

Chapter-3

Foundation and the Organization of the Uttarkhanda Dal

In the foregoing chapter, discussion has been made on the socio-economic and political background to the foundation of the Uttarkhanda Dal (U.K.D.). It is to be mentioned here that all those aforesaid aspects prepared a fertile ground in the northern part of North Bengal in the late sixties of the twentieth century for the emergence of a new regional political party, organized by a section of Rajbanshi ethnic group of people. Thus, it was against that background that the U.K.D. was founded on 5th July 1969. However, it is known to us that two kinds of circumstances generally work behind the occurrence of any historical event, i.e. remote and immediate. It so happened in case of the formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal too. It is needless to say that the remote circumstances have already been discussed in the previous chapter and now in the present chapter, the immediate circumstances for the formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal will be discussed.

It has already been said in the preceding chapter that the new political party, organized by a section of Rajbanshi people, was born in the womb of the *Kshatriya Samiti*. In fact, the proposal and decision to form a political organization were taken in a historic annual session of the *Kshatriya Samiti* that was held at Charer Bari, a village of Maynaguri Block of Jalpaiguri district on 31st May and 1st June, 1969.¹ But in order to understand the immediate background of such decision to form a political organization by a majority section of *Kshatriya Samiti* members, it is essential to discuss the history of the changing character of the activities in brief, in the post independence period.

It has already been mentioned that in post independence period in divided North Bengal of West Bengal, the first *Kshatriya Samiti* was organized in 1954 and its first session was held at Dinhat of Cooch Behar under the president ship of Sri Upendra Nath Barman. The next full fledged conference of the *Kshatriya Samiti* was held at Jateswar in Falakata Block of Jalpaiguri district in 1955 and in this session again Upendra Nath Barman was the

president.² It was in 1956 that the head office of the *Kshatriya Samiti* was shifted to Jalpaiguri.³ It needs to be mentioned here that with the tremendous efforts of some hardworking leaders of the *Samiti* that it began to spread its wing in divided North Bengal.⁴ Among them the names of Jatin Singha Sarkar of Tufanganj, Jajneswar Roy of Jalpaiguri, Mahendra Dakua and Gajendra Basunia of Mathabhanga, Surendranath Roy of Saptibari of Jalpaiguri, Birendranath Roy Sarkar and Kalindra Nath Barman of Siliguri deserve special mention. This apart, a number of youths took a positive role in extending the activities of the *Samiti* and they were Dr. Bijay Bhushan Roy of Jalpaiguri, Manibhushan Roy of Alipurduar, Harimohan Barman of Rangali Bazna of Jalpaiguri, Prosenjit Barman of Dinahata, Paresh Barman and Mrigendranath Roy.⁵ But it is to be remembered that after the partition and independence in 1947, the *Samiti* lost its earlier vigour and spirit both in the fields of social and political activities.⁶ Because a large sections of the followers of *Kshatriya Samiti* switched over their allegiance to different national parties in post independence period. In this connection, a special mention can be made of the name of Upendra Nath Barman, a stalwart figure of the *Samiti*. He was elected the member of Constituent Assembly in 1947 with the support of the Congress Party⁷ and since then he was associated with that party. Therefore, it would not be wrong to mention that the *Kshatriya Samiti* in post independence era was returned into merely a social organization what it was in the beginning phase. Scholars specially the Rajbanshi scholars argue that Upendra Nath Barman was instrumental behind such changing character of the *Kshatriya Samiti* in post independence period.

However, this changed character of the *Kshatriya Samiti* was well reflected in two *Kshatriya Samiti* meetings which are discussed below. The annual conference of the *Samiti* was organised at Rabindra Hall, Maynaguri of Jalpaiguri district on 27th December 1967. The meeting was presided over by Harimohan Barman, Headmaster of Rangali Bazna Mohan Singh High School, Madarihat, Jalpaiguri. Other important members who were present in the meeting were, Haripada Roy, Secretary of the *Samiti*; Sri Jajneswar Roy, ex M.L.A.; Kalindranath Barman, Rajendra Nath Roy, (Kushmundi, W.Dinajpur) et al. In that meeting Haripada Roy, the secretary, merely read out the annual report of the activities of the *Samiti*. The members who were present, merely participated in the stereotyped discussion that how to develop the socio-economic condition of the community. Apart from this, the origin of the

Rajbanshi *Kshatriyas*, the history of the Kamatapur and how to restore the pristine glory of the Rajbanshis were generally discussed. But one significant aspect of that conference which is mention worthy was that the members present proposed a vote of thanks (gratitude) to the secretary of the Council of West Bengal Secondary Education for excluding the Bengali short story ‘Bajikar’ from the ‘Pathankalan’, the text book of class ix (nine) in the academic session 1967-1968. It should be mentioned here that the short story ‘Bajikar’ was controversial for mentioning the term *bahe* in it. It has already been mentioned while discussing social background in chapter-2 that the term *bahe* was used by the upper caste Hindu in a most contemptuous manner which antagonized the Rajbanshi people. However, another proposal was taken to convey gratitude to Jalpaiguri Jela Congress, Vidarthi Parisad and ‘‘Bajikar Patrika Committee’’ for their laudable efforts to persuade the matter with the Govt. to exclude the said story from the text book.⁸

