja to the Chief Commissioner of the State V. I, Nanjappa on the 12 September 1949 A.D.

Now the very basic point comes in this discussion how Cooch Behar became a district of West Bengal. Because it was not at all easy task to convert a kingdom into a district who
enjoyed a long Journey for near about 500 years in the capacity of kingdom out of which more than 200 years as independent status.

A section of the members of the Hitasadhani Sabha first of all tried to remain as centrally administered state apart from those sections who wanted to join with Pakistan. But when they find their proposal to remain as centrally administered state will not be acceptable than they opted for the merger with Assam. Against this proposal for the merger with Assam a strong groups emerged in Cooch Behar. The Prajamandal in inside of Cooch Behar and People’s Association outside the kingdom with the demand for the merger with West Bengal. These demand and counter demand were so strong that Jawaharlal Nehru had to assured in the public meeting in Calcutta that the decision for merger either for Assam or West Bengal will be taken through the plebiscite.

In that context, among those who had contributed a lot for the merger with West Bengal, the name came first, he is Sarat Chandra Basu. A strong section of the central ministers were in the opinion that Cooch Behar should be merged with Assam as in their opinion, the aboriginal people of Cooch Behar was much closer with the Assames in question of ethnicity than with the people West Bengal. But Sarat Chandra Basu who had a strong influence over the central leadership of the then National congress took the initiative in favour of West Bengal.

Another great personality in this regard should be remembered. He is Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. the then Chief Minister of West Bengal.

It is learnt from the autobiography of Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, also an ex Chief Minister of West Bengal that Sarder Ballav Bhai Patel, the then Home Minister of Central Government was in favour for the merger with Assam. Dr. Ghosh was given the assignment to judge for the two princely states Cooch Behar and Mayurbhanj for their merger by the working committee of the National congress. Dr Ghosh suggested for the merger of Mayurbhanj with Orissa and Cooch Behar with West Bengal. Here it should be mentioned that Keshab Chandra Sen a legendary figure of Bengal established the relationship by giving marriage his two daughters one with the king of Cooch Behar and another with the king of Mayurbhanj. It might be a co–incident, but two Bengali daughters influenced the two kingdoms with their Bengali culture.

5.2 UTTARKHANDA MOVEMENT

I like to include the Uttarakhand Movement in my study, as the last survey that I have conducted for the research work to find the root causes of this unrest and the geo-ethno environmental impact on the present Ethnic unrest.

I have included Uttarakhand Movement because I made my conclusion upon the discussion of the Hitasadhani Sabha though its movement for a separate state was thought to have sank in to oblivion after the split of the organization in to different directions, the shoots of the roots remained in the political soil of North Bengal which may germinate in different form. It is now found that the demand of a separate state raised by the Hitasadhani Sabha did not obliterate
completely. The representative of Cooch Behar Praja Congress, along with Darjeeling Gurkha League, Sikkim Praja Sammelen and Jalpaiguri Gurkha League assembled at Darjeeling on 30th October, 1949 where they adopted a resolution for the demand of the formation of a separate state styled as ‘Uttarakhand Pradesh Sangha’. In their demand they excluded Malda and West Dinajpur considering their demographic position but they included Sikkim in their proposed state and sent their memorandum to the then Prime Minister of India which could not draw any attention from the Prime Minister office.

After the reorganization of the state for about 15 years there was apparent peace remain in North Bengal. But on 5th July 1969 at Thakurpat Rajmohan Junior High school of Dhupguri Police station of Jalpaiguri District the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samaiti fixed their meeting to discuss on the various problems of the Rajbanshi community. This meeting was conveyed by the secretary of the organization. Dhupguri Branch of Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti and Rajbanshi Kshatriya Yuba Samiti Convened another public meeting on the next day at the same venue under the president ship of Ramaprasad Roy and Bijendra Nath Roy and Nirmalendu Roy as joint secretary. In that meeting some political leaders of different political parties were present. Those leaders resigned from their respective political parties and declared the formation of the Uttarakhand Dal.

On the foundation day there was no demand for the creation of any state. In their publicly circulated demands they included:

* Equalisation of the value of the personal wealth in money’s worth. A raiyat under W.B, E.A Act. was allowed to possess only 25 acres of agricultural land the valuation of which was at that time Rs. 75000 only, whereas a landless businessman could own truck, bus, shop, factory, service without any ceiling. Rationalization of Govt. and non-government services i.e. of family services. Reclassification of business ration card. The landless people in business, services etc belonged to ‘A’ category ration cards where as an adhiaar who cultivate only 2 to 4 acres was categorized as ‘C’ class ration card holders. *Implementation of the slogans ‘Matri Bhasa Matri Dugdha-Saman’ by introducing the medium of education in mother tongue like Rajbanshi/kamtapuri, Bodo, Santali, Mundari, Nepali etc along with Bengali in Primary level and establish more primary schools with provision of drinking water and sanitation for girls students. *Propose to rename the North Bengal University as Thakur Panchnan University. *Establishment of High School within the radius of 4 kilo metres. *Attendance money to be paid in cash to the guardians of poorer section of the pupils in the primary schools. *Introduction of free education up to class twelve. *Establishment of, agro–based small and medium sized industries in the villages like jute spinning weaving, paper, tobacco and timber products. *Introduction of subsidy to the poor and marginal cultivators by way of free distribution seeds, manure, bullocks, agricultural equipments and cash loan on easy term at minimum rate of interest. *Introduction of irrigation facility, free of capital cost without any capital contribution by the cultivators. *Establishment of free coaching centres for IAS, IFS WBCs and allied service courses for Scheduled castes and tribes candidate as in Kolkata. *Nationalization of banks and other financial institutions and
introduction of proportionate reservation of seats of scheduled Caste and Tribes candidates in Govt services.

*Establishment of High Court, Medical College, Agricultural College, more Engineering colleges, law colleges and technical institutions in North Bengal. *Nationalization of the Banks and other financial organizations. *Promotion, preservation, maintenance and development of the cultural heritage of North Bengal and promotion of the knowledge on history, culture, languages and anthropology of the people of North Bengal and North eastern part of India. *Introduction and maintenance of quota for students in Govt and non–govt schools. *Maintenance of quota in licence and permits for business to the Scheduled Caste and Tribe candidates.

The first demand did not mention for the formation of a state, rather they participated in the state Assembly Election held on 10\textsuperscript{th} March 1971. They contested in six constituencies but could not even save their security in any constituency. They gave an explanation for the miserable result that there was lack of fund which is needed for contesting the election. Thus it indicates that they had no any intention for the separate state otherwise they would not participate in the election.

In their maiden appearance in the electoral politics they contested in six seats; in 1971; Maynaguri, Dhupguri, Sadar, Falakta seats of Jalpaiguri Districts and Mekhliganj seat of Cooch Behar. They also contested one parliament seat of Jalpaiguri. The results are given here under:

| Table 5.1 |
| Election Result of Uttarkhanda Dal (UKD) |
| Maynaguri: (SC) |
| Bijoy Krishna Mahato (Congress) 39,173 |
| Haripada Roy (UKD) 6075 |
| Dhupguri: |
| Bhabani Pal (Congress) 11471 |
| Wajuddin Ahmed (UKD) 5321 |
| Jalpaiguri Sadar: |
| Anupam Sen (Congress) 25,608 |
| Girish Deb Singha (UKD) 1928 |
| Falakata: |
| J Roy (Congress) 13410 |
| Panchanan Mallik (UKD) 4302 |
| Mekliganj: |
| Mihir Kr. Roy (FB) 19880 |
| Sitanath Roy Sarkar(UKD) 1627 |
| Jalpaiguri Lok Sabha: |
| Tuna Oran (Congress) 103104 |
| Soma Oran (UKD) 11097 |
From the above statement it is evident that Uttarkhada Dal could not draw the support of the voters, rather, their miserable performance in the election clearly shows that the Rajbanshi community was not in a position to rely upon them in question of handing over the legislative power in their hand.

The Uttarakhand Dal gave the call for a separate state in the name of Kamtapur on 22. 06. 1980 through a publicly circulated Bengali leaflet published by Panchanan Mallik, the principal president and Sampad Ray, general secretary of Uttarakhand Dal.

In that leaflet they called for a separate state against the ‘slavery’ of Calcutta based political leadership. In the leaflet they told,’we are helpless and directionless in the whirl wind of Calcutta based economic, industrial, educational policies.

**Table 5.2**

_Leaflet No. 1_

| Friends, the indomitable selfishness, oppression and outrage of the power –hungry avaricious Calcutta leaders and their henchmen have surpassed the oppression of Hastings, the infamous foreign colonialist British Ruler–People of the land who never faced any scarcity of food and clothing, have now become beggars for a handful of grains, a piece of bread and a piece of cloth.— |
| — Friends, How long will the simple straight forward people of North Bengal, closing their eyes and mouths put up their inhuman, endurable pains and treatment? The appeals, prayer, and claims of North Bengal’s people for long 32 years have yielded no result. |
| It is in this context of non-confidence towards such leadership and with helplessness that we, on behalf of Uttarakhand Dal submitted a memorandum under the leadership of Sri Panchanan Mullick and Sampad Roy to Prime Minister of India putting our demand to form a separate state |

It is seen from their demand that their agitation at the initial stage was against the mal-distribution of allocation of fund in the state budget. They claimed in their demand that the North Bengal has an area of about 21,325 square kilometres, i.e. 25% of the total area of West Bengal inhabited by 30% of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people where of 13 M.L.A, only 3 seats in general category The vast areas of North Bengal Like tea, tobacco, timber, tourism and other crops yielded two third of the total income of the state.

On 22nd June 1980 they demanded for the separate state in the name of Kamtapur and explained in the manifesto circulated by Panchanan Mullick, Principal president and Sampad Roy, General Secretary, Uttarakhand Dal why they want a separate state. In the memorandum
they told that their aim was to set apart North Bengal from South Bengal and create a prosperous Indian state called Kamtapur in order to protect the people of North Bengal from the exploitation of ‘Calcutta–centric capitalist leaders. They argued the same explanation about the establishment of the self identity, In support of their demand they cited the example of Maharashtra and Gujarat where the two states were developed as separate states by partitioning Bombay province in 1960. Before that in 1962, Nagaland came out as a separate state from Assam. In 1966 the province of Haryana was formed coming out from Punjab. Meghalaya got the status of the province taking out from Assam. Andhra province formed from Madras.

They also gave an explanation in naming the organization and the name of the state. In their explanation it is stated that they gave the name of their movement ‘Uttarakhand’ because of large number of labours working in the tea gardens. They are sympathetic towards their causes of their action. Many of the workers hailed from the area where the tribal peoples are fighting for the same demand of forming the separate state of Jharkhand. In order to the fraternal support towards their demands they preferred to take ‘khand’ from Jharkhand and gave the name of their movement Uttarakhand.

5.3 THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF THE RAJBANSHI/KOCH AND THE BENGALI

A debate has been emerged about the relationship between the Koch- Rajbanshi and the Bengali not only in question of their religion but also in question of their racial identity. To understand this issue it becomes imperative to glance over the field of the anthropological study over this issue. During my study in this research work I could not find any research work which dealt on this issue in details. I felt it necessary to give an account of the anthropological position between these two races and the relation in the light of the anthropological study. But I am neither an anthropologist nor my study at the aim of exploring the anthropological analysis, I left the same for the future researcher with an earnest hope that they will enrich their research covering this important field of science which I am not in a position to cover due to my inability to dip in to this branch of science.

Moreover, as my research study is to look in to the geographical as well as environmental factors in relation with the present unrest it becomes imperative to throw some light taking the help of anthropological account as it is closely related with both the factors.

There is the argument and the counter argument whether the Rajbanshi/Kamtapuri is the dialect of Bengali or it is an independent standard language as the other language like Bengali, Oria, Ahomia, Tamil etc played a pivotal role in igniting the racial spirt to establish their independent identity which ultimately converted in to the movement for the demand of Kamtapur state. On the other hand, the Bengali community by opposing to the demand for the recognition of the Rajbanshi/Kamtapur language as an independent language and claiming it as a dialect of Bengali.
language brought the issue in to the field of the armageddon of two conflicting views. Thus it becomes a conflict of racial conflict between two races.

In this context it becomes imperative to judge the situation on the light of the origin of these two races especially when the one section of the Rajbanshi community claims themselves that they are carrying the pure Aryan blood and hence they are not related with the Koch in question of their origin. Again they has no any blood relation with the Bengali and they have their separate identity and their language is the independent language. On the other hand, the Bengali is claiming that the Rajbanshi are the sub group of the Bengali races and hence their language is the dialect of Bengali. This argument and counter argument becoming more prominent and taking as the fulcrum around of which the movement are revolving. As this issue still remain unsolved the difference between the two conflicting races become more and more wide providing the avenue for more and more ethnic conflict in this region.

The study of races is a branch of science itself. The purpose of this branch of science is to typify and classify races. The study of the races of the mankind is one of the most important in anthropology, the science that studies include the natural history of man with all variations due to the ages, sex, geographical etc factors. The races of mankind are, in fact, geographical variations, historically conditioned of a single physical type-man.

All mankind are divided into three great races - Mongoloid, Europeoid, and Negroid. These three great races are divided in to seven races each of which contains a number of groups of anthropological types. These groups of types are linked by intermediate or contact groups. So the present mankind may be regarded as a mixture of numerous anthropological types that make up one biological whole. This explains to a considerable extent why one race may enter in to the make-up of several nations. So races and racial difference are not something eternal, immutable and inherent in man. Constant changes taking place in the human body under the influence of social, economic and natural factors. The higher race and lower race has no any scientific foundation. Ignoring this fact there are tendency from some corners classify one higher race and other lower race .It only unreasonably confuses the grouping of people by classes and by other socio economic factors with their biological groupings.

The environment has the important role to influence the development of the races. As people spread over the face of the earth, they came up against different natural conditions. In the beginning of the spread of man to new regions was of great significance since many group of people lived for a long time in different natural conditions isolated from each other and eating different foods. With the increase of human population there was growing contact between the groups of races with their consequent mixing . When an isolated group increased in numbers and spread to new areas, it often came in to contact with other groups and mixed with them. As
they spread farther unoccupied or sparsely populated territory geographical isolation was again felt and as a result there was a differentiation of anthropological types.

5.4 GEOGRAPHICAL ISOLATION

In the Palaeolithic epoch, the human population was sparse and had spread in different direction of the earth that had vastly different climatic conditions and had to face natural barriers that prevented contact between other peoples. In that epoch geographical isolation played the most important role in changing the inherited features of some anthropological types. It is seen from the biological standpoint, the mechanism of procreation of the organism and changes through heredity are the same for human being as for the higher mammals.

Man’s geographical isolation was often combined with social isolation because of the conflicting interests of the neighbouring groups, the absence of common language and the classes that could and frequently did take place even when the groups were racially identical.

The animal organism is adopted for life in a definite ecological niche. This accounts for the relative adaptive purposefulness in the structure and habits of animals.

In modern period man, on the contrary, only a few, not the majority of his racial specifics are of adaptive significance. In some cases, no doubt, traces of adaptation are clearly defined in, for instance, the pigmentation of the skin, the development of the fold in the eyelid, the thickness of the lips and several others. Today these features are of little importance in the struggle against the adverse natural conditions when compared with the artificial means of protection that are available to man.

Nevertheless there are certain hereditary features in the structure of the human being, including some specific racial features in the structure of the human being, that can even today change under the influence of the environment; the change may take place fairly quickly, especially in case of emigration from one country to another country. So the racial differences are to be observed only by the study of comparatively large groups since individual variations are much greater than racial. Thus it should be bear in mind that racial diagnosis cannot always be applied in full to an individual, and may sometimes give no result at all

5.5 INTER MARRIAGE

The socio–economic development of the races is the processes of intermarriage or the mingling which has been going on for a long time. In Mexico about 60% of the population are the offspring of mixed marriages between Europeans and Indians, and in Colombia the same is true of 40% of the population. There exist large number of people of mixed origin-European and
Negro, Negro and Chinese, European and Japanese, American and Indian and European. In South America triple and even more complicated mixtures of races found. They include Negro, European and American and American Indian.

Some of the races have produced intermediate contact groups as a result of their mingling over a long period. The example of this mixed group is the Urals group (part of the Mansi and Khanti peoples). These groups were formed by the mingling of Europeoids and Mongoloids. Another example Lapps (Soma people) and Mari people. It is estimated that at least half of mankind of today consists of people who are to a great extent racially mixed.

The ease with which the races intermarry and the ever growing numbers of people involved is evidence that they have a common origin. This fact alone shows how groundless are the race theories that deny the blood relationship of people of different races.

When the races mix the majority of the racial features of their progeny have an intermediate character; this has been definitely proved by anthropologists. In the course of time permanent groups are formed. It begins to mix with others. It is probable that some races underwent a much fuller development in the distant past but even then the socio-economic factor, although much weaker than at later stages, modified the processes of race formation reducing some and strengthening other racial difference or complexes of difference. This explains to some extent the visible difference of the races; furthermore, the degree of independence of the races is conditioned by the extent to which they have been drawn in to the processes of mingling. So in the present day there are not really any races anywhere. The myth of the ‘pure’ race is the invention of the racists that contradicts scientific facts.

It should be kept in mind that the races of man, having developed from a single stock—primitive man are from a strictly scientific point of view, biologically similar subspecies division. So as far as their evolution is concerned, none of the races stands higher or lower than others in the level of physical development.

The racist usually consider the white race to be the higher and the colured (black and yellow) races to be the lower. Some of them support the Aryan theory and according to which they discarded themselves to be the higher races. The racists even claim that the few ‘Higher Races’ have created all culture and civilization.

The Germanic peoples present a good example showing that culture is independent of race. Their ancestors were barbarians at the time of the Roman state reached its highest level. Later, when the Germanic peoples found themselves in conditions more favourable to development, they reached a high cultural level while retaining their racial peculiarities.
In view of above discussion it may be said that the development of man and his races proceeded under the influence of various factors and the socio-economic factors in the end began to dominate over biological factors and even to force some of them to cease functioning.

5.6 COMMON FEATURES TO ALL RACES

Before entering in to the discussion on the relation between the Bengali and the Rajbanshi/Koch it is needed to sum up the above observation to look in to the matter of my study in the light of the anthropological relation between two communities.

The races are of common origin and cannot be regarded as different stages of development. Each of them is characterised by a definite but hereditarily changing complex of morphological and physiological features. The race took shape under the joint influence of natural and socio-economic conditions of life. The fundamental role in the development of man is played by social and not biological factors, so that natural selection has gradually lost its significance.

5.7 THE RELATION BETWEEN THE BENGALI AND RAJBANSHI ON THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL FACTORS

The racial origin and identity and the status of the mother language now playing a pivotal role in the field of the ethnic unrest not only in North Bengal but almost in every ethnic movement of the world in general. The dominant races always try to establish their dominant authority over the minority races.

In Bengal, now West Bengal after partition of India the Bengali still holds the dominant position in the state in all respects. Their attitude toward the minority groups follows the same. The claim that the Rajbanshi/Kamtapuri language is the dialects and even sub dialect (as claimed by some intellectuals of the Bengali community) of Bengali may be regarded as the dominating attitude of the dominant group of the state. Sitting upon the seat of self-conceit they do not feel it necessary to feel the heart beat of the minority group.

It should be mentioned here, that two men are not identical in all respect. Even the twin child bear the difference in their appearance by which they can be differentiated from each other. Although this difference is there, but there are common similarities among the different groups of peoples which make them to be identified as distinct race. These common similarities have a fairly stable hereditary character and serves as basis for classifying those who possess them as belonging to particular:
They are:

| i) | Colour of the skin (the degree of the pigment of the skin). |
| ii) | Types of hair (straight, undulating and curly). |
| iii) | Shape of the eyes— which depend on the nature and size of the fold on the upper eyelid. |
| iv) | Heights. |
| a) | Pigmy (less than 1480 mm). |
| b) | Short (between 1480 mm and 1581 mm). |
| c) | Medium (between 1582 mm and 1676 mm). |
| d) | Tall (between 1677 mm and 1720 mm). |
| e) | Very tall (1721 mm and above). |
| v) | Shape of the nose; determined mainly by the height of the bridge, the form of the spine, the width of the wings and the direction of the long axes of the nostril. |
| vi) | Shape of the skull; expresses in cephalic index. It is the ratio of breadth to length using the formula (breadth multiply by 100 and divided by length). The longer the head, the smaller the index figures. |
| vii) | Shape of the face; its shape is determined mainly by the development of the cheek bones. For example, if they project forward and outward as are the case with many Mongoloids they give a broad, flat face (flat horizontal profile); if the cheek bones are not prominent as is the case with many Europeoids they give a narrow face that project forward. |
| viii) | Blood groups; for the anthropological classification the character of the blood is examined. For the quality of agglutination blood is grouped as O, AB, A-B, MN Rh positive and negative. On the quality of resistance against the virus if the similarities in character in the blood is found between two races of mankind it is taken that there is close bondage between them. |

Although the area of the present study is not the anthropological account of the origin and characteristic of the mankind in classification of races but as I have to find out the root of the disputes on the question of the relationship between the Rajbanshi and the Bengali in general and the relation between the Rajbanshi and the Koch I have taken the help of the anthropological findings. In order to find the answer whether the Rajbanshi and the Koch are the same in their origin or if it is taken that the Rajbanshi really has been originated from the ‘pure’ Aryan blood then whether he should be recognized as the superior races over the Koch needs an anthropological prescription to find its answer.

**5.8 THE IDENTITY OF BENGALI**

Who are the Bengali? Whose blood they are carrying? There is no doubt that no single stream of blood is flowing through the body of the Bengali. The blood of the Bengali is mixed blood; as
such the Bengali cannot claim the carrier of pure blood. Race as we mean a more or less big biological group of individual having relatively similar from the morphological point of view.

When we say the Aryan race we mean those groups of people who follow religion, language and customs of the Aryan. Similarly when we say the Hindu race, we mean those group follow the culture and customs of the Hindus. The Bengali race thus means who born in Bengal and follows the particular mode of lives and culture and speaks in Bengali. From this fact it revealed that there is no definite definition of race as universally accepted. But here the anthropology may come to rescue from this complex situation to some extent. The primary index to define a race on the basis of anthropological points has already been discussed in this chapter.

Many of the Indian scholars based on the observation of Sir Hurbat Risley, the then the Chief Commissioner of the Anthropological Department of India. The Ethnographic Survey was conducted in India in 1901 under his supervision where he appointed some Indian Employees who were not at all specialist in anthropology. They were provided only a preliminary training on the method of taking the measurement of the anthropological data. According to Risley the Bengali is a race of the mixing of two groups of blood-Mongoloid and Dravidians.

It is now clear that there were two races–Pre–Dravidians and Proto-Australoid were the primitive inhabitants of Bengal. The blood of the Bengali is the mixture of the two groups and in the later period with people of the Mediterranean, in the later period the blood of the Aryan and Mongoloid. They spoke in different languages and in course of time throughout the process of social mixing they took the present shape.

It is said by the different scholars that the Rajbanshi has been originated from the Koch tribe. In this regard it has been discussed in this chapter of this study. There we find the similarities of different groups of races including the Mongoloids. But the term ‘Koch’ seemed to be ambiguous in the mind of Edward Gait, it is clear that when one use the word Koch it represents also a distinct group of people or a particular community. In Rabha language the word Koch means ‘human.’ In this context, Gait opined, that in Assam proper the term Koch had become the name of a Hindu caste into which are received the converts to Hinduism from the rank of the Kachari, lalung, Mikir and other tribes.(Gait,p 46)

There is no doubt that a few Mongolian tribes, especially the Kacharis (Bodo) had joined the rank of Koch or Rajbanshi after being converted in to Hinduism. In question of the relationship between the Koch/Rajbanshi and the Bengali it is observed from the cephalic index that the appearance they got from the Alpine groups of races who were believed to came through the sea-route of the Asia-Minor or through Baluchistan and spread at first Sindh, Kathabar, Gujrat, Maharashtra ,Kurg and Tamilnadu. A group of them reached Orissa and Bengal along the Eastern coast. They may be regarded as the forefather of the higher caste peoples of Bengal.
although they could not maintain the purity of the blood. Their blood was mixed with the blood of Austrics and the Dravidians. In the ‘Manjushree Mulkalpa’ an ancient book described the inhabitants of Bengal as ‘Dasyu’. In the Mahabharata same description is made. There it was said, that the peoples of Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Pundra were from the womb of Sudhama, the queen of the Dasyu king Bali through implantation semen of the sage Dirghatama. From this statement it is clear throughout the long course of the social history mixing of different bloods took place which gave birth to the present appearance of the Bengali. Same historical accounts may be seen in case of the present Rajbanshi/Koch community with the variation of the mixing of bloods to some extent.

Naturally, the question comes who were the Dasyu? This is important to know because in the age of the Mahabharata almost all the groups of people of the Eastern part of India were termed as Dasyu, as they opposed the Pandavas and joined with the front of the Kauravas in the Kurukhetrya War. So from the epic period there were some relations existed between different groups of peoples of this part of the country and they lived here before the Aryan came.

It is taken as granted that those people spoke in the non-Aryan languages. The presence of Kol and Dravidian in the western fringes of the Bengali area and of the Boda and Mom-Khemer speakers in the northern and eastern frontiers testifies this statement.

The following charts of the anthropological measure shows the fact that the mixing of different bloods took place in the blood of the Rajbanshi/Koch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.3 Anthropological Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Kshatriya Rajbanshi (Jalpaiguri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rajbanshi (E. Dinajpur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Paliya Rajbanshi (Malda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rajbanshi (Murshidabad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rajbanshi (25 Parganas)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It should be noted here, that in the Rajbanshis of Jalpaiguri Mogoloids characteristic of the epicanthic fold is found but it is absent in case of the Rajbanshi community of west Dinajpur. It indicates that the Mongoloids blood got mixed with blood of the Rajbanshi Community in case of Jalpaiguri. On the other hand, in case of the Rajbanshi of West Dinajpur they got the blood from the Dravidian races.

From the above facts it is evident that no pure blood is flowing neither in the blood stream of the Rajbanshi and nor in the blood of the Bengali.
The races of man, having developed from a single stock-primitive man-are, from a strictly scientific point of view, biologically similar subspecies divisions as far as their evolution is concerned, none of the races stands higher or lowers than the others in its level of physical development.

The mingling of races is frequently due to one group multiplying rapidly as result of socio-economic development; it’s spreading its territory it embraces neighbouring groups and assimilates them. The process of inter marriage or mixing of bloods started during the Upper Palaeolithic and became more intense in the course of subsequent millennia, led to progressive increase in the number of intermediate groups and to all races again developing in to a single physical type. Intermarriage therefore has great significance for the differentiation of races.

Certain groups of anthropological types such as the Artic (Eskimo), Pigmy, and Australian aborigine groups, were for a long period in complete isolation and this intensified the racial features peculiar to them. During the course of time, however, even these comparatively isolated groups have lost their so called ‘racial purity.’ So today there are no really any pure races anywhere.

The boundaries between the majorities of racial groups have already been obliterated by the process of intermarriage. It is to be supposed that anthropological types and their groups will mingle and disappear more rapidly than the races and great races. Where there are large numbers of great races living in a solid mass, the Chinese, for instance or living in isolation like the Eskimos or Pygmies, they may remain relatively untouched by racial mixing.(Nesturkh: p65-66).

At one time natural isolation and natural selection played an important in racial formation but later the mixing of races and anthropological types became primary factor. One may even say that the mixing of races has ceased to be a race-forming factor and has become one that trends to eliminate racial differences. The present day lesser races and non-contact groups reflects the effect of the environment to a still lesser degree, their specific features are formed more and more under the influence of the social milieu.

5.9 KOCH RAJBANSHI AND KOCH VERSUS RAJBANSHIS

The researcher of this study has no any inclination neither of the Koch or Rajbanshi nor in favour or against the movement for the demand of Kamtapur state. It is for the academic discussion required for the research study this question needs to be examined.

To get the answer is very important. Who are Koch and who Rajbanshi? In my field work I met different persons those who claimed belonged to either Rajbanshi or Koch and in seminar
both who claimed the language as Kamtapur or it is Rajbanshi. With my hypothetical question for which the proposed state would be aimed at either for the Koch or Rajbanshis I met veteran leader and scholar Sri Dharmanarayan Burma with this question. He is the author of several books like Kamtapur Bhasha Prasnga, he demanded that the Rajbanshi originated from the pure Aryan blood and their language is Kamtapuri not Rajbanshi. Koch is different from the Rajbanshi in their origin. Again I met with Dr. Dhirendra Nath Das, Sri Nagendra Chandra Ratta, Sri Sujan Burman of Kamtapuri Bhasa Unnayan, Dinhata of Cooch Behar all of them demanded that Koch and Rajbanshi are not same in question of their origin. They told, the language is same but it is not Rajbanshi, it is Kamtapuri. When I met Prof. Nikhelish Roy of Bengali Dept. North Bengal University he told me that Koch and Rajbanshi is the same and the language is not Kamtapuri but Rajbanshi. I met several cross sections of the people of the Rajbanshi-Koch community and got such contradictory reply.

When the Rajbanshis are claiming themselves that they are not Koch, their language is different from the Koch language. The Koches are Non Aryan and the Rajbanshis are Aryan. So those community who were known as the man of the soil, and when the history of the Cooch Behar and the Baikantapur dynasty were known as the history of them, their literature, custom are the literature and custom of the aboriginal people of North Bengal, if they appear with such separate identity then the total history has to re-write again and if the proposed Kamtapur state come into true than for whom Kamtapur it would be that question also waiting for the reply.

There is no doubt that Bodo races entered into the North Eastern part of Bengal several hundred before. Again, it can be taken as granted, if the Lichhabis of North Bihar were belonged to the Indo-Chinese group of origin in the 6th B.B then there should not be any doubt that from the ancient time the races of the Indo-Chinese group of origin lived in Assam and North Bengal. Here the number of the Brahmin and the Hindus of the Western of the country were very negligible. The Brahmin and the caste Hindus came here in the recent past century. The most of the population of North Bengal either belonged to Bodo races of origin or the mixed origin of Austric-Drabir-Mongoliad. From the lower Bengal and Bihar (Bhatia) those people came and mixed with this population and formed the present races.

The origin of the dynasty and their history have already been discussed earlier. In this chapter let it be discussed about the different opinion among the Koch-Rajbanshi origin as the present study of the research about the root of the unrest. In order to find the clue of this unrest it is needed to compile the contrast opinion of the different school of thoughts within the Rajbanshis itself to find the difference and origin of the demand of Kamtapur state and the Greater Cooch Behar.

