

Preface

The present dissertation paper is an analysis of the origin, growth and decline of the Uttarkhanda Dal, a regional political organization founded by a section of the Rajbanshi Community, a major ethnic group of people of North Bengal of West Bengal. The aforesaid theme has been, in fact, analysed from historical point of view at micro-level study. It is to be mentioned that the Uttarkhanda Dal was the first regional political party of West Bengal in post independence period which emerged with some demands for the overall developments of North Bengal in the late 60s of the last century. Later on it was found that after one decade of its formation, the U.K.D. changed radically its aims, objectives and aspiration. In order to fulfill the regional aspiration the U.K.D. raised the demand for a separate state of Kamotapur (the prevailing use of the term by the scholars is 'Kamatapur', but the U.K.D. leaders used this term as 'Kamotapur' in their various documents) from the 80s of the 20th century within the frame work of Indian constitution which was no doubt a great political phenomenon in the history of post independence West Bengal. It should be made clear that though the regional political parties like All Indian Gorkha League and Gorkha National Liberal Front (G.N.L.F.) emerged with regional vision in undivided and post Independence North Bengal respectively but those organizations were confined to the hilly areas of Darjeeling district of West Bengal and therefore are not under the purview of our discussion.

The present study has critically shown the background of the formation of this regional political party, its activities and the reasons of its volte face with regard to aims and objectives. Again it has been elaborately discussed that how the Dal witnessed its decline only within two decades.

The researcher of the present study wants to acknowledge his heartiest gratitude and indebtedness to various scholars, persons and institutions by whom he is benefited directly and indirectly to complete the present work. At the very outset, the researcher is deeply indebted to Dr. Nilangsu Shekhar Das, Principal, Sukanta Mahavidyalay and my supervisor and Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, a retired professor, Dept. of History, North Bengal University for their valuable guidance without which it was not possible to complete the present work. The researcher has always communicated and consulted with Dr. Nilangshu Shekhar Das, the

official guide who has given positive and constructive suggestions and ideas from different angles which helped to a large extent to proceed the work. Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh the co-supervisor has always encouraged and inspired the researcher giving ideas, advice, suggestions and invaluable and rare materials which have helped definitely to enrich and develop this research work.

The researcher is grateful to a large extent to Sri Madan Mohan Mallick, the eldest son of Panchanan Mallick, the founder president of the Uttarkhanda Dal (and remained the same till the final split of the Dal) who has extended his helping hand giving important documents of the Dal which are hitherto unearthed without which it was completely impossible to proceed and complete the present work. Sri Prabin Chandra Roy who was once a forefront leader of the U.K.D. has indebted the researcher providing a lot of important documents which were under his custody and also giving his valuable interview. The researcher is also largely grateful to those leaders of the Dal who helped giving their interviews and some of them are septuagenarians and octogenarians. Mention is to be made of Sri Harimohan Barman, Dharendra Nath Roy, Shashi Bhusan Adhikary, Babunath Barma, Suranjan Roy, Gunadhar Barman, Tushar Barman et al.

The researcher very earnestly likes to mention the name of Prof. Ichhamuddin Sarkar, Dept. of History, N.B.U.; Dr. Bijay Kr. Sarkar, Head of the Dept., Dept. of History, N.B.U.; Dr. Anita Bagchi, Dept. of History, N.B.U.; Dr. Dalia Bhattacharya, Dept. of History, N.B.U.; Sri Shankar Das, Dept. of History, N.B.U.; Dr. Dipak Kr. Roy, Dept. of Bengali, N.B.U.; Dr. Arun Kumar Jana, Dept. of Political Science, N.B.U.; Dr. Partha Sen, former reader of History, Islampur College; Dr. Asim Kr. Sarkar, Dept. of History, Malda College; Dr. Bikash Ch. Roy, a researcher on folk culture of the Rajbanshis and a teacher for their valuable suggestions and critical comments.

The researcher is deeply indebted to the staff of West Bengal State Archives, specially to Sri Subodh Das, Assistant Director; staff of N.B.U. Library, Azad Hind Pathagar, Jalpaiguri; staff of National Library, Calcutta, Cooch Behar State Library, private library of Late Jagat Saha, Dhupjora, Jalpaiguri for providing materials and books.

Finally, I am very grateful to my wife Pritikana Roy Mallick not only for her moral and unconditional support but also untiring labour to type almost the whole thesis singlehandedly. It will be very injustice if I do not mention the name of my two daughters Darshayita and Kristikanya for their constant cooperation.