Another general meeting of the *Kshatriya Samiti*, held in Jalpaiguri on 16th December, 1968 in the office of the *Kshatriya Samiti* under the president ship of Sri Purnya Chandra Roy. The chief guest was Sri Rajendra Nath Roy. In addition to this the Rajbanshi students of A.C. College, P.D. Women College, A.C. Training College, all these are in Jalpaiguri, participated the meeting. In this meeting, it was also found that the secretary of the *Samiti*, Sri Haripada Roy initiated discussion on the development of the Schedule caste and Schedule tribe communities of the region. From among the students’ speakers were Sri Chandra Kishore Roy, Hitendra Nath Roy and Sri Shashibhushan Adhikary.⁹ Thus, it reveals from the agenda of the *Kshatriya Samiti* meetings that its main concerns were social issues and not political one. But one important feature of the *Kshatriya Samiti* activities during the period was the emergence of protestant attitude in the minds of the educated youths of the Rajbanshi community especially in respect of caste hatred. They raised their protestant voice under the leadership of Kalindra Nath Barman whenever the term *bahe* was used by some Bengali intellectuals.¹⁰ It is to be mentioned that even in the College, the Rajbanshi students were insulted with the derogatory term *bahe* and therefore, the Rajbanshi students in maximum occasions felt ashamed of introducing themselves as Rajbanshi.¹¹ In an interview, Sri Shashibhushan Adhikary, the then youth leader of the *Kshatriya Samiti* and also the founder member of the Uttarkhanda Dal stated in reminiscence that the Rajbanshi people coming

from villages in ‘‘Dhupguri hat’’ often were harassed, humiliated by the upper caste Hindus of Dhupguri town with the derogatory term *bahe*. Though they wanted to protest but they could not do anything but remaining as a helpless spectators for the want of any political platform of their own.¹² Another youth leader of *Kshatriya Samiti* of that period Sri Dharendra Nath Roy, also a founder member of the Uttarakhanda Dal, while echoed the view of Shashi Bhushan Adhikary on caste hatred, he expressed his personal experience in that respect. In addition to this, he added the political anarchy all around in West Bengal which was prevalent as a result of the role of the United Front Govt. and partiality or the deprivation of the local Rajbanshi landless people at the time of distributing vested lands—all these led the youth and educated section of the *Kshatriya Samiti* thinking of the formation of a political organization of their own to meet all these challenges, they faced in the socio-economic arena in the then period.¹³

Thus, it is found that the factor of social injustice coupled with that of economic factor worked well to prepare the immediate background to the formation of a new political Party by a majority section of the *Kshatriya Samiti* members.

However, against the immediate background mentioned above, the Annual Conference of the *Kshatriya Samiti* was convened at Charerbari (Beside Bedgara Railway Station), P.S.-Maynaguri, Dist. Jalpaiguri on 31st May & 1st June 1969. The president and general secretary of the Reception Committee were Sri Lalit Mohan Shing and Sri Harimohan Roy respectively. The members of the Reception Committee were Sri Nagendra Nath Roy, Sri Girindra Nath Basunia, Sri Bhupendra Nath Roy, Sri Panchanan Mallick, Sri Ganesh Chandra Roy, Sri Krishna Kumar Roy, Sri Jamsing Roy and thirty six other members, whose names were figured in the leaflet. The principal speaker was Sri Upendra Nath Barman, B.L., the Deputy Chairman of West Bengal Bidhan Parishad and the chief guest was Sri Satindra Kumar Bhattacharya, M.A., W.B.J.C.S., Scheduled Caste and Tribal Welfare officer, Jalpaiguri.¹⁴The office bearers of the *Kshatriya Samiti* for the year 1967-68 were Sri Lalit Mohan Roy (from West Dinajpur), the president; Sri Bhupendra Nath Roy and Sri Panchanan Mallick were the vice presidents; Sri Hari pada Roy, the general secretary; Mahadeb Sarkar (Kushmandi, W. Dinajpur) and Sri Girija Sankar Roy were assistant