No races can claim they are carrying the pure blood from which they were supposed to have been originated. In the blood of Rajbanshis as a general rule of social process several stream of
bloods had mixed during the course of time. Here again, the flow of the Indo-Chinese Bodo races converged at great speed. Whether the Rajbanshis are Bengali this question generally effect the identity and unity of Bengali as a whole, similarly, the question whether the Koch and Rajbanshis are same or note draws the line of division jeopardizing the unity of this great population that are regarded as the biggest aboriginal people of North Bengal.

Upendra Nath Burman, Popularly Known as, the ‘Bishma ‘among the Rajbanshi community and Ex M.P. now died, said in an interview some years back when I was working on the ethnic unrest of North Bengal and published the book under the title ‘Bichinataher Utsya Sandhyane kamtapur Theke Uttar Purba Bharat’ there I quoted the remarks that he made in his book under the title ‘Rajbanshi kshatriya Jatir Itihas’ and collaborated with his statement. He strongly advocated his statement that the Rajbanshi and the Koch are completely different in origin. In support of his statement he suggested to consider the following points. 1) appearance 2) language that means the difference between the two languages 3) religion 4) customs 5) the history of the past which means the history of their origin.

Upendra Nath Burman further said in his book, ‘all the Koches bear the origin of Mongolites. Early koches were black and ugly to look at. On the other hand, the Rajbanshis are handsome and many of the Rajbanshi bear the appearance of the Aryan. The appearance of the Rajbanshi of the southern part is more handsome than that of the Rajbanshi of north. The Rajbanshis of that Rangpur and Dinajpur are more handsome than that of Rajbanshi of Jalpaiguri. It is needless to say Rangpur was the principal centre of the Rajbanshis in the ancient period. The Rajbanshi language was originated from the Prakrit and Magadhi. Sanskrit is the grandmother of the Rajbanshi language but no such phonetic characteristic is found in the Koch language.’ He further argued, the koches were converted in to the Hinduism at the time of Biswa Singha when he embraced the Hinduism but the Rajbanshis from their birth are Hindus. In performing the ritual practice in ‘puja’ or offering god there are difference between the Rajbanshis and the Koches. The ritual practice of Rajbanshis is similar with the practice of the Hindus; their customs are like as the Hindus. The Hindus use the water from their hand. The rituals of the Koches are not sanctioned by the Hindus and they do not use the water from the hand of the Koches. Koches were the invaders and came from the outside of the country.

All the scholars and even those who claimed themselves as Rajbanshi stated the fact that the Cooch dynasty was founded by Biswa Singha who declared himself as Rajbanshi.

The question lies here. If the Koches and the Rajbanshis are taken as the different races of origin that what would be the racial identity of the Cooch Behar Dynast?

Dharma Narayan Burman in his book ‘Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itibritta Banam Tribal Andolon’ referred a point that was said by Dr. Atul Sur in his book ‘Bangalir Nrittatik Parichay’ where he told the appearance of the upper caste (brahmin, kyasatha . baidya ) similar
to the Alpian language group of the Aryan. On the other hand, lower caste Bengali belonged to the primitive inhabitants of Bengal. They are the descendents of the Pro Australoid races.’

Sri Burman put the question what would be the arguement in the racial division when the similarities appears in the appearance between the lower and the high caste Bengali community? When the characteristic of the appearance of the Pro-Australoid like short nose, black complexion, and curved hair are seen in the appearance of the high caste Hindus or the appearance of the Alpine group of races seen in the appearance of the low caste Bengali community how it would be explained?

The answer to the question that was raised by Sri Burman will also give the answer to the very basic position of the present racial identity. It is not the important point that which blood was there in the flow of the blood of races, the important point is the formation of the new races due to the mixing of the different flow of blood. If there was the blood of Alpine group of races that mixed with the blood of Bengali it is the pride of the present Bengali community. Similarly the Bengali should feel proud if the blood of the Pro Austaloid dark peoples mixed with the blood of the same Bengali Community. So if there is no definite appearance of Bengali, if no definite complexion for Bengali, if the complexion of the so called higher caste like brahmin that was artificially created by the self proclaimed guardian of the society becomes black short in height,- still he or she will remain Bengali. Again, if the complexion becomes fair, attained the height as said for the Aryan, the Bengali similarly remain as the Bengali not the Aryan or non Aryan Bengali. His identity is one. He is Bengali. In question of religion Bengali cannot be divided into Hindu Bengali or Muslim Bengali. Bengali should remain as Bengali only. It is the pride of a community. A race fully developed through the convergence of the different blood of different groups of races, accepting different groups of languages assimilating of different culture through the course of the social processes through the passage of time. This can be compare with the properties of the magnet. A magnet can never be found having only one pole, either North Pole or South Pole, similarly no races of carrying the pure Aryan blood or Pure Drabidian blood will be found. The present races are as if the cloth made of the number of fibres of different colours. If one try to isolate the fibres from the cloth to arrange them according to their texture and colour the cloth will not remain as the cloth, similarly, if one tries to isolate him with the aim to find it origin from the immemorial past, the identity of the race will be the first victim.

It is not needed to go far. Let have a glance over the list of the wives of Biswa Singha along with their land where they belonged and the sons from their womb.
Table 5.4
List of the King’s Queen and Son

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>The father land of the queen</th>
<th>Name of the queen</th>
<th>Name of the sons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Ratna Kanti</td>
<td>Nara Singha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gour</td>
<td>Hemaprava</td>
<td>Naranarayan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gour</td>
<td>Padmabati</td>
<td>Shukradsaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>Chandra Kanti</td>
<td>Kamalnarayan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>Purnakanti</td>
<td>Madan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>Hemkanti</td>
<td>Ramchandra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>Rati</td>
<td>Surasingha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kashmir</td>
<td>Tilottama</td>
<td>Mansingh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kashi</td>
<td>Chandra Kanti</td>
<td>Mecha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kashi</td>
<td>Chandranana</td>
<td>Brisha Ketu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kashi</td>
<td>Joya</td>
<td>Ramnarayan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kashi</td>
<td>Bijoya</td>
<td>Ananta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kashi</td>
<td>Joyanti</td>
<td>Dipsingha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Shantipur</td>
<td>Lalita</td>
<td>Hemdhar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Shantipur</td>
<td>Labanyabati</td>
<td>Meghnarayan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Shantipur</td>
<td>Padma mala</td>
<td>Jagat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mithila</td>
<td>Shatarupa</td>
<td>Rupchand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mithila</td>
<td>Kanchanmalika</td>
<td>Surya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Harisingha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kochbeharer Itihas: Khan Chowdhury Amantullah (p 92)

This list is an example only to show how a race comes to be existed by the mixing of different groups of blood. But a peculiar mentality for attraction toward the fair or white complexion is shown even among many Indian although they are considered as black in the eyes of the white peoples. Many Indians selected their match from the whites of Europe and America but it is a rare case where an Indian although he or she is black chosen their life partner from the black. The same mentality is shown to show the relation with the Aryan blood and feel proud for the ignoring the fact that the blood of the black of this country not only the blood of our fellow country man but also the blood of their fore fathers are flowing through the most of the Indians. Many of us feel shame to recognize the relationship with them. As a result those people are gradually becoming more and more isolated from the so called people of the Aryan origin. So the call for the integration appears to them a simple word without bearing any meaning.

The Rajbanshis are Kshatriya. No harm to accept it. But why they feel it needed to invite the Brahmin from the Nabadwip to get their reorganization for that? The Rajbanshis had a glorious past. That should be their best weapon to establish their identity. Prayer for the recognition from the Brahmin for their Kshatriya hood is nothing but it indicates the feeling of inferiority complex.
When the question came whether the Kshatriya will be recorded as the schedule caste because some of them suggested that as the Rajbanshi community being recognized as the Kshatriya, the second highest position of the Hindu caste system they should not be included in the scheduled caste list of the Hindu community. But Panchanan Burman who took the lead for the recognition as the Kshatriya hood for the Rajbanshi strongly advocated for the inclusion in the scheduled caste category to avail the special facilities that are extended to the lower strata of the Hindu society. So the Rajbanshis are now enjoying the privileges that the lower caste of the Hindu society enlisted in Schedule Caste can enjoy.

A section of the Rajbanshi community claimed that Koches are not Rajbanshi. But again, a section of Bengali was reluctant to recognize this vast mass of the people as the Bengali. From the easy of the ‘Sahitya Samrat Bankim Chandra chattapadhyhay wrote in his ‘Banga Darshan,’ ‘many koches are living in Bengal. They are found in Dinajpur, Malda, Rajsahi, Rangpur, Bangura, Daca, Maymansingh and some other districts of Bengal. In Bengal their number are about one lakh. Whether this one lakh Rajbanshi can be called Rajbanshi? Somebody said they should be regarded as Bengali. But we are doubtful about this. (Banga Darshan, Magh 1287 saskabda)

Upendra Nath Burman is regarded as a scholar not only among the Rajbanshi community but equally respected by the others. Similarly Dr. Giraja Mohan Roy also respected by all section of the community. Both of them belong to the same origin of race i.e. the Rajbanshi. But these two scholars are in the two opposite thought of schools. The opinion of Upen Barman has already been discussed earlier now the opinion of Dr. Giriaja Mohan Roy is mentioned which he wrote and collaborated in the interview given by him to the researcher of this study:

Rajbanshi in the opinion of Dr. Roy belonged to the Indo–Mongoloid group of race. He supported this view on the basis of the height and other appearance of the Rajbnshi similar to the height including other appearance of the Mongoloids groups of people living in Assam, Burma, Tripura, Nepal and foot of the Himalayas. In his opinion the Rajbanshi is a branch of the Indo – Mongoloids Bodo mongoloids groups of people.

Dr. Roy ignored the opinion of Upendra Nath Barman on the basis of the following observation:

Firstly, the formation of the body of both the Rajbanshi and Koches are same. Secondly, from the ancient time marriage relation has been established between them. Thirdly, religion, culture, language, literature, and the mode of living are same for both of them.
Fourthly, the logic upon which the Rajbanshi claim themselves as the Kshatriya the Koche also claims for the Kshatriya hood upon the same logic. The demand of the Rajbanshi that they fled in fear of torture of Parashuram who vowed to eliminate all the Kshatriya from the earth and hide themselves at the foot of the Himalayas. The koches also said that to save the anger of Parashuram took the shelter by the side of the river the Sankoch and outcaste as ‘Mlechha’. And from the name of the Sankoch the name ‘Koch’ has been derived. That means that both of them are the Kshatriya and out of fear to be killed by Parshuram they took the shelter in North Bengal. So these two groups are same in origin.

Fifthly, they are known in Assam as the Koch–Rajbanshi.  
( Utterbangar Sankriti; Rajbanshi Kshtriya Jatir Puja Parban’ Grija Shankar Roy )

5.10 THE REGIONAL IMBALANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FEELING OF REGIONALISM

(A CASE STUDY OF NORTH BENGAL)

An attempt is made in my presentation to bring to the fore the socio-politico-economic dimension of regional variation in West Bengal and its effect upon the feeling of the regionalism that ultimately watered the germination of separatist movement.

The largely quantitative description in my study focuses on three set of disparities within the state. It describes disparities in income and poverty between industrial zone of South Bengal and industrially dry northern zone of North Bengal including other indicators of human development which links to the issues of voice and representation of marginalized groups and the role of decentralization of economy and cultural resources in addressing poverty and disparities.

In question of backwardness it may be stated here there is also a wide disparity in matters of various social benefits among the peoples of different groups and different regions. The greater the inequality between the different regions of the state as well as in the country there is the greater the social and economic isolation between the regions.

Fear of becoming demographically minority is also one of the root causes that the people suffer from what is known as identity crisis. It must bear in mind that integration should not become the name of assimilation.

Poverty and inequality also appear as one of the greatest threat not only to the sustainability of human life but also the very existence of the unity among the different section of the ethnic groups.

The participatory role of the people is perceived today as an essential part of the development strategy. It does not only mean peoples involvement in a particular programme it also means
open access of the people in a wider range of social choice and greater use for political, economic and social opportunities. Participation in economic life enables people to realize their potential and offer their contribution to society. It also affords a basis of self respect and dignity which make them feel at par with other people of the state and feeling of the isolation does not find strong ground to germinate taking in to the account of the fact economic growth is meaningful for the people if it can be translated in to the betterment of human life.

I have visited from the south to the north of this state including North East states. One of the key impressions during my field study has been the seemingly increasing disparity.

In the absence of in depth knowledge or understanding of the social relation in the backward areas of the state I like to confine within the limit of macro-view of social and economic indicators of the state. It appeared to me this state is marked as much as disparities with the state or by absolute deprivation. The main reason, whatever the development their either in the field of economy or in the field of culture all are confined within the radius of certain areas in and around Kolkata. Nothing has been done for the decentralization of economic activities and consequently the cultural development became the captive in the hand of single centre.

North Bengal has a long historical back ground. It has vast natural resources and man power. The region is full of tea plantation areas but it is lagging far behind in terms of industrial progress. The result is obvious. The scope absorbing unemployed youth is limited.

To substantiate of my contention I have already presented a comparative study between the Punjab and West Bengal taking in to the account of the fact that both the states were the victim of partition
Table 5.5

A comparative study between the Northern and Southern part of West Bengal.

The average child mortality rate of the state is 67 per thousand; it is 92 in Coochbehar, 76 in West Dinajpur, 78 in Malda and 58 in Darjeeling. (Infant and Child Mortality Estimate, by S.Rajan and others E.P.W.May9-15 1995)

The average number of hospital bed of W.B for every 1018 population. it is 2748 for West Dinajpur. 2112 for malda, 1828 for Coochbehar 1145for Jalpaiguri 483 for Darjeeling (Health on the March W.B 1991)

Average literacy rate of the state is 69.2; it is 67.21 in Coochbehar, 63.62 in Jalpaiguri, 54.87 in West Dinajpur, 50.71 in Malda, 72.87 in Darjeeling. Per head yearly income for the state is Rs 2230; it is 1971 in Coochbehar, 2173 in Jalpaiguri, 1776 in W Dinajpur, 1686 in Malda 26234 in Darjeeling (Statistical Abstract W. B1978-89;97-98. Burea of Applied Economic and Statistics)

Agriculture 33% of the cultivable land gets the irrigated water. Govt. spent Rs 30.90 per hecter in the districts malda and Coochbehar. it is 1401.22 for Midnapur and Burdwan.

North Bengal represents 20% of the total population of the state but shares only 3 pc of total electricity produced in the state. The I.D.B.I report reflects the true picture in the field of industrial development where it stated; the share of the IDBI Refinance Assistance to the state of West Bengal has varied marginally. As a percentage of assistance flowing to the backward region of W.B, North Bengal share has been declined from 26% to 18% WBFC has assisted so far about 400 medium scale industries in the state, about 90% of this unit has come out in South Bengal. North Bengal share is only 5%.
CHAPTER: SIX

ETHNO LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF THE MOVEMENTS

Language is the identity of the race. Language is the strongest weapon of the movement. Language generates the emotion. Language brings the idea of collectiveness. Language gives the sense of unity among the members of the community or the race. This language, again, may promote the sectarianism in the feeling of one to the others.

Language always plays a major role in establishing the identity of ethnic group or community. The newly emerged educated middle class of the Rajbanshi community defied the demand of the Bengali intellectual that Rajbanshi language is a dialect of Bengali language and claimed it is a standard independent language like Bengali. Notwithstanding the fact, that there is no commonly accepted definition of being termed as dialect and standard language the Bengali intellectuals tried to remain their dogmatic attitude to claim it is a dialect of Bengali. As this nonissue became the issue of conflict which ultimately turned in to the demand for the creation of state recognizing of their own language. This chapter felt to look in to the textual explanation to recognize the principal or standard language of the country. It also examined the riddle of the 8th scheduled to recognize the principal or standard language of the country.

6.1 ROLE OF LANGUAGE

In this research study I have included language to understand the fathom of the gravity of the present crisis and root of the unrest. In this context I feel that it needs to give an explanation about the language and its role. The present ethnic unrest initiated from the recognition of the Kamtapur or the Rajbanshi language as the Standard language. The history of the different ethnic movements reveals the fact they had been originated initially from the demand of the recognition of the mother language. I do not like to go out of the boundary of India I like to remain within the limit of the boundary of India.

To establish the racial identity a movement can give birth of a language or a language can appear again in the new form. A language which was thought to be dead may be rejuvenated through the ethnic movement. Alphabets, literature, folk culture again may thrive into the new life through the movements. The examples are here. Kurmali, Santali or the Gorkahli and Kakbarag language. The Kurmali language, in spite of the fact that it was one of the oldest languages of our country it was a colloquial language. With the influence of the Jharkhand movement this language has appeared as the language of literature and gave birth its grammar. Through this movement the Alichiki of the Santal Language has becoming popular.
In the Darjeeling Hills region the Nepalis were to establish their separate identity as the Indian Nepali. So a section of Nepali, specially under the leadership of Subas Gishing the Chairman of G.N L.F. and the pioneer for the movement of Gorkhaland state until the new king replaced him from his chair demanded the original Nepali language ‘Khuskura’ to be renamed as ‘Gorkhali’ so that the Indian citizen Nepali should be differentiate from the Nepali speaking citizen of Nepal.

In my study of research to find the impact of the language on the ethnic movement specifically on the demand of Kamtapur state is to be examined. Although my study is not language but as the controversy has become very sharp whether Kamtapuri or Rajbanshi language is the standard language or it is a dialect of Bengali Language as claimed by a section of Bengali intellectuals became an important part to be included in the study.

As it has been said earlier that this study is not on language so there is no need or even scope to discuss about the language in details, my study is thus remain confined within the space which is related to the Kamtapur movement. In the opinion of linguistic expert, Whitner said ‘language is a social institution’.

Again, according to Edger, H Suretvant stated in his book ‘An introduction to Linguistic science ‘a language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which members of a social group cooperate and interact.

In order to search the roots of this ethnic unrest it is needed to look at a glance about the language, as here again the conflict between Bengali and the Kamtapuri is playing the pivotal role in the ethnic unrest of North Bengal. From sanskrit, regional, Prakrit languages grew and from there, present Indian languages come in to being.

Most of the eastern Indian major languages originated from Maithali which developed its entity from Magadhi Prakrit’. So it is expected that there is symmetry and similarities among these languages in various directions. The language of North Bengal which was a part of old Kamtapur bears a mark of great similarities with that of western part of Assam.

Dharma Narayan Burma, the strong advocate of the opinion that the Rajbanshi and the Koches are different identity said in his book ‘A Step to Kamta Bihari Language published in 1991 from Tufanganj stated the fact that ‘at the first stage, a sharp distinction between the Rajbanshis and the koches could be seen. But hundreds of years passed on, Koches in the throne was accepted by the Rajbanshis and in such a way matrimonial connection was made. And in course of time Koches and Rajbanshis admixture themselves culturally and socially and their separate identity was lost. As a matter of fact on such an admixture, the cultural and linguistic development took a new shape and we get this present language and culture. This language which dates its origin
from the Charuya Pada of between 8th to 12th centuries was the administrative and educational medium in the reign of Kamtapur king–from the 13th century to the 19th century.’

The letter of Maharaja Naranarayan wrote in 1555 A.D to the Ahom king Chukhampha (Sarggadev) represent well the Kamtapuri language. Here lay the complex problems. What is the identity of the language of the letter that is written by Maharaj Naranarayan to the Ahom King? Calcutta University stated that this letter is the first specimen of Bengali prose literature. If it is so, Dharma Narayan Burman claimed, that Bengali prose literature generated from the womb of Kamtapuri language.

On the other hand, the scholars of Assam demanded that this letter of Maharaja Naranarayan to be the first visible sign of Assamia Prose literature. Between this opposite demands Sri Burman naturally asked the pointed question: ‘This awakens very naturally our contention where Kamtapuri will go then?’ His further question, ‘an organized kingdom without any linguistic medium or did do its function with a Lingua Franca of so called scholar’s imagination? Of course not. Evidently it stand that when there was a complete darkness in linguistic stability in the east and in the south, Kamtapur glew with its own unparallel radiance of culture and ideal administration’ (Barma).1

Let it admit, the letter that was written by Maharaja Naranarayan to the Ahom King is the first specimen of Bengali prose. If such letter could be written by the king to another king it should be taken in to granted that during that period the practice of literature in Kamtapur kingdom was greatly developed. There were such other manuscripts and books must have written during this period otherwise such kind of letter could not have been written all on a sudden. These literature known as Kamtapuri literature has been included in the Assam Burunji i.e. in the history of Assam literature which ought to have place in the History of Bengali Literature.

6.2 DEBATE ON KAMTAPURI AND RAJBANSHI LANGUAGE

A large section of the Rajbanshi-Koch community strongly argued that this language should be termed as Rajbanshi language. Most of them argued that the Rajbanshi and Koches are same and by naming the language as Rajbanshi the psychological division if any among the Rajbanshi community will be eliminated. Dr. Grierson also called it Rajbanshi dialect. While an interview was taken, Dr. Giraja Shankar Roy, ex principal of a college and author of several books, belonged to the Rajbanshi community strongly supported the name Rajbanshi Language.

The other school of thought strongly opposed it. Dharmanarayan Burman, ex head master belonged to the Rajbanshi community and consider that Rajbanshi and the Koch are different in their origin and as such they are not identical, argued that, Rajbanshi language is not only the
court language of the Rajbanshi King but it was also the court language of the Koch kingdom and this was more developed in the hand of the Koch kings. It was/is the mother tongue of Muslims, Rajbanshis, Kayasthas, Brahmins, Khens, and other people of old Kamtapuri kingdom. So in his opinion the language should be called ‘Kamta-Bihari’ language.

Let me examine the argument of the Bengali intellectuals like Dr. Das of Biswa Bharati University where he argued that the construction of the language of the letter of the Maharaja was the same that was used in the Bengali prose. It is therefore, to his opinion a specimen of the oldest Bengali Prose. But in that context the reply of the Ahom King ought to be taken in to the consideration. That letter contained the same construction and very similar words that were used by the Maharaja Naranarayan.

If I placed or accept the argument to consider the letter as the specimen of the old Bengali prose by applying the same argument it can be claimed the answer of the Ahom king to the Maharaja also another unique specimen of Bengali Prose. It is therefore can be claimed that Ahom Language is also a dialect of Bengali language. But taking into the consideration of the vastness of the population of Assam and their political power no body dare to raise that claim.

Here comes the question of the dominance from the centre of power over the others. This centralization of power appeared during my study and the interaction of so many cross sections of peoples that centralised power is one of reason for this demand for a separate state for the Rajbanshi People. Of course many of the members of the Rajbanshi community extended their support to recognize their language as an independent standard language but are reluctant to subscribe the view to have a separate state either in the name of Greater Cooch Behar or the Kamtapur State.

The culture and literature of the undivided Bengal was not only Kolkata Based. The districts of East Bengal like Dacca, Maymansiingha, Kumilla, and Sylet at that time almost at par with Kolkata. After the partition of Bengal the divided Bengal became one centred state. Kolkata is not only the political capital of the state but Kolkata is the guardian of the culture and literature of the state apart from her political and economic supremacy. Without the blessing of the Kolkata no Bengali could be noble Bengali to be called.

6.3 THE ILLS OF ONE CENTERED STATE

It is not the issue between Kolkata and Cooch Behar or any other district. The issue is one centred urbanization verses decentralization of economy and culture.

West Bengal only one centred state. Except a portion of Howrah, Hooghly, and 24 paraganas West Bengal is only Kolkata. But in the Punjab no district has such monopoly over the other. But the interesting point is that the ratio of the urban population is more or less same of the two
states. It is 26.49% in west Bengal and 27.72% in Punjab (1981 census). The basic difference between the Punjab and West Bengal laws when the guardian of the Punjab state tried to distribute their population in creating number of urban centres by decentralization of their economic projects the political guardian of West Bengal preferred to concentrate whatever their resources in and around the capital, Kolkata. The population of the biggest urban centre of West Bengal, Kolkata was 91,65,650 (1981) and in the same year the population of Ludhiana, the largest urban centre of the Punjab was 6,06,250. This reflects the fact 63.5% of the total urban population live in Kolkata and 13.5% of the total urban population lived in Ludhiana. The numbers of small towns are increasing rapidly with decentralization of their economic programmes. As a result the people of the Punjab are not migrating from their native village to one urban centre if they feel it necessary to move. With the more towns the more civic service to the citizens on one hand, and on the other hand, it will release the pressure upon the particular town. The political parties are forced to extend their civic service to the more peoples. As the development works are distributed among the so many urban centres other districts will not feel that they are the colony of the particular city as it has been raised by the districts of West Bengal against the dominance of Kolkata.

A discontentment was accumulated through the long period against the monopolistic position of Kolkata in the field of culture. Most of the intellectuals were not in a position to pay any attention to the sentiment of the peoples of the districts. They looked upon them in indifferent attitude. As a general rule of the social science a movement has been started against the monopoly position of a centre. It is not rebellion but it is a response to the call of the history.

The language has also one kind of imperialistic character. The dominating language wants to swallow the weaker language. The dominating attitude of the community over the others remains behind the imperialistic character of the language. The western concept for the formation of a nation or the state has been accepted by the policy makers of our country. Gaelic of Scotland and Welesh of Welesh were obliterated to English or by obliterating Bret language of west France to give the place of French language is the example. Russ language also tried to suppress the marginal languages of their country like Let, Estaniya, Polish, and Fin etc. The result was not good. The imperialistic attitude of the Russ language to suppress the other languages may be considered as one of the reason for the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The basic question is what is the gain from this conflict on the question of dialect and the standard language? The attempt to prove that Rajbanshi is the dialect of Bengali language the integration of West Bengal will not be strengthen. Specially, when the difference between the dialect and the standard language is very thin then what is the use of being at dagers drawn against each other over this issue should be the point of discussion. If the Rajbanshi community demands that their language is not the dialect of any language the Bengali community has no reason to jump into the field to oppose it. If the Rajbanshi claim that Bengali is the dialect of the
Kamtapuri language it does not mean that Bengali will lose its importance. When I put that questions before so many peoples of both the communities most of them gave their answer, it does not carry any matter for them. Rather, they want to flourish both the languages through more and more development projects.

Before conclude let me place my observation on that study where the language is playing a vital role in the ethnic movement of North Bengal. Government has already formed the Rajbanshi Sahitya Academy in Cooch Behar town. Prasenjit Burman, Ex M.P. and a well known writer and respected personality of the Rajbanshi Community has become the Chairman of the academy. But a large number of Rajbanshi Community who considers that the name of the academy ought to have been by the name ‘Kamtapuri Sahitya Academy’.

The Rajbanshi or the Kamtapuri language whatever may be the name of the language it is the language of both the Rajbanshi and the Koch although the most veteran personalities among the Rajbanshi community, Dharma Narayan Burman himself admitted that throughout the processes of time and through the social interaction the difference between the Koch and the Rajbanshi is no more. So the question of the name of the language whether it will be termed as Kamtapuri language or the Rajbanshi language would be settled within themselves. But the situation becomes complex when the other community intrudes in to the internal disputes in order to show their supremacy of their thought and claim that they are the final authority to say over the matter then the situation turn otherwise. That has happened on the issue of the Kamtapuri/ Rajabanshi language. When I met several cross section of peoples, mainly Rajbanshi community during my field study they expressed the same feeling. They told that it is their internal matter and the dispute will be settled among themselves like the family matter settle within the family.

When I met some Bengali intellectuals who not only believe that Rajbanshi is a dialect but also expressed their opinion in public. They put their argument when it is pointed to the depicted letter to them that was written by the king from Cooch Behar and none demanded the presence of any Bengali prose writer in the court of the king. Still, how they could deny that it is then proof of Kamtapuri language? They replied that only a specimen like this cannot be the conclusive prove that Kamtapuri or Rajbanshi language has been originated from their own source and it is the specimen of that language. The counter argument came from the Rajbanshi community; if it so then the Bengali intellectual could not claim from the few stanzas of the ‘Charjya padh’ that it is the source of the Bengali literature.

I repeat the same as it appears to me that a section of Bengali intellectual were the one of the root to provoke the sentiment of the newly emerged educated middle class of people by raising the unsolicited controversy in demanding Rajbanshi is a dialect of Bengali language. Almost all of them live in Kolkata, seldom come to North Bengal to feel the pulsation of the soil of this
region before framing the contextual theory on the sensitive issue of the this region. I am not suggesting that the fact will depend on the sentiment but not on the fact. But when the question comes on the issue whether it is a dialect or independent language one should take all the possible cautions as well as every relevant facts ranging from historical, social, anthropological, linguistic and the ethnic sentiments of the concern people. The question echoed by the Rajbanshi community as a whole including a large section of the Bengali Community what prompted those intelligentsia to jump all on a sudden to beat the drum to declare that Rajbanshi is a dialect and even one of them wrote in the pamphlet of a political party that it is sub-dialect of Bengali language.

They forgot the social science. In order to continue my field study I made my station at Tufanganj a Rajbanshi dominated semi urban area. There I met several peoples including two times members of the West Bengal Assembly, Jiban Dey (Bengali) now 80 years old, writer of several books on Cooch–Dynasty. From their observation it is found that Rajbanshi language was the original language of this locality and was spoken locally by the ‘Aboriginal ‘Rajbanshi’ people. It had no any status in the education as the medium of instruction and the books were written in Bengali and many of the teachers were Bengali and some of them of course Rajbanshi. Jiban Dey told in an interview that they never made differentiation between the Rajbanshi and the Koches as it is not possible to differentiate among the Bengali who are carrying the pure blood of the Aryan and other who carrying non Aryan blood. He also supported the statement of Dharmanarayan Burman that Rajbanshi is the language of both the Koch and the Rajbanshi community (if the Koch and the Rajbanshi are taken as the separate identity). Once the great language and a source of great literature lost his status and confined within their colloquial language at their home, now with the emergence of educated middle class in the Rajbanshi community it becomes the strongest weapon to establish the ethnic identity.

6.4 THE SEARCH FOR SELF INTROSPECTION

The educated Rajbanshi youth deeply felt this tragedy, and they were trying to rehabilitate their language and culture as best as they could.

Naturally it was not only for him but also for the whole of the community without their knowing it, become a case of frustration and indeed a tragedy.

After the formation of the middle class in the Rajbanshi community began to feel this tragedy and they were trying to rehabilitate their language as best as they can do. At that juncture it was needed the help of the Bengali middle class to render their help to restore their past glory including their literature. But the Bengali showed their attitude to the local people specially the Rajbanshi community without any sympathy with a thoughtless apathy. This process meant the slow acculturation and assimilation of the Rajbanshi and their admission first into the lower ranks in the Hindu Bengali community and then absorption of their language and culture.
The conflict between the home and the outside world in this unequal battle was certainly a tragedy for the language and culture which went to the wall – a tragedy which might actually have struck the newly formed middle class and they came forward to establish their culture. Language is the strongest weapon to establish the identity and the glory of the past.