secretaries; Kalindra Nath Barman and other fourteen members from different districts of North Bengal were in the Executive Committee.¹⁵ However, in that conference of the *Samiti*, the dignitaries who were finally present were Sri Upendra Nath Barman, Sri Jajneswar Roy (ex M.L.A.) also known as ‘Dooars Gandhi,’ Sri Jagadananda Roy (ex M.L.A. and Deputy Minister). The open session of the conference was chaired by Sri Upendra Nath Barman.¹⁶ It should be mentioned in this respect that all these three dignitaries were associated with Indian National Congress. The historic importance of this conference was that the educated youth section of the *Samiti*, for the first time in the history of the *Samiti* was openly shouting and demanding for the formation of a political party of the Rajbanshi *Kshatriyas*. They refused to listen to the old stereotyped (conventional) speech of these three dignitaries.¹⁷ They demanded the formation of a political party which would work for the development of North Bengal only. They were no longer ready to tolerate the all round torture being meted out by the south Bengal leaders (political) on the people of North Bengal. The youths were inspired in this respect by the “SHWETA PATRA”(white paper) published by the then member of parliament Smt. Maitreyee Devi which was addressed to the Prime Minister of India demanding proper allocation of financial allotment for all round development of North Bengal.¹⁸ It was youth leader Girija Shankar Roy who argued to the youth that as the Rajbanshis were majorities in North Bengal, so they could form a political party of their own.¹⁹ On the other hand, according to Girija Shankar Roy, it was Kalindra Nath Barman who had made a statement to a news paper (Yugantar Patrika) that a political party was going to be formed just on the eve of that conference.²⁰

Notwithstanding it would not be wrong to presume that the educated youth section of the *Kshatriya Samiti* was contemplating about the formation of a political party for the indigenous people of North Bengal long before the ‘Charer Bari’ conference and it was waiting for an opportune moment and space to come out. Finally, it was burst out into that conference. At last the demand of the agitated youths was conceded and verbal decision was taken to form a new political party which pacified the agitators. Following this new development, most of the old and senior leaders of the *Kshatriya Samiti* retired from the Executive Committee and a new committee was formed on the same day i.e. on 31st May 1969. In the new committee, Sri Harimohan Barman became president, Sri Panchanan

Mallick and Sri Bhupendra Nath Roy became vice presidents, Haripada Roy was made the general secretary. Apart from this, four assistant secretaries were Kalindra Nath Barman, Pulin Behari Roy, Sripada Sarkar, and Digendralal Roy and other ten members from Jalpaiguri district, one from west Dinajpur and another from Darjeeling. This newly formed committee assured that measures would be initiated very soon taking into account the feeling of the revolting members.²¹

The youths were probably not satisfied and consequently a meeting was held at 2 p.m. on the same day under the president ship of Sri Rajendra Nath Roy. After a prolonged discussion, a resolution was taken to form a new political party by the members present. The name of the new party was given 'Kshatriya Samiti' for the time being.²² Apart from this, an Executive Committee was constituted of seventy two members. The most important among them were Pulin Behari Roy, Kalindra Nath Barman, Panchanan Mallick, Harimohan Barman, Haripada Roy, Dharendra Nath Roy, Kishorimohan Roy et al.²³ Thereafter a Samsad meeting was convened by Haripada Roy, the general secretary of *Kshatriya Samiti* on 21st June, 1969 and in that meeting '5th July 1969' was fixed for a general meeting of the *Samiti* to discuss various issues. The venue was also fixed at Thakurpat Rajamohan Junior High School (the then time), P.S. Dhupguri, Jalpaiguri district. Simultaneously, the Dhupguri branch of the *Kshatriya Yuba Samiti* convened another public meeting at the same venue on the next day i.e. on 6th July, under the president ship of Ramprasad Roy and Brojendra Nath Roy and Nirmalendu Roy as joint secretaries.²⁴

However, the final day arrived and the historic conference was begun at Thakurpat Rajamohan Junior High School on 5th July 1969 under the president ship of Sri Harimohan Barman. Arrangement was grand and it was quite a large gathering.²⁵ It should be noted that some tribal people from nearby Ethelbari Tea Estate under the leadership of Sri Soma Oraon and a few local Muslims of Dhupguri were also present in the meeting. It is also to be noted that the situation near the venue of the conference on that very day was quite tense because of a political procession, organized by a left political party under the leadership of Sri Dulal Ghosh and they threatened dire consequences if a political party was formed. The *Kshatriya Samiti* members were also formed a volunteer group under the commandership of Sri Shashi

Bhushan Adhikary to guard the conference from probable external attack by the Left Party activists.²⁶ However, a prolonged discussion for hours went on whether a new political party was to be formed. The forefront and senior leaders of the *Samiti* viz. Sri Harimohan Barman, Sri Panchanan Mallick, Haripada Roy, Kalindra Nath Barman et al. were not in favour of forming a new political party just at that moment. But the educated youths of the *Samiti* made repeated and tremendous pressure on them to form a political organization. At last, in the midnight of 5th July, the final decision was taken by the senior leaders to form a new political party. The *Kshatriya Samiti* members who were also active members of different political parties resigned from their respective parties on the spot for the sake of newly formed political party. The most important among them was Sri Panchanan Mallick who was an active member of Proja Socialist Party.²⁷ Thereafter the next discussion was with regard to the name of this new political party. In this regard, so many names were proposed by different members but finally, the name ‘‘Uttar khanda’’ was accepted by the members. It was proposed by Sri Satish Chandra Roy of Kalirhat, Dhupguri.²⁸ Haripada Roy stated that ‘‘this is the northern part of India as well as northern part of West Bengal as such the name ‘Uttarkhanda’ was justified and its jurisdiction lies at present with the districts of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur, and Malda.’’²⁹ Girija Sankar Roy, another founder member of the party has stated that in the name ‘‘Uttarkhanda’’ the prefix ‘Uttar’ is taken from Uttarbanga and the suffix ‘Khanda’ is taken from the term Jharkhanda. Because some tribal leaders like Soma Oraon was present in the meeting and they were sympathizers of Jharkhand movement.³⁰