‘But while it was passing away, the old speech and the culture behind it had its revenge. The pre Aryan speech and culture formed a very strong established substratum, and acted as a powerful weapon in the formation of the present day composite Hindu society, culture and religion and in the evolution of the Aryan language on the soil of India for the last 3000 years. This fusion of the Aryan and the non Aryan changed the character of the Aryan speech and culture of India and made it acceptable to all and sundry and supply to it its irresistible and inexhaustible force. (S.K. Chatterjee; Conflict of Speeches in India)

6.5 DIALECTS AND STANDERDED LANGUAGE

The language is not static. Its dynamic nature provides it a constant change from one form to another. Some grow more vigorously some lost. So there is no permanent definition about the dialect and language.

The process is still at work in those areas of India where an earlier pre Aryan with its own cultural milieu is confronted with one or more Aryan speeches. There the home language is confined to the narrow limit of the group or the family. As a result, the language lost its use in the out world. Such the bilingual or Bengalised Rajbanshi community inevitably absorbed in a wider Bengali speaking Hindu community. That does not mean they forget and left their language and culture forever, rather they will try to re-establish their lost glory of their language and culture to establish the identity.

There was no any appreciable resistance or attempt from the community like Rajbanshis as at that time they were not organized politically and culturally in absence of the middle class intelligentsia and they had to submit to the advanced Bengali community in the field of language and culture. But now the situation has rapidly changed with the emergence of strong educated middle class in the Rajbanshi community. As the question related to the status of the language which is playing a very important role in the establishment of the ethnic identity I made an direct communication with the cross section of the peoples of this locality ranging from the intellectuals teaching community in the university, colleges and schools to the social workers and the very commoner of the society belonging to both the community of North Bengal.

I visited to the residence of Prof. Ashuru Kumar Sikder of Bengali department of North Bengal University and writer of several books. He admits that the commonly accepted difference
between the language and the dialect has not yet defined. ‘A Dictionary of Linguistic’ stated regarding the dialects; ‘A specific form of a given language, spoken in certain locality or geographic area, showing sufficient differences from the standard or literary from that language, as to pronunciation and idiomatic usages of words, to be considered a distinct entity, yet not sufficiently distinct from other dialects of the language to be regarded a different language’.

From this explanation an idea about the difference between the dialect and the language may be obtained but it still remain unsettle of number of questions. Because the difference between the dialect and the language is not the absolute but only relative. It is told that different form of the same language with the regional variation is the dialect of that language and when this line of difference cross a certain limit it will not remain as the dialect then it will be converted into language. For example, Bengali and Ahom once the two dialects of a language, now they are an independent standard language. But there was no standard formula that could be given what extent of the boarder of the difference that should be crossed to become a language.

Again, in the opinion of some expert that when the regional form of a language becomes the media of expression of the two distinct communities of peoples then they would be termed as the separate language. It is on that ground Ahom and Bengali who were the two dialects of a language now recognized as the two independent languages. But what would be then in case of Bangladesh and West Bengal. The citizens of Bangladesh and the citizen of India (West Bengal) are two separate group of population. In that case two languages of Bangladesh and West Bengal have to be taken as two separate languages. Another explanation was given; if the two groups of population are separated from each other culturally their regional languages would be treated as the independent standard language. On that explanation Ahom and Bengali language are no doubt two independent standard languages but accepting this argument the Rajbanshi community can easily claim that their language should be considered as the independent language because the culture of Rajbanshi and Bengali are quite different from each other. Again, if one accept the culture as the index for the differentiation between the dialects and the language that would be unable to give the answer to the very basic question also. There are so many similarities among the dissimilarities between Ahom and Bengali languages, on the other hand, same similarities and dissimilarities are found between the Bengalis of West Bengal and East Bengal still the language of Bengal is same. Even the understandable of the language is not the solution of that controversy. So long one community is in a position to understand the meaning the language of the others it may be termed as the dialect of the standard languages. But in that case if a Bengali visits Assam or Orissa he can understand most of the words of Ahom or Oriya. But if one Bengali of Kolkata tries to follow the conversation between two Bengalis either Sylhet or Chitagmg in most cases he will failed to understand their conversion. I got the same experience.

I met several personalities of the Rajbanshi community for my study of research, like Premananda Roy, author of ‘Ekush Shataker Rajbanshi Samaj O Manishi Panchanan’ Dr
Dhirendra Nath Roy, teacher, and resident of Dinhata, Nagendra Chandra Ratta and Sujan Burman, both are teachers editors of 'Sotal Chauali Path', the elementary grammar book of Rajbanshi language, Prof. Arup Jyoti Das and writer and film maker reside at Guwahati and Bodo – Rajbanshi origin and many others. Every one told that if some of the Bengali intellectuals would it not have been claiming that the Rajbanshi is the dialect of Bengali language it would remain as a non issue and it would not find any avenue to ignite the fire of the ethnic unrest in the name of the language.

They further argued, if the Kamtapur or Rajbanshi literatures which were reached to its pinnacle during the 14th and 15th century should have been placed in the history of Bengali literature. The great writers of Kamta literature like Hem Saraswati, Haribar Bipra, Madhab Kandali and the famous poets of Koch, Kanshari Deb should have placed in the History of Bengali Literature. They asked why their sons will search those creations and the creator in the Assam Buranji?

The counterpart of the Koches in Tripura are now also in war path. Here the Kokbarag has been using Bengali alphabet for long centuries. Now a section of the Tripra community demands that they like to use Roman alphabets replacing Bengali. How far this demand is aimed at the development of the language that require to be examined. One probable reason lies behind this that this section of the Tripra community think Bengali is the main obstruction in establishing their independent identity. So a section of Tripra community has chosen the Roman alphabet for Kakbarg, as the Rajbanshi has been using the Rajbanshi language for establishing of the ethnic identity.

6.6 THE RIDDLE OF 8TH SCHEDULE

At the time of independence there were fourteen languages that were included in the 8th Scheduled. Those languages were, Assamia, Bangla, Gujrati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kanara. Marathi, Malayam, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu and Sanskrit. After that more and more languages have been added in the scheduled. At present there are 22 languages in the Schedule. It has already been stated that India is not a monolingual state. It is a multilingual country having 1652 languages as per census report of 1961. Nobody knows what are the index that were fixed to select the language to be included in the list of 8th Scheduled. The Sanskrit language has been included in the 8th schedule. But the number of Sanskrit speaking peoples that were recorded in the census mere a few hundred that means if there is any Sanskrit speaking people really exists in the country they needs to search thorough the microscope. The number of Santali linguistic community was 36 lakhs, Bhili 12.5 lakhs could be considered for the 8th schedule. Again, Kashmir having 24 lakhs and Sindhri with 12 lakhs of population could find their place in the 8th Schedule. There should have been a index like the population, or any other items that would be consider in giving a place in the Schedule. In absence of such index there is an ample scope for
the misunderstanding among the different section of the community. Those community had the political power could manage not only their language to be placed in the 8th Schedule but also the respective state on the linguistic consideration. Even after that the province were fragmented under the pressure of the other linguistic community for the formation of the respective linguistic state. Now the other linguistic community coming forward with the same demand taking the advantage of the absence of such index for the formation of the state and giving the recognition of the language in the 8th Schedule.

The domination of one language over the other invites the catastrophic effect. The Russ domination disintegrated the very existence of the Soviet Union. The attempt to dominate over Bengali by Urdu language is one of the prime factor for the disintegration of Pakistan. One should take the lesson from the history in order not to allow it repeat in case of them. The dominating attitude of Hindi already created a sharp division between the South and the North of our country. Further, in the 1981 census 48 languages assimilated in Hindi eliminating their linguistic existing in the official record. In a multilingual state every language should have their own identity and position in the state. No community will accept his language as a sub language of any other language in the long run.

When the states were formed upon the linguistic consideration it was not thought about the other linguistic groups. As a result ethnic conflict finds the scope to raise their head as a general rule with the emergence of the educated middle class within the respective community to make the demand for the creation of the said linguistic state. Those linguistic community who could show their political power and the capacity to influence the votes were able to have a separate state. One formation of the state on the linguistic basis encouraged the other to come forward with the same demand.

One should keep in mind that the Bengali speaking peoples got their state where the state official language is Bengali, but the other linguistic groups who live within the boundary of West Bengal have the equal love and respect towards their respective language. Nobody can deny the fact that, we are told, that be Bengali than Indian, be Marathi, then Indian and so on. I can re call the call of the merger of Bengal and Behar. Anthropologically and historically the Bengali and the Behari are same. Shasanka, the king of Bengal established his capital in Pataliputra, now Patna. If Bengal and Bihar were merged together it would be good example of the national integration. But it is the Bengali who opposed it, because they had a fear that they would be minority in question of their demographic position. But if the merger would have taken place at that time all the administrative posts would be occupied by the educated Bengali in absence of the educated middle class in the Bihari community. The natural resources of Bihar would be the raw materials for the industrial hubs situated in Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, and by the side of the Hooghly River. But if such proposal for the merger would have been placed now the strongest opposition will come from the Bihari community. Because the strong educated middle
class has emerged in their society and the feeling of the Behari nationality has finds its strong foundation in Bihar.

Rabindra Nath Tagore, the dream and hope not only for the Bengali community but for the mankind of the world. Rabindra Nath Tagore in his essay ‘Bhasa Bichhed’ wrote both Oriya and Assamia language are the dialects of Bengali and advised Bengali alphabets would be the ideal for them. Prof Sukumar Sen, a notable linguistic told, these three languages have been originated from the same source so they were the same language at one time. Nobody can think that Rabidra Nath Tagore suggested that suggestion from the throne of egoistic thinking. He told it taking into the account of the historical facts that these three communities were sisters coming out from the same seeds. Inspite of the fact both the Oriya and the Assamis expressed their strong resentment over this suggestion because it appeared to them it would abolish their independent identity.

A number of the Bengali intellectual when claimed that Kamtapuri or the Rajbanshi language is the dialect of Bengali they did not bother to think that such uncalled claim may hurt the sentiment of the Rajbanshi community. Now nobody dare to call Assamia and Oriya are the dialects of Bengali language whatever may be the historical support behind that because of their political strength. Such claim of the Bengali intellectual drove them to feel more isolated and they are now trying to establish the relationship with the people of Assam where they find more near relationship in respect of language specially the Rajbanshi community of Goalpara who were separated from them during the period of 40s. In my study and the interaction with the peoples associated with the demand of Greater Cooch Behar state I found this is one of the strongest factors of demanding for the creation of Greater Cooch Behar state. They felt that the relationship with the Ahom community cannot be restored as it was in the past due to the isolation for so many years so it is better for them to have separate state in the name of the Greater Cooch Behar for the Rajbanshi as a whole.

Before concluding about this chapter let have look over the role of the sentiment circling the Rajbanshi community again in the ethnic unrest of North Bengal. Dr. K.L. Barua in his ‘Early History of Kamrup’ opined as following:

‘The old Kamrupi language was a variety of eastern Maithali and that is why Huen Tsang remarked that the spoken language of kampurupa differed a little from the language of Kamrupa differed a little from the language spoke in Moid–India i.e. Magadha and Mithila.’

‘The Prakrita languages of different regions were identical but on association with non Aryan languages of the respective places assumed different shape and entities. Kamrupi Prakrita language accordingly assumed distinct character and so it was independent of the eastern Prakrita languages’ (Burman p 213).
Some of the Pan-Bengali scholars desired proto-language to be sub-dialect of Bengali language. In the same time, Assamese Scholars also echoed the same Pan-Assamese theory. The Rajbanshi scholars like D N Burman, Prof. Girin Roy opposed both the views and opined in the interview in saying that both the theories of the scholars of the respective states are far from the truth because this Kamrupi which is lately known as Kamtapuri/ Kamta-Bihari, linguistically is equidistant from Pan–Bengali and Pan–Assamese realities.

6.7 THE HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF KAMTAPURI LITERATURE

It has already been stated that in the 13th century the name of the kingdom Kamrup was changed on shifting the capital of Kamrup to Kamtapur. Fifteen miles south to present Cooch Behar. This was ruled by 15 native kings successively beginning with Sandhya Roy in 1225 A.D. to Nilamber 1482A.D. Pathan Chieftain conquered Kamta but could not retain it for more than 12 years. Within a short period Biswa Singha captured the throne. Markendeya Purana, in 35th pada says:

‘Kamata Nagare Biswasingha Narabar. 
Prochanda Protap Raja Bhoge Purander.’

Twenty two kings of this line ruled over Kamta and lately Cooch Behar, for 454 years continuously from 1496 to 1950 which is the longest dynastical rule in India.

I like to mention the literature of Kamta Cooch Bihar which I collected from the different libraries of Cooch Bihar and Jalpaiguri and from the individual collections of different peoples during my field studies.

From this collection it is found that the kamta–Cooch ruler was the patron of literatures. Several distinguished, authors, and religious preachers enriched the literary treasures of the Kamta language. The letter of Maharaja Naranaryan of Kamtapur, written to the Ahom king has already been mentioned. When the Rajbanshi scholars demanded it is the first visible sign of prose literature of Kamata Language, the scholars of Bengal and Assam univocally demanded this is visible sign of prose literature of their respective languages.

It is no doubt that when there was a darkness in the field of literature in the east and south due to the political instability during that period. Kamtapur glew with its own unparallel radiance for language, culture and ideal administration.
Table 6.1.1
List of the Kamtapur Literature

1) Gopicandrer Gan of 13\textsuperscript{th} century
2) Gornather Gan
3) Prahlad Carita: Haragauri Sambad, by Hem Saraswati During the reign of Durllav Narayan
4) Joginitantra written in the period of Maharaja Durlav Narayan
5) Padma Puran by Surnani.
6) Translation of Aswamedha Yajana of the Mahabharata by Harihar Bipra
7) Daker Bacan by the poet Dak
8) Padamapuran by Durgabar
9) Padma puran by Mankar

Sankar Deva, the court poet of Maharaja Naranarayan (1533-1587) wrote many books. So far I have gone through those books I mentioned below:

Table 6.1.2
List of the Kamtapur Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LITERATURE</th>
<th>DRAMA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I) Ajmel Upahyan</td>
<td>VIII) Balichalan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II) Adidasar Bhagabat</td>
<td>IX) Bhakti Pratap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III) Utakalmala</td>
<td>X) Bhakti Ratnakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV) Uddhab Sambad</td>
<td>XI) Ramayan (uttar kanda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V) Gunamala</td>
<td>XII) Rukmini Haran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI) Niminabasidha</td>
<td>XIII) Harishchandra Upakhyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII) Premkalasi Ghosa</td>
<td>XIV) Barisa Barnana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Kali Daman
2) Parijat Haran
3) Rasa Krida
4) Rama vijay Nath
5) Sita Sayambar
6) Patniprasad
7) Kele Gopal
8) Sitaharan

‘Rama vijay Nath’, was staged in the court of Maharaja Naraynaryan with the patronization of Cila Roy, the famous general of the king. Sankar Deva acknowledged his help by composing poems in praising Cila Ror for his help in staging the drama:

‘Ramak Param Bhakati Rasajnan
Shrisukladhwaj Nripat Pradhan
Ramaka Vijoy yo Karayali Nat
Milahu Taheka Baikanthak bat.’

Table 6.2
List of other Kamtapuri ancient books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nam Ghosa by Madhav Deva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhakti Ratnabali by Madhav Deva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhattima Madhav by Deva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barageet Madhav by Deva</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ramsaraswati was the court poet of Naraynarayan. He at the request of the king translated the Mahabharata in to Kamta language. He also wrote Bagasur badh, and some other books which I heared the names but could not see. Bhatta deva translated Katha Gita and in this language. Puradsatham Vidyabagusa wrote Pryaga Ratnamala, Pitambar Sidhanta Bagis wrote Markkendya Candi, Nal Damayanti and Usha Parinaya. There were others books also written during that period which clearly speak about the remarkable progress in literature. It is equally true that during those periods Bengali and Assames languages had not taken a definite shape. It is only during the 18th century both the languages took the definite shape especially in the prose literature.5

6.8 RACES AND LANGUAGES

Many linguists have made an ardent search for the common ancestor from whose language similar European languages developed. At one time it was thought that scholars had found this ‘first language’ in Sanskrit the language of the ancient Indian manuscript’ (Nesturkh; p 90).

It is true that a number of Indian languages and the Persian languages had some resemblance to the European languages which gave rise to the name of Indo-European for the whole group of languages.

It is also believed that in the distant past India and Iran were invaded by tribes from some other part of the world, tribes that spoke Indo-European Languages who conquered those countries. This conquerors declared themselves a “higher race than the local population whom they had enslaved; they gave themselves the name of the Aryan from the Sanskrit word, ‘Arya’ meaning noble–born. Later the name Aryan was applied to certain racial groups and the findings of the linguists were given an unscientific, racists colouring. Many racists regards only the tall, blue-eyed blonds of modern north Europe as being true Aryans–these peoples have given the name of the Nordic race.

If language is the offspring of the race spirit, the peoples speaking Indo-European languages should possess the features of the northern Aryan races. But this not so. The kurds and many other peoples, who are Indo-European in languages, have skin and hair that is much darker: light–eyed individual are rare among them. Aryan languages are typical of south Europe where the majority of the people have dark eyes and hair do not in any way resemble the mythical Aryans.

Thus the theory of an Indo-European or Aryan ‘first language’ and common ancestor with all the features of the Aryan race is refuted and at the same time it is obvious that no race has the right to call itself ‘Aryan–Noble’.
It is clear, peoples speaking the same language are not racially homogeneous and as rule, consists of representative of a number of anthropological types (Nesturkh). In Africa the Negroid peoples speak their own languages, in North America they speak in English and in South America Spanish. Thus groups of one race that enter in to the composition of various peoples and nations, speak different languages.

From the above discussion it goes to show that language is independent of races and disproves the unscientific theory that language is the off spring of a mysterious race–spirit, in some way “biologically inherent “in a race. Language depends entirely on the development of society, it emerges, lives and dies as people develop’ it has no casual relation with the race as biological group.

No doubt, language is the basic mental process such as thinking, understanding and even dreaming. Linguistic rights can be classified into three broad stream; 1) identity based, 2) justice based, 3) diversity based.

My aim to understand the basic root of the present unrest in North Bengal with reference to Rajbanshi/ Koch I like to see the role of the language in question of the identity first and then its role in diversity.

‗Language is not simply a tool for communication but is a central and defining feature identity as all human thought are conceptualised through a language and all the human values are pronounced and perceived through it. It follows that since language is a significant factor in building one’s identity it must be preserved. People identify with the (local) community of speakers of their language, recognise one another as members of the same groups on the basis of language, and have a more or less settled desire that the group should survive and flourish in to the indefinite future’ (Sengupta ;2009. 17 The Economic and Political weekly).

Language is a constitutive and significant factor in one’s identity formation and provided their speakers with a sense of individual as well as collective forms of linguistic identity.

6.9 JUSTICE–BASED

Language is the strongest tool of participation in the polity of the state. If one has no scope to speak in their mother language can have a serious impact on an individual’s employments, educational, and recreational opportunities. This leads to gross injustice and discrimination. Supporting the policy of official multilingualism is based on egalitarianism. ‘The same kinds of valuable institutional space and resources that are made available to speakers of one language in the community ought to be at the disposal of speakers of other language as well (Patten 2001; 710)”
Unequal linguistic endowment in the form of ability to speak the dominant language can be the source of interpersonal injustice and every citizen should possess the right to mobilise support for a language community or policies that he or she considers a collective or public good (Latin and Reich 2003;103).

6.10 DIVERSITY BASED

The preservation of linguistic diversity is that diversity is a value and provides alternative to choose from different culture representing different systems of meaning of good life as none can claim to have achieved in totality (Parekh 1995;205). It can further said that each language is itself a manifestation of human creativity which has value independent of its use and also that it is human accomplishment and end in itself (Reaume 2000;250).

It thus gives to make the conclusion that linguistic diversity is therefore essential to the human heritage with each and every language embodying the unique cultural and historical wisdom of people. The loss of any language is an irrevocable loss for all humanity.

From the above discussion it is evident that a large number of the smaller minority languages are threatened and these include scheduled and non scheduled languages as well as the official languages of some states. In India 196 endangered languages have already been identified. Surprisingly, inspite of the fact that the two languages namely Manipuri and Bodo incorporated in the Eighth Scheduled of the Indian constitution are now in the category of endangered list. Among the official languages of the states of seven-Ao, Angami, Chang, Khasi, Khiemnungan, konyak, and Manipuri are recorded as endangered languages. So it need for re-evaluation and revamping of the existing policies in India towards non dominating languages.

In India, which is linguistically an extremely diverse country, there emerge several issues in respect of evaluating government policies towards minority languages. There exist a lack of definitional clarity between what constitute ‘majority’ and Minority’ language as Hindi, the official language of the Union of India, is the language of only two fifth of the total population of India.’

Here again, it is seen that the number of the speaker of the language is not always determine the stability of the language. For example, according to the census report of 2001 it is seen that the there were 13.5 lakh Bodo speakers and 14.7 lakh Manipuri speakers in India and incorporated in the Eighth Scheduled but still these two languages are emerged in terms of being unsafe. According to the Atlas of the world’s Languages in danger published by UNESCO in 2009 two-thirds of the non-scheduled languages are also under threat to different degrees with half of them being unsafe. There are 50 non scheduled languages facing the threat of danger inspite of their countable number of speakers.
Table 6.3

List of Endangered Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adi</td>
<td>(1,98,462)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gondi</td>
<td>(27,13,790)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konyak</td>
<td>(2,48109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundari</td>
<td>(10,61,352)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sema</td>
<td>(1,03,529)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anal</td>
<td>(23,191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmar</td>
<td>(83,404)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korku</td>
<td>(5,74481)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissi</td>
<td>(2,11,485)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherpa</td>
<td>(18,342)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angami</td>
<td>(1,32,225)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho</td>
<td>(10,42,724)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korwa</td>
<td>(34,486)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nocte</td>
<td>(32,957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamang</td>
<td>(17,494)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ao</td>
<td>(2,51,387)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabui</td>
<td>(94,758)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kui</td>
<td>(9,16,222)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paita</td>
<td>(64,100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangkhul</td>
<td>(1,42,035)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balti</td>
<td>(20,053)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karbi</td>
<td>(4,19,534)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladakhi</td>
<td>(1,04,618)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phom</td>
<td>(1,22,508)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangsa</td>
<td>(40,086)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhumij</td>
<td>(47,443)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharia</td>
<td>(2,39,608)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liangmey</td>
<td>(34,232)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pochury</td>
<td>(16,744)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thado</td>
<td>(1,90,595)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anal</td>
<td>(23,191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmar</td>
<td>(83,404)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korku</td>
<td>(5,74481)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissi</td>
<td>(2,11,485)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherpa</td>
<td>(18,342)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angami</td>
<td>(1,32,225)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho</td>
<td>(10,42,724)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korwa</td>
<td>(34,486)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nocte</td>
<td>(32,957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamang</td>
<td>(17,494)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ao</td>
<td>(2,51,387)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabui</td>
<td>(94,758)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kui</td>
<td>(9,16,222)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paita</td>
<td>(64,100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangkhul</td>
<td>(1,42,035)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balti</td>
<td>(20,053)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karbi</td>
<td>(4,19,534)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladakhi</td>
<td>(1,04,618)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phom</td>
<td>(1,22,508)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangsa</td>
<td>(40,086)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhumij</td>
<td>(47,443)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharia</td>
<td>(2,39,608)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liangmey</td>
<td>(34,232)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pochury</td>
<td>(16,744)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thado</td>
<td>(1,90,595)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in the parenthesis are the numbers of speakers of the languages as per 2001 census.

There are 14 languages in India that have been listed in the Atlas as the definitely endangered languages. They are:

Table 6.4

List of Most Endangered Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deroi</td>
<td>(27,960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolami</td>
<td>(1,21855)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangte</td>
<td>(14,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kom</td>
<td>(14,673)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juang</td>
<td>(23,708)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konda</td>
<td>(56,262)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khond</td>
<td>(1,18,597)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lepcha</td>
<td>(50,629)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coorgi</td>
<td>(1,66,187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbu</td>
<td>(37,265)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinnauri</td>
<td>(65,097)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malto</td>
<td>(2,24,926)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koch</td>
<td>(31,119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miri</td>
<td>(5,51,224)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in the parenthesis are the number of speakers of the languages as per 2001 Census

Among the 35 critically endangered two are Gadaba and Parij which as per Census report of 2001, were spoken by 26,262, and 51,216, respectively.

The constitution of India enabled the Parliament to create a new state was no doubt a rational thinking that linguistic minorities be offered adequate opportunities for political and economic growth so that they should not have the feeling of discrimination or neglect. This states have the constitutional right to legislate their own official language. Even the official language as mentioned earlier is facing the danger of oblivion.

From the above fact it suggests that a large number of the smaller minority languages are threatened and these include scheduled and non scheduled languages as well as the official

168
languages of some states. So it is an urgent need for immediate initiation of policies for protecting, revitalising and promoting the entire range of endangered languages if the linguistic diversity of India is to be preserved.

The demand for the recognition of the Rajbanshi/kamta-Behari language should be dealt with on the light of this specific consideration.

In this context Supreme Court of India on the question of the minority languages decided in 2002 that the operative unit in respect of determining who belongs to a minority within the meaning of article 30 will be the state and not the whole of India.

6.11 THE ETHNO–LINGUISTIC BACK GROUND BEHIND THE HITASADHANI SABHA

As it has been stated in my early submission about the unique demographic distribution in Cooch Behar which has no mach with any district of West Bengal and the same is not required to be repeted. Although there was a strong ethnic feeling between the Deshi and Bhatia i.e. between the Rajbanshi and the Bengali but no communal class has ever taken place. The same is said when the progressive state like Bengal became the ugly field of communal riot the princely state Cooch Behar never indulged the communal forces to show their ugly teeth in the society. During the period of the Muslim regime of the state a considerable number of the Rajbanshi converted in to Muslim, known as Nasya Sekh. But even after the conversion they still follow many of the Hindu pactices and laws. In Cooch Behar both the Muslim and the Hindu community follow the Hindu law of inheritance.

The role of the rulers of this princely state should also be brought in to discussion. Although the rulers of the state were Hindu but they never adopted the discriminatory policy to the other religious believers. In the time of publication of the holiday list they considered every religious festival and thus followed a true sense of secular state policy.

The Islamic preachers could not succeed to introduce the strict Islamic ritualistic practices in the villages. One reason may be attributed in that context as stated by Prof Ananda Goal Ghosh on his scholarly article published under the title ‘The Hita Sadhani Sabha ‘- Power struggle by the Cooch Beharis’ in Socio political Movements in North Bengal’ (ed) that due to poor communication and transport system the Islamic preachers could not travel in to the remote villages of Cooch Behar. But this argument did not appear to me as convincing. Because when the Islamic preacher could convert the village people in to the Islam they could also easily visit that place. The main reason behind this, there was no such caste discrimination as prevailed in the Hindu Society in other parts of the country including Bengal. So the converted Muslims did not feel it necessary to alienate from the main stream of the Hindu population from whom
they were once a part. The number of Seikh, Mughal, and Pathans were insignificant indicating the fact those Muslim came as invaders they did not prefer this part of the land for their permanent settlement. According to the census report of 1981, the total number of the Muslim Population in Cooch Behar district was 170746. Out of which only 1146 were the out siders Muslims. So a kind of ethno–linguistic consolidation instead of the religious consolidation took place amongst the Hindu and Muslim of Cooch Beharis.

Like as Muslims amongst the Cooch Beharis the Brahmins amongst them also showed an another uniqueness in their presence. There are Adhikari Brahmins that are present only in that community and others are Maithali Brahmins. They maintained a very good understanding with the Rajbansi community and it is they who introduced the Bramanical practices in the community. They were liberal and did that ritual practice keeping the many customs of the Rajbansi community. Thus here also exits a differentiation between the ritual Hindu practice of North Bengal and the Rarh Bengal or the South Bengal. South Bengal follows the customs of Kalinga where the North Bengal followed the practice of Maithali customs. The difference between these two are such sharp that the Kamrupiya Brahmin were despised by the Rarhi Barendra and Vaidik Brahman who represented the rest of Bengal.

An interesting point is that, the Saha’s a traditional Bengali business community and Jogi a non caste Bengali community were inducted in the Rajbansi community. How they were included in the Rajbanshi Community and many of them became the members of the Hitasadhani Sabha need another field of study which excluded from my research study.

6.12 ETHNO–CASTE–LINGUISTIC ANTAGONISM

There are so many variations in Bengali spoken language. Those who speak in different variation of that spoken Bengali in their respective areas everybody claim themselves as the Bengali and Bengali is their mother tongue. So when the chaste Bengali of Nadia–Krishnanagar of central Bengal was recognized as the spoken standard Bengali for teaching, study and writing no Bengali objected it. Even in Bangladesh follows this standard.

It is not the same in case of Rajbanshi. They claim that they are not the Bengali and their language is not Bengali. It is Rajbanshi or Kamtapuri / Kamtabehari. On the other, many of the Bengali Scholars claimed that this language is the dialect of Bengali and they have to accept it for the cause of the integration, as if it should be taken into the fact if the Rajbanshi is regarded as one of the language of India and independent from Bengali the integration of our country will be fallen like a sand made castle. The role of language in question of establishing the ethnic identity has already been discussed earlier. Here in this chapter I like to throw some light about the economic disparities on the issues of the ethno–linguistic matter.
The economic disparities bring also the disparities in the education which ultimately effect the economic position of the community.

During the period of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur introduced the modern education in Cooch Behar State. Many primary and secondary schools were established by him.

During his regime he founded the college in the name of Queen Victoria in 1888. For remembering the Golden Jubilee Celebration off her coronation. It was the first degree college of the then North East India. It should be noted that the Cotton College of Guwahati was established after 12 years of Cooch Bihar Victoria College.

Although the college was established in the princely state by the ruler in order to spread the education but the lion share of the opportunity of higher education was availed by the outsiders. The Administrative Report of 1933 showed that forty seven candidates were appeared for the examination of which only eleven were Coochbeharis. Out of eleven seven were Hindus and four were Muslims.

From the same source it is found that in the year of 1940 forty thee students were appeared in the Calcutta University Examination and only seven were Coochbeharis. The higher posts of all the educational institutions were occupied by the non-Cooch Beharis. For example, all the Head Masters and Head Mistress of the Jenkins School and the Sunity Academy including the principal of the Victoria College were the non-Coochbeharis. In the meantime educated middle class had emerged in the Rajbanshi Community and this disparity had created a feeling of discontentment in the rising middle class of that said community.

A feeling for the need of an organization to represent the Cooch Beharis or the ‘man of the soil’ got its momentum. It is further aggravate when the new land policy was introduced by the king.