So, it was at the late hour of the night that the historic resolution was adopted by all the members present there which reads thus: ‘‘The farmers and labourer society of North Bengal being deprived for long period of time hereby adopted a resolution to form a powerful political party named ‘‘Uttarkhanda Dal’’ at today’s meeting.’’³¹ Thus, the Uttarkhanda Dal took birth from the womb of *Kshatriya Samiti*. In fact, it was formed on the pattern of Jharkhand and D M K parties.³²

Now let us discuss some of the important resolutions which were adopted in that meeting. In resolution No. 2, it was mentioned that the colour of the party flag would be the

combination of green and saffron and the emblem of *Langal*(plough)and *Belcha* (digging hoe) would be there in the party flag.³³

According to the next resolution, a sub-committee was formed in order to prepare the constitution of the party comprised with the members like Sri Harimohan Barman, Haripada Roy and Rajendra Nath Roy. Another sub-committee was formed to prepare the party programmes consisted of Sri Digendralal Roy, Sri Panchanan Mallick, Sri Pulinbehari Roy, Sri Kalindra Nath Barman and Sri Harimohan Barman.

An Executive Committee was constituted with Sri Panchanan Mallick as its President and with Sri Haripada Roy and Md.Gani Minya as vice presidents. Sri Kalindra Nath Barman became general secretary and two assistant secretaries were Sri Digendralal Roy and Sri Dharendra Nath Roy. Sri Matilal Roy became treasurer of the party. The other members of the Executive Committee were Sripada Sarkar from West Dinajpur, Sri Girija Shankar Roy from Darjeeling, Sri Rabindra Nath Sarkar also from Darjeeling, Sri Dharendra Nath Roy from Cooch Behar, Rajendra Nath Roy, Harimohan Barman , Harish Chandra Roy, Banku Behari Barman, Dinesh Chandra Adhikary, Sri Satyen Basunia, Sri Soma Oraon, Hari Nath Lakda, Deben Saibya, Bankim Kujur, Jatan Das Bhakat, Jogendra Nath Narjeenary, Nirendra Nath Raikat, Umananda Roy, Iswar Chandra Roy, Nandeswar Sing and Basuram Roy--all these were from Jalpaiguri district.³⁴ It was very interesting to note that in the Executive Committee majority members were from Jalpaiguri. Though there were the representations from Cooch Behar and Darjeeling and West Dinajpur but not a single representative was found from Malda district. It was also noticed that a local Muslim Md. Gani Minya was made one of the vice presidents of the Executive Committee. Besides, the name of the tribal representatives like Soma Oraon, Harish Lakda, Bankim Kujur and Jatan Das Bhakat in the Executive Committee deserve special mention. Inclusion of one member from Mech community i.e. Deben Saibya in the Executive Committee also revealed a significant aspect of the constitution of the committee. It should be mentioned here that the think tanks of the U.K.D. wanted to bring other autochthons in the party to strengthen their organization and also to avoid the criticism that the U.K.D. was the political organization of the Rajbanshi community only.

However, it was also unanimously resolved to provide an allowance of Rs. seventy five per month to the general secretary of the party. The party office of the newly formed Dal was opened at Panchanan Ashram, Siliguri.³⁵ But the most important aspect of the proceedings of the meeting was the resolution which incorporated the temporary party programmes in it. There were mentioned 35 points party programmes which would be followed temporarily by the party and these are mentioned below chronologically.

1. The party believes in Progressive Socialism.
2. Reservation for the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe is to be made two times of the existing number keeping in view the ratio of the total number of population of the aforesaid communities.
3. Preservation of language and culture of the people of North Bengal and appropriate govt. measures are to be taken in that direction.
4. Preference should be given to the local landless cultivators at the time of distributing the govt. vested lands and representation of the Uttarkhanda Dal is to be incorporated in govt. land distributing committee.
5. Recruitment of ninety percent candidates in govt. service from the Uttarkhanda area in various govt. services of North Bengal.
6. The ceiling of individual property in money's worth.
7. Restriction on house ownership in urban area in order to remove the differences between rural and urban areas.
8. Introduction of minimum salary of a govt. employee as Rs. 200 and maximum not more than Rs 2000 per month.
9. Allotment of four acres of vested land to the landless cultivators of North Bengal instead of two acres of govt. declaration. 10. Possession of no cultivating lands by non-agriculturists.
11. Introduction of sufficient irrigation system for the improvement of the fertility of land of North Bengal.

12. Reclamation of waste and fallow lands of the tea garden areas.
13. Separation of Judiciary from Executive.
14. Fifty percent inclusion of local songs and culture of people of North Bengal in the weekly programmes of the radio centers of North Bengal.
15. Removal of discrimination in rationing system between rural and Urban areas i.e. Reclassification of rationing system.
16. Storage of realized levied grains in the respective collected areas and Distribution of these collected grains in the same area.
17. Establishment of paper, jute and handloom industries in North Bengal.
18. Setting up of agricultural college one in each district of North Bengal.
19. Recruitment of teachers from the villages and introduction of Compulsory education upto lower secondary and free education up to Higher Secondary level.
20. Setting up of schools in villages and tea garden areas in proportion to the number of students.
21. Sufficient govt. aid for reviving the small scale and cottage Industries of North Bengal.
22. Immediate implementation of the policy of decentralization.
23. Opposing the policy of labour cut and lock out in factories by this party.
24. Preservation of sovereignty and integrity of India with strong determination.
25. Policy of making pressure on the Central Govt. for the rehabilitation of the inhabitants of the Chhit Mohal(enclaves).
26. Consideration of the electoral alliance with any Indian party for the development of North Bengal.

27. Seventy five percent recruitment from among the offspring of the agricultural class in the service of agricultural department.
28. Extension of the reservation date for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.
29. Fixation of the price of jute Rs. eighty per maund.
30. Recruitment of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe candidates in the SC. and ST. offices including head of the offices.
31. Achieving of various demands through constitutional ways.
32. Free distribution of tea leaf weighing fifty gram to each labourer of tea gardens every week.
33. Employment facility to educated offspring of the tea garden labourers according to their educational qualification.
34. Employment to the offspring of the tea garden labourers attaining sixteen years of age.
35. Foundation of at least one higher secondary school and hospital at each 'Anchal'(an administrative unit below the Block) of North Bengal.³⁶

It divulges from the above mentioned 35 points party programme of Uttarkhanda Dal some interesting and important aspects of this newly formed political party. At the very beginning of its party programme, the Uttarkhanda Dal adopted 'Progressive Socialism' as its party ideology. But no explanation so far was given by any theorist of the party that what they actually meant by these terms of 'Progressive Socialism.' But one explanation may be given in this respect that some of the forefront leaders of the party were well conversant with the knowledge of Marxism and Socialism. It is seen that Kalindra Nath Barman used to make strong criticism of the activities of the Left parties of West Bengal especially the C.P.I.M. According to him the Left parties had deviated themselves from true Marxism and Socialism. He cited the example in this context, the policy of the Left parties in Kerala and West Bengal where the United Front Govt., formed by the Left parties made alliances with the communal parties like Muslim League and Gorkha League respectively. Leaving apart, the 'misrule' of

the United Front Govt. in West Bengal, as Kalindra Nath Barman termed it, led them (Communists) to be termed as reactionary. According to Barman it was decomposed form of socialism prevalent in West Bengal.³⁷ Besides this, Panchanan Mallick, the founder president of the Uttarkhanda Dal, which has already been mentioned, was an activist of Proja Socialist party. Therefore, it would not be wrong to conclude that as some of the leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal had connection with some of the socialist parties of India and thereby were well conversant with the socialist ideology, they termed some of the socialist parties of India especially the C.P.I.M. as reactionary and therefore, they adopted the term 'Progressive Socialism.' Thus the U.K.D. wanted to make it clear that it was more progressive than other Socialist Parties of West Bengal and India.

Another important aspect of this newly formed political party was that at the time of its formation some people of Mech, Tribal and local Muslim communities felt their presence. It revealed the fact that the Uttarkhanda Dal was constituted with a section of the autochthon of northern part of North Bengal but with a section of Rajbanshi leaders at the helm. It should also be mentioned that by all round development of North Bengal, the Uttarkhanda leaders meant the development of all the indigenous people of the region irrespective of castes and creeds so far as their thirty five points party programmes divulge. In the programmes of the party, the interests of the tea-garden labourers were not ignored. It might be that the Uttarkhanda leaders wanted to woo the tea garden labourers for strengthening the party organization. It was no doubt the result of their progressive thinking.

However, another interesting character of the programmes of the Uttarkhanda Dal was the reflection of the conflict between the rural gentry and the urban one. It is to be remembered in this respect that almost all the forefront leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal were from the rural area of the region. The socio-economic fissure between the Rajbanshis and the higher caste Hindus which was started in the colonial period also well reflected in the programmes of the Uttarkhanda Dal raising the question of the rural versus urban disequilibrium. It should be mentioned that the rural people here, were mostly the Uttarkhanda party supporters and urban gentry were mostly the higher caste Hindus migrated from erstwhile East-Pakistan especially from eastern and central Bengal during colonial period. It

is relevant to mention that ‘The recent Uttarkhanda phenomenon is an ultimate outcome of struggle for power and associated privileges between the indigenous communities (particularly the Rajbanshis) and the immigrant Bengalees.’³⁸

However, the most important fact which clearly reveals from the thirty five points party programmes is that nowhere in its programmes or resolutions of its various meetings mentioned making the demand for a separate state for North Bengal which is the exploring area of our dissertation theme and the same will be discussed in details in later chapters. It is very relevant to mention that almost all the scholars while writing on the Uttarkhanda movement have tried to make their discourse with the argument that the Uttarkhanda Dal was formed with the demand of a separate state for North Bengal i.e. Uttarkhanda or according to some, the State of Kamotapur.³⁹ But it can be categorically mentioned on the basis of the resolutions, party programmes and constitution of the Dal that during the first decade since its formation there was no mention making a demand for separate State of Kamotapur or Uttarkhanda. Therefore, there is no any historical evidence or basis for such argument as made by some scholars.