The government took the initiative for the development of the cultivable land for the enhancing the revenue of the state. In order to do that they took a massive steps for the distribution of fallow land and jungle land to convert it for the cultivation. The local cultivators at the initial stage did not show their interest in doing this laborious job. At that time most of them were engaged in ploughing the land as ‘adhiars’ as the land was easily available and it was comparatively easy to plough.

In order to attract the cultivators of the outside areas the government announced various attractive measures. So many farmers mostly from the then East Bengal came here and accepted the land. They were laborious and had the skill in the art of the agriculture and converted both the fallow and forest land into the agricultural land. As the land was virgin and the art of skill in
agriculture that the ‘incoming farmer employed in those land, within a short span of time it became a fertile land for various crops and turned the fortune of the farmer of the said land comparatively better than the local farmers. When the local farmers came forward with their demand for the land there was no land to distribute them.

This measure resulted in a radical change in the land–man ratio of the state which had a tremendous effect upon the social structure of the state and caused one of the factors for the conflict between the Cooch Beharis and the outsiders of the state.

We can have an idea about the land scenario from the Settlement Report of Mr Becket, the settlement officer of Cooch Behar. He wrote on 1872 and an extract is produced to realise the land situation of the state:
‘From calculation made, I found that out of about 150,000 bighas of revenue paying land included in 185 taluks, about 81,000 bighas are held by foreigners, of the remaining 69,000 bighas less than a third is held by cultivating Jotedars, and the reminder by resident Jotedars, who do not actually cultivate land but live on profits derived from Chukanidars (Middle man) (Source: Ghosh)

The processes of change of land man ratio and ownership of land was a continuous processes as many of the incoming settlers were the farmer by their profession. Thus there were discontentments mounting from the both side of the social strata. From the urban side the newly educated Cooch beharis found that their avenue for employment in the administrative arena was occupied by the more educated Bengali outsiders much before of their becoming the educated people. In the rural side the cultivable land were now in the hand of the outsiders farmers. So the front of the conflict between the Cooch beharis and the no-Cooch beharis extended day by day. The Cooch beharis were feeling the need of their organization that could raise their voice for them. At that point the emergence of the HitasadhaniSabha should not be discarded as the organization of the land lords; rather it should be examined in the light of the social transformation. At the time of the freedom of India, the people of Cooch Behar, especially those Cooch beharis, began to understand that Cooch Behar State had no other option but to take a decision on the merger issue. As the conflict on both the economic and social area were mainly between the Cooch beharis and Bengali they sought an organization who could make strong stage for the interest of the Cooch Beharis. Hitasadhni Sabha was an outcome of that social situation.

6.13 THE FORCES BEHIND THE LINGUIIIISTIC CONFLICT

Kamta kings patronized the poets to translate Sanskrit books in to Kamta languages. I am mentioning those books as the kamta languages because I could not find their names in the history of Bengali Literature. Dharma Naryan Burman during the interview lamented that inspite
of this exalted position of Kamta language the scholars of Bengal and Assam tend to underestimate Proto Language by saying that it is dialect of Bengali and on the other hand of Assamese.

In the absence of the recognition by the history of Bengali literature, the scholars of Assam included these one of the finest creation in the literature in the history of Assam taking it to the account that a large section of the Rajbanshi community is now living in Goalpara after it annexed with Assam. Here I like to quote from the Books ‘Assamese, Its Formation and Development’ where it wrote in the page no 16, Ch I. as follows:

‘It was under the patronage of kings of Kamtapura, outside the western limit of modern Assam, fourteen miles to the south of Cooch Behar that the earliest Assam books were written. Even now the spoken language of North Bengal and western Assam (dialect of Goalpara and Kamrup) is substantially the same and seems to form one dialect group.’

I met several members of the Rajbanshi community in different occasions and in a seminar where the participant from both schools, supporting the name of the language as ‘Rajbanshi’ When I mentioned the remarks taking extract of the remarks of Banikanta Kakati as mentioned just above all the speakers except the participants of Goalpara opposed the remarks of Kakati as a deceitful remarks. Many of them asked how the Kamta court poet’s book can be earliest books of Assamiya language. They argued that when those books were written in the court of the Kamta Raj Darbar that must be the books of Kamta language, the court language of the kingdom.

During the break of the seminar I met with the participant coming from Goalpara and asked about their silence on that issue. Ajoy joyti Das Prof. of a college of Boroland told me that they were in dilemma in question whether this creation will be the part of the Assamiya Buranji or the independent kamta language. They argued that from their school hood they are learning from the history of Assamese literature name as Ahom Buranji that these are the part of the Assames literature that means the literature field of Assam gave the due recognition of these creations in their history. They further argued that the Rajbanshis of West Bengal do not find these creations in the history of the Bengali Literature. So in West Bengal the children of the Rajbanshis do easily accept the argument that they are not the part of the Bengali literature, rather they are the independent Kamta Bihari or the Rajbanshi language.

This argument bears the weight. When the question comes to administer the Rajbanshi community it will be asked that they belong to the Bengali community and the creation that were made in the court of the Kamta dynasty are the treasure of the Bengali literature and the letter of Naranarayan will be the living specimen of the first instance of the Bengali prose but when the question of due respect and reorganization will come there will be no mention of them in the history of so called main stream history of Bengali Literature.
No doubt that Kamta language is an ancient language although it is a matter of debate that this language is prior to Bengali and Assames. It is a debate of no use but only to abuse the harmonious relation between the two communities. If it is taken as granted that it is prior to Bengali it does not bring the downfall of the position of Bengali language.

Language moves forward depending upon the various factors. It is fact, that the ‘change of geo–polity of this region brought about downfall of Proto language. During the British rule Kamta kingdom was divided into four parts, one was tagged with the newly founded Assam state (1874) another portion with Bengal, the other with Bihar and residue was Cooch Bihar state. Consequently the regional language of the respective states took upper hand; there by this language had to recede back. Moreover, Calcutta University was established in the year 1857 and through this university, teaching of Bengali language spread into Eastern India. So Bengali became medium of instruction in Bengal and Cooch Bihar, and Assamese in Assam. And naturally Kamta was pushed back.’

The argument as put forward by D. N Burman in his article ‘The kamta Language – a Brilliant past and Tragic End ‘in Socio political Movements in North Bengal (Ed) cannot be ignored when in the teeth of serious adverse position this language is still not only living but so many Rajbanshi intellectuals are organized together and publishing number of articles and books in the Rajbanshi/Kamtapuri language. I have collected more than one hundred books and journal all of which are written in Kamtapuri Rajbanshi language which is a glaring example of the formation of the middle class intellectuals among the Rajbanshi Community. I got the Gita, a translated version in Rajbanshi language where I had the privilege to write its forwarding. I tried to remember and equate the same thing when the Gita was translated in Bengali version during the period of British rule and the national sprit was its height to overthrow the colonial rule. The translation of Gita was an indication to establish that the Indian philosophy was superior to English philosophy to boost up the national sprit of the people. It appeared to me that the translation of the Gita into Rajbanshi Language by one Rajbanshi intellectual. Nagendra Nath Roy, Head master of a school represents the feeling that the Rajbanshis were not inferior to any community and their language is strong enough to represent the most sacred holy book of the country.

During my field work I met several peoples across the different shades of the people. Most of the people expressed their view that they want to live together .and many of them belonged to the Bengali community told me that those who claimed that Kamtapuri language is a dialect of Bengali they are doing nothing except to convert a non issue into a issue of igniting the fire of ethnic conflict. They opined that when the many of the Bengali feel proud to say that their children do not know how to write or speak in Bengali but very much strong in English and
prefer to send their children to the English medium school then what of the use of making such a non issue that Rajbanshi is the dialect of Bengali language?

In a seminar on the International mother language day in the memory of the departed soul who gave up their lives for the mother tongue in Dacca held at Bagdogra where a large number of teachers of North Bengal University attended. Fortunately I was also one of the speaker on that occasion. Every speaker spoke to keep the practice through their respective mother tongue and argued that the medium of the instruction of education should be through the mother language. After the end of the seminar I made a study how many of the participant opted to send their children to be taught in Bengali medium or any other school where the medium of teaching is their respective mother language. I find none of the university and college teachers who opted to send their children to the schools where the medium of instruction is their respective mother languages.

So those sections of the Bengali intellectuals jumped into the band of wagon to establish that Rajbanshi language is the dialect of Bengali they had to bear one of the major responsibilities for the ethnic unrest of this region.

REFERENCES
2. Chatterjee, Suniti Kumar, (1979), ‘Conflict of Speeches in India and the Adivasis ‘in Selected papers Angla – Nibandha – Chayana, New Delhi ,People’s Publishing House, pp180
3. Barua, B. K., Early History of Assam,
4. Burma ibid
5. Burma ibid pp225
7. Patten, Alan (2001), Political Theory and language Policy, Political Theory, Vol29, No 5 October, pp 691-715
CHAPTER: SEVEN

IDENTITY–AUTONOMY QUESTION AND THE STATE: THE KAMTAPUR EXPERIENCE

Hitasadhani sabha which was formed before the independence of the country and during the rule of the Coocbehar Dynasty played a dominating role to organize the Rajbanshi Community in favour of remaining the Cooch Behar Dynasty as an independent state. They enjoyed the blessing of the royal family. They had the tremendous influence upon the common Rajbanshi Community although the leadership of this organization was in the hand of the land lord of the Rajbanshi Community. Another important facts that the separation of Goalpara district, the Rajbanshi dominated area and annexed with Assam during the latter part of the British Rule was a severe blow to the unity of the Rajbanshi community. This separation is one of the major cause to raise the demand of Greater Cooch behar State by the present kamtapur movement. Again the uneven distribution of development helped to create some kind of the feeling of alienation from southern part of the state.

7.1 FROM HITASADHANI MOVEMENT TO GREATER COOCH BEHAR MOVEMENT

Nothing happens all on a sudden. There must have some causative factors behind it. Same postulation is applicable in the social movement. It can be compared with the match box. Only the stick of the match box having gunpowder on it will not produce the fire unless there is gun powder is pasted on its side. When the two gun powders made the friction the fire is produced. Similarly to understand the causes of the ethnic unrest of North Bengal one should look back its back ground and try to find out the hidden roots that are planted in the past. It is for that reason in my study I have included the ‘Hitasadhani Movement’ as in this movement there was a strong diverse opinion in question whether Cooch Behar will remain as an independent state or a state within the territory of the Union of India as the state of West Bengal or like other states became a very debatable issue during those period. Hitasadhani Movement did not last long but that does not mean that the roots of that movement have completely uprooted from the soil of the region, rather to say from the heart of the respective community. So it needs to look at the past to judge whether there was any hidden seed began to germinate in the new form of demand and responsible for the ethnic unrest of North Bengal.

7.2 CLASS COMPOSITION OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Hitasadhani Movement, the traditional left parties analysts discarded it as the movement of the land owners patronized by the royal family. This simple explanation fails to explain why this movement got the momentum with the massive support at its initial stage.
No doubt this movement which was originated in the forties of the last century till the state’s merger with West Bengal gained momentum in the princely state of Cooch Behar. One should remain true to the history to find the fact to understand the present and future. When I met some aged politicians who had seen that movement and even participated in the movement they were divided in to two fronts. Those who belonged to left politics, particularly CPI and CPM they discouraged me because in their consideration to introspect the movement which ‘met a natural death’ is a fruitless effort. But to my question how a movement gained momentum if they had no any mass support behind them, they gave their traditional reply as it was the movement of the landlords they accumulated all their resources and got the favour of the royal family. Among them were Jiban De, two times elected members in the State Assembly of the then CPI. Chandi Pal the veteran CPM leader, who died recently. Jiban De of course admitted during my last visit at his residence in Tufangaj that this simplification in analysis of the incident is the mistake that the left party often commits. He also admitted that the Hitasadhani Movement, no doubt a landlords sponsored movement but it enjoyed the popular support of the Rajbanshi Community.

Let have a journey from the Hitasadhani Movement to the present Greater Cooch Behar. At the outset let me recall the history of the Koch kingdom that has already been stated in the early chapter. The Cooch Behar kingdom continued its existence with great honour from the 15th century to mid 20th century for a period of about 500 years. As it has already been discussed that the Koch dynasty has its unique characteristic. During this long period, the king and the subjects used to live together and as belonged to the same race there was a social relationship amongst them. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous chapter that both the land lords and the adhiars i.e. who cultivate the land of the land lords are both farmers and used to plough their land side by side with their own hands. It is for that reason there was no strong class base demarcation was formed between the land lords and the share croppers as it was very prominent in the others districts of the state. It is for this reason when the Tebhaga movement got the strong root in other districts of North Bengal the response of the farmer of the Cooch Behar was minimum. The left leaders of the movement blamed that the Koch kings did not allow the farmers to form any organization which they thought may go against their interest. This may be the one reason but it cannot be the sole explanation. No ruler in any country invites or invited to form movement or organisation against him which may go against their interest. The national movement against the British rule certainly not received the favour from the colonial ruler. Rather hundreds of freedom fighters had to sacrifice their life and spend their major part of the life in the prison. Inspite of the fact the freedom movement reached to its height and able to remove the world’s mightiest colonial ruler.

During the short span of life the Hitasadhani Movement under the banner of the Hitasadhani Sabha became very popular amongst the people of Cooch Behar mostly of the local origins. The Rajbanshi, Kshatriyas, were the majority of the population, Khens, Brahmins and the
Mohamedans also forming around 25 percent of the population of the princely state. Some outsiders who settled here and engaged themselves in different occupations like (Jotedsari), legal professional or traders also joined in the movement. In short, although among many scholars who were left in their believe described this organization was an organization of the land lord or the zaminders, in my observation; they failed to observe the participation of the common peoples. So they did not felt it necessary to search the back ground of the movement, which helped the organizer to build up this mass movement. As a consequence of this biased attitude they failed to judge about the influence of that movement upon the present demand of the Greater Cooch Behar movement.

7.3 FACTORS BEHIND THE HITASADHANI SABHA

It became evident that India was going to achieve her freedom but there would be two states India and Pakistan. The native states were allowed to join with either India or Pakistan. The king of Cooch Behar were in ‘horns of Dilemma’ to take the decision to join either to the dominion of India or Pakistan. Whatever may be the idea of the land lords of the Hitasadhan Sabha but the common people of the princely state wanted to enjoy the fresh air of the democracy. As there was no class enmity between the land lord and the cultivators the reason as stated earlier they joined with the Hitasadhan Sabha knowing the class base of the leadership of the organization in a hope that would ultimately give the fruits of the democracy. So when the organization formed in the name of Hitasadhan Sabha on 19th May, 1947 not only the land lords but also the other peoples of the state joined in the organization which started the process of works in transforming Cooch–Behar into a centrally administered state.

Here it needs to look a bit in the past in order to know the basic idea of naming the organization. The idea of doing good or welfare to Cooch Behar was echoed in 1859. King Naranarayan established an organization named Desh Hitaishana Sabha for social, cultural and economic development and himself became the president of the organization. The high official, the learned man, zaminder and businessmen were the members of the renamed the Sabha as Cooch Behar Hitaishana Sabha. The king became the president of the organization after some modification of the frame of the Sabha. Mr. Beverage, Deputy Commissioner, and Nilkamal Sanyal, the Dewan, held the post of Vice president of the Sabha. This Sabha with 29 members started their function in the field of social policy, agriculture, industry, business, education literature etc. The details account of this sabha is narrated in the Cooch Behar Hitaishana Sabha edited by Sashi Bhusan Halder in ‘Cooch Behar Darpan’ in their issue on 14th April 1938.

Such kinds of organizations were formed in different times under the direct participation of the kings. Some of the examples may be given. The Dharma Sabha established by King Shibendra Narayan (1939-47) too made the correspondence of the subjects with the king easy.
The human relation became attractive and easy through the establishment of hats, markets, trade-centres and ports (Bandar) by the kings.

Cooch Behar began to taste the modern shape during the period of King Nripendra Narayan (1863-1911) who built the palace in Cooch Behar. He was highly educated and under the influence of Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal, principle of Victoria College opened the gate for the subjects of his state for the higher modern education. Many notable scholars and social reformers were produced during this period. One of the great name was Thakur Panchanan. Under his leadership a new wave of the social movement founds its way.

At that time Calcutta became the capital of India and became the principal centre of trade and culture. Dacca which was the important centre of learning and trade centre during the Sultan or Nawab period gradually lost its importance. As a result the educated youth of the then East Bengal most of whom belonged to the zaminder or the land lord family they were in search of new avenue for the employment. At that time many of them came here as the king Nripendra Narayan opened the door of the kingdom for the educated youth for the educational institutions, in the court of law as the state adopted the British laws replacing the primitive practice in land system and also in the matter of law and order. For that reason the king asked the English law knowing people for the function in the court and also for the administration. As Cooch Behar was nearer to East Bengal the educated youth preferred to come here and settled. Many of them became permanently settler by purchasing the land from the local Rajbanshi community. Many of them no doubt, took the advantage of the simplicity of the local people. In that case they utilized their connection with the administration.

An impression prevailed in this area was that the people who would come from the parts of the low land (Bhati, means for the movements of the rivers towards the lower land) were called ‘Bhatia’. Generally the people of East Bengal who came in large number and settled here they are called by the local people as ‘Bhatia’ and still they are continued to be known as Bhatia even today. It is again the new settlers called the local people as ‘Deshi’.

Although the national movement of India sparked in the minds of the common people of India it could not influenced the people of Cooch Behar partly due to the restriction that were imposed by the king to organize any political and social activity and partly due to the fact the middle class educated youth, mostly Bengali were part of the King’s administration. But with the establishment of the educational institution in the state the fresh air of national sprit found its way in the mind of the students of the both communities. The students of Victoria College including the teachers involved secretly with the national movement. The persons like Narendra Ghosh, Ananta Kumar Roy, Debashish Mukhopadhyay, Ashruman Dasgupta, (a teacher of royal family) Suresh Chandra Bandopadhyay, Dinesh Biswas, Upendra Nath Burman, Khetra Singha were connected with the Anusilan Samity.
One interesting information I got from the writings of Prabhanandan Das ex headmaster and scholars in his article, ‘The Hitasadhani Sabha and the Tension of Cooch Behar’s Integration with India.’ There he reveled this interesting fact that ‘inspite of hard rules the kings were not far away from the liberal attitude. Surendra Nath Bandopadhyay, the leader of ‘Indian Association had a connection with King Nripendra Narayan. Nripendra Narayan donated money to the Congress fund.’

King Jagadipendra was against the national movement of India and imposed the strict administrative steps so that no political activity may take the root in the soil of the state. But he took the initiative to introduce free education for the woman in the state which helped to the rise of the consciousness among the people.

All this had a tremendous impact on the social movement. The Kshatriya moment which was initiated first under the leadership of Harmohon Khajanchi and aptly taken over by Rai Saheb Panchanan Burma, the socio-political leader of North Bengal may be taken as the result of the spread of education. This ensured self assertion of the Rajbanshis during the period when the society was completely caste ridden. The Rajbanshi community regained their self confidence, honour and prestige in the society.

When the social movements get the momentum it will not move alone but accompanied with the political feeling and determination. Cooch Behar was not exception from the general rule of this social science. The political parties were continuing their activities secretly and got the support from the general mass. Following the bi-racial programme of Lord Wavel in 1945 the feeling of Deshi and Bhatia surfaced strongly. The old Bhatias, (those who came earlier) had already adjusted with the culture of the local people of this area. So the clash between them was not so sharp. But the clashes took place when the waves of the new Bhatias flooded the state. They came with their culture and a feeling of superiority complex which hurts the sentiments of the local people.

The very word ‘Bahe’ as already been discussed earlier is an abbreviated form of ‘Baba he’ just like ‘Bapu he’ in Bengali, is good in respect of addressing the senior or junior men. But this word became a word to show the disrespect or neglect to the Rajbanshi community by the those new ‘Bhatias’. The ‘Deshi’ people also began to use ‘Baghe Bangalees’ in retaliation. It is also disgraceful name for the Bengali. A wall of division in the social atmosphere was built. The Rajbanshi could have plea that the new ‘Bhatias’ should remain grateful towards them because it is they who offered them shelter and way of living successfully. If they showed their antagonistic attitude towards them it would not have been possible ‘for them to make their settlement in the state so peacefully. Political, party, no doubt took their initiative in building the political consciousness among the peoples ‘inspite of’ the odd situation and helped to grow the anti royal
feeling as their political goal but they did not pay their attention to remove the under current as stated above that were flowing in the minds of the both communities of this state. Both the superiority complex of the educated Bengali and to some extent a feeling of inferiority complex in the minds of the Rajbanshi community has to be removed at the initial stage. In my field study I find that the political activists and the political parties were more interested in building their political support rather than to look into the social matter in the eyes of the social reformer. Moreover, they in many cases indulged to create this division among the peoples in the line of caste and religion to fulfil their narrow political gain.

Here, if the political leaders and the other intellectuals tried to measure the fathom of the wounded sentiment of the local people being marginalized in one hand, and on the other hand losing their identity and culture including their language and history, the situation would have not been taken this shape as it appeared to day. However, thanks to the good spirit of peoples of the state and after the merger with West Bengal no ethnic clash was allowed to take place in the soil of Cooch Behar. It should be mentioned here when the communal riots in Bengal rocked the pride of the Bengali culture either they belonged to Hindu or Muslim community engaged to kill each other the people of Cooch Behar showed their unique quality in maintaining the communal harmony between the Hindus and the Muslim. There was not a single incident of communal clash is recorded in the history of Cooch Behar.

One should recall the great movement of Quite India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi which influenced the Rajbanshi community as well during the 40s. The death of Panchanan Burman although weakened Kshatriya movement but it influenced many leaders to join in the national politics. For example, Upendra Nath Burman joined the National Congress along with his many followers and became the member of the Parliament. As it has been stated earlier that the political movement including social, economic, were forbidden in the princely state of Cooch Behar.

A very important political development took place in the 40s when at the insistences of the responsible governments in all the princely state of India, election were held in Cooch Behar. That was the first political events in the monarchy. At that time a signal of future alarm was flashed which was ignored by the then even radical leadership of that state. The subjects of the state were divided in to two groups – Deshi and Bideshi, the first open division in the line of community feelings. There emerged the Hitasadhani Sabha, an organization of Deshi people comprising Rajbanshi both the Hindu and the Muslim along with other indigenous groups.

**7.4 THE ROLE OF THE ROYAL FAMILY TOWARDS HITASADHANI SABHA**

One should keep it remember in that context that the king himself was an indigenous people of Cooch Behar. On the other hand, the administration that he arranged in such a way that it was
completely under the control of the high caste outsiders i.e. the so called Bhatias and the indigenes people virtually had no role in the administration. When the election was declared the deshi leaders like Satish Chandra Singha Sarkar, Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah, Gajendra Narayan Basnia, Ansaruddin Ahmed assembled behind the Deshi people and participated in the election under the banner of Hitasadhani Sabha, an organization formed with a declared objective to look after the welfare and interest of the Deshi people as a whole. This newly formed organization virtually won all the seats of the council. The two leaders of Hitasadhani Sabha, Satish Singha and Amanatullah were inducted in the council of ministry and were given Education and Finance port Folio of the ministry respectively. This incident has a long drawn impact upon the Rajbanshi and other indigenous people as they first tasted the victory and saw their own men in the higher position of the administration. It was no matter for the common indigenous group to see the class character of the representative of the elected members of the Hitasadhani Sabha it appeared to them as the first victory of their community over the outsiders administrators. The example of the Independence Day can be cited in that context. The common people of India was no mood in that memorable day to judge the class character of the members of the minister of the central government except the few numbers of the left parties. Nobody was in mood to response the call of the Communist Party of India ‘Eai Azadi Juta Hai’.

In Cooch Behar also, most of the indigenous peoples along with the so called Bhatia’s were poor and illiterate. When I met with the present leaders of the political parties including both the left and the right they told that the Hitasadhani Sabha took the advantages of their ignorance and poverty through the trick to charge people fully with the ethnic feelings and emotions. They also further said that the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha projected their preaching in such a manner as if they had taken the task of the unfinished goal of Thakur Panchanan Burma for the emancipation of the Rajbanshi community. But basic question surfaced now how and why the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha could success in their preaching? Why the common Deshi or indigenous people who constituted the 80% of the population of the state relied upon them? Even under the left rule for more than 34 years how that ethnic unrest could raise their head? The question came because during my interview with Chandi Pal the then District Secretary of CPIM gave the explanation that the activities of the left progressive political parties of Cooch Behar was very weak and as such the impact of their ideology amongst the farmers and other poor were very insignificant then. The same argument was expressed by another left leader Dinesh Dakua in his article ‘A journey from Hitasadhani Sabha to Greater Koch Behar’ published in the book under the title ‘Socio political Movements in North Bengal. (Ed).

It should be noted that from the time of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur during his short rule from 1913to 1922 AD an administrative change was found as the king appointed more and more local peoples in the administration. He was also supporter of the Kshatriya movement. At his initiative the sacred thread ceremony of Maharaj Jagaddipendra Narayan, Maharaj Kumar Jitendra Narayan Gautam Narayan was also held in the state.
7.5 MASS SUPPORT BEHIND THE HITASADHANI SABHA

It may be mentioned here that the Cooch State legislative Council was formed in the year of 1909 during the reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan but all the members in the council were either official or nominated. In 1941 A.D. The Cooch Behar Legislative Council act was passed during the reign of Maharaja Jagdipendra Narayan and provision was made therein for direct election of eight members – two members (one Hindu and one Mohamedan) by jotedars of the state, one member by the members of the legal profession of the state, and five members from each of the five sub-division of the state, namely Sadar Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Mekhliganj, and Tufanganj. Important leaders like Stish Chandra Roy Singha, Khan Chowdhury Amanullah Ahmed, Ansuruddin Ahmed, Jogendra Nath Roy, Gajendra Nath Roy Basunia, Kumar Tikendra Narayan, Mosaraf Hossain Prodhan among others became the members of the State Legislative Council when the election was held in 1946 A.D. As mentioned earlier the win of Satish Chandra Roy Singha, a lawyer from Dinhata sub Division defeating Makbul Hossain Ahmed, also a lawyer who happened to be the father of the former Bangladesh President Ershad Hossain was not an unexpected result at all. Another important leader Umesh Chandra Mandal, also a lawyer contested from Mekhligang. Other contesting candidates for that constituency were Susil Kumar Chakraborty and Mosaraf Hussain Pradhan. Mandal lost to Hussain in the triangular contest.

In an article written by Parabananda Das under the title *The Hitasadhanee Sabha and the Tension of Cooch Behar’s Integration with India*’ Published in ‘Social and political tension in North Bengal’ (Ed) an incident was mentioned which I think an important events in the life of Cooch Behar.

The clash between the students and the military hastened the movement against the king. A collision took place when between the two cycle riders running opposite each other on the street nearer to Victoria College and a Missionary School (Maraja Nripendra Narayan School). In one cycle carrying two military personnel dashed the other cycle. The military men got angry and began to beat the other cycle rider. Some students of Victoria College noticed this incident and snatched the cycle of the military men to hand over the cycle to the police station. At that time a large number of military men under the leadership of a captain entered the college. Satish Chandra Bhowmik, the Head master of the Missionary School tried to resist the Captain Kumarendu Narayan. But no honour was given to the head master. The military personnel entered the college ransacked everything. It was reported according to one eye witness that a breast of girl was cut; many students were wounded including girls and the principal and teachers.
The King was absent at the time of incident. After returning to the capital he discharged the captain along with the Subedar Nabin sing from their service by conducting the criminal procedure against them. This student movement was also a turning point in the political history of Cooch Behar. Before that nobody dare to show any voice of protest against the Royal Army and the king. At the same time the peasants movement initiated to its journey against the king by the leadership of Jiban Dey, the then a young Communist leader at Banshirhat where the unjustified tax on selling of goods was imposed on the sellers. Before that the peasant movement in Mathabhanga in 1930-31 though weak but helped to germinate the future movements.

When the national movement for freedom of India reached to its height and the change were seemed inevitable a fresh air for change began to blow in the political atmosphere in Cooch Behar also. Taking the advantage of the turmoil the people of Cooch- Behar, different civil organizations of the state like, Cooch Behar People’s Association, Civil Liberties Committee, and Cooch Behar Employees Association tried to organize themselves to establish democracy in the state and for this they began to make contact with the national leader of India for their help. Satish Chandra Roy singha, a very powerful leader of Cooch Behar at that time, whom the Statesman, a daily news paper of Calcutta once described him as the uncrown king of the state. Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah Ahmed, a highly respectable person of the state and many others holding respectable position in the state came forward to form an organization.

It was 4th Jaistha1353 BS corresponding to the 19th may, 1946 , before a huge gathering of more than 60000 peoples on the Rash Mela maidan which was the wide open having no stadium and other construction thereon , the Hitasadhani Sabha was formed with great enthusiasm where Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah Ahmed declared as president, Satish Chandra Singha and Dharani Shankar Bhattachjee as the vice president, Jaladhar Saha as the secretary and Majir Uddin as assistant secretary of the organization. It should be kept in mind that during those days there was no bus communication yet the people came in thousands either on foot or carts and special trains had to provide for the peoples coming from the distance place.

Amongst others who addressed the gathering was Sonmani Devi, the first woman graduate amongst the local people. The ‘Bhawaiya ‘ Samrat Abbas Uddin , a son of Cooch Behar sang in the gathering and sang the song which was composed by his younger brother Abdul karim for this occasion with the opening word ‘O Bhai Morr Kuch Behari Re’. The same song now is sang almost in every cultural function of the Rajbanshi community, here it should be noted that Hitasadhani Sabha was the first political party which was granted recognition by the state.

The indigenous people who had no representation in the administration in the states so long, at least found two of their members were in the council of ministry with two very important portfolios and as such they got thoroughly elected and enthused. The common indigenous people
did not consider it to think the class character of the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha. The gathering of the meeting of Hitasadhani Sabha was its example.

The left party particularly the communist Party of India started their organization and initiated the farmer agitation following the movement of Te-Bhaga but could not produce much success for mainly two reasons: firstly they were not allowed to do their function openly, secondly, the leaders were almost Bengali who still then considered as Bhatia in the eyes of the indigenous people.

The Hitasadhani Sabha placed the demand to develop own area with their own men. They also said in their demand that they want to work through the elected representative under the shade of the central government. That call responded the mind of the indigenous people as they had a dream that their land would again be a land of the indigenous people. Hitasadhani Sabha capitalised this sentiment of the indigenous people and could create great enthusiasm among them.