However, it was on the next day of the Thakurpat Conference i.e. on 6th July, 1969, the open session of the newly formed Uttarkhanda Dal was started under the chairmanship of Sri Baburam Roy of Dakshin Kathulia, Dhupguri of Jalpaiguri District. The new party flag was hoisted by Sri Harimohan Barman, the president of the last session. The opening song was sung by Sri Shyamapada Barman, a famous folk singer of North Bengal and his group. Kalindra Nath Barman, the new general secretary of the U. K. D. proclaimed the thirty five temporary programmes mentioned above. Other speakers were Sri Rajendra Nath Roy, Sri Harimohan Barman, Sri Digendra Nath Roy, Sri Harinath Lakra, Pulin Behari Roy, Sri Panchanan Mallick and others. The session was ended with the speech of the chairman, Sri Baburam Roy.⁴⁰

It is very important to note that the head office of the Uttarkhanda Dal was shifted from Siliguri (Panchanan Ashram) to Jalpesh Mandir, Jalpaiguri on 9th February, 1970. It is from this office that a new printed thirty nine point party programmes were issued by Kalindra Nath Barman on behalf of the U.K.D. on 9th February, 1970 in a leaflet. It was with

the modification of the earlier thirty five points and the addition of four new points in the programme. In this printed programme the four other points which were added are (1) The increase of land ceiling up to hundred *bigha* in North Bengal considering the quality or productivity of land in compare to that of South Bengal; (2) Holding at least of two cabinet meetings of the ministers of the govt. of West Bengal at any place of North Bengal in a year; (3) Introduction of Urdu and Arbi in the syllabus of High School and the set up of hostel for Muslim students in every High school and the establishment of a Madrasa college in North Bengal; (4) Party's firm belief in nationalism and its opposition to communalism and provincialism. The modifications were the establishment of a law college under North Bengal University along with the earlier demand of Agriculture College. Another modification was the set up of a Circuit Bench of High Court in any district of North Bengal and the last one was the extension of reservation facilities to the communities like Khen (Sen), Kalita (Dutta), Tantubai, Nath, Debnath and other communities of North Bengal and they were to be included in the scheduled caste list.⁴¹

The interesting aspect of the modified programme of the U.K.D. was that it advocated for the educational facilities of various indigenous communities of North Bengal. This reveals no doubt the regional character of the party. It is noteworthy that some of their programmes like establishment of Circuit Bench of the High Court, Cabinet Branch in North Bengal were so advanced that after one or two decades later, the Govt. of West Bengal tried to implement or trying to do so. It should again be mentioned that the party repeatedly emphasized its stand on national integrity and against provincialism. So there is no room for arguing that the party had made any demand for separate state at that point of time. The newly formed Uttarkhanda Dal had not only its various party programmes but the leaders of the Dal had also thought of framing a constitution of the Dal. It has already been mentioned that a decision was taken to frame a constitution for the Dal at its very inception. The responsibility was entrusted to a sub-committee comprising Sri Harimohan Barman, Haripada Roy and Rajendra Nath Roy.⁴² It is seen that it was Harimohan Barman who prepared the first draft constitution of the Uttarkhanda Dal. But it was not the final one. This draft constitution was amended later on by Rabi Sarkar and Digendra Lal Roy and submitted to the Central Committee for approval on December 19, 1970. It is to be remembered that from

1970 onwards due to some political restlessness the leaders of the Dal did not take any interest to finalize the Constitution. At the same time they were acquiring maturity and knowledge about drafting a Constitution. This Draft Constitution so far as our available sources of information are concerned, was not printed and published by the Dal. The Uttarkhanda Dal ultimately published its final and printed constitution on August 15, 1980. It is to be remembered that the basic aims and objectives which were mentioned in the first two Draft Constitutions were completely changed in the amended constitution of 1980.

However, it is very imperative to note that some of the important articles and clauses of all the above mentioned draft and final Constitutions of the party help us to understand the changing aims and objectives of the party.

Let us discuss the first Draft Constitution, drafted by Sri Harimohan Barman. This Draft Constitution was consisted of 22 articles having some clauses of each article.⁴³ The Article-1 states about the name of the party i.e. the Uttarkhanda Dal and its flag and emblem. The second article is about the rules and regulations which a party member had to be followed. Article-3 of the constitution mentions about the norms of disqualifications of a member of the party i.e. the persons who were not to be qualified to apply for the membership of the party. In this regard, it is mentioned in that article that the person with communal attitude and anti-social character shall not be qualified to be a party member. It no doubt, reveals the secular character of the Dal. Article-4 defines activities which shall be regarded as anti-party activities and such activities shall be subjected to the punishment. Article 5, 6, and 7 are with regard to the nature of punishment, opportunity for appeal by an accused member and the opportunity for self defense by an accused member respectively. Article-8 deals with the rules and regulations about the resignation of a party member from the primary membership of the party.

Article-9 of the Draft Constitution mentions the main structure of the organization. It states that the whole organization shall be consisted of five strata in order-(a) Primary Committee, (b) Anchalik Committee (regional committee), (c)Thana Committee (a committee within a Police Station), (d) Central Committee and (e) in urban area, the Para Committee which shall be regarded as Primary Committee and the Sadar (town) Committee

consisting of Primary Committees shall be regarded as good as an Anchalik Committee (Regional Committee). The rules and regulations dealing with the formation of those committees and their functions mentioned above are entered into the Articles-10,11,12,13, and 14 of the Draft Constitution. Article 15 and 16 of the said Constitution deal with the annual subscription of the bona fide members of the party. By Article 17 of the Constitution, the responsibility for organizing general public meeting was entrusted to the 'Anchalik' and 'Thana' Committees. But the annual conference of the Dal shall be organized jointly by the Central Committee and concerned 'Thana Committees'. Articles-18 refers to the formation of the Central Executive Committee. According to Article-19, the meeting of the Central Committee shall be convened by the general secretary but the Annual Conference of the Dal shall be convened by the president of the Central Committee. It is said in the Article-21 that the Central Committee of the Dal shall be regarded as the highest authority of the Dal. Clauses-a,b,c, and d of Article-22 of the constitution mention that the candidates of the Dal shall be able to contest in the elections of the State Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary elections and various other autonomous institutions. In clause 'e' of Article -22, the primary aims of the party are mentioned and this clause shall remain rigid. The aim of the Dal, mentioned in that clause is to propagate, spread and preserve the language, literature, culture and tradition of North Bengal.⁴⁴

It reveals from the first Draft Constitution of the Uttarkhanda Dal that the party had no any objective to demand a separate State of North Bengal. Another important aspect of the constitution was that any citizen, irrespective of castes and creeds could be the member of the party which revealed the secular character of the Draft Constitution. But at the same time, the limitation or rather contradiction of the constitution was that for the membership of the party, a person should be the inhabitant of any district of North-East India only.⁴⁵ With regards to its objective, it is mentioned that the propagation, spread and preservation of language, literature, culture and tradition of North Bengal would be the main objective of the Dal. It clearly reveals its regional character. Another important facet of the party which appears from this Draft Constitution was that it believed in electoral politics.

It has already been pointed out that the above Draft Constitution, prepared by Harimohan Barman was a first one but not a final one. That the said Draft Constitution was

later amended by Sri Rabi Sarkar and Sri Digendra Lal Roy and was submitted to the Central Committee of the party on January 19, 1970. It should be mentioned in this connection that the printed constitution of the party was not published till 1980. However, considering the time and environment, it was but natural for them to prepare such a Draft Constitution of the party. It took almost one decade to publish a printed and final constitution of the party. It can be said in this context that the party leaders gradually arrived at the political maturity with regard to preparing their party constitution.

The second Draft Constitution is the replica of the first one, but some new articles have been incorporated and also the ideology and aims and objectives of the party have been vividly mentioned this time. The second Draft Constitution is constituted of 34 articles. Each article like the first Draft Constitution has some clauses. However, only the new inclusions will be mentioned here. It is seen that the aims and objectives of the party this time are mentioned in clause–b of Article-1 of the second Draft Constitution. It states that the main objective of the party shall be the overall welfare of the people of the backward regions of North-East India. Clause–c of the same article is with regard to the ideology of the party. The ideology of the party, it is mentioned, shall be the establishment of progressive socialism; acquisition of various demands through constitutional ways and means and lastly the preservation of the sovereignty and integrity of India.⁴⁶ The other new additions was Article-13 which mentioned about the members of various committees whether they could be qualified for contesting any election, approved by the party ; Article-15 which referred the title of the office bearers of various committees including the central committee. In this Draft Constitution it is seen that Article-17 and 18 were penned through by the makers of the constitution. However, Article-19 tells about the duration of the various committees which has been mentioned as five years term. Another addition was Article-30. It is an important Article from the view point that it had empowered the president of the Central Committee to declare emergency if any sort of anarchy was prevailed in the Central Committee. It is also stated in that article that if it becomes necessary, the president had the power to dissolve all the committees and could form a temporary committee just to run the organization till the formation of the permanent committee. In this constitution, Article-32 states that any article

or clause of any article of the constitution could be amended with the consent of the majority number of representatives present in the annual conference of the party. The last addition to this Draft Constitution was about the process of the nomination or selection of candidates for the state assembly and Parliamentary elections.

However, all the Articles and Clauses of the first constitution were retained as they were, in the second Draft Constitution too. Again it is mention worthy that the important aspect of the second Draft Constitution is that none of the articles of this constitution alludes any kind of demand for a separate state of North Bengal or Uttarkhanda like the first one. So, the Uttarkhanda Dal was like other political parties of India but having some regional characters. It should also be noted that this constitution also reveals anti-communal and anti-caste nature but at the same time it should be remembered that it also reveals strong regional character because the party was committed only to the welfare of the people of North Bengal though irrespective of castes and creeds. It may be mentioned that considering the time and environment specially the socio-economic condition of the concerned region in general and educational condition of the Rajbanshi and other autochthons of the region, the preparation of such Draft Constitution by the think tanks of the Uttarkhanda Dal should be regarded as unique one to a large extent.

Finally, discussion is to be made on the final or printed and published constitution of the Uttarkhanda Dal. In this final constitution of the Dal, though almost all the articles and clauses of the first and second Draft Constitutions were retained, but there was a remarkable change in the structure of the constitution. Besides this, the aims and objectives of the party were drastically changed. This is one of the core areas of our dissertation. The causes and reasons which worked behind such drastic changes in the aims and objectives of the Dal will be discussed in details in Chapter-6. However, the second Draft Constitution was amended according to the decision which was taken in the Annual Conference of the Dal, held in December 30 1977 at Jalpesh Temple, Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri. The Constitution was amended by Sri Bhupendra Nath Roy, Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri; Sri Sampad Roy of Chathat, Darjeeling and Sri Panchanan Mallick, Bhangarhat, Jalpaiguri. The amended constitution was examined by Sri Harimohan Barman, Rangali Bazna, Jalpaiguri and Sri Sudhansu Kumar Sarkar, Haldibari, Cooch Behar. Finally, the amended and examined constitution of the Dal was

approved unanimously in the Annual Meeting of the Central Council of the Dal, held on February 1980 at Tekatuli, P.S.Maynaguri, Dist.Jalpaiguri.⁴⁷ It was only after that the constitution of the Uttarkhanda Dal was printed and published.

Now let us see the drastic changes which are found in the aforesaid final constitution of the Uttarkhanda Dal. In this constitution first of all, it is found that chapters are added which were completely absent in the previous two Draft Constitutions of the Dal. There are eight chapters altogether having 42 articles and some clauses in this final constitution. The first chapter contains three articles which are about the name of the Dal i.e. Uttarkhanda Dal, the symbol and colour of the party flag respectively. So, there is made no any change in this chapter and articles from the earlier one.

But the most important and mentionable chapter and article of the constitution are Chapter-2 and Article-4. It is, for the first time, found that the basic objective of the party was drastically changed. In clause - a of this article, it is mentioned that it is the objective of the Uttarkhanda Dal to form a dignified separate state in Uttarbanga (North Bengal) within Indian Union for the total development of the neglected, exploited and oppressed Uttarbanga. So, for the first time the party raised the demand of a separate state for North Bengal. It is very relevant to mention here that the Dal for the first time took the resolution for a separate state for North Bengal in May 1980 in an important meeting of the Dal which will be discussed in details in chapter-6. It was no doubt, almost after one decade since its formation that the party raised such demand for a separate state. Thus, it made a volte-face from its earlier objective. However, the causes and reasons behind such u turn of the attitude of the Dal will be discussed in detail in chapter-6 of this dissertation paper. In clause-c of this article, the ideology of the Dal is mentioned. Now, in its ideology, it is incorporated that the ideology of the Dal is to eradicate all the disparities in the society, to establish classless society and the society without exploitation and the establishment of democratic progressive society and socialism. In this final constitution, it is found that new term like democratic, classless society etc. were incorporated which proved the mature thinking of the leaders of the party. It may also be mentioned that the party had from its very beginning, closeness with the socialistic conception and perception prevailed in West Bengal at that time.⁴⁸

The articles and clauses, incorporated in chapter-3 are with regard to the membership

and subscription from the members of the party and these were already incorporated in the first two draft constitutions. The fourth chapter of the constitution incorporated the articles and clauses which deal with the rules and regulations which are to be followed by the party members; the right and duties of a party member, code of conduct etc. The fifth chapter contains the articles and clauses relating to the formation of the presidium, its power and functions; the formation of the secretarial board and its power and functions. The sixth chapter is with regard to the organizational divisions and the power and functions of each department. In the seventh chapter, the rules and regulations about the convention of general meeting are mentioned. In addition to the reference to the quorum of the various party meetings, the reference of no-confidence motion against any office bearer of the party are mentioned in articles of the last chapter of the constitution. In the last article i.e. article no.-42 of the last chapter of the constitution, the slogans of the party were mentioned as 'Bandemataram' and 'Joy Hauk'⁴⁹ (let the victory be). It is very interesting to note that though the party had close affinity with the socialist parties or left parties from its idealistic point of view, but with regard to the slogans of the party, it has followed the rightist parties like Indian National Congress, B.J.P. etc. which have also the same slogan i.e. 'Bandemataram.' But with regard to the slogan 'Jai Hauk', the touch of religion is felt.

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