They placed their demand to be submitted before the maharaja of Cooch Behar by claiming the development of Cooch Behar State in that mammoth gathering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.1.1</th>
<th>Executive Members of Huitasadhani Sabha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khan Chowdhury Amanatullaya Khan</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharani Shankar Bhattacharya</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satish Chandra Roy Singha</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaladhar Saha</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majjiruddin Ahmed</td>
<td>Asst Secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.1.2</th>
<th>General Members of Huitasadhani Sabha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satish Chandra Roy</td>
<td>CoochBihar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satinath Roy</td>
<td>Khagarbari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aneswar Roy</td>
<td>Bhetaguri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jogendra Nath Roy</td>
<td>Mekhliganj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekin Prodhan</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mossahr Hussain</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gajen Roy Basunia</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JogendraNathMandal</td>
<td>Tufanganj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhira Roy Basunia</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogen Ishore</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajeswar Sarkar</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JatindraNathSinghaSarkar</td>
<td>Tufanganj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PatalChandar Barman</td>
<td>Natabari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HafazuddinMiah</td>
<td>Premerdanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchharauddin Ahmed</td>
<td>Cooch Behar Sadar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar Purnendu Narayan</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamini Kumar Barman</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karamuddin Miah</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar Birendra Narayan</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above mentioned numbers many others from different villages were included as the ordinary member of the organization.
The method of declaring and including the names of the members was a new to the indigenous people of the state where not to speak of the formation of any organization in public was not allowed there such kind of the participation appeared to them a new venture for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Legendary Folk song by Abbas uddin</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh, Bhai mor Cooch Behari re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Oh, My Cooch Bihari brother)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaturdikke Jale Surujbati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The sun like lamp kindles on all sides)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomar ghare kyane andhar rati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Why the dark night does prevails in your house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haire, Hai!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Alas! Alas!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parar Bojha tomara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katadin Baiben Bhai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The left activists ignored the Hitasadhani Sabha completely as an organization of the landlords or the zaminders and hence they are very much reluctant to give any importance to their presence and discarded it. These intellectuals or the political activities now in dilemma to give the explanation why after the rule of national stream political parties like the Indian National Congress and there after left rule for 34 years the demand for the separation from West Bengal could find its roots in the soil of West Bengal? Why the Rajbanshi community still feel that their language and culture are absorbed by the so called Bhatia after so long has been past?

In order to search the answer of this question and in the same time whether the same issues that were raised by the Hitasadhani Sabha almost 70 years back were kept like a dormant volcano waiting for the eruption that needed to be examined. For that reason I intended to peep in to the class position of the members of the Hitasadhani Sabha to know how an organization of the zaminders or land lords all on a sudden could become the inspiring source of the common mass.

Jotedar were the mini zaminders. The persons belonging to the category of the jotedars were the land owner of 12/-13 hals or 20/-25 hals in extreme point. A hal constitutes of about 13 bighas of land that means they were the owners of 200 or 250 bighas of land. The cultivators who cultivated under the joteders were called ‘Haluas’. The ‘giri who cultivate the land of their
own part of the land. Other parts of the land were distributed among the Halus. The Halus would give half of the crops produced. In this system the exploitation, deprivation or oppression by the joteders would prevail. But here the relation of the giris and the halus were not always bitter rather in some time congenial which were not seen in other part of the country, the reason of which has already been discussed. The giris would take 2 mounds in exchange of 1 mound when he lends the crops to the Halus. But the giri would help the haulas when they were in distress. At that time there was no bank to give the loan. Giris were the last saviours of the haluas. The giris become liberal in respect of their halua’ sons and daughters marriage. The custom of “panichhita” meant one who would sprinkle water on the head of the daughter or the son was turned into a father or mother, as the case may be, in the case of marriage. The Haluas took that advantages and the Girs were made father or mother of their sons and daughters. The relation became deep and they were treated as relative. It should be kept in mind that this relation was not like as the relation between labour and owner as in other part of the country. It was a social relation that had been the prevailing custom in the Rajbanshi society based on the relation of love.

When India became free as the two dominions of India and Pakistan and paramount of the British Government over the India states there were three options were left for the princely states: 1) to remain as independent states, 2) to accede to the Dominion of India and 3) to accede to the dominion of Pakistan.

It was evident that the intention of the Maharaja and Maharani of Cooch Behar was to remain as the independent states. The Hitasadhani Sabha also in the same line of opinion. The reason can be easily understandable. They from the very beginning organized themselves raising the demands for the authority of the local people. They were neither in favour of merger of Cooch Behar with Assam or West Bengal. They were in favour of creating an independent Cooch Behar state comprising the Dooars part of Jalpaiguri, a part of Darjeeling, which were at one time under the state of independent State of Cooch Behar.

Some influential leaders of the Dooars area named Bidhu Bhusan Karjee of Paropar, Alipurduar, Tarini Kanta Roy of Raichanga near Falakata, Gopal Chandra Roy of Shilbari, Tarakeswar Roy, G.Basunia of Khet-i-Fulbari and Md. Abdudhobahan of Falakata of the Dooars area expressed their desire by publishing a leaflet in the year 1947 A.D just on the eve of independence of India and before the merger with Cooch Behar to form a separate state comprising the said area under the Maharaja of Cooch Bihar.

It cannot be denied that the Hitasadhani Sabha enjoyed the overwhelming popularity in the state. The election result of the State Legislative Council which was held in 1949 almost all the candidates of the Hitasadhani Sabha were elected.
7.6 THE ROLE OF HITASADHANI SABHA TO WARDS THE MARGER

In order to search the roots of the ethnic unrest of North Bengal nobody can deny the role of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Many of the scholars as mentioned earlier tried to ignore Hitasadhain Sabha as the organization of land lord and hence they are now irrelevant in the history of Cooch Behar. Many of them even expressed their opinion in the interview as part of my field study that to bring the episode of the Hitasadhani Sabha would be an attempt to invite the ethnic division which they thought that had buried under the grave with the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal and after the progressive political parties took the lead of the district. But with the emergence of the same demands that were raised by the Hitasadahani Sabha even during the rule of the left front government who claimed themselves as the government of the common people forced them also to re-think that the ethnic problems still remain there. It is not mere a regional problem but it is a universal problem that needs special attention to understand. No simple method not even the much publicized socialist theory after the debacle of the Soviet Union is proved sufficient. So it needs an open mind to judge the issue without prejudice beforehand. Under this context I felt it necessary to give an account of the evaluation of the Hitasadhani Sabha as it appeared to me inspite of their abolition but their demands still remains in one form to another.

Hitasadhani Sabha cannot be discarded as the organization of land lords ignoring the fact that it emerged as the ethno-linguistic political group and played a very crucial role at the eve of the freedom of India as well as the closing phase of the princely state of Cooch Behar. Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh of University of North Bengal, and author of number of books on North Bengal rightly said, ‘It emerged in the most critical phase of its history, and played a very significant role in shaping the fate of the lonely princely state of Bengal. What is more important is that the majority of the ‘Coochbehari’ people were emotionally associated with the Hitasadhani Sabha. Its popularity was beyond doubt whether one supports it or dislikes the Hitasadhani Sabha’s aims and actions. Until now no serious attempt has been made by any academician or non-academician in the particular ethno-linguistic and social hierarchy of this tiny princely state.’

Without going through the studies of post colonial and the post modern political and social transformation the origin or the root of the present unrest cannot be judged. In order to make my journey I made a venture to see the social events of the immediate past of North Bengal specially, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and a greater part of Siliguri plains. Without taking the account of the role of the Hitasadhani Sabha no such discussion is possible.

In this context the demographic composition should be kept in mind and that was given the place in the study. It has already been stated that the religious composition, and the ethno-linguistic identity were completely different from the rest of Bengal. The demarcation line
between the Cooch Behar and the non-Coochbehari was very sharp in this princely state. It was thought that this difference has abolished after the merger with West Bengal and ruled by the centrally administered authority from Kolkata.

The sharing of power in the hands of man of the soil was the main slogans of the Hitasadhani Sabha which earned the overwhelming support of the local people. Although the king belonged to indigenous community but the common people had no scope to maintain the relationship with him. It is the members of the administrative staff maintained the administration and were entrusted with the task to look after the subjects of the king. The bureaucratic mentality of the administrative staff is inherited from the Colonial rule. After being the princely state the kings of the state introducing more and more colonial administrative procedure replacing the traditional customs which were the binding force between the feudal ruler and the subjects. As it is discussed earlier the administrative staffs were almost all belonged to the Bengali community with their different language and culture and they appeared as alien community. This attitude further got the chance to become strong because of their function as the bureaucrat in the administration office.

‘Man of the soil’ is not only voiced in the soil of Cooch Behar, it echoed every part of the country even in the midst of wide spread of the wave of the ‘Globalization.’ How one can define the egotism of the Maharstrian and emergence of the Shib Sena in such a big force based on the slogans ‘Maharastra for Maharastirans or against the so called Hindi imperialism by the South Indian people. Even in the same state like West Bengal the people of one place obstruct the candidates coming to join for the proposed industry to be set up in the place of their residence. Very recently the prestigious University of international fame like Calcutta University declared that their students will get a preference in the admission for the post graduation course. It is also a manifestation of the same sentiment ‘Man of the Soil’ though in a sophisticate form.

The slogans of the power in the hand of the local people cannot be discarded as the demand of the landlords. If it is so then the movement of the freedom struggle of India has to be described as the movement of the land lords and the Indian big traders class as claimed by the then Communist Party of India by raising that slogans ‘Eai Azadi Zuta Hai’. The leadership of the Indian national movement no doubt was in the hands of the affluent class of peoples known in the Marxist term. ‘Bourgeois ‘that does not mean that it is the movement of bourgeois class. The participant of the movement were the common people and their dream to free India and test the power though their own men. The leadership of the Hitasadhani Sabha was no doubt in the hands of the affluent class of people predominantly land owners but that does not mean the overwhelming participant of the common people should not be given the due importance .The sweeping victory of the candidates of the Hitasadhani Sabha in the election held in the year of 1946 was the clear indication that the Hitasadhani Sabha echoed the dream of the common people of the state. That was the first time for the local peoples find that persons belonging to
their ethno–linguistic group in the administrative chairs. This share of political and administrative power that they tasted through the movement of the Hitasadhani Sabha encouraged their aspiration to gain political power at the eve of freedom of India as they sensed with the leaning of the colonial ruler a new political door is going to be opened.

7.7 THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE HITASADHANI SABHA

During my filed study when I met several persons to know their views about the Hitasadhani Sabha. I felt it needed to examine the demands that are raised by the present leadership of the movement for a separate state or for the recognition are more or less similar with the demands that were raised by the present leadership of the movement for a separate state or for the recognition for the more or less similar demands that were raised by the Hitasadhani Sabha.

Everybody admits that there was a grave grievance in the mind of the common people of Cooch Behar. But it should not be forgotten that there is a long distance between the grievance and the organization unless someone take the task of forming an organization by capitalizing of the grievances.

During my study I found that the indifferent attitude towards the Hitasadhani Sabha not only by the left oriented scholars but also from the side of the government made it very difficult to open the pages of the facts. So very little evidence or to say record are available to judge who were the real strength behind this organization so that it could appear with such massive strength. It requires to examine to know the roots of the ethnical unrest so that everybody should take the note that what appeared dead it may not be so and the seeds of that apparent dead issue may germinate in the near or distant future as the ethnic conflict between the Cooch Beharis and the Non–Cooch beharis which was thought died with the disappearance of the Hitasadhani sabha.

There was a convention that in any organization that were formed in the Cooch Behar Dynasty either the Maharaja or the Maharani would be the president. In the same time it needed the prior permission of the king. That happened at the time of the formation of the Praja Hitasadhani Sabha in 1859. The Maharaja by virtue of the throne became the president of the Praja Hitasadhani Sabha. But there was a deviation in the case of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Neither the king nor the queen held any post of the organization. So a mystery is still there whether there was any prior permission was granted from the royal administration? Or the organization was formed without taking the permission of the king? But that probability was remote. Because some names that have already mentioned in the earlier who were not only the organizer of the organization but also holding the ministerial post in the royal cabinet.
So, it can be taken as granted that the Hitasadhani Sabha had the blessing of the king in disguised. The famous folk singer Abbas Uddin Ahmed who took part in the meeting wrote in his memories that the Maharaja had the blessing for the organization. It was also told that Maharaja on many occasion addressed the meeting of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Indrajitendra Nrayan, a scion of the Royal Family had also delivered a speech in the meeting of the Hitasadhani Sabha at Mekhligang. By searching the record in the government department where all the records are kept for that period but I could not find the document showing the support of the king towards the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha. It needs further investigation for the future researcher.

One more point waits for the discussion. It is the role of the Royal administrative staffs. In the case of the Kshatriya movement it is found that the same Royal administration of the predecessor of the last Maharaja did not allow any activities of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti in the princely state of Cooch Behar. Naturally question appeared what compulsion forced the king not to allow opening the branch of the Kshatriya Samiti in the state. Here also, there is no clear answer in this regard. Some of the Rajbanshi intellectuals tried to say that it is due to the fact that almost all the higher administrative post of the Royal administration was occupied by the high caste Hindu Bengali and they were under the influence of the Hindu caste Brahmin who was very much against the Rajbansh Kashatriya movement. They influenced the king not to support the Kshatriya movement and their branch should not be allowed in the state. However it is also presumtion but no conclusive proof is found in this regard.

Here again, an interesting points should be noted. Although the Royal Administration did not allowed the Rajbanshi Kshatriya samiti to function in the Cooch Behar state inspite of the fact that the personality like Takhur Panchanan Barma was its leader. But after 30 years we find another organization in the name of Cooch-Behar Kshatriya Society in Cooch Behar with the approval of the king. It is therefore a pertinent question why the king wanted a separate Kshatriya organization in the name of the Cooch Behar Kshatriys Society? It is well known fact that the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti who performed their movement for the elevation of their status in the Hindu caste system. On the other hand, Coochbehari identity was more emotional than the Rajbanshi identity and they feel proud to be identifying themselves as the Coochbehari rather than to be known as the Rajbanshi. During the pre merger period they seldom identified them as the Rajbanshi and called the Rajbanshi of Rangpur or Rangpuriya. The conflict in the question of Kamta Behari is that reflection.

This needs to be discussed in the historical perspective; otherwise the dichotomies of the Rajbanshi Society of the colonial phase will be misunderstood. Similar kind of problems that was found in the Western Assam where there is a big Rajbanshi community lives. They were also reluctant to welcome of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samity Movement. This part of Assam where a large number of the Rajbanshi community live needs separate discussion.
We cannot ignore the change that was taken place in the Cooch Behar Royal family after the marriage of Prince Jintedra Narayan with Indira Devi, the princes of Gaikawar state. Before that Bengali domination was prevailed in the Royal administration. But after this marriage that domination began to reduce due to the direct intervention of the Maharani Indira Devi. She began to appoint the higher post of the Royal administration from other state. So the administrative structure of the state which was headed by Dewan Calica Das Dutta, ICS had been revised with the consent of the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>List of Administration in Cooch Behar Kingdom</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Dr. A.R. Seconhdey, Chief Medical Officer of the State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mr. L.B. God, Chief Engineer of the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mr. Hanuman Sah Routh, Revenue Secretary of the State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mr. I Sekhar, Education Secretary and publicity Officer of the State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mr. P.K. Kaul, Commandant, Home guard of the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. G.C. Fookan, Police commissioner of the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mr. K.R. Singh, Minister –waiting – of the state.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above list that the de-Bengalisation processes was started although the Coochbehari did not like it as whatever the discontentment was there in the mind of them but that does not mean they would prefer to invite the person from the other state. Some scholars alleged that the Hitasadhaani Sabha was the brain child of Nawab Khasru Jang, relative of the Nizam of Hyderabad and also the personal assistant of Maharani Indira Devi, the Queen-Dowager of Coach Behar state. But there was no proof in support of it.

It is therefore remains a misty about the promoter of the growth of the Hitasadhani Sabha. But it is true that the Hitasadhani Sabha got the blessing of all above mentioned groups or persons otherwise it would not have been possible for the organization to held such massive gathering and within the short period of its growth it could not expand in such massive way without the support or blessing from them whatever might be the support of the common people behind their demands.

Every programme must have some objective it may good or bad. Naturally there was an objective of the Hitasadhani Sabha to be fulfilled. As no study as such was conducted about one of the most important event that was taken place it is very difficult task to formulate the very specific objective that the Hitasadhani Sabha set forth its journey to achieve.

They had launched their crusade against the caste Hindus i.e. in the name of the outsider against the Bengali community raising the slogan ‘Bhatia Hatao’. Abbas uddin, the legendary
folk singer candidly said that the predominance of the outsiders was the main reason behind the ‘Bhatia Hato’ slogan.

The emotion in this direction was so deep that the folk singer like Abbas uddin Ahmed sang the song ‘O Mor Cooch Behari’ with such emotion that many elders who had the opportunity to attend the gathering although young at that time told me that an emotional wave swept over the whole gathering. The people on way to going back from the gathering they were singing the song. Now that song has become a regular song almost in all the function of the Rajbanshi community. It is taken to be granted that Cooch Behari people were not against the non Cooch Beharis. Some like Prof. Ananda Goplal Ghosh opined that a new kind of communalism developed in this princely state. I like to differ with Prof. Ghosh on the term ‘Communalism’. It appeared to me after the inspection of the facts in the available documents and from the interaction of several peoples of these areas that it was not communalism as stated by Prof. Ghosh in his article, ‘The Hitasadhani Sabha – Power struggle’ it can be described as the strong ethnic feeling against the supremacy of the other ethnic community. In describing the movement as the communal movement it should bear in mind that when the so called advanced cultured community like the Bengali in undivided Bengal engaged in the one of the ugliest communal riot in the name of religion there was not a single communal riots took place in the soil of Cooch Behar State. I could not find any incident where the Koch / Rajbanshi and Bengali community engaged in the communal fighting.

It is true, after assuming the minister ship, the two minister Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah and Satis Chandra Singh Roy, minister of Revenue and education respectively introduced some measure to appoint the candidate from the Cooch Behari community which was previously the monopoly of the outsiders i.e. mainly from the Bengali community. Prof. Ghosh described this measure as ‘communal measures’ in his same article. Here it also I like beg to differ on this term as it appears to me that those two ministers gave the opportunity to the ‘man of the soil’ who happened to be the member of the same ethnic community.

It is true that the role of the Muslim members of the Hitasadhani Sabha was not good at all, rather they were using their ugly communal card for their own interest. Practically they were acting as the counter part of the Muslim League in Cooch Behar. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan’s call for ‘Great Bengal’ influenced the Muslim of Cooch Behar. Here it should be noted that the Rajbanshi Muslim who were the indigenous people they did not respond to this call in general. It is reported that Khan Chowdhury, the president of the Hitasadhani Sabha and the Revenue Minister of the state encouraged the Muslim immigrants especially of Rangpur and Mymensing to settle in the Cooch Behar state. The agricultural land in East Bengal was scarce. So the land hungry farmers took that advantage and came to Cooch Behar and many of them married the girls of the Rajbanshi community. It is reported that at the invitation of Khan Amanatullah, Majahed four (Army of liberation, Sirajganj, Pabna) came to Cooch Behar with his army to organise for the merger of Cooch Behar with Pakistan.
Another organization in the name of Cooch Behar State Praja Mandal led by Umesh Chandra Mandal, advocate of Dinhata and belonged to Rajbanshi community was founded. This organization got the support of both the Communist Party of India and Forward Block. They actively supported the cause of merger of Cooch Behar with Indian Union. In a memorandum, dated July 20, 1948, addressed to Sarder Ballabhai Patel the Praja Mandal stated that the Maharaja and his pro league Muslim Ministers and the minister belonged to the schedule caste were hobnobbing with Pakistan. They also alleged that the Maharaj himself met Suhrawardy, the prime Minister of Bengal and invited his opinion about the merger referring to the fact that his state would be surrounded by three sides by the territories of Pakistan.

It is no doubt that the Hita Sadhani Sabha could sale their slogans effectively among the Koch/Rajbanshi community of Cooch-Behar in general with an objective of the establishment of their political power but they were in dilemma in what way they would achieve their goal. At the first stage their demand was to merge Cooch Behar with Assam, later it wanted to remain as a state not as a district, on the other hand, the Muslim members of the Sabha wanted the merger of the Cooch Behar state with Pakistan.

The letter which was sent to the Joint secretary. Government of India dated 22nd November, 1949 by Nanjappa, the Chief commissioner of Cooch Behar reflected the attitude of the power hungry leadership of the Hitasadhan Sabha. Mr. Nanjappa wrote in his letter, ‘it is interesting to note that the Hitasadhani Party is willing to merge Cooch Behar with Gorkha districts of Darjeeling or with Assam. Their real intention appears to be to try to maintain political influence in the area.’

Here it should be noted that, with an aim to create a new state the representative of different parties met at Darjeeling on 30th October, 1949. There demand was the formation of the state comprising the above depicted areas and for that objective they formed an organization named “Uttara Kanda Pradesh Sangha.”

When the political atmosphere over the Cooch Behar State clouded with the conglomeration of different shaded of interested elements to from a separate state a new kind of political climate developed in the Dooars area of Jalpaiguri District, the historical background of this area has already been discussed in the earlier chapter of this study. A section of the Rajbanshi people of both the Hindu and the Muslim community demanded the inclusion of Dooars with Cooch Behar State. Their argument was that that this part of the land originally was the part of the Cooch Bihar dynasty and it was conquered by the Bhutan government and then the British Government took it from the hand of Bhutan and merged with Jalpaiguri. Two leaflets had been published in the name of the people of Western Dooars. Of course, almost all the people of Western Dooars were ethnically and linguistically belonged to the same stock of the Cooch Beharis.
It can be clearly said from the above facts the ethno-caste-linguistic agglomeration of different parts of the North Bengal as mentioned above took place during this period. It is again from the present ethnic unrest shows that the said ethno-caste-linguistic issues still remain very active.

In this study though I have concentrated my area of study within the boundary of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri district but the two districts of western Assam, namely Goalpara and kamrup automatically takes its place in the discussion as in these two districts 75% of the total population belonged to Rajbanshi community. Not only that the Rajbanshi community in Assam already enjoyed the test of power of the state. Sarat Chandra Sinha who belonged to Rajbanshi community became the chief minister of the state.

The 1874 is the very important year for the Rajbanshi community. In this year, Goalpara, the Rajbanshi concentrated district was separated from North Bengal and merged with newly formed Assam province. The separation of Goalpara from North Bengal not only changed the geographical area of North Bengal but also greatly damaged the traditional belt of the Rajbanshi homogeneity dividing the history of Rajbanshi community.

It should bear in mind that since 1874, either due to the reorganization or partition whatever have taken place, in each time the Rajbanshi community has been marginalized some time linguistically, sometimes in demographically and sometimes politically and culturally. Rangpur, Goalpara and the princely state of Cooch Bihar all these were known as the land of Rajbanshi. The separation of Goalpara district initiated the split of the homogeneity of the Rajbanshi community. Then came the partition. The loss of Rangpur in one hand and the influx of the Bengali refugees on the other hand. This continuous marginalisation gave birth a sense of inferiority as well as insecurity in their mind. This also led to form the different types of the movement in different times and different forms. Whatever may be the name or form of the movement the root causes of the movements are their continuous marginalization and consequently losing their hold on their customs language, and culture. In addition to this, the severe economic disparity due to the indifferent attitude of the government toward this region aggravated this sentiment.

After the year 1874 this is for the first time the Rajbanshi of Assam and North Bengal came together to unite themselves and formed a common platform ‘Greater Kamta United Forum with an aim to reunite again. It is no doubt in embryonic stage but form an embryo a baby grows and develops in full grown man if he gets nourishment from the different sources. Similarly ethnic feeling remains in the embryonic form at the initial stage but it turned in to the ethnic clashes if it gets the provocation as its food from the surrounding environment.
The new Assam province was created in 1874 comprising five Assamese speaking districts namely, Sibsagar, Darang, Lakhimpur, and Kamrup. These areas were geographically known as the Brahmaputra valley. Dibrugarh known as Ujani Assam was included in it and after that in the same year the Bengali speaking Surma Valley’s Sylhet district and the Rajbanshi dominated Goalpara district which was formerly a part of Rangpur were also included in the new province.

The Rajbanshi people of Goalpara where they represented eighty percent of the total population could not understand the far reaching consequences of this separation. Had the Rajbanshi leaders of that time resisted this decision of incorporating Goalpara with Assam the history of the Rajbanshi might have been different. They lost their two hundred years connection i.e. from 1639 to 1822 with Bengal. It should be noted here that in 1639 the region of the present day Goalpara was incorporated with Rangpur and it was severed from Rangpur in 1822 when the district of Goalpara was created. One important thing in this connection may be mentioned. When the colonial government had created the province of Assam the total Assamese speaking population was at that time was 35 lakhs. On the other hand, the number of the Rajbanshi population was also 35 lakhs. But there was a difference in question of geographical distribution of the Rajbanshi population. The Assamese got their linguistic state because they used to live and still living in their own territory while the Rajbanshis had been living in Goalpara and the Kamrup of Assam province the princely state of Cooch–Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Terai, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Purnea of Bihar, Jhapa and Morang of Nepal.

Although there was no formal demand voiced by the Assamese until 1874 the colonial government created Assam province for the Assamese. After the British conquest of Assam proper in 1826, Bengali was the medium of instruction in the British administered Assam territory. But the Western educated Assames exerted pressure to introduce Assames as the medium of instruction in the educational institute. Following the demand the colonial ruler formed the province of Assam to provide the linguistic state. That was a good decision no doubt, after the merger of Sylhet and Goalpara the process of Assamization ultimately converted into linguistic Chauvinism. When the Bengali speaking peoples of Sylhet registered their protest the Rajbanshi leaders of western Assam had never raised the demand of their mother tongue, Rajbanshi or Camtapuri language.

Another important incident to be noted here that after the second Anglo-Bhutan war of 1864-65 the seven Dooars known as Eastern Dooars was merged with Goalpara district. It was a vast tract with thinly populated tribal zone. Goalpara was the permanently settled populated area while the newly added eastern Dooars was land of non permanently settled areas.

An interesting point in this context is seen if it can be compared with the district of Jalpaiguri. Both the district originally was with Rangpur District. Jalpaiguri district comprised
the permanently settled area and the non-regulation areas of the western Dooars. The Western Dooars also brought under the British rule after the Second Anglo-Bhutan war of 1864-65. Like the Western Dooars the Eastern Dooars also thinly populated tribal areas. Both the districts are now facing the problems Rajbanshi linguistic ethnic identity.

In Assam the processes of Assamanization and in West Bengal the Bengalisaton converted in to linguistic Chauvinism. In Assam the Rajbanshi of Goalpara accepted and embraced the Assamese language step by step. In fact, the processes of Assamanization started in 1874. The separation of Goalpara was the most setbacks for the history of the Rajbanshi community. Because this separation separated the Rajbanshi community into two opposite platform. The different administration and linguistic set up of Assam and Bengal had also created a different outlook in question of their position, status, and opportunities between the two groups of Rajbanshi population. This difference was exposed in question of the dispute regarding the merger issue of Cooch Behar State.

In the hearing of the State Re-organization commission in 1953-55, Upendra Nath Burman, the Rajbanshi leader of West Bengal had fervently supported the merger of Cooch Behar with Wes Bengal. On the other hand, Sarat Chandra Sinha, the Rajbanshi leader of Goalpara had fervently advocated the retention of Cooch Behar with Assam On that hot debate both of them had forgotten the question of the community solidarity and creation for their linguistic state. Had there strong educated middle class emerged as it was emerged in the Bengali Community in the 19th century and later in the Assamese community the history of the Rajbanshii would have been written in another form and the state of Kamtapur might have there in the map of India comprising at least three districts, Goalpara, CoochBehar and Jalpaiguri. The slogan of Hitasadhani Sabha although evoked tremendous response from the common people but it could not retain it support because of their internal squabble and lack of direction. The Pro Pakistan group led by Khan Chowdhury was also responsible for the failure as his communal interest was much greater than the community interest. When he took the Pro Pakistani Muslims of Cooch Behar forgetting the basic nature of the Rajbanshi community that they are non communal inspite of the fact they were converted into Muslim during the short period of the Muslim rule of Cooch Behar they were more Rajbanshi than the Muslim. Those supported the call of Khan Chowdhury for joining with Pakistan they mostly came from East Bengal at the time of distribution of the fellow land which I mentioned in this study earlier.

Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah the ex Revenue Minister of Cooch Behar State was asked to leave Cooch Behar within 24 hours. On the other hand, Satish Chandra Singh Sarkar was rewarded as the Deputy Minister Transport and Communication in the cabinet of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. Umesh Chandra Mandal the leader of the Praja Mandal was also inducted in the cabinet of the state ministry. The power struggle for the community turned into the gain of personal power as in the most cases of the mass movement. Thus there was the end of the
power struggle of the Hita Sadhani Sabha the stormy cloud of Cooch Behar politics on the eve of the merger was ended. But the roots of the ethnic unrest still remained in the political soil of North Bengal. But the basic issue germinated from the shoots that were left even after the Hita Sadhani Sabha revised from the Coochbehari identity to the Rajbanshi identity.

Hitasdhani Sabha needs another field of study which I excluded from my research study.

REFERENCES
2. The Cooch Behar Gazetteer from the year 1940.
CHAPTER: EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to study the nature of the Ethnic Unrest of North Bengal and the impact of historical, social, geographical, and environmental factors upon this unrest situation of the Rajbanshi Community of North Bengal. We have traced the origin of this ethnic unrest of the Rajbanshi Community, their social life, its changes, and how the present social changes are gradually influencing their social thought in establishing their self identity through the various means.

In this chapter, which is the concluding chapter, I shall present a summary of the discussion that has been made for the preceding chapters and the role of the various institutions responsible for the unrest which has been depicted as my subject of research and the suggestions based on the facts that are collected through my study.

8.1 THE HETEROGENEOUS NATURE OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The present unrest in North Bengal whether it may be the demand for the Gokha Land State or it may be the demand for the Kamtapur or Greater Cooch Behar State has been revolving around the fulcrum of the ethnic sentiment. It is therefore, on the ethnic relation among the different shades of people and their effect upon this unrest. For that purpose I have searched the history of the ethnic conflict as well as the ethnicity to judge the present state of unrest of North Bengal. The ethnicity along with the ethnic unrest is not a local issue and it is the global phenomena that are why I have to peep into the back ground of the ethnic history as a whole.

The regional Autonomy Committee in their report (1991:11) stated:
‘It is well settled that ethnicities located in specific territorial boundaries claim to be classified as ‘regions’ and therefore have a legitimate claim to the autonomy at the political and economic levels. In fact, the urge for self governance and aspiration of economic development is at the root of such a claim.’

Almost all the ethnic unrest culminated in to the demand for autonomous boundary which is apparently, growing contestations over the question of autonomy in general relate to the complex interplay between the ethno-cultural moorings of an individual or group identity and a rather seductive appeal of geopolitical reductionism and territoriality. The demand of Kamtapur state or the Greater Cooch-Behar state or the demands of Gorkha Land are the manifestation of this phenomenon.
According to Yash Ghai (2000-8) ‘it is a device to allow ethnic or other groups claiming a distinct identity to exercise direct control over affairs of special concern to them, while allowing the larger entity those powers which covers common interests’.

Ghai further points out that, ‘more than any previous age, ours is marked by ethnic conflicts response to ethnic conflict have ranged from oppression and ethnic cleansing to accommodations of ethnic claims through affirmative policies, special form of representation, power sharing and the integration of minorities. One of the most sought after, and resisted, device for conflict management is autonomy’.

The purpose of this study is to map out the key guiding principles of what we would like to describe, both in a generic sense and in the specific context of Kamtapur or Greater Cooch Behar, as ‘Autonomy of Autonomies’ Such principles, we will argue and illustrate, relentlessly question the assumptions of the geo-political boundary of a state are the fulfilment of a historical destiny, rather than a containment. We would like critically to examine various understandings, representation and discourses of autonomy, both past and present in about the ethnic unrest of North Bengal in the light of these principles.

In more specific terms, the key intention behind this study is two-fold. First, to expose the partiality of territorialized geopolitical visions, which in turn continue to remain hostage to colonial imperial ethnographic mapping practices and the resultant categories, rooted in governmentality. Such govern mentality, however, is not necessarily restricted to intellectuals and institutions of statecraft. It can also be found among non-state, politically motivated, ideological groups, actively engaged in the pursuit of primacy through the exclusion of the ‘Other’ and the ‘Alien’.

Secondly, while critiquing the manner in which various competing, often colliding, definitions of autonomy, continued to be imprisoned by such categories (related to religion, ethnicity, caste, colour, creed and gender) this study intends to show that autonomy is not something that is determined, dictated and driven structurally from above by the intellectual and institutions of statecraft. On the contrary it is or at least ought to be, integral to democratization process; enabling people to make as well as realize choice of their own, without compromising their legitimate moral and political claims to human dignity and diverse socio-cultural identifications as citizens practicing without fear or favour the norms of reciprocal civility.

8.2 IDENTITY CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

‘Ethnic politics is playing important role in the functioning of modern nation states, the world over. While the process of development had contributed largely to integrative tendencies in many states, it has produced fissiparous tendencies in others. On the one hand, the developed countries has succeeded a lot in containing ethnic problems through process of nation building
and modernization, on the other hand, in the developing poor countries it has worked the way i.e. it has contributed to disintegrative process and gives rise to large scale ethnic assertions. In case of India ethnic consciousness has risen mainly in post–independence era. On the context of terming these claims as law and order problems, the Indian state in most of the situation has acted in a repressive manner to counter these ethnic assertions which have produced violence on large scale’ (Singh).

Ethno–nationalism has been defined by various corners in various forms from different outlooks but one outlook may find the common place that it is form of particularism and exclusivity. The ethno–nationalism has resulted in functional behavioural pattern between the very ethnic minority groups present in the state and state itself.

8.3 ETHNO-NATIONALISM

The ethno–nationalism is working as a double–edged sword. On the one hand, the ethnic minorities are problems for the nation state where they were located in terms of their increasingly political assertion regarding identity, culture, language, religion etc. On the other hand, the nation –state is a problem for them in terms of their perceived or genuine discrimination particularly regarding the fulfilment of their legitimate political and socio-economic aspirations. Ethno-nationalism can be further divided into two variables. One is national self awareness of ethnic groups concentrated in compact geographical areas. For example, Sikhs in Punjab, Tamils in Sri Lanka, Baluchi in Pakistan. The Muslims in India and the Hindus in Pakistan are the examples of the second variety which is dispersed throughout the country and therefore cannot claim any compact territory as its home. Various parts of the world are feeling the heat of these ethnic assertions. Czechoslovakia, USSR, and Yugoslavia disintegrated in the near past mainly on ethnic lines. More and more states are facing the struggle between the supporters of politicized ethnicity and those of anti-ethnic integrationists. In the third world country mainly from Asia and Africa, which emerged after the decolonization process as independent state, have been the hot beds of these ethnic assertions and resultant conflict.

Ethnic movement in India is a multi dimensional phenomenon having several components. Further, Indian society is a plural society and the sub-structure on which the modern political superstructure has been built up is characterized by primordial factors. The components of the ethnic unrest may vary from region to region and from time to time. But in the context of the ethnic movements of North Bengal such components may be classified as ethno-identity, ethno-linguistic, ethno-historical, ethno-geographical, ethno-environmental and socio-economic and political. A brief discussion of these components is discussed bellow.
8.4 QUESTION OF IDENTITY

‘Ethnic upsurges have produced similar problems and challenging situation both for multi-ethnic developed as well as developing countries but state response in the two has been different. Whereas the developed states have responded to the irredentism and ethnic upsurge through accommodative mechanism using the crisis management and conflict resolution techniques, the state response in third world countries have been without any significant exception, of seeking military solutions, thus producing conflict and violence on unprecedented scale’ (Singh).

The developing countries like ours having plural societies were the colonial territories of developed ones. These territories were mostly conglomeration of different ethnic groups. Various ethnic groups joined hands together to out the colonial exploiters as those ruler exploited their territories throwing them into the wallow of misery. During the struggle for eliminating the colonial rule ethnic identity was blurred behind or under the nationalist rubric and these ethnic groups forced a collective action. The anti imperialist was mainly based on the slogan of self determination and was successful to free their territories from the hand of the colonial rule. The receding colonialists left these territorial dispensations with hard and defended borders. But that borders was not created through the painstaking efforts of geographers or demographers but were the result of the geo-strategic and politico-economic considerations of the colonial masters. These were political borders and not built on the rational considerations.

‘The receding powers left these occupied territories, as such lumped together diverse and antagonistic human groups, or homogeneous groups were divided to suit the motives as convenient to them. So nation-state in major part of the world did not come into existence through natural process of historical evolution as in Europe, but artificial creations of outgoing masters who left the problems of ethnic minorities of all sorts unresolved in order to keep their hold intact in future (Singh).

Identity and its relation to ethnicity and community, on one side, and conflict, on the other, have emerged as the salient topics for scholarly investigation in the social sciences. This study investigated the trends in this engagement in the ethnic unrest of North Bengal particularly the Kamtapur movement of the Rajbanshi.

8.5 COMMUNITY

Identity has become pervasive among different communities in different parts of the world. In India, language that did not originally have a term to designate the concept of identity have now evolved terms, often based on Sanskrit roots or adopted an existing word for the purpose (Jayram 2004). The fact that identity did not have a semantic location in many Indian languages is a significant factor that should be taken in to consideration in understanding people’s concern with their collective identities today.
Identity and its relation to ethnicity and community, on the one hand, and conflict, on the other, have emerged as a salient topic for scholarly investigation in the social sciences. Internationally, there has been a steady outpouring of research study which indicates its importance in the present social process. In India too with the increase of the number of ethnic movements in different parts of the country either in the name for the recognition of the language or in the name of the state for their own names of the community causing the grave concern in question of the national integrity. This study also intended to survey the roots of the ethnic unrest of North Bengal in the name of the establishment of the identity of the Rajbanshi Community.

Identity, however, has an important sociological connotation. It is in the collectivist sense that the concept of identity gets linked to the concepts of community and conflict. The focus of this research is primarily sociological and the different components as mentioned earlier which played the important role in this sociological aspects.

Within the limited scope of this research study it was not possible to study all the components which lead the ethnic movements. What is done here is to delineate the thematic of the subject as revelled by empirically and significant studied with reference to ethnic movements of North Bengal.

Identity has immense import for collectivises, just as the identity of the collectivity has immense import for the individuals belonging to it. The concept of ethnicity is also fuzzy; in the large body of literature on the subject, there appears to be no consensus on what ethnicity is. The terms ethnicity and ethnic groups are among most complicated, volatile and emotionally charged words and ideas in the lexicon of social science’. (Nash 1989).

Identities expressed in collectivist terms of community or ethnic groups are often the outcome of consultation and confabulation, especially in situations where multiple communities or ethnic groups exists.

The “we and they “ and “us and ‘them’’ feelings integral to community and ethnic identities are often phrased in antagonistic / belligerent terms and bring communities so articulated into conflict with each other. (Jayaram, 2012). Many of the conflicts and barbarities in the world are sustained through the illusion of a unique and choice less identity and the cultivated violence associated with identity conflicts seem to repeat itself around the world with increasing persistence. (Sen 2006). India has been a theatre of conflict between communities–communal conflicts involving religion/ sect based groups, caste conflicts, ethnic group conflict, linguistic group conflicts and the likes (Jayaram 2011). Often these conflicts have been violent as it is seen in the ethnic movement of North Bengal, resulting in destruction of life and property and the hardening of community veins.
Theoretically, the analysis of identity as a sociological phenomenon is intrinsically tied to the idea of ethnicity and community on the one hand, and conflict and violence, on the other. We tried to understand the various levels, dimensions and aspects of dynamics of identity of the Rajbanshi Community as revealed through our research study.

8.6 IDENTITY AND NATION

The broadest identity for human being is naturally their species being Homo Sapiens, an identity that distinguishes them from other animal species. In contrast to race and civilization as identity makers, the ideas of nation and its derivative “nationalism” have animated the elite and the masses and generated considerable scholarly discussion. It is no doubt that our concepts of nation and nation state have been derived from the west. But the western thought is not in a position to give the full answer to the problems of Indian nationalism. There is a familiar problem in approaching the history of Indian nationalism, namely, the partially helpful, partly obstructive presence of Western political theory’ which has produced as much confusion as help in understanding our nationalism’ (Kaviraj 2010).

The age of globalization is also the age of nationalist resurgence. On the one hand, there is the “widespread (re) construction of identity on the basis of nationality, always affirmed against the alien” and on the other hand, there is the “challenge to establish nation from within” (Castells1997).

The globalization of economy and the internationalization of political institutions the universalism of a largely shared culture, diffused by electronic media, education, literacy, urbanization, and modernization and scholarly assault on the very concept of nations declared to be ‘imagined communities, (Anderson1983)

Michael Mann (2005) identifies four supposed “threats” to contemporary nation states–capitalist transformation, environmental limits, identity politics and post militarism. He cautioned;

“We must beware the most enthusiastic of the globalists and transitionalist. With little sense of history, they exaggerate the former strength of nation–state with little sense of global variety, they exaggerate their current decline; with little sense of their plurality, they down play the international relations. In all four spheres of ‘threat’ we must distinguish: (a) differential impacts on different types of states in different regions; (b) trends weakening and some trends strengthening nation states;(c) trends displacing national regulation to international as well as transitional net work; and (d) trends simultaneously strengthening nation states and transnationalism (2005)”

Here it should be taken in to the account of the special characteristic of Indian subcontinent and the phenomenon derives from the fact that India is not a single nation but a plurality of
nations. The socio-political construction of ‘India as nation’ is a colonial phenomenon and it is well captured in the post-independence concern with nation building (Srinivas 2002).

In India, sub-nationalism has manifested in two ways – (I) the demand for separate statehood or autonomy (called regionalism), which is articulated within the constitutional framework of the state and in that case does not challenge the idea of India as a Nation and (II) the demand for self-determination (dubbed as secessionism), which by definition challenges the idea of India as a nation state. The latter manifestation is often described as region within region (Kumar 2011). The agitation for the separate state of Telangana is the example of the former. Equally the demand for the separate Kamtapur State also falls under this category. On the other hand, the Kashmir problem is the example of the latter category.

Sub-nationalism of the north east states including the demand for Kamtapur state:-

The expression of sub-nationalism in north east India including North Bengal is different in that tribal ethnicity is an intractable issue there and insurgency has been a perennial problem for Indian state. A key element in the social construction of India as nation was the division of the sub-continent and the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

The changes in the social and political landscape of Bengal resulting from partition and the creation of minorities, the Muslims in West Bengal and the Hindus in Bangladesh has a tremendous effect upon the social position not only in West Bengal but throughout the states of North East India as a whole.
The most fundamental cleavage in modern India has been in terms of religious affiliations. The demand for partition was made on religious grounds and that Pakistan was formed on the principles of Islamic thoughts, at least partly aggrandizement in terms of religion in the post independence era. The religious groups in India are not just different in terms of religion in the post independence era. They are for the most part, also different in terms of doctrine and rituals. They are for the most part, also different in terms of marriage, divorce and inheritance patterns, family and kingship, gender norms and behaviour, and occupational specializations, economic position and educational attainments.

The religious groups in India are amorphous and they are characterized by regional differences internally. Overlooking intra-religious differences has frequently resulted essentialising religious identities and communalism. In India, the term communalism essentially carries a negative connotation implying the hardening of communal veins and intercommunity conflicts and violence.

Here lies the unique social harmony in the Rajbanshi Community. Here also exists the religious groups mainly the Hindus and the Muslims. I could not find a single incident of communal riots in course of my research study. Even when the communal riots had been rocking the whole of Bengal the social atmosphere of the Rajbanshi community remains calm maintaining the religious harmony among them.

8.7 THE TRANSITIONAL ACCOUNT OF THE RAJBANSHI COMMUNITY

To understand the present ethnic unrest which is the major ethnic community of North Bengal I tried to trace the transitional account of the Rajbanshi community. Although there are different opinions about the racial identity of the Koch–Rajbanshi community but it revealed from my study that the Koch-Rajbanshi of North-Eastern India are group of various Bodo-speaking tribal communities that have a long, roughly 1500 year long, processes of sanskritization moved from Bodo speeches to Sanskritic Language, from shifting hoe agriculture to settle plough agriculture, from relative non oppressive gender relations to restrictive practices imposed on women, and from a non-state society to kingship and more or less stable state formation that lasted for more than four hundred years until it was absorbed into the Indian Union in 1950 (Nandy 1997). And yet the integration of this group into caste society remains ambiguous and the status of its identity is becoming a political issue.

Our study explored the processes involved in Sanskritization and showed the conflict between them and the older culture and society. It is this tension at various levels that has kept this group suspended between tribe and caste and has now opened up vistas of nationality formation.
The core area of the Koch-Rajbanshi spreads over three countries, Nepal, India and Bangladesh. In India they live in six North Bengal districts of West Bengal, the lower Assam, with great concentration in Dhubri, Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup and Darrang districts. In Bangladesh they live in Rangpur, Dinajpur and North-Eastern Maymansingh.

Beyond the core area the Koch-Rajbanshi are to be found in significant numbers in all the plains districts of Assam and along the Indian–Bhutan border.

Until the advent of the Koch state in early sixteenth century AD, there are very few historical records of these people except Hiuen Tsangs account and Minhaju-S-Siraj’s 1261 AD account of Bakhtiar Khilji’s exploits in this region. In Mahabharata we find the name of a king, Bhagadatta of this area who took part in the Kurukshetra war.

Dynasties and warfare are recorded until we reach the Kamtapur kingdom of the Khens, a Hinduised, Bodo speaking tribe which has merged mostly into Koch –Rajbanshis and some into Bengali Hindu Groups. Apart from kingdoms and king lists, the record since 1000 AD. mention a group of local, land chiefs who, through this areas, are referred to with the conventional number twelve–Baro Bhuiyans. The presence of these chiefs suggested some spread of settled agriculture. But it is certain that this spread of settled agriculture was extremely uneven. Even in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s there was still some jhumming in the plains of the area.

From Bakhtiyar’s defeat, the state of Kamrupa, the rise of Koch –Rajbanshi Power we get three hundred year account of intermittent strife in which the prominent actors are Kamtapur, Gauda, and later the Ahom kingdom immediately before Biswa Singha establishes Koch power and his sons expand and consolidate it in the middle of the sixteenth century, Kamtapur lay devastated by a war with Gauda and the region itself left in a power vacuum. Into that vacuum and reliable documentary history, the Koch Rajbanshi then steps in.

8.8 SANSKRITIZATION

The Bodo-speaking origin of the Koch–Rajbanshi is there, implicitly and explicitly, in the two important origin myths that are of Brahminical provenance. One story is that the Koch is Kshatriyas who fled to escape the murderous wrath of the Brahmin Parusuram into the jungle by the side of the sacred river Sankosh of the North East India. There they lost their culture and forgot their past. So degraded had they become that forgot to wear their sacred thread in proper way. So in the middle part of the twentieth the ‘Bratya Kshatriya’ movement started under the leadership of Thakur Panchnan Burman, where they performed the ritual practice of wearing the sacred thread as symbol of their identity as Kshatriya.
The Second story begins with a Mech chief (Mandal) named Haria who lived somewhere north-east of the Brahmaputra port of Dhubri. From the description of his cultivation it assumed that he was a typical Jhum cultivator. His two wives, Heera and Jeera were two sisters. This accords well with the customs of some Bodo-speaking tribes to this day, such as the Garos, who allows a second wife for “permitted” causes such as childlessness etc but insist on the second wife being a uterine sister or a lineal cousin, thus keeping the relations between the lineages undisturbed.

Biswa Singh the founder of the Koch dynasty was the son of Heera. Here the Brahmins have inserted their familiar twist into the story indicating their penetration in to the tribal society of this area. The story is that Biswa was not the son of Haria, the Mech or Bodo. The lord Mahadev is said to have taken the form of the Mech (this name is, according to some linguists, a corrupted form of the word ‘Mleccha’) and impregnated Heera. The Bodo connection is thus severed, given the Brahminical view of procreation. Biswa and his entire descendant automatically qualify out of the rank of the mlecchas, and became Kshatriyas. How the logic of this story qualifies all other Koch to promote them in the same way is not clear.

Before I part with the mythological story I tried to find the tribal connection in the process of present transformation of the Koch–Rajbanshi. It is found that Biswa singh gathered a number of chiefs of the Mech tribe and established an empire. It is found that the presence of many centres of power throughout the whole history of dynasty would attest to the presence of a tribal confederacy where various clans or lineages ruled under the umbrella of a paramount chief. The Raikats of Jalpaiguri, the Darrang of Bijni, and Sidli chief—all are claiming royal lineage or the ubiquitous Bhuiyan chiefs who keep moving in and out of texts attested to something more than a tribal organization but perhaps less than the trapping of full sovereignty vested in a person.

The processes of sanskritization in this region over the centuries has resulted in a tribe–caste continuum with the tribes whose ways of life remains more or less unaltered by the Sanskrit culture at one end of the continuum and fully Hinduised castes at the other end.

In my study I find that the Koch claims to belong to one Gotra, the Kasyap Gotra, violating the cardinal principal of caste endogamy. Their religion is a curious blend of nature worship, Shaktism, Vaishnavism, Tranticism, Siddha and even Sufism. Much of their worship is associated with agricultural operations and the warding off evil spirits. Most of their rituals are performed by their own kinsmen-‘adhikaris’ and the ‘deosis’ along with the ‘shudra ‘holders of ritual offices in Assamese Vaishnavism and even untouchables. The Bengali Brahmin who gave the certificate to the Koch –Rajbanshi on their Kshatriya status in the twenties and the thirties of the last century nevertheless refused to officiate for them. Apart from the taboo on ploughing and the menstruation taboo, Koch- Rajbanshi women are subjected to few restrictions. Marriages are dissoluble on the initiative of the women as well as the man without any difference in social
legitimacy. Children outside wedlock were not outcasted. Most of the Koch-Rajbanshi conforms to the beef eating taboo, but other food taboos of the Hindus are acknowledged publicly but it is seen in many cases violated privately.

From my above observation it can be said that the Koch–Rajbanshi are not by any means fully integrated into caste society inspite of centuries of sanskritization. This was largely due to a resistance to the full scale absorption in to the Hindu social order as subaltern at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. The present ethnic unrest of North Bengal originated from that social condition where the Koch-Rajbanshi did not feel that they are the part of the Bengali community due to that incomplete absorption.

8.9 THE REASON BEHIND THE RESISTANCE

It becomes imperative to study the reason behind such resistance to assimilate with the major community of the Bengal inspite of long association with them. The reasonable reason is that the Koch–Rajbanshi resides in a peripheral region very far from the Ganga–Jamuna “Doab” where the Sanskrit story began. It is taken to be granted that cultural diffusion over long distance takes a long time. It can be compared with flow of water. The movement of water over the uneven terrain where high grounds are left behind as islands while the water rushes behind them. These high grounds should be seen as the pockets of cultural resistance built upon ecological, social, and political circumstances. The Bodo speaking tribes of the plains and the Koch-Rajbanshi of North–East represent a history of such resistance.

With the coming of the Jhumming Tribes under the fold of the Koch who by that time were adopted the settled farming is the important transition in the Koch- Rajbanshi society. With the know-how of the settled farming came the requirement for linguistic adaptation. The Koch-
Rajbanshi managed successfully to make this transition to the plough and new Sanskrit based language. This language, which represents a morphological sea change from the agglutinative Bodo speeches but which retains many words from the old languages and many aspects of old phonology, is now known as Kamtapuri, Goalparia or Rajbanshi. It remains strong in North Bengal, Northern Bangladesh, and three westernmost districts of Assam inspite of official language policies and laws medium of instruction in education they do not get any favour from the government. Although it is not yet standard modern, but becoming one would not take a long if state patronage were available. This is very important as the language plays the vital role in question of the establishment of the identity.

Here we find an interesting point to note that while accepting the Hindu god and goddess and declared themselves as the Hindus as caste they kept the entry in to it open and they demanded an exit, as in Assam quite successfully, right in to the highest caste of Kalita–Kyastha who wield equal social and ritual power in the dominant Vaishnav milieu with the Brahmins. It revealed that they remained suspended between tribe and caste. Therefore the question came how they managed such position in the strong waves of social transition. It revealed from my study that the first and foremost reason for such unique resistance was the retention of the state power over centuries. The Brahminical forces had to moderate their proselytizing in the face of a political power whichnegated any subaltern status. To retain this power it was needed to mobilise the tribal solidarity. Such needed solidarity prevented the chiefs to take the usual technique to converting the chiefs and elevating him and his lineage to a high caste status and then the trickling down of the caste medicine to the populace below and trapping them into subalternity. (Nandy 1997). The requirement of solidarity prevented the ruling group from taking their supposed differentiation from the rest too seriously. So, even when the rulers in Cooch Behar at the time of Buchanan-Hamilton were highly sensitive about their Koch background and wanted to be known only as Rajbanshis, they had not and could not differentiate themselves ritually from their tribal folk inspite of Brahmin incitement to do so for a long time.

Grierson summed up this process “There can be little doubt that the original Koch was the same as the Bodos. The Koch, Mecch, and Bara or Bodoal connotated the same tribe or at most different sects of the same tribe. The name Koch in fact connotes a Hinduised Bodo who has abandoned his ancestral religion for Hinduism and ancestral Bodo Language for Bengali or Assamese. Rajbanshis are the Hinduised Koch of Rangpur and Goalpara” (Grierson 1927: 95).

Biswa Sing became the patron of Hinduism and rebuilt the holy Kamakhya temple. He imported and supported many Brahmins. His son, King Naranaryan was the patron of Sankardev and maintained him. But in this phase of sanskritization the interaction largely remained confined to the tribal chiefs and with the Brahmins busily providing respectable lineages to the rulers.
It is also found in my study of the social transformation of the Koch–Rajbanshi community that the entry into Koch status was not a one-shot-affair. There were stages in the process as evidence by the different subdivisions of the Koch enumerated in the 1891 Census. There were Madahi, Sarania, Heremia, Saru and Bar Koch. Each steps up the Koch ladder requires the upper group to give a daughter in marriage to the next lower for the latter to rise in status for example, in the eastern part of our area, the Bar Koch may and do rise into the Kalita status by the same mechanism.

8.10 THE KOCHES AS A CASTE

It needed to search this answer because there is not only the difference of opinion but a conflict between the two groups of Koch–Rajbanshi community surfaced in question whether the Koch and the Rajbanshi are the same caste in their origin. While one school of thoughts under the leadership of Dharma Naryan Burman claimed that the Rajbanshi and the Koch are different in origin, the Rajbanshi being the Kshatriya in their origin they cannot be placed with the same seat of the Koch. On the other hand, another school of thoughts like Prof. Girija Shankar Roy strongly believed that Rajbanshi and Koch are the same in their origin.

The consolidation of the British power in this region brought about change of the whole situation. It eroded the political power and autonomy of these people and radically altered the social equilibrium. The introduction of the market forces destroyed the natural economy in terms of which they entered settled agriculture and they lost political power which once one of the main instrument for their resistance to total subordination in the caste hierarchy.

The introduction of the zamindari, English education and birth in the administration helped to establish upper-caste (Bengal and Assames) nationality which in turn strengthened sanskritization. The movement of the 1920s and 1930s in Assam and Bengal essentially challenged the hegemony of the upper caste, though in opposite ways. In Assam the Shankaradeva Sangha and the Haridhaniyas were ideologically committed to the anti-Brahminism and initiated many movements challenging the Brahminical hegemony. On the other hand, the Koch–Rajbanshis of North Bengal and Rangpur initiated their movement under the leadership of Thakur Panchanan Burman and the Rajbanshi–Kshatriya Samaj demanding the status of the twice born. They donned the sacred thread and got the Brahmins of Calcutta, Nabadwip and even Benaras to legitimize their claim. But this very Brahmin refused to administer to these people.

Neither the movement of the Shankardev Sangha and the Rajbanshi–Kshatriya Samaj could ensure equality of status. They were categorized in Bengal as the Scheduled Castes and in Assam they have been classified along with OBCs.
The reality, however, is that they were not a caste in the accepted sense of the term nor they have remained a tribe. They also perceive this ambiguous status of theirs. Their movement also reflects this perception. The movement for a separate state of Uttarakhand and Kamtapur including the six districts of North Bengal and recently the Greater Cooch Behar comprising Goalpara in addition to the six districts of North Bengal, the demand for the recognition of their language, kamtapuri / Rajbanshi are all indication of a nascent nationality consciousness.

8.11 ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Our country like many of the developing countries was the colony of the British ruler having plural societies. The territories were the conglomeration of various ethnic communities. When the colonial masters exploited these territories the ethnic communities’ native to these colonized territories joined hand together to rout out the exploiters. The anti imperialist drive was based mainly on the slogan of self–determination and they were able to push out the imperialist power from their territories. The receding colonialist left these territorial dispensations with hard and defended borders. These borders were not the outcome of the painstaking efforts of geographers or demographers but were the result of geo-strategic and politico-economic consideration of the colonial masters. So nation- state in major part of the world did not come into existence through process of historical evolution as in case of Europe. Our country is no exception.

8.12 NATION BUILDING PROGRESS

Our country as in other newly independent states is ethnically heterogeneous but mostly they are being administered with central administrative set up. The resources being meagre at their disposal, they have been unable to meet the aspiration and demands of people within their boundaries. Unable to get their demands fulfilled the minority ethnic groups comprising these states think to get themselves acknowledged through their ethnic communities to get justice and fulfil their aspirations. The inability of the state elite to fulfil their developmental need has led to the decline in state authority. This affected the process of state sponsored nationalism adversely. Ethnic identities of minority are questioned quite often due to which they feel alienated and threatened because the majority fails to accept them as separate groups. Most of the developing countries being heterogeneous in their composition the colonial power during their colonial rule dealt differently with certain ethnic groups according to their convenience. Some of the groups were advantageous position in comparison to others. The exit of colonialists deprived most of these groups the privilege and special treatment to which they were accustomed. In post–colonial setup these privileged groups not only lost their privileges but also had to face a situation of deprivation. In an effort to resist the state they mobilized their groups reminding the memories of lost territory or independent or state of pre dominance invoking suitable periods of history (Singh 2008).
The history of the Koch-Rajbanshi collaborate the statement. The Kamtapur state or the greater Cooch-Behar demand placed the history of the Koch dynasty and their glorious past. Here the condition of the relative political deprivation and economic discrimination became the rallying point in ethnic identity of the Koch–Rajbanshi for their consciousness and mobilization.

**8.13 EFFECT OF MOBILIZATION**

The processes of industrialization, urbanization and spread of education has failed to integrate diverse minorities in contrast to European countries where in states were built and nation consolidated before societies were modernized. On the other hand, it had formed the basis of cultural awareness and identity consciousness. For the purpose of mobilization of ethnic groups by minority ethnic elite various factors are taken into account but language, religion and politics are the critical factors that are used to build political identities. Through these factors minority’s emotional as well as psychological elements are aroused and exploited in the masses comprising it. As a political force, when ethnicity has taken reins of political manipulation it has mobilized the groups against state nationalism and its integrative policy. This type of reactive nationalism had been the result of not only uneven development or distinctive culture of peripheral communities, but also emergence of a political leadership. The leadership mobilized support by employing a nationalistic ideology depicting the peripheral regional ethnic community as potential nation (Singh 2008).

Ethnic community promises individual the justice and equality in political, economic and social spheres, which is supposed to be denied under the existing social condition. The articulation of demands with threat to identity in terms of culture, language, religion, etc. had ultimately pushed the movement for fulfilment of their ethno-regional demands into secessionist movements as it happened in Bangladesh in Pakistan. The emotional factors are attached with particular geographical region or area which culminates into the demand for separate state.

**8.14 ATTITUDE OF THE STATE**

The ethnic unrest not only rocking the soil of North Bengal but the similar unrest is felt throughout the different parts of the country. The Indian state had often questioned separate ethnic existence of minority groups while ignoring their demands. This has generated a type of urge in them for their identity furtherance and thrust on its exclusivity. Had the state followed a proper of nation building, rather than state building, a common identity could perhaps have emerged as its identity (Sing 2008) in addition to that the coercive attitude of the centre, the inability of delivering justice even on genuine grounds by the state system, all these factors collectively have been responsible for simmering of volcanic type of feelings against the state giving rise to ethnic movement.
The uneven development had resulted in inequality in sharing the fruits or development due to which certain groups or regions are at the receiving end. Due to this discrimination and deprivation these ethnic groups are being alienated from the national mainstream, indulged in a type of political strangulation perceiving themselves as ‘internal colonies’ (Singh 2008).

In case of North Bengal we find the picture during our study which more or less echoed the same voice. The natural resources of North Bengal are not used for the development of this area. The owners of the tea estate are outsider. They are earning profit but not investing any money for the local development. Wealth of forest is reaped by the government but they are South Bengal bound. Not a single wood based project has been taken in North Bengal. The newly emerged educated middle class expressed their discontentment regarding the domination of the intellectuals of Kolkata over them. For example, there is North Bengal University at Siliguri but till now no ‘son of the soil’ has adorned the chair of its Vice-Chancellor. Even the interviews for the recruitment of teachers and officers are held in the University’s Kolkata office.

This uneven distribution both in economical and social sectors created a serious discontentment not only among the Koch-Rajbanshi but many of the members of other community also showed their anguish and discontentment and joined hands with the movement for greater regional autonomy. I met a group of students of North Bengal University. They belonged to the Bengali community. But in reply to my question they surprised me with their answer saying that they would support the regional autonomy as they think, that the whole of North Bengal is a colony of Kolkata and if they get the autonomy and have the right to administer the area they would enjoy the privilege as the people of a very small state like Sikkim enjoy.
I made a search over this sentiment and found that it has the long roots in the social and cultural background beside the uneven distribution of progress. West Bengal still one centered state, Kolkata. Not another single city has emerged up till now because all the projects and distribution of wealth have been concentrated in and around Kolkata. Outside Kolkata and its surrounding districts like Hooghly, Howrah, and a part of 24 Paragans and Burdwan districts are the few which got big projects.

North Bengal represents about 20% of the total land area of the state and about 22% of the total population of West Bengal but not a single project has allotted on the soil of this region. 67% of the agricultural lands do not get any irrigation water.

In that context let me mention a comparative study between West Bengal and Punjab. The state of West Bengal is only one centered state Calcutta but in Punjab there is no such domination by any district or centre over the other districts. The percentages of the urban population of both the states are more or less same. In west Bengal it is 26.49% and 27.72 in Punjab. The population of the largest city of West Bengal, Kolkata was 91,65,650 in 1981 while the population of Ludhiana, the largest town of Punjab was 6,06,250 in the same time. It indicates that while 63.5% of the urban population of West Bengal live in Kolkata, 13.5% of the urban population live in Ludhiana. The numbers of big and small towns are increasing in Punjab with the decentralization of wealth of the states resulting more and more peoples are in a position to enjoy the civic facilities than that of West Bengal. With accumulation of resources and political power in a single centre, an authoritarian attitude is bound to form in the minds of the middle class people of the centre.

It became imperative to search about the participation of some of the people belonging to the Bengali community in the movement for Kamtapur state or autonomous status. I had to overturn the pages of history to understand this issue and could not leave it as a stray incidence. Before establishing the British rule Dacca was the principal sector for both the political and cultural affairs of Bengal. After the coming of British Empire Calcutta became the capital of the British Kingdom and Dacca lost her importance. The middle class educated youth most of which belonged to either the big land lord known as zaminder or middle land lord called talukder had to come out to fetch their new opportunity due to the changed political situation. Many of them came to Calcutta and a large number of fortune seeker middle class youths ventured to North Bengal and Assam where the British rule offered them in the administration department of newly annexed Assam province with their kingdom and railway and tea plantation areas. The king of Cooch Behar who adopted the British administration system in his kingdom offered the same to them. They enjoyed a leading position in political and cultural field of this area. With the growing influence of Calcutta (Kolkata) they lost that position and had been suffering from an inferiority complex which ultimately provoked them to match their voice with the voice of the
kamtapur movement in the hope that would enjoy the leading position both in political and cultural field.

This is not uncommon in the history of the resent past of our country. In support of my statement I can cite the example of Assam.

Those organized caste Hindu claiming themselves as the torch bearer of the Assamese literature and language came to Assam only 300- to 500 years before. Shankar Deb came to Assam 500 years ago. He was originally a Bengali and came from Sylhet. The legendary personality of Assam, Raibahadur Kanal lal Barua was originally a Bengali belonged to Sushni Kayastha of Bengal. In an interview Hemen Bargohangi, journalist cum writers of Assamese language told that many of the leaders of the Assames ethnic movement originally Bengali in origin came to Assam some 200 to 300 years back.

As I have said earlier that the disparity of the distribution of the wealth of the state is the breeding ground of the separatist movement. Let see the economic distribution position towards North Bengal at a glance. I have gone through the statement of IDBI(1990) where it said that the share of the region in the IDBIs ‘Refinance Assistance sanctioned to the state of West Bengal has varied marginally. As a percentage of assistance flowing to the backward region of West Bengal, North Bengal’s sharer has been decline from 26% to 18%. Again from the same source ‘WBFC has assisted so far about 400 medium scale industries in the state ;about 90% of these units have come up in South Bengal, while North Bengal’s share is only about 5%.

Here again, it has been seen that while the 95% of the total industrial workers of west Bengal engaged in South Bengal, North Bengal represents only 5% of them where in absence of any big and medium industry in North Bengal they all work in either SSI or unorganised small industry.

In my study this disparity in the distribution of the wealth between South and North appeared as major cause of the discontentment among the peoples of North Bengal which dragged them in to the movement to register their protest against this disparity as depicted above.

**8.15 POPULATION INFLUX**

In my preceding chapter I have discussed the influx of the refugee population in west Bengal. In my study it has been revealed that what the proper attention ought to have been given to judge and mitigate the problems due to the sudden influx of the population was not given by the government although it is known that it will affect the political, economical, and social condition of the areas. The incoming increased population needs house, food, cloth education, health and
means of earning. To meet these demands there was need to take different economic projects which was completely absent in case of North Bengal.

8.16 KOLKATA CENTRISM

An undercurrent we felt, that is flowing not only in the minds of the newly emerged middle class educated youth of Koch-Rajbanshi but also in the minds of the large number of the Bengali peoples against the centralised political, and cultural domination of Kolkata which may draw them into the fold of this ethnic movement as it has been seen in the case of Assam if proper care is not taken immediately.

Sailen Debnath, Professor of Alipurduar College and well known writer and author of several books belonged to Bengal community expressed his strong feelings against the dominance of Kolkata in his much published books ‘West Bengal in Doldrums’ and wrote under the caption title ‘Kolkata Centrism and the Denuding of West Bengal’ where he expressed his anguish with this word, ‘kolkata! Kolkata! kolkata!’; there is no other state in India where people talk so much of the metropolis because they have other big cities too with all facilities; that is why they need not talk all the time of the capital city’ (2009; 310) He goes on saying ‘There is a pitiful sense of ego also cherished in the minds of the Bengalis since. There are people who think if they don’t say they are living in Kolkata, their prestige and dignity may be under-estimated as uncultured rural rustics’.

Prof. Debnath is not an ordinary average educated people. He is highly learned senior professor of a college having Post Doctoral Degree in his cap. His numbers of books are highly acclaimed by the scholars throughout the country. His anguish regarding the domination of the intellectual of Kolkata over the other districts can be taken as the index of the sentiment of the other common people of North Bengal. So the present unrest of North Bengal is not only due to the ethnic movement of a particular community i.e. Koch-Rajbanshi but it is due to the sum of the agglomeration of the discontentment of different cross section of the people of North Bengal.

8.17 THE ROLE OF THE SOCIO ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF THE KOCH-RAJBANSHI IN THE ETHNIC UNREST OF NORTH BENGAL

Koch-Rajbanshi has been recognised as a major Schedule Caste in North Bengal. By caste identity about 14% of people of North Bengal are Koch-Rajbanshi. The present feeling of deprivation among the Koch-Rajbanshi and their antagonistic attitude towards the other population primarily those who came as refugees could partially be understood from a comparative study of socio-economic data available from census. This study helped us to
ascertain why the Koch- Rajbanshi launched Kamtapuri - Uttarakhand movement during mid 
eighties demanding a separate state Kamtapur and again Greater Cooch Behar state.

This study was aimed to know the factors which prompted this movement during the mid 
eighties of the last century. This study took the major part of the data up to the census year 1971.

It is found that the relative proportion of the Rajbanshi to total population of North Bengal 
has decreased from 14.32% to 13.85 in 1971. On the other hand, the proportion of other 
Scheduled Caste has increased from 7% in 1951 to 14% in 1971. The other scheduled caste had 
the highest (271%) population growth as opposed to 94% among the Rajbanshi. On socio-
political consideration such a demographic change has considerable effect. This massive growth 
of population of other Scheduled Caste is due to the immigration from East Bengal presently 
known as Bangladesh. This influx of immigration ultimately led to tough competition over 
control of existing natural resources of North Bengal.

It was also found in my study that proportion of the urban population among the Rajbanshi 
was less than 1% in 1951 which was raised lazily 1.28% in 1971. It clearly indicates that the 
change in the way of life associated with the urbanization had been minimum in the case of the 
Rajbanshi.

Literacy is the index to judge the advancement of any community. It was found that the 
literacy rate of the Rajbanshi was only 16% in 1971 while it was 28%, 18%, and 11% among the 
non-Scheduled, other scheduled Caste and the Scheduled tribes respectively. It clearly indicates 
that the Koch–Rajbanshi was not given proper opportunity for the attainment of literacy and 
education which hindered their progress in socio–economic and cultural front. These are also 
other important factors for the present ethnic unrest as they behind in the competitive socio–
edconomic field. This statement will be more relevant when we studied the position in case of the 
higher education of the Rajbanshi. In 1971 only 3% of the Rajbanshi literates were matriculate. 
In the urban areas only 2% of the Rajbanshi literates were graduates or post graduates. During 
the decade 1961-71, there was only one percent increase in the number of Rajbanshi literates 
holding university degree. Less than 1% of the Koch /Rajbanshi literates had degree in 
medicine/ engineering/agriculture etc which further shows their backwardness in the specialized 
professional jobs. Tea work participation rate was low among the Rajbanshi. In general field in 
1971 only 27% of the Rajbanshi were workers. The corresponding percentage were 29, 30 and 
34 for the no-Scheduled people, other Scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes respectively. It 
should be noted here, that the relative proportion workers among the Koch/ Rajbanshi has 
decreased from 34% in 1961 to 27% in 1971.In terms of decadal growth, there was nine percent 
fall in work participation rate of the Rajbanshi, In contrast, there was more than sixty four 
percent increase in the number of workers among the other Scheduled castes and fourteen per 
cent among the non scheduled people.
Among the Koch/Rajbanshi of urban areas the growth rate of workers was high being 71% and relatively better than that of the others. It indicates that there were better employment opportunities for the Koch/Rajbanshi in urban areas. But when the proportion of the urban Koch/Rajbanshi is so small the overall economic advancement cannot be judged at all from such growing labour participation rate in urban pockets only. Moreover, this advancement confined only to class of educated–urban based Koch/Rajbanshi which is only a negligible part in proportion to the whole community.

Economically, the Koch/Rajbanshi are dependent on primary sector. The participation rate of the Koch/Rajbanshi was less (4%). Along with a sharp fall in the number of cultivators, there was considerable increase in the proportion of agricultural labourers among the Koch/Rajbanshi. The substantial increase of agricultural labourers among the Koch/Rajbanshi was partly due to land alienation between 1961 and 1971.

In urban areas about 59% of the Koch/Rajbanshi workers were dependent on agricultural activities. So there was little change in the means of livelihood of the Koch-Rajbanshi who were otherwise urban by their residential background. The participation of the urban Koch-Rajbanshi in service was less (19%). The corresponding percentage were 32, 28, and 38 for the no-Scheduled people, other Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively (Mukhopadhyay 1995).

From the above discussion I like to draw my conclusion on the issue which I have taken for the study of my research. First of all, I like to present my observation in to the main issue around which the Koch-Rajbanshi launched social movement both before and post independent period.

By the end of the 19th century the Koch-Rajbanshi aspired to elevate their social status by claiming themselves as Kshatriya. Through the processes of Kshatriyaization they wanted to be recognized as promoted from a lower to a higher birth in the caste hierarchy in the Hindu caste system with a hope to earn greater prestige and respectability in terms of the conditions of caste system that were prevailing at that period. But a major weakness of that social mobility movement was at that time they could not make their bridge and fill the gap between the existing secular status of the Koch–Rajbanshi masses and their claimed ritual status. So when through such a mobility movement the Koch–Rajbanshi wanted to come at par with the immigrants’ upper caste of this region, Kshatriyaization mainly succeeded in creating a class of urban based gentry’ elites in the Koch-Rajbanshi society. The social position of the poor, Koch–Rajbanshi, however, remained unchanged because of their deplorable economic conditions, (Mukhopadhyay 1987; 30). It is therefore, despite adoption of Kshatriya status, the nature of socio-economic relationship between the Rajbanshi and the non–Rajbanshi and the rules specifying the relationship remained unaltered. Rather, this movement enlarged the gap between social strata of
the community itself as the Kshatriyization tried to make a distinction between the Koch and the Rajbanshi and the later claimed themselves as the ‘Bratya Kshatriya’ and denounced the Koch as the outcaste of the society denying the historical and anthropological facts that both the Koch and the Rajbanshi are the same clan originating from the same origin as depicted in the previous chapter.

Such the anomalous position of the Rajbanshi of being a Scheduled Caste on the one hand, and claim as the Kshatriya, the symbol of the higher caste of the Varna System of the Hindu caste society created a great confusion among themselves regarding their real social identity. On the one hand, the leader of the Kshatriyahood movement claimed that they belonged to higher birth caste being named as the Bratya Kshatriya in the caste division of the Hindu Society and in the other hand, they included themselves in the list of Scheduled Caste meaning voluntarily branded as backward low caste hierarchy just to avail the certain privileges which were meant for the backward and low caste peoples in the caste based society of the Hindu society.

After the introduction of the various development programmes for the scheduled caste in different Five Years Plans the overall socio-economic condition of the Koch–Rajbanshi remain almost as same as an even worse than it before. Rather, it was found in our study the economic condition of the Koch- Rajbanshi are relatively backward than the people belonging to other social groups. This backwardness, prevailing for long years ultimately enunciated a feeling of relative deprivation among the Koch-Rajbanshi. Their discontentment had been accumulated throughout the years but the policy makers of the state did not bother to look in to the matter and never tried to eliminate this discontentment taking in to the consideration of their special position before the merger of the Koch kingdom with West Bengal. Kamtapur–Uttarakhand movement was obviously an ultimate manifestation of this discontent.

It should bear in mind that the unprecedented influx of the Bengali Refugees in 1947 from the then East Bengal and again in 1971 from the then East Pakistan completely over ran not only the demographic position of the local people but in the same time they almost absorbed their culture, language, and economic means throwing them in to the wallow of misery which completely brought about the significant change in the population structure of this region and effected the emotion and sentiment of the minority community under the changed situation. So they began to feel that this large immigration of refugees has resulted not only the case of their economic misery and hardship but also their ethnic identity as a group of people like others.

We have already discussed the fact in our previous chapter that, since independence the relative proportion of the Koch-Rajbanshi to total population as well as the Scheduled Caste population of North Bengal has decreased considerably. At the same time, mostly due to immigration, there was phenomenal growth of scheduled caste (other than the Rajbanshi) population in northern part of West Bengal. The non scheduled population also grew at a higher
rate. Here it is important to note that the Kamtapur-Uttarakhand movement were basically the result of the clash of interest between the indigenous Rajbanshis and the non-Rajbanshis population over the control of economic resources of the region (Mukhapadhyay 1995).

In my study it also revealed the fact that till the economic activities of the Koch–Rajbanshi were mainly restricted on agriculture as we have given a comparative data where it has been shown that up to 1971 the Koch-Rajbanshi workers did not show their interest in participating in non agricultural occupations. One of the reasons, they had their agricultural land in their hand and the other reason was behind that they had their limited chance to get absorbed in these occupation in competition with the alien population because they were true sense the son of agricultural community and could never thought any job other than the agriculture. But the influx of the immigrants completely altered the basic character of the region as the local inhabitants the Koch- Rajbanshi lost their lands in the hand of the incoming population. Uprooted from the land the Koch-Rajbanshi came to find other jobs about which they had no any idea before and naturally they were not in a position to compete with others mainly those who came as refugees from East Bengal and settled.

It is thus seen from the demand of the Uttarakhand Dal where they demanded for the reservation of jobs for the local people in state and semi state–government establishments, private farms and most remarkably for tea gardens in the Rajbanshi tract revealed the fact about their incapability to face the competition. We mentioned the demand for the reservation of work of the tea garden for the Rajbanshi community is most remarkable because during our study in tea garden areas to know the impact of the tea plantation on the Koch-Rajbanshi community we could not find a single Rajbanshi tea workers in the tea garden although the tea planters at that time tried their best to attract the local people to work as the labour in the tea garden. Finding no response from the local people the tea planters brought the labours from the tribal dominated areas of the middle part of India.

From the charter of demands of another organs of Rajbanshi community known as Kendriya Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti (KRKS) where they placed nine points charter of demands before the Prime Minister of India. Of these nine points demands we can mention four to see that were exclusively on the issues of special economic privileges and reservation of jobs for the name of the ‘sons of the soil’. This is a clear indication that due to the alienation from the land they were forced to change their traditional mode of living. Those four demands are:

i) Reservation for Scheduled Caste unemployed people of North Bengal should be increased from 15% to 80% in which special quota 55% should be reserved for Rajbanshi candidates for recruitment in government and non government office of North Bengal.
ii) In order to uplift the economic status of the Rajbanshi, 55% bus route permit, industrial license to be allotted for the people of Rajbanshi community.

iii) Large scale industries should be installed in North Bengal immediately to provide employment to the landless cultivators and labourers of the Rajbanshi community.

iv) Adequate financial aids through bank loans, governments grant should be given to the unemployed Rajbanshi under self employment Scheme (KRKS 1987).

From the above demands it is clear that the Rajbanshi/Koch were not satisfied with their scope of employment in the non-agricultural sectors. They find it difficult for them to face the competition to get the employment opportunity. So they demanded more reservation for them in order to overcome this feeling of insecurity.

It is also found in our study that during the decade 1961-1971 there was sharp fall in the numbers of cultivators and large number of increase of agricultural labourers among the Rajbanshi which clearly indicates that the Rajbanshis were alienated from their land in large number.

Fig: 8.17.1  Deforestation in the name of Eco-tourism.

It is also found that the transfer of land from the hands of the Rajbanshi to others started in large scale since late nineteen century in different parts of Northern part of Wes Bengal. We have described how the big jotes (lands) were started to change hands from the Rajbanshi land owner and concentrated in the hands of the non Rajbanshi in our preceding chapter.
During the period of 1960 a new waves of the pine apple plantation started in this region which again uprooted the Rajbanshi from their agricultural land. At that time a new groups of upper middle class mainly belonged to the Bengali community and then the Marwari traders began to establish pine apple plantation without taking the consideration of the environmental and its social impact of this venture. They procured agricultural land mostly belonged to the Rajbanshi community alluring them by offering higher price than that of the prevailing market rate and planted the pine apple trees converting the agricultural land into the pine apple garden. The Rajbanshi farmers again became landless and within no time they spent the money what they got by selling their land and some of them employed in the pine apple garden as daily workers. As the soil of this region was not suitable for this pine apple garden it lost its fertility within a span of seven to ten years. It has two results: first of all, this land turned in to barren land with the use of more and more chemicals with the fruitless hope to gain more. Thus the entrepreneur left the land with heavy loss. Secondly, its socio economic effect has been tremendous. The Rajbanshi community lost their jobs on one hand, and on the other hand, they became completely land less daily labour and crowded in the turban centres like Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Islampur and other towns. Siliguri, the largest town of North Bengal is now called as the ‘city of Rickshaw.’ Nobody even the Siliguri Municipal Corporation has the correct figure in their record how many number of rickshaw are there in the town. An unofficial record stated that more than forty thousand rickshaw are engaged in carrying the passengers in the town every day. From the field study it has been observed that almost all the Rickshaw pullers are now Rajbanshi replacing the Bihari rickshaw puller who were the only community who pulled the rickshaw in the town even up to the first half of the 60s.

During the course of my interview with the rickshaw pullers almost all of them told that they had their agricultural land but it was sold and spent all the money they got. Now they came to these towns for the bread and their wife who were very orthodox even during those periods now working as maid servant or the helper (jogali) of the mason which often create some kind of social tension among the Rajbanshi community.

Many Rajbanshi land owners have also lost their raiyati (occupancy) holding through mortgage or sale. This also led them to join hands with movements when they found that the organization like Uttar Khand Dal raised the demand, land which were sold due to their distress call should again be recovered as it was done in many cases of the Tribal property. The demand of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti was more aggressive as they demanded ‘the Bhatias’ (usually the Bengali Immigrants are called) to whom the Rajbanshi had sold his property must be thrown out from this area to accommodate the Rajbanshi Community who had sold their land in distress.

‘There was demand raised by the Kendriya Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti (KRKS ) in 1971, transfer of land by the Rajbanshi since 1971 are to be return back to the transferers in free of cost introducing ‘Restoration of Alienated Lands Act’ and be effected on and from 1971.
8.18 SUMMARY

Before giving my conclusion based on the data that I have narrated in different chapters, I like to give the summary of the each chapter as follows:

CHAPTER: ONE
Introduction: The problem-Conceptual Frame Work. This first chapter dealt with the objective of the research work on the ethnic unrest of North Bengal and under the valuable guidance of Dr Sushama Rohatgi, the Head of the Dept of Geography and Applied Geography of University of North Bengal according to the characterisation as submitted in Synopsis.

CHAPTER: TWO
The region of the people: This chapter tries to give the account of the historical setting of the naming of northern part of Bengal. North Bengal as no such name has been officially recognized, still the name of North Bengal has been widely known even accepted by different official organization by naming such name. It was the epicentre of different historical events of not only during the period of puranic ages but also during the period of both middle and modern age. At present it consists of six chapters also dealt with the brief account of the Rajbanshi community, the most dominated social group of Bengal before the partition of the country. In this chapter an account of the Kshatriya movement under the leadership of Thakur Pananchanan Burman in whose name a university has been established recently has been described to make it understand its impact on the social movement of the Rajbanshi/ Koch community.

CHAPTER: THREE
Kamtapur Movement; genesis and social context: This chapter dealt with the historical account of the Kamtapur dynasty which was one of the strongest kingdoms during the period of the seventh century. This kingdom believed to be emerged as an independent political unit in the first half of the eighth century but until the fourteenth century its history remained under so many speculations. Vaskarvarban was the most known king of Kamtapur dynasty during the period of the seventh century dynasty. This chapter dealt with the historical account of those dynasties to find ethnic relation between the different ethnic communities of that period.

This chapter also dealt with the historical account of the Kshatriya Movements and the leadership of Thakur Panchanan Burman and the role of the Cooch dynasty. This chapter also tries to bring the other branches of the Cooch Dynasty in the light for discussion. The branches of this dynasty are Baikanthapur Dynasty, Panga Dynasty (Rangpur), Cachar Dynasty, Darang Dynasty, Bijani Dynasty, Beltala Dynasty.
CHAPTER FOUR
Evolution of the Movements and the present state: The ‘Bengali Refugees and the Immigrants of Bangladeshi’ dealt with the largest refugee influx of the world following the partition of the country. This unprecedented influx of refugee’s waves brought about the devastating effect over the whole of India particularly East Pakistan and West Bengal including the states of North East India. In North Bengal it not only affected the demographic pattern but it also caused a serious concern over the ethnic position of the whole of the area. This influx of the Bengali refugees not only outnumbered the Rajbanshi community but also marginalized them in question of their language and culture affecting their ethnic identity. This chapter tried to trace out its effect upon the present ethnic unrest of North Bengal.

CHAPTER FIVE
Locating Kamtapur movement among some other ethnic movements in North East India:
Koch–Rajbanshi or Koch versus Rajbanshi? Dealt with the very question whether the Koch and the Rajbanshi are different races from the angle of their origin. This chapter analyses, not exhaustively, but through selected documents to find both the mythological as well as anthropological accounts about their origin. In order to search this question we have to cross the boundary of the area of the research study and had to go up to the extent of Tripura as this state along with the other states like Meghalaya and Assam had the feeling of loosing of their identity in the face of the incoming of the refugee influx in the respective states. The ethnicity related with the anthropological relation, so this chapter also gives an account of the athoropolgial relation between the different ethnic groups of North East India.

Community tried to prove that their language is a dialect of Bengali. When there is no commonly accepted definition of the dialect and the standard language such claim may caused the non–issue into the issue of conflict and misunderstanding between the Koch/ Rajbanshi and the Bengali community and handed over the strong weapon in the hands of separatist thinking of the minority community.

CHAPTER SIX
Ethno linguistic Aspects of the Movements: Language and its Impact on the Movement’: This chapter has been included in my study. But this is not the deviation from my proposed chapter as mentioned at the time of my submission of the synopsis. In my synopsis I mentioned factors that are responsible behind the ethnic unrest of North Bengal that would be included in my field of study. With the progress of the study we find this factor very important at the beginning for my proposed hypothesis but now appeared one of the most important factor which are playing vital role in the present ethnic unrest of North Bengal. Language is such a factor .This chapter dealt with role of the language in the present unrest of North Bengal. Nobody can deny the fact that language is the identity of the race. It generates the emotion and brings the unity among the community, in one hand, and promotion of the sectarianism in the feeling of one to the other on the other hand. We find the letter written by Maraja Naranarayan of Cooch Behar dynasty.
addressed to the Ahom king which has been claimed by the Bengali intellectuals as the oldest prose letter (composition) of Bengali language. But the Rajbanshi community demands it as the example of Rajbanshi/ Kamtapuri language. This chapter also gave the account of the history of Kamtapuri languages which we do find in the Assam Burunji.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Identity-autonomy question and the state: the Kamtapur Experience: In this chapter we provided information about the formation of the Hitasadhani sabha and its demands. This organization launched their programme for the demand of Greater Cooch Behar State. The left intellectuals ignored Hitasadhani Sabha on the plea that this organization had been sponsored by the landlords being blessed by the Royal family. But they failed to understand why the organization had enjoyed such overwhelming support from common people of the state. The mammoth gathering and the tremendous success in the election showed their popularity among the common mass. So this chapter dealt with social and economical factors behind the movement of the HitaSadhani Sabha. In the organization there were different streams, one was in favour of joining with the Dominion of Pakistan, another prefer to remain as separate states and the third one was in favour of merging with Assam. The organization ultimately lost its existence due to the inner conflict but the demands for Greater Cooch- Behar raised by it again surfaced which proves it remained in dormant state.

This chapter provides information of important incidents after independence. Among them the merger of Cooch Behar State with West Bengal is important. This merger was not an easy matter as there was strong opposition from the different sections among the Rajbanshi Community itself. The pro Pakistani group hoisted the Pakistani flag in support of their demand. Another section wanted to be merged with Assam. There was a strong third force who demanded that Cooch Behar should remain as a province under Indian Territory. The other force, with support of the Bengali opted for the merger with West Bengal. The supporter for the merge with Assam province was so strong that Jawaharlal Nehru, the then the Prime Minister of India was forced to announce in the public meeting that a plebiscite will be made to decide with which province it will be merged. But ultimately the leaders of Bengal could convince the central leadership to take the decision that Cooch Behar will be a district of West Bengal. This chapter describes the impact of the separation of Goalpara from West Bengal and merger with Assam.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Summary and Conclusion: Finally I came into the conclusion chapter based on the facts that we have collected through different sources as mentioned in the proceeding chapters with my observations and suggestions.

North Bengal at present has six districts, Malda, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch-Behar. All this points as mentioned here clearly suggest that the ethnic unrest of North Bengal is not an isolated social phenomenon but it is a part of the social
transformation that is taking place throughout the world. It is a social issue and should be dealt with social objectives not as law and order problems. The state having state and nation – building agenda in its projected frame work perceives the demands and uprising of the ethnic minorities as anti national and secessionist. Terming it as an obstacle to the nation building processes and for strengthening national integration state had tried to counter these ethnic assertions with a heavy hand to suppress it but rarely through accommodation attitude (Sing 2008).

In case of Koch–Rajbansi of North Bengal there is no denying fact that they have become marginalized due to the incoming influx of refugees from East Bengal and they lost not only their land but also their culture including their language. As a result of which there is a feeling of the lost of their identity. The newly emerged educated middle class among the Koch-Rajbanshi, as rule of the social science, now taking the lead in establishing their identity as distinct community taking their glorious past as means of their weapons. They were influenced by the ethnic movements of the neighbouring states and above all, the demand for Gorkha Land movement. It is the movement of the middle class aspiration that separate political geographical boundary in the name of their community as they hope that they would enjoy the economic and political privileges for their interest. The neighbouring small states Sikkim inspired them as that state has their own Secretariat where the sikkimese are getting the preference in employment. The state has their own High Court, own Public Service Commission, College Service Commission, even has the scope to fulfil the dream to become minister to administer their own political fortune.

So this movement should be looked upon as an effect of various indigenous and exogenous forces. The unrest had been the result of uneven development as mentioned in the proceeding chapter. It is also the result of the cultural domination by the Bengali by dint of their demographic majority over them. Nobody has yet to give a definition or make any correct differences between the dialects and the principal language. Ignoring this fact a section of the Bengali intellectuals described the Kamtapur / Rajbanshi language as the dialect of Bengali language inflicting wound in the sentiment of the Koch-Rajbanshi community as a whole.

If this unrest is allowed to continue in this border line part of the state it will not only aggravate the ethnic conflict but also cause a serious impact upon our national integration and security.

In view of all these problems I can see that while studying social changes it is necessary to observe the society in a comprehensive form so that I can solve these problems bringing them into the confidence across the discussion table.

In my study I find whatever may be the considerations of the small state that have been formed in different parts of our country but in case of the demand for creating a separate
Kamtapur/greater Cooch Behar state does not enjoy the support from both the objective and subjective angles. Most of the members of the Koch-Rajbanshi community agreed with this observation during the conversation that made during our field work in course of our study. But the recognition of Kamtapuri/ Rajbanshi language can be and should be given and the Bengali intellectuals should restrain to impose their egoistic view upon them in question of their language. Immediate steps should be taken to uplift their economic position taking into the consideration that Cooch Behar was not a part of West Bengal and it enjoyed as an independent status for near about 400 years before it was merged with West Bengal after independence. In the same time special steps should be taken for economic development taking it for granted that no project has yet been initiated for the vast areas of North Bengal and the unequal distribution of wealth is one of the prime cause of the discontentment among the people of North Bengal.

In short, I cannot reduce the causes of this unrest to one or two factors as no single factor leads to a transformation. I am in strong opinion that Kamtapuri and Uttarakhand movement and demand for the formation of a separate state as demanded by Uttarakhand Dal or Greater Cooch Behar State as demanded by Greater Cooch Behar People’s Party cannot be the solution to mitigate the ethnic problems. Such a regional movement of separatist nature cannot be the only weapon which could successfully met all the emerging needs of the Rajbanshi leaving aside other institutional means and state intervention. But the point is unless the widening disparities between the Rajbanshis and others in the spheres of socio-economic advancement is narrowed down, this indeed is bound to generate a feeling of animosity between the locals (particularly the Rajbanshi) and the immigrants. Kamtapuri-Uttarakhand movements were an outbreak of said feeling (Mukhopadhya; 1995).

As the conclusion suggests, because of the constraints of time and resources, I have not been able to carry out a satisfactory structured and detailed analysis of the data collected through this research study. The facts presented are based on aggregative simple average and is therefore, limited in scope and content. We can perceive the emergence of certain broad features, and insight has been obtained about some areas of interest requiring more in depth study, and I hope to use the survey materials for further research.

Finally, I can say that the study of different socio-economic structures of a multi structural society does not offer a solution to the problems of that society, but merely paves the way to it. It does this not by simplifying and reducing, but by complicating and extending the front of research (Bhowmik 1981).
Through my research study I tried to search the answer of a question candidly swirls in front of eyes why after more than 50 years of merger does the demand for the formation of a new statehood in the name of Kamtapur or Greater Cooch Behar emerge as of the striking ethnic movement that rocked the whole of North Bengal? Why there is a chain of troubles of ethnic conflict in the Dooars of Jalpaiguri where the brotherly relationship between the different ethnic groups was the main characteristic throughout the period of history.

My study revealed the fact that influx of thousands of refugees from East Pakistan and Assam changed the demographic scenario and socio economic conditions of the Rajbanshis in quick succession. The merger of Cooch Behar state with West Bengal emboldened the Rajbanshi in the political front through long before in 1874, the creation of Assam state had already fissurized their socio-political fabrics, however, through the old fissure could not be mended, yet the Coochbehari Rajbanshi came into the main stream of the Rajbanshi of other districts of North Bengal and built a social bridge of assimilation of the Bengali community.

My study revealed the fact that uneven distribution of wealth and concentration of development in an around the capital remaining the one centred based state with the cultural domination over the other districts marginalizing their cultural identity by the Kolkata based intellectual with a deliberate intention to belittle the history, culture, tradition, and their mother tongue of demographically marginalized ethnic community like the Rajbanshis were the sources of this discontentment among the Rajbanshis which threw them into the hand of the provocation for joining with the demand for creating a Geo-political administrative area where they can have the authority to establish their own identity as a separate ethnic community. It also revealed the fact that remains as one centred state like West Bengal cannot be taken as healthy prescription for the integration of the ethnic bondage and mitigate the discontentment among the marginal community.

On account of their mounting frustration owing to the dispossession of the way of life, they have become emotional in their outburst against the government and people in power.

I believe my research work in this regard will invite the future researchers to come forward to explore the core of the ethnic problems where I could not penetrate and bring them into the light so that uneven distribution of development as well as the discriminatory attitude of the dominating class of society should be put into the cage for the cause of maintaining the integrity among the all sections of the ethnic community.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Alam, Javeed, ‘Who Wants Democracy?’ New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2004,

Aloysius. G,‘Nationalism Without a Nation in India ,New Delhi ,Oxford University Press,1997

Anand, dibyesh, Tibet; A victim of Geopolitics, New Delhi, Routledge, 2009

Anderson, Benedict;’ Imagined communities; Reflection on the Origin and Spread of nationalism’, London Verso,1983

Ansari, Iqbal A;’ Minorities and the Politics of constitution-Making in ‘in Gurpeet Mahajan and D Sheth (ed), Minority Identities and the Nation state , New Delhi, Oxford University Press,1999

Anderson, Denedict; Imagined Communities; Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London; Vreso Editions and NLB, 1983.


Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar; ‘Caste Protest and Identityin Colonial India; TheNamasudras of Bengal1872-1947 (2nd Edition), New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2011

Barkat, Abul; Political Economy of Deprivation of Hindu Minority in Bangladesh; living with the Vested property Act’ in Abhijit Das Gupta et al (ed), Minorities and the state; changing; Changing Social and Political Land’ scape of Bengal, New Delhi, Sage, 2011./

Baruah, Sanjib; ‘IndiaAgainst Itself; Assam and the Politics of Nationality’, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999

Basu, Amrita and AtulKohli; ‘Community Conflict and the State in India, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2011

Burman, Chand; ‘Identity,Conversion and Violence’; Dalit, Adivasis and Then 2007-08 Riots in Orissa in Rowena Robinson and MarianusKujur (ed), Margins of Faith, New Delhi, Sage, 2010’

Beckerleggs, G, ed. ‘Colonialism, Modernity and Religious Identities; Religious Reform Movements in South Asia’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2008
Berreman, Gerald D; ‘Hindus of the Himalayas Ethnography and Change,’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1972


Bhagavan, Manu and Anne Feldhause ‘Changing Power From Bellow; Dalit and Subaltern Question in India’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2009

Bhargava, Rajeeb, Amiya Kumar Bagchiand R Sudarshaned ‘Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy,’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999


Bhadra R.K; ‘Ethnic Identity problem and Administrative Efficacies in North –East India; In R.K Bhadra&MitaBhadra(Ed); Ethnicity, Movement and Social Structure (contested Cultural Identity):RawatPublication, New Delhi,2007


Barua N.K.,’ David Scott in North –East India, New Delhi, MunshiramManoharlal, 1970


Brass, Paul; ‘Ethnicity and Nationalism; Theory and Comparison.’ New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1991


Castells, S and M J Miller; The Age of Migration; the International population Movement in the Modern world’ New York, Guilford Press, 1993.

Chadda, Maya ‘Ethnicity, Security and Separatism in India’ New York Columbia University Press, 1997

Chandra, Bipin ‘Communalism; A Primer’ New Delhi, Anamika, 2004

Chatterjee, j ‘The Spoils of Partition; Bengal and India’ 1947-1967’ New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2008

Chatterjee, Partha and Pradeep Jaganathan, ed, ;’ Community, Gender, and Violence ( Subaltern Studies xi), Delhi, Permanent Black, 2000

Chatterjee, Roma and Deepak Mehta; ‘Living with Violence; An anthropology of events and Everyday life’, New Delhi, Routledge, 2007

Chowdhury, Sujit; ‘The Bodos; Emergence and Assertion of an Ethnic Minority,’ Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

Ciotti, Manuela; Retro-Modern India; Forging the Low Caste Self’ New Delh, Routledge, 2010


Copley, Antony; ‘Religions in Conflict; Ideology, Cultural Contact and Conversion in Late Colonial India’ New Delhi, 1997.

Chattapadhyay,Sunity: Kirata Jana Krity, Kolkata, Asiatic Society,1974

ChattaadhyaySuniti Kumar,'Jati, Sanskriti O Sahitya, Calcutta ,Mitra O Ghosh, 3rd edition 1352 B.S. Bengali.

ChakrabortyAmalendu Kishore ; The Quest for Identity; The Tribal SolidarityMovements in North East India ; Calcutta; The Asiatic Society, 2004.


Clark, Gregory, and David Zach Landes; ‘Caste versus Class: Social Mobility in India 1870-2010 Compared to England, 1086-2010, Berkely; University of California Press.

Daily, G. C.; Nature’s Services: Societal Development on Nature

Das gupta, Jytirindra; ‘Language, Conflict and National Development; Group Politics and National,’ Bombay; Oxford University Press, 1970

Dasgupta, Abhijit, Masahiko Togawa and AbulBarkat, ed, ; ‘Minorities and the State; Changing Social and Political landscape of Bengal’ New Delhi, Sage, 2011.


Das Arup Jyoti; Kamtapur and the Koch Rajbanshi Imagination; Guwahati; Montage India 2011.


DuttaNandana: Question of Identity in Assam: location, Migration, Hybridity, New Delhi , Sage Publication 2012.

Engineer, Asgar Ali; 'Communal Riots after Independence; A Comprehensive Account’ New Delhi, Shipra Publication, 2003


Froerer, Peggy; ‘Religious Division and Social Conflict; The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in Rural India’ ; Delhi, Social Science Press, 2007


Gosh, Lipi; ‘Political Governance and Minority Rights;The South and South-East Asian Scenero ’ New Delhi, Routledge, 2007.


Gupta, Dipankar; ‘The Context of Ethnicity; Sikh Identity in a Comparative perspective’, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997

Guru, Gopal,ed.; Humilation; Claims and Context’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press ,2011


Gellner, Earnest; ‘Nation and Nationalism’ New York, Cornell University Press, 1983


Hall, Stuart; ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’ in Mongia Padmini (Ed) Contemporary Post.


Heredia, Rudlof C; ‘Subaltern Alternatives on Caste, Class and Ethnicity, Contribution to Indian sociology, 34 (i)

Hobswam, Eric; Nation and Nationalism since 1780; Programme, myth, Reality, Cambridge university Press, 2002


Hussain, M; The Assam Movement; Class Ideology and Identity, New Delhi, Manak Publication, 19

Jassal, Smita Tewari; ‘Caste and Colonial State; Mullahs in the Census’, Contribution to Indian Sociology. 35, (3)


Judge, Paramjit S; Religion, Caste, and Communalism in Punjab, Sociological Bulletin, 51 (2)


Kaul, Ashok; Kashmir; Contested Identity-Closed system Open Choices’ Jaipur, Rawat, 2011

Kaur, Ravinder; ‘Since 1947; Partition Narrative among Punjabi Migrants of’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press w, 2007

Khilknani, Sunil; the Idea of India’ New Delhi, Penguin, 1997

Kujur, Marianusan and Rowena Robinson, Ed, ‘Margin of Faith’ New Delhi, Sage, 2010
Kumar Ashutosh, ed, ‘Rethinking State Politics in India; Region within Region’, New Delhi, Routledge, 2011.

Kumar, B B; ‘Naga Identity’ New Delhi, Concept, 2005

Kumar, D V; ‘Gellnerian Theory of Nation and Nationalism; A Critical Appraisal’ Socio Logical Bulletin, 59 (3)


Kothari, Rajani; ‘Ethnicity’, The Illustrated Weekly of India, March 6, 1988.

Koshy, Susan and R Radhakrishan, ed; ‘Transnational South Asian; The Making of a Neo-Diaspora’, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Ludden, David, ed; ‘Making India Hindu Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India’, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1996


Manchanda, Rita; ‘No Nonsense Guide to Minority Rights In South Asia’, New Delhi, Sage, 2009

Masselos, Jim, ed; ‘India; Creating a Modern Nation’, New Delhi, Sterling, 1990

Massey, I P; ‘Minority Rights Discourse in India’, Shimla, Institute of Advanced Study, 2002

Massey, James; ‘Minorities and Religious Freedom in a Democracy’, Delhi, Manohar, 2003

Michelutti, Lucia; ‘The Vernacularisation of Democracy; Politics, Caste and Religion in India’ New Delhi; Oxford University Press, Routledge, 2008


Majeed, Akhtar, ed; ‘Regionalism; Developmental Tension in India,’ Delhi, Cosmo, 1984.

Mishra Bani Prasanna; The Foreigners in Assam Problems and Solution; Soliguri Fariadi, 2006.

Menon V. P; ‘The story of the Integration of the Indian State’ Delhi, Orient Longmans ltd, 1956

Mukherjee Bharati; ‘Regionalism in Indian Perspective, Kolkata, K.P. Bagchi & Co. 1952.


Mukhapadhyay, Rajat Subhra; ‘The Rajbanshis of North Bengal’ – A Comparative Demographic Profile, North Bengal University, 1991.

Mukhapadhyay, Rajat Shubra; ‘Uttarakhand Movement; A Sociological Analysis’, North Bengal University, 1987.

Mukhapadhyay Rajat; ‘Conversion Vs Construction; A Discourse on Hindu Identity of the Rajbanshis’, In A.K.Halder & P. K. Bhowmig (Ed); Kolkata, Societies and Cultures in India, Vol. II Non Tribal Issues, R.N Bhattacharya, 2008

Mukhapadhyay Rajat; ‘A Note on the Cultural Background of Kamtapur Movement in North Bengal’; In Rajat Kr. Das and Debasish Basu (Ed), North East India in Perspective, New Delhi; Akasha publishing House, 2005

Myron, weiner, ‘Sons of the Soil Delhi Oxford University Press 1978

Nag, Soumen; ‘Kanchanjanghaya Asantir Agoon’ (Bengali), Kolkata, P.D. publication, 1995.

Nag, Soumen; ‘Bichhinatar Utsaya Sandhyane Kamtapur Theke Uttar Purba Bharat’ (Bengali), Sreerampur, Saptarshi Publication, 2003


Nath D., ‘History of the Koch Kingdom’ 1515-1615, Delhi, Mittal Publication 1989


Oommen, TK, ed, Citizenship and National Identity; From Colonialism to Globalism’, Delhi, Sage, 1997

Oommen, TK; ‘Nation, Civil Society and Social Movements; Essays in political Sociology,’ New Delhi, Sage, 2004.

Pakem, B, ed; ‘Insurgency in Northeast India’ New Delhi ’Omsons Publication, 1997

Pandey, Gyannendra; The Construction of Communualism in Colonial North India’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990
Parekh, Bhikhu’’Cultural Pluralism and the limits of Diversity’’ in GurpitMahajan (ed) Language Rights and Political Theory’ Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000

Parrat J ; ’Wounded Land; Politics and Identity in Modern Manipur’ New Delhi , Mittal, 2005

Parthasarathy, D; ‘Collective Violence in a Provincial City’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997

Phadnis, Urmila; ’Ethnicity and Nation Building in South Asia’ New Delhi, Sage, 1990.

Pareewal, Shinder; ’Sikh Ethnonationalism and the Political Economy Of Punjab’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000


Raj, Rabindra; ‘The Naxalite and Their Ideology’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2011

Rattansi, Ali; ‘Racism; A Very Short Introduction’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2007

Roy, Kausik; Partition of India; Why1947 New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2011


Robb, Peter, ed;’ The Concept of Race in South Asia’ New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997

Rao M.S.A.; Urban Sociology in India; Reader and Source Book, New Delhi, Orient Longman 1974.


Sabewral, Gopa;’Ethnicity and Class; Social Divisions in an Indian City’ New Delhi’ Oxford University Press, 2006.

Sarin, V I K; ‘India’s North East in Flame’, New Delhi, Vikas, 1980


Tazi, Nadia, ed, Keywords; Identity, New Delhi Sage, 2004


Weiner, Myron; Sons of the Soil,’ Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1978.

Williams, Raymonmd; ‘Keywords; a Vocabulary of Culture and Society’, Glasgow, Fontana, 1976.
Wimmer, Andreas; ‘Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict; Shadows of Modernity’ Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002

Zehol, L; ‘Ethnicity in Manipur, ’New Delhi, Vikas, 1998

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS


Gazetteers


The Calcutta Gazette, Registered No. c 207; part III-Acts of West Bengal Legislature, Government of West Bengal. Legislative Department’s Notification No.21991-6th December,1950- The Act of the West Bengal Legislature, having been assented to by the president, is hereby published for General Information West Bengal Act LXIII of 1950; the Cooch Behar (Assimilation of State Laws ) Act, 1950.
Other Official Documents

Merger Agreement; Between the Governor General of India and His Highness The Maharaja of Cooch-Behar, Ministry of States; New Delhi, the 30th August, 1949. DO. No. F 15 (19) - p49.

Notification, dated New Delhi, the 12th September, 1949, government of India, ministry of States.


Memorandum and Resolution

Resolution and Memorandum of different political parties and organizations like UKD’s, UTJAS’s, Hitasadhani Sabha, Kshtriya Samiti, KPPP’s UUSMS’s, GNLF’s etc.

Personal Interviews on different dates

Leaders of Hitasadhani Sabha; Mr. Harish Chandra Sarkar, Late Jatin Roy Singh

Leaders of NBCA; Sri Dharma Narayan Burma, Sri Jiten Burman, Dharma Narayan Das. Dr. Dhirendra Narayan Das, Late Promonendra Narayan and others

Laeders of UTJAS; Ranjan Roy, ProbhbnatBurman, Latejugal Kishore Roybir and others

Leaders of KPP (Atul Roy Group); Atul Roy

Leaders of KPP (Nikhil Roy Group); Nikhil Roy

Leaderts of UKD; Prabhas Singh Shastri, Bhabesh Das, Rabi Sarkar,Purna Narayan Singh, PanchananMallick, Sampat Roy (late) and others.

Leaders of CPIM; ManikSanyal,Chandi Pal, SailenSarkar, Dinesh Dakua and others.

Leaders of F.B ; Kamal Guha (late) UdyanGuha, Hiten Nag, Amar Roy Prodhan and others

Leaders of congress;’ Deaprad Roy, ShukabilasBurman,ShyamalChoudhury and others

Leaders of CPI; Debi PrasadLahiri, Debi Neogi (Late) Bhupen Nag (late) and others.

Several others peoples across the all section of peoples of the regions

Articles from different Journals’


Kirmani, N (2008);‘History, Memory and Localised Construction of Insecurity’, Economic and Political. Weekly Vol.43 (10), pp57-64


Lateef, Shahida, (1980); ‘Ethnicized Social Chage’, The Economic and Political weekly, Vol.15, pp 635


Seth, Dl (1966); ‘State, Nation and Ethnicity; Experience of Third World Countries’, The Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 24,pp 615-25.


Majumder, Chandra Guha; ‘Separatists at it Again,’ The Statesman (Calcutta)’July 7, 1998


‘Regional Security; The Indian Doctrin’. India Today, August 15, 1983

Kothari, Rajni; ‘Ethnicity’ The Illustrated Weekly of India, March 6, 1988.

‘The Great Divide’ The illustrated Weekly of India, September 1, 1985

Gosh, Biswajit, (2003); ‘Ethnicity and Insurgency,’ Sociological Bulletin, 52 (2), pp221-43


BOOKS/JOURNALS WRITTEN IN RAJBANSHI/KAMTAPURI LANGUAGE

‘Sotal Chhawali Path’ Kamtapuri Bhasa Unnayan Parishad, Dinhat, Coochbehar (2010)

Bhaoaiya part landpart II by Alluddin Sarkar; Progressive Book House Guwahati (2001)

Ak Bises Bhaber Bhaoyawa by Allauddin Sarker; Progressive Book House Guwahati (2004)

Bhandani Ist and II yearly number Sree Sree Bhanpuja and Utsab Committee, Mathabhanga (2011)


Sree Sree Gita Aye by Nagendra nath Roy; Siliguri (1998)

Bhasa Andolaner Garj Kyane by Taramohon Adhikzari; Tufangunj (2012)


Rajbansi bhasa Sahityer Parichay’ by Dwijendra Nath Bhakat Golakgang Assam (2000)

Daria puja special ed Partha pratim roy (1417 banglaabda)

Degor Jamatia issue ed Nikhilesh Roy (2008)

Satsha Bacharia kamta Koch Rajyer Hitihas, by Ramendra Nath adhikari, India Library, Gouripur Assam (1996)

Kamtapuri abhidan by Sujan Burman; Dinhata Cooch Behar (2011)

Rajbansi abhidhan by Phanindra Nath Burman Rangali Bajan Jalpaiguri (1377)

Kamtapur Itihasher all; Khagendra Nath Roy (Falakata, Jalpaiguri) (1988)

Agila Diner Katha, By Haripada Roy (2002)

INDEX

A
Arakan Basin 11
A.D. smith 29
A Burning Question 31
A History of Cooch Behar 31
Ambutia 34
Akhya Kumar Mitra 38, 40
Ahmed Sharaf 38, 40
Ananada Gopal Ghosh 39
Arupjyoti Ghosh 60
Aramitra 68
Ashrumati Debi 84
Ahoms 94
Akbar 103
Aurangajib 104
Amalendu Dey 122

Ananda Bazar Patrika 122
Asur 141
Adhihar 160
B
Bihar 132
Badamtam 34
Banga
Buck Land 40
Barendra Bhumi 44
Brahmaputra 47
B.K. Barua 55
Bhaskar Burma 61
Bhaktiar Khilji 63, 64
Bangiya Jana Sangha 88
Bhutia 94
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodo</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Dajananda Saraswati</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basudeb Narayan</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>D.C. Sarkar</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biswa Singha</td>
<td>108, 137</td>
<td>Daud Khan</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhupen Sharma</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Damodar Deb</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biram Deb</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>Dubendra Narayan</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhumij</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>Dajendra Narayan</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birhar</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>Dharma Deb</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhojnarayan</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>Darpa Deb</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baniprasanna Mishra</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>Dalimkot</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidhan Chandra Roy</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>Darpanarayan</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chongtong</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Ethnic Theory and Practice</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittagaon</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Edward Gait</td>
<td>56, 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattal</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Edward Tuite</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechoslovakia</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambal</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Falakata</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charu Chandra Sanyal</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Fulbari</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durlavnarayan</td>
<td>67, 68</td>
<td>Gidra Pahar</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmanarayan Burman</td>
<td>67, 68, 107</td>
<td>Gour</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilip Roy Chowdhury</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Giasuddin</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

245
Girindra Narayan Roy 98
Gobinda Mishra 104
H
Habibur Rahaman 38
Harshabardhan 50
Hieu-en-Tsang 50
Haridas Mondal 54
Hamilton 62
Horka Duar 62
Hussain Shah 69
Habibur Rahaman 70
Hem Chandra Chowdhury 70
Harmohan Roy 75
Hedgson 90
Herbert Raisly 98
Ho 141
J
Jugi 20
Jalpaiguri 24
Jalpesh 24
J. Hutchinson 29
Javeed Alam 33
Kalinga 36, 46
Jenkin School 73
Jogendra Deb 84
Jyoti Basu 84
J.N. Bhattacharjee 90
Jagya Narayan 105
Jopyana Deb 109, 137
K
Kashem Ali
Kursong 34
Kurukhetra 38
Kirat Jana Kriti 41
Kummilya 44
Kachari 56
Khosol Sarkar 72
Kalidas Bagchi 73
Khan Chowdhury Amanullah Ahmed 73
Keshab Sen 85
Korotoya 85
Khasis 94
Kirat 96
Kaivartas 97
Kambos 97
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kumar Rupnarayan</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalika Das</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar Narayan</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar Narayan Chowdhury</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kora</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumlai</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khenia</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan 20, 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laxan Sen 63, 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lepcha 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebensraum Theory 136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Mount Batten 154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagoni 159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalit Bakshi 167</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malpahari 14, 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munda 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moynaguri 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahasthangarh 49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Md. Bin Tuglak 68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirkana 68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montengu Chemsfold Act 86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipuri 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikirs 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizo 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manu 97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madan Mohan Temple 105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madan Narayan 105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manikya Deb 108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mech 20, 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal Man 119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manab Mukherjee 122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marwari 143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monger 147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munda 147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharani 156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya 157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayman Singh 162</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathabhangla 163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathabhanga 163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasya Sekh 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasan 61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilamba Naglim 61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimai duar 62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasiruddin 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nawab Hussain 69
Nripendra Narayan 79, 107
Nihar Ranjan Roy 89
Nanajana 167
O
Old Societies and New Societies 29
Oraon 20
Ogyen Dang 51
P
Pakistan 14
Poundra Bardhan 35
Pabna 37
Pragjyotishpur 38
Panchim Banga 39
Purba Banga 39
Pandua 44
Panchanan Burma 60, 72, 73, 74, 81, 87
Pithu 63, 65
Pratapdhwaj 67
Pirthiraj 68
Prabashi 70
Prativa Debi 84
Privy Debi 84
Paliyas 96
Pran Narayan 104
Parikhit Narayan 112
Parhariya 141
Phanindra Rakhit 109, 111
Prafulla Chakraborty 119, 121
R
Rangpur Gazette
Rajbanshi 9, 14
Regional Movements 30
Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas 31
Robert 33
Rangpur 40
Rup Roy 52
Rukununuddin 54
Rava 56
Raja Mahendra Narayan 57
Rajsahahi Div. 73
Rakhal Das Bandopadhyay 89, 97
Ramprakash Chanda 89, 97
Rajpal 91
Rajendra Narayan 106
R.W. Timan 123

S

Sreehatta 44

Sandhya Roy 61, 66

Shankar Deb 62, 104

Sruditi Dhar Rupnarayan 62

Sindhu 67

Suniti Debi 78

S Darba Deb 83

Surendra nath Roy Chowdhury 87

Sailen Debnath 90

Sisdhya Singha 108

Shanty Mohan Roy 122

Santal 141

Sadri 147

Subas Gising 147

Sajoral 159

Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel 166

Satisdh Chandra Roy 167

Sarba Deb 109, 121

Suja 104, 137

T

Tabaket 1

‘The power of Identity’ 123

Tundu 141

U

Uttarakhanda 11

UttarBanga Sahitya Parishad 74

Upanayan Movement 75

Upendra Narayan 89

Udit Narayan 112

Umesh Chandra Roy 167

V

Victoria College 73

Vivekananda 92

Vijwa Singha 95

W

W.W Hunter 98
FOURTH CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE
ON CONFLICT, AUTONOMY AND
PEACE: A REPORT

Dolly Kikon
Samir Kumar Das
All these features built around concrete instances of history, politics, and society, call for a new theorizing of the theme of autonomy, which can take into account the tensions and the virtues of dialogic forms and dialogic order. A critical theory of autonomy will aim at making a fruitful negotiation with the paradox inherent in the politics of autonomy - namely that, it is the dual site of regulation and freedom, power and will.

3. Why is violence so pervasive in the movement of Autonomy?

Soumen Nag

When the invitation of Calcutta Research Group to participate in the dialogue on Principal and practice of the Autonomy reached me, trepidation, not jubilation, hesitation, not satisfaction gripped instinctively. How come this? Why me? Who misjudge the judge. When I glanced through the great names who have been invited in this dialogue – a majestic procession of scholars – I wondered how dare I an anonymous persona – non – grate, from a small town like Siliguri venture to sit along with them. However, I take the Privilege to participate in this occasion and tender my grateful thanks specially to Dr. Ranabir Samaddar for his mystifying goodness in choosing me, whether I will fill the bill is a different matter.

I am also happy about another related fact, and that is the venue of this deliberation as no other part of the country has witnessed so much turbulence as the North East including Darjeeling has done.

There is no scope to go into details but this is much clear that both human rights and the rule of law have been conspicuously weak, if not also absent, from the way things have been conducted in this part of the Country. This is a cause for serious disquiet. The fact that it was decided to organize this function at Darjeeling speaks for itself. I hope, this initiative will be the precursor of many more similar initiative. I shall concentrate my deliberation on the title for discussion.

“Why is violence so pervasive in the movement of Autonomy?” With special reference to the Autonomous Darjeeling Hill Council which was tabled after bloodshed and fire for long Four years and Karmapur movement that rocked North East.

One after another autonomous council for different region have been signed and before each agreement there was clarion call to end the blood shed. Still the rattle of bullets echoes every nook and corner of this region. Here lies the riddle in the movement for autonomy. Another underground groups surfaced through their voice of gun claiming with further autonomy in other pretext.

So the basic question knocks our sagacity, how does one think? The question is important, whatever the issue or the area of one’s concern, because of this thinking, on the nature and adequacy of the understanding it provides, depends the nature and adequacy, the ultimate effectiveness of how one acts, in the matter. It is our diagnosis of a disease, which determines its treatment. In the same way it is our explanation or understanding of social reality, any aspect of it, which indicates the prescription, the necessary purposeful action on our part.

The seed of violation in the movement for autonomy was germinated on the very day when the East India Co. annexed South Sikkim to their empire and for quite some times called the annexed portion British Sikkim while the left over of the kingdom was referred to as Independent.

Conflict, Autonomy and Peace: A Report 28
Sikkim. The area was later named Darjeeling after a village that existed there and subsequently formed into a district by the same name. So Sikkim in reference to Darjeeling district can be called mother state and West Bengal to which this part of Sikkim was later annexed as a district may be called surrogate mother state.

In searching the reply for the depicted issue, the basic questions surfaced in mind how far the movement of the autonomy is autonomous itself? Whether both internal and outside agency, taking the advantage of unique geographical position of North East have the remote control in steering the movement according to their projected program. Above all, the government tendency to view the unrest as a law and order issue ignoring the causes of conflict, such as the neglect of the region by economic decision makers, encroachment of land by immigrants, derigion of the Local Culture and attacks on peoples identity.

Despite the high level of education land continues to be the main source of live hood but immigrants encroaches on it and causes shortage. The Bangladeshis are such immigrant groups but not the only one. A much bigger number comes from the Hindi hear land of Bihar and U.P. Many local communities resent the fact that immigrants prosper on the land by encroach upon, while they are left behind. For example, most attacks in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam have been on the Biharis who have occupied land there.

The conflicts began with attacks on outsiders and slowly turn into ethnic conflicts within the region. In the context of the land shortage caused by encroachment and the failure to invest in productive jobs, as its exclusive rights, so each community rewrites its history to claim an indigenous status and the exclusive right over resources in a given area. Ethnic conflicts are a direct consequences of such hardened ethnic identities and exclusive claim.

It should be kept in mind, when the political system gives the votes to the many, and the economic system gives the bread to the few civic disorder is almost inevitable. When the vote is a human right and bread is a privilege of the few, democracy is a mockery, it cannot be an instrument of peace and harmony, because it is not instrument of Justice.

Please allow me to come back to Darjeeling. The demand of a separate state named Gorkha Land has a long history and all the demands coincide with specific historical background.

The first demand for separate state was made as far back in 1907. In spite of the justification of the demand in favour of imperialism, the British Crown failed to approve the demand, as at that time Britain and Czarist Russia was engaged in rivalries in Tibet. Since Himalayan state including the Indo-Mongoloid Buddhist of Darjeeling Hills had ethnic and super structural affinity with Tibet, formation of separate state by partitioning Bengal might have endangered British position in the Himalayas. So the British rules preferred to keep Darjeeling hills with Bengal. Had the demand of 1907 been accepted Nepali nationality in Darjeeling hill council never have emerged as according to the 1901 census, Nepali speaking people was 40,101 out of total of 1,42,492 hill people.

Again in 1917 Demand for a separate state named ‘North Eastern Frontier State’ (Darjeeling Jalpaiguri and part of Assam) was raised. But it was a period of First World War. Seeing the co-operative attitude of the Indian National Congress (being dominated by moderate group) the British Government feared to arouse mass resentment in Bengal by further attempt of partition of their province.
The British planters renewed their effort for separate state in 1929. Dalai Lama, who had so far remained a friend of the British shifted his fraternal affinity to-wards China. The Indo-Mongoloid ethnic communities were also demonstrating their affinity so for a separate state was turned down.

Moves for separate state made in 1933, 1939 and 1943 were based on the same principle but was turned down as during this period the British was engaged in the Second World War and had no time to look into his home front.

The undivided Communist part of India, headed by present leadership of CPIM also raised to create a separate Gorkhasthan even with a option to create a sovereign state.

Gorkha Hill Council was formed but how it enjoys its autonomy in governing the Darjeeling Hills? Take for example about Municipality affairs. They are in a fix whether they are under the governess of West Bengal Municipality Act or by the Darjeeling Hill Council.

Kamtapur Demand of the Rajbangshi Community has emerged in the plains of North Bengal. K.L.O. (Kamtapur Liberation Organisation) has chosen the voice of the gun to register there autonomous existence but the time will not make a room for discussion.

Published in FOURTH CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGE ON CONFLICT AUTONOMY AND PEACE

Edited by Dolly Kikon and Sanir Das, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata.