

**THE ORIGIN, GROWTH AND THE DECLINE
OF THE UTTARKHANDA DAL
(1969-1987)**

**A Thesis submitted to the University of North Bengal
For the award of Doctor of Philosophy
In the Department of History**

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DECLARATION

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Abstract

The present dissertation theme has explained very critically the various aspects of the Uttarkhanda Dal from its very formation in 1969 to its final split in 1987. The Uttarkhanda Dal was a first regional political party, organized by a section of Rajbanshi community, a major ethnic group of people of the northern plains of West Bengal popularly known as North Bengal or *Uttarbanga*. The formation of this regional political party in post independence period and its activities especially in post 1980s because of various reasons created a socio-political tension in the region under review.

As the present theme is related with Rajbanshi ethnic group of people and their place of habitation i.e. the major portion of undivided and divided North Bengal, so the historical background of North Bengal and the ethnic identity of the people of that geographical area have been explained first very elaborately.

Next the socio-economic and political background of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal has been discussed. In the social background it has been shown that the foundation canvas of the U.K.D. was provided by the *Kshatriya Samiti* Movement which for the first time exposed the cause of the *Kshatriya identity* of the Rajbanshis at the end of the 19th century. In fact, the U.K.D. took its birth from the womb of the *Kshatriya Samiti*.

In the economic profile, it has been shown that the Rajbanshi people were mostly agriculturists. Therefore, the Zamindari and Jotedari Abolition Act of 1953 and the West Bengal Land Reforms Act of 1955, the influx of the *Namasudra* agriculturists from erstwhile East Pakistan and later from Bangladesh made adverse effects on the economy of the Rajbanshis.

In the political background, the origin of the U.K.D. has been traced back from the changing character of the socio- political activities of the *Kshatriya Samiti* especially in the post 1937 era. Apart from this, the role of the *Cooch Behar Hitasadhani Sova* has been discussed which indirectly prepared the psychological background of the leaders of the U.K.D.

With regard to the immediate circumstances which led the formation of the U.K.D. it

has been shown that a section of the educated youths of the *Kshatriya Samiti* for the first time raised the demand of a political party of their own. The veteran leaders of the *Samiti* conceded to the demand and finally the U.K.D. was formed in July 1969.

The political programmes and activities of the Dal during the entire period of our study have been discussed into two phases. In the first phase (1969-1980), the activities of the Dal were limited to the effort of bringing the socio-economic and cultural problems and backwardness of the people of North Bengal to the notice of the State Govt. However, in the second phase (1980-1987) there was a marked change in its primary goal and thereby in the nature of its activities. It raised the demand for a separate state of *Kamotapur* in the geographical area under review. It added a new dimension to the political scenario of West Bengal.

However, the result of the electoral politics of the U.K.D. shows that its all kinds of appeal to the indigenous people especially to the Rajbanshis were not heard of and it failed to make any support base at any level during the whole period of its activities.

Finally, the Uttarkhanda Dal witnessed its split in 1987 and divided into two factions due to the intra-group conflict within the party as well as for other contributory factors.

Findings are as follows.

That the U.K.D. was born in the womb of the *Kshatriya Samiti* and it had never raised the demand for a separate state of Kamotapur with its very formation.

That the indifferent attitude of both the Central and the Govt. of West Bengal towards the demand for the all round development of North Bengal, raised by the U.K.D. mainly led the latter to raise the statehood demand.

That the support base of the Dal was not solid at any level of the society of North Bengal.

That the most of the educated youths and the rising neo-middle class from among the members of the Rajbanshis did not respond well to the appeal of the U.K.D. which showed the holocaust of the ethnic bond of the Rajbanshi community itself and also stopped the

supply line of the leadership. That the U.K.D. left a separatist tendency in the mind of a section of Rajbanshi people and the Kamatapur Peoples' Party is its true legacy.

That it was a continuous historical development of the socio-political movement of an indigenous community of undivided and divided North Bengal.

That the movement for a separate state under the leadership of the K.P.P. is still going on at the low ebb and awaiting for a large scale mass response from among the indigenous people but that seems, at the present situation, to be not possible without the occurrence of a kind of political earthquake in the region under study.

Finally, our findings will help the policy makers to adopt constructive and positive measures regarding the socio-political movements and the socio-economic developments of the people of North Bengal especially to those of its northern part and thereby will help to solve not only the present problems but the problems to come in the socio-economic and political arenas of the region under study.

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.

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Abbreviation

1. A A S U- All Assam Students Union.
2. A G P-Assam Gana Parishad.
3. B D O-Block Development Officer.
4. C P I (M)-Communist Party of India (Marxist).
5. G N L F-Gorkha National Liberation Front.
6. J M M-Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.
7. K G P-Kamotapur Gana Parishad.
8. M L A-Member of Legislative Assembly.
9. U K D-Uttarkhand Dal.
10. U T J A S-Uttaranga Tapasili Jati O Adibasi Sangathan.
11. W B J C S-West Bengal Junior Civil Service.

Glossary

1. *Aibhasa* Nathikaran Pancha- An association for the registration of the mother tongue.
2. *Babahe*- An addressing form generally address to the younger by the elders.
3. *Babugiri*-Foppishness.
4. *Bhadralok*- A Bengali gentleman.
5. *Bhanga Kshatriya*- Kshatriya violating the customs of lineage.
6. *Bigha*- An unit of measuring land, one bigha is equal to about 1/3 of an acre.
7. *Batya Kshitriya*- A fallen Kshatriya.
8. *Catha*- Unit of measuring land, 20 cathas are equal to 1/3 of an acre.
9. *Chukanidar*- Middle ranking tenure holder, tenant of the Jotdars.
10. *Dal*- Generally a political party.
11. *Dar-Chukanidar*- A class of under tenants of the Chukanidar.
12. *Dar-Dar Chukanidar*- A class of under tenants of a Dar Chukanidar.
13. *Giri*-Land owner of intermediaries of land, the term particularly uses in North Bengal.
14. *-Gram Than*-The place where lord Shiva is worshipped, specially prevalent among the Rajbanshis.
15. *Gurkha*- Inhabitant of a small village of Nepal named Gorkha. The Nepalese of Darjeeling of W.B. also identify themselves as Gurkhas.
16. *Halua Dal*-A branch organization of the U.K.D. consisting of the farmers.
17. *Hat*-A country (village) market.

18. *Jaga Sangeet*-A kind of song, prevalent among the Rajbanshis.
19. *Jotdar*- a class of tenant or intermediaries or land holder particularly it was used in North Bengal.
20. *Kamrupi Brahmins* – A priest class (Brahmin) from Kamrup of Assam.
21. *Khas*- Vested.
22. *Kshatriya Samiti*- An association of the Rajbanshi Kshatriyas.
23. *Pandit*-A Scholar.
24. *Rail Rokho*- Blockade of the movement of train.
25. *Swechha Sewak Bahini*- Volunteer forces.
26. *Uttar khandist*- The activist of the U.K.D.
27. *Zamindar*-Land lord or proprietor of land in a large scale.

Introduction

The present study is an attempt to explain critically the origin, growth and decline of the Uttarkhanda Dal, a regional political party formed in July 1969 by a section of Rajbanshi people, an important and major ethnic group of people of northern part of West Bengal of India. It was no doubt a great phenomenon from political point of view for it was for the first time such a political organization was formed by a section of major ethnic group of people in the post independence West Bengal. Another important area of the present dissertation which has also been viewed critically is that though the U.K.D. initially advocated for the all round developments of the people of North Bengal irrespective of castes and creeds and at the same time it had contested in various Assembly elections of West Bengal as well as the parliamentary election of India with those above mentioned issues but gradually it had turned radically not only its aims and objectives to a new direction but even changed its modus operandi. Thus it was found that the Dal making a complete volte-face raised the demand for a separate state of 'Kamotapur' (the leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal had used this term, but the prevalent term is Kamatapur) from the 80s of the 20th century comprising the then five districts (now 7 districts) of North Bengal and thereby added a new dimension and tension to the political scenario of post independence West Bengal. This demand, it has been found that it was the first of its kind in the history of the plains of North Bengal nay West Bengal barring the hill region of Darjeeling.

An attempt has been made in the present dissertation to analyse chronologically and very critically the reasons behind the formation of such a regional political party (especially by a section of aforesaid ethnic group of people). It has also been viewed that why the Uttarkhanda Dal raised the statehood demand just after one decade of its formation. Again an analytical discussion has been made on its failure to earn public support even from among the Rajbanshi community itself. Finally, the present study has also made an effort to analyse critically the reasons for the split and thereby the decline of this regional political party within a short span of time. An important aspect of the legacy of the Dal i.e. a separatist tendency which it left in the minds of some people of

Rajbanshi community which later gave birth to another such regional political party in the 90s of the last century has been explained minutely.

It is very interesting to note that the U.K.D. was emerged with socialistic ideology, vividly mentioned in the party resolution and later in printed party constitution. It has been explored that it was due to the socialistic background of some of the founder leaders of the party. But the same was given up at the later phase of its activities.

Apart from the above facts which have been explained so far in the present study, it has also been noticed that the factors namely the influx of millions of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan into North Bengal especially into its northern part i.e. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, and plains of Darjeeling district as a result of the partition of Bengal in 1947; the adverse impact of West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act of 1953 and the land Reform Act of 1955 on the *Jotedars* especially on the Rajbanshi *jotedars* of the northern plains of North Bengal ; the beginning of the Naxalite movement of 1967 in the *tarai* of Darjeeling and later its horrible activities in other districts of North Bengal led to the creation of a new social, economic, political and demographic situation in North Bengal of West Bengal especially in its northern part. In this new situation the formation of an ethnic based regional political party (U.K.D.) in the late 60s of the 20th century by a section of autochthon of the region signifies an important phenomenal political development in the history of post independence West Bengal.

Thus it is observed in the present work that the periodic changing features of the policy and objectivity of the U.K.D. vis-a-vis the indifferent attitude of the then State Govt. to its initial demands for the all round development of the people of North Bengal and the statehood demand raised by other regional political parties of India especially from the 80s of the 20th century like Jharkhand Mukti Morcha , G.N.L.F. etc. and their impact on the U.K.D. led to a situation of tremendous socio-political tension in the region under review since 1980 when the U.K.D. raised the demand for a separate state of Kamotapur. Considering the historical significance of our study a very careful and systematic investigation has been made in the present work.

It is to be noted that so far as my knowledge goes, this will be the first comprehensive research work on the Uttarkhanda Dal, the first ethnic based political organization of post independence North Bengal. In this connection, the question of statehood movement appeared in the discussion fora. Therefore, the thrusting area of our studies is various aspects of the U.K.D. In this regard, it is to be mentioned that without knowing the ins and outs of the policy, programmes and activities of the U.K.D., it is very difficult to analyse the *Kamotapur* movement.

With regards to the time frame of the study it is to be mentioned that the choice of the year 1969 is a natural one because the U.K.D. was formed in that year. The terminal year is chosen 1987 because of the fact that the U.K.D. formally got split in that year and followed by its immediate decline afterwards.

The locale of the proposed study is the northern part of West Bengal of India, popularly known as North Bengal or *Uttarbanga* comprising with 7 districts (formally 5 districts) viz., Malda, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and newly created Alipurduar. The northern plain of North Bengal in our study consists of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and the plains of Darjeeling district. Our study has not covered the geographical area of Darjeeling hill. The reason behind selecting the above geographical area is that the vicissitude of the U.K.D. and its activities were limited to this region of West Bengal.

With regard to the chapters first of all it is to be mentioned that in the first chapter entitled 'Geo-Ethnic Background of the Region' the geographical region of the study under review and its historical background and at the same time the ethnic identity of the people of the said geographical area have been discussed vividly. It has been attempted in this chapter to discuss the geographical area of North Bengal since the pre independence period i.e. from ancient time for the better understanding of the present day socio-economic, political, cultural and demographic status of North Bengal. In this connection, the significance of this geographical area as a strategic place from ancient time has been explained comprehensively. It is known to the scholars that this particular geographical area of Eastern India is a gateway to the North- Eastern part of

India and at the same time still it has a special strategic importance for its geographical proximity with three foreign countries viz., Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. In other words it is to say, this geographical region of India is one of the greatest migration route of the people of different races since time immemorial. Therefore, almost all the races of people viz., Dravidian, Austric, Alpine, Mongoloid, Tibeto-Burma etc. assimilated and intermingled and had developed a mixed culture. As a result of the ethnic diversity of the concerned region especially its northern part (Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Alipurduar) has no match with that of the rest of West Bengal and the local historians like to call it rightly the 'mini-edition' of India. Regarding historical background of the concerned area has been discussed dividing into two different glorious zones of imperial kingdoms of Pragjyotishpur-Kamrup-Kamata-Koch kingdoms in the northern part of North Bengal and the Pundra-Gauda kingdom in the southern part of it. The vicissitudes of political power or shifting of political power from one dynasty to other and ultimately to the colonial ruler till independence has been dealt with.

Again the ethnic identity of the Rajbanshis which was well connected with the Uttarkhanda Dal along with other ethnic groups of people of the region under study has been viewed critically.

In the second chapter, the socio-economic and political background of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal has been explained thoroughly. As all three had not taken shape at the same point of time, so they are discussed under three different parts. In the first part, the foundation canvas of the Uttarkhanda Dal has been discussed on the basis of social background of the *Kshatriya Samiti*, the first one that exposed the cause of the *Kshatriya* identity of the Rajbanshi and since then the Rajbanshi as a community (in general) started uniting socially. In addition to this, it has been explained in this part of our discussion that how the social activities of the *Kshatriya Samiti* was transformed into a political one after 1920s when Bengal Legislative Council was introduced by the colonial govt. It has also been shown that how after the demise of Panchanan Barma, most of the front line *Kshatriya Samiti* leaders gradually switched over their allegiance

to different national political parties leaving aside the importance of the *Kshatriya Samiti* which ultimately gave birth grievances in the mind of the educated youth of the *Samiti* against those leaders particularly in the post-independence era and that led them ultimately to form a regional political party of their own.

In the part of economic background, the economic profile of the Rajbanshi people in colonial and post colonial period has been dealt with and thereby explained the economic grievances and condition of the major ethnic community which caused directly or indirectly the formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal. The too much dependent of the community on the land and their apathy towards other economic professions and its adverse effects on the community have been thoroughly discussed. At the same time the land alienation problem from the hands of the Rajbanshi community to other communities especially to the Bengali caste Hindus and Namasudra cultivators have been explained along with the adverse effect of the Zamindari Acquisition Act of 1953 and the West Bengal Land Reforms Act of 1955 on the local Rajbanshi *Jotedars*.

With regard to the political background, the changing activities of the *Kshatriya Samiti* till the post independence period and the gradual loss of its earlier vigour have been critically discussed. It has also been discussed in this part that how the Cooch Behari identity question of the *Hitasadhani Sobha* had encompassed all the Rajbanshi in one point with indirect impact was on the formation of the U.K.D.

In the third chapter, the foundation and the organization of the Uttarkhanda Dal has been discussed historically taking into consideration the socio-economic background of its origin. The immediate background of the formation of a political organization by a majority section of the *Kshatriya Samiti* members has been discussed thoroughly. In addition to this the final emergence of the party, its various committees and party programmes have been explained. A discussion on the Draft and the final printed Constitution of the Dal has been made chapter wise and article wise.

The fourth chapter has dealt with an important aspect of the Uttarkhanda Dal i.e. its organizational activities and the response of the people of the region. However, the

organizational activities have been discussed in two phases and two different chapters. In this chapter, the first phase has been discussed. The first phase covers from its very foundation to 31st May 1980. It has been shown that till then the Dal did not raise the demand for a separate state. The activities of the Dal were limited to only strengthening its organizational structure and extending its public relation in different part of North Bengal during this phase. Apart from this, the reaction of the indigenous people to the appeal of the Uttarkhanda Dal along with the response of other National political parties existed in North Bengal have been discussed very critically. In brief, it has been shown in this chapter that the activities of the U.K.D. in its first phase mainly directed towards a search for a separate political identity i.e. a political party of the autochthons of North Bengal but not a search for a separate state which has been discussed in chapter-6.

In chapter-5, the electoral politics of the U.K.D. and its results have been dealt with. It has been on the main, shown in this chapter the poor performance of the Dal in various Bidhan Sabha (Assembly) elections of West Bengal so far as its candidates were fielded in various Assembly seats of North Bengal mentioning the percentage of votes it received till its final split in 1987. Similarly its performance in the various Lok

Sabha (Parliamentary) elections held during that period mentioning the percentage of votes has been explained critically. Again the electoral activities of the Dal and its results vis-a-vis the strong presence of the other national political parties especially of C.P.I.M., Indian National congress in the region of our study have been discussed elaborately pointing out the election results in the table.

With regard to chapter-6, the second phase of the activities of the Dal has been discussed thoroughly and critically. This chapter begins with May 31, 1980 when the U.K.D. first raised the demand for a separate state. Since then the agitational and separatist activities of the Dal were started. In this connection, the demand for the recognition of Kamotapuri Language as a part for fulfilling the demand for a separate state has been stated elaborately. Apart from this the oath taking programmes by the *Uttarkhandists* for acquiring the separate state of Kamotapur mentioning the name of some of the oath takers have been discussed. The *Rail Roko* movement, organized by the Dal very desperately to draw the attention of the general people and the Central Govt. has critically been explained. It is to be stated that this is

the chapter where an important aspect of the activities of the Dal i.e. the demand for a separate state has been explained very critically.

Chapter-7 which is the last chapter of the present dissertation deals with the internal feud, began among the fore front leaders of the Dal. It has been explained that how this intra-party conflict along with other external factors led the final split of the Dal and ultimately it was divided into two factions i.e. the U.K.D. and the Kamotapur Gana Parishad. In fact, it sounded the death knell of the Dal and out of its ashes, emerged a new regional political party i.e. Kamotapur Peoples' Party (K.P.P).

It appears from the source materials, used in the present dissertation that the use of archival records is very minimal. The reason for such situation lies in the rules and regulations of the West Bengal State Archives vis-à-vis the National Archives of India. Conventionally, the archives could not open the records unless they cross thirty years since the happening of the event. Apart from this, the records relating to the present thesis are mostly connected with the Home Department, Govt. of West Bengal. Despite thrice visit in the West Bengal State Archives in Calcutta, the Director of State Archives and also its Assistant Director expressed their inability to provide the classified records relating to the regional movements of post Colonial and post Partitioned West Bengal. However, stray records have provided me scattered information about the political activities of the U.K.D. Perhaps, the Dal was not recognized by the Election Commission, that is why, the Home Department could not prepare the classification list on their records. Obviously I have depended much upon Police Records of the Districts, District Magistrate Administrative Records, District Commissioner's Records though not much but helped me a lot to prepare the dissertation. For example, with regard to the *Altagram Rail Blockade* incident I have consulted the Dhupguri Police Station Record. But I have been much benefited from the records of the Uttarkhanda Dal, preserved in the personal collection of the different activists of the Dal. Though many of the founder members of the Dal had departed from the material world but their sons and daughters have preserved almost all the records in their personal collection. But for the period before independence I have collected some records on Bengal Legislative Council from 1921 onwards, Census Reports from 1891 onwards. Apart from

this, some information about the Legislative Proceedings of the West Bengal State Legislative Assembly relating to our dissertation from 1970 onwards have been collected from the M.L.A.s of different Constituencies of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts. In addition to this, Oral History methodology has been used massively for understanding the politics of the U.K.D. I could not forget to have mentioned the folk songs, folk dramas, rhymes, proverbs for understanding the psychology as well as their deprivation from their own perspective. It is also to be noted that many leaflets, pamphlets, proceedings, letters which are written in Rajbanshi language, I have tried to provide a free translation of the contents of the letter documents. I would also like to mention that the concerned area of my study and the content of the study is multi lingual. In order to meet this problem I have consulted some documents, writings, books and newspapers in Nepali, Assamese and Sadri (tribal) languages. At the same time I have corresponded with the *Kshatriya Samiti* of Rangpur, Bangladesh and eminent personalities of Bangladesh particularly of Rangpur.

It is again to be mentioned that for consulting some rare books I have visited National Library (Calcutta), North Bengal University Central Library, Cooch Behar State Library, District Libraries, and also the private Libraries and private collection. I have also evaluated the present theme using private papers as well as sources unearthed hitherto through field studies. I have made considerable use of local materials such as contemporary weeklies and journals, little magazines and daily newspapers published from this region apart from the national dailies. All these collected data have been analysed very elaborately and systematically to reach a logical conclusion of the present study.

Chapter - 1

Geo-Ethnic Background of the Region

In the present chapter an attempt has been made to provide geo-ethnic profile of the area of the present dissertation. At the beginning we should make clear the meaning of the terminology 'geo-ethnic' what we have actually meant for here. The terminology geo-ethnic means the geographical location of a particular area of the present study and its historical background and at the same time the ethnic identity of the people of that geographical area. It is necessary because the study is much connected with the ethnic identity of the major community of the region. Rather it can be said that it is the epicenter of the present dissertation theme, because the Uttar Khanda Dal is actually a study on the ethnic based political association of the region. It is needless to say that this is the first time of its kind is actually a study of the ethnic based political association in the plains of North Bengal nay West Bengal in the post independence era. Now let us explain geography and ethnicity in two different ways.

As the history of a country or a region is closely connected with its geography, therefore, at first, an attempt has been made to depict the geographical profile of the area of the present study. The geographical location concerned with the present dissertation is the northern part of present day West Bengal of India, officially and unofficially is known as North Bengal or *Uttarbanga*. It is to be stated that the activities of the concerned political organization i.e. the Uttar Khanda Dal, the main theme of our dissertation were mainly confined to this geographical area and the ethnic group which was mostly connected with that political organization is mainly the inhabitant of this geographical area. This geographical area comprises with at present seven districts (formerly five districts) viz. Malda, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. The former district of West Dinajpur was later divided into North and South Dinajpur in 1992.¹

However, though the main area of focus of the present dissertation will be the aforesaid districts of present day North Bengal but the geographical area of Darjeeling hill i.e. three sub-divisions of Darjeeling (Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong and Kurseong) will not come under the purview of our discussion because of the fact that the ethnic group which is well related to our study is not the inhabitant of that hilly region of Darjeeling. But the *tarai* region of Darjeeling district will certainly come under the geographical area of our study. It is to be considered here that the geography of present day North Bengal was not the same in pre independence period. Prior to 1874, the northern part of British Bengal was consisted of the districts of Purnia, Goalpara, Rajshahi, Malda, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and princely state of Cooch Behar. Barring Cooch Behar the eight districts were under Rajshahi Division of British Bengal. It is to be mentioned that the Goalpara district was made a part of Assam province in 1874 and in the same year Assam was made the Chief Commissioner's province.² After partition in 1947 the whole of Rajshahi, Rangpur, the eastern part of Dinajpur with seventeen police stations, five police stations of Jalpaiguri, a few parts of Cooch Behar and one police station of Darjeeling (Phansi Dewa) went to erstwhile East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) and Purnea became a part of the state of Bihar.³ With regard to Cooch Behar, a princely state, it was merged with India in 1949 and converted into a district of West Bengal in January 1950.⁴

The present day North Bengal is a narrow tract of land at a short distance from the Chinese border connects two divisions of India i.e. Eastern and Northern India and thereby it is thought to be a very vital geographical area of India. In fact, North Bengal has a special strategic importance because of her geographical proximity with Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan on the north; Assam and Bangladesh on the east; southern part of West Bengal, Bihar and Bangladesh on the south; Bihar in the south-east.⁵ In other words, it lies between Eastern India and the *Aryavarta* (present North India). Thus, the region has been serving as eastern gate-way for the communication of people, trade and commerce as well as cultural relation and exchange of ideas between the Indian sub-

continent in the West and north-eastern state in the East as well as Burma (present Myanmar), Bhutan, China and other parts of south-east Asia since long past. Thus, the region is located in the centre of the network connecting different civilizations.⁶

It is very much relevant to mention here that the region is one of the greatest migration routes of different races of people since time immemorial. In consequence, almost all the races of people like Tibeto-Burma, Alpine, Aryan, Dravidian, Austric etc. assimilated in this region of India. Out of all these racial groups the people of Tibeto-Burma i.e. Indo-Mongoloid race (otherwise called '*kirata*') is most numerous and predominant.⁷ But the fact is that all the aforesaid groups of people of different races had been inter- mingled there and had developed a mixed culture in the region of our study. As a result of which, the ethnic diversity of the concerned geographical region especially its northern part i.e. Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar of present day North Bengal has no match with that of the rest of West Bengal.

In the preceding paragraphs the geography of North Bengal in colonial period and in the post-colonial period has been discussed. Now an attempt has been made to make a glance on the historical past of the region. As it is well known to all that the social, economic, political and cultural aspects of a particular region generally get very much influenced by its geography as well as history and it is also historically true that geography and history clubbed together with other contributory factors determine culture, customs, behaviors, language and above all help in making the socio-political structure of a particular region and here North Bengal or our concerned geographical area of study is not exception to that. The geographical location of North Bengal had determined its history since the dawn of civilization; therefore, it is very imperative to make discussion on the historical past of the region. Similarly it is also very important to make our conception very clear about the predominant position of a particular ethnic group of people i.e. Rajbanshi in this particular region. This apart, the Uttarkhanda Dal, the concerned political organization or the main theme of our discussion had raised the demand of a separate state named Kamotapur from the second phase of its activities i.e. from 1980s which will be discussed in detail in chapter-6. Therefore,

the brief history of Kamotapur or Kamota (the prevailing term is Kamatapur but the *Uttarkhandists* used it as Kamotapur in their memorandum, sent to the Prime Minister of India) is needed to be discussed in order to justify the historicity of the very demand of the Uttarkhanda Dal.

Most of the historians generally discuss the historical past of North Bengal dividing into two different glorious zones of imperial kingdoms of Pragjyotishpur-Kamrup-Kamata-Koch kingdoms in the northern part of North Bengal and the Paundra-Gour kingdom in the southern part of it.⁸ Changes in the geographical map and transfer of political powers in the vast region between the rivers Brahmaputra and the Ganges had occurred from time to time. It is found in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranic literatures that this area overtime was known as Pragjoytisha, Kamrupa etc. In fact, the present Bangladesh and the entire North Bengal were within this region. Subsequently, a part of it was named as Pundra and the rest as Kamrupa. River Karatoya flowing in the west of Jalpaiguri district of present West Bengal was the border between two regions.⁹

Since the early centuries of the Christian era, one part of Pragjyotishpur began to be described as Kamrupa. The *Allahabad Prasasti* of Samudra Gupta (c.325-326A.D.) mentioned that 'Kamrupa' was a frontier kingdom.¹⁰ However, with the rise of the *Varmanas* as ruling dynasty of the region, the kingdom of Pragjyotisha had been generally recorded as Kamrupa. In fact, it was during the reign of Bhaskara Varmana (600–650A.D.), Kamrupa emerged as a significant political powers. Huen Tsang (Yuen Chawang), a Chinese traveller, who visited Kamrupa during the reign of Bhaskara Varman, described in his account that Kamrupa was situated in the eastern side of Pundravardhana after a great river, the Karatoya.¹¹ However, the geographical boundary of Kamrupa was more clearly defined in the 'Yogini Tantra', a late medieval Sanskrit text. It described that 'Dikkar Basini' formed the eastern boundary while the Karatoya River was considered as the western boundary of the region. Northern side of Kamrupa was marked by the *Kanchangiri* (Kanchan Junga Hill) and extended up to the confluence of the Brahmaputra and the 'Lakshya' rivers in the south.¹²

In the post Bhaskara Varman era, western part of Kamrupa was described as 'Kamata' where the Khena rulers established a kingdom in the fifteenth century with its capital at Kamatapur. Subsequently, the Koch and Mech tribes founded the Koch kingdom on the ruins of Kamata kingdom which was almost identical with the latter. It should be pointed out that in the geographical area of the present study especially its northern part barring the hill region of Darjeeling, the process of the formation of a chiefdom was started in the late 15th century under the leadership of Haria Mandal (a chief of Mech Community).¹³ This process eventually culminated in the formation of the Koch Kingdom under the kingship of Biswa Singha (C.1510–1514 A.D.) and Nara Narayan (1540–1587 A.D.).¹⁴ In fact, it was under the able leadership of Nara Narayan that the Koch Kingdom reached at its highest territorial size comprising with the whole of Tista and lower Brahmaputra Valley and began to be known as 'Koch' or 'Behar'. However, the Koch kingdom was divided into two parts in 1581 due to the internal feud between Nara Narayan and his nephew Raghudeva Narayan (1597–1604).¹⁵ After this division, eastern part of the kingdom had been named as 'Koch-Hazo' and the main area of the kingdom came to be known as 'Behar'. In the last days of independent status of the Koch kingdom, it was extended from Bhutan frontier in the north to Rangpur in the south and from the Tista river in the west to the Sankosh river in the east. However, "until the 28th August, 1949 Koch Behar was an Indian state ruled by the Maharaja of Koch Behar who had been a feudatory prince under the British Government. By a document dated 28th August 1949 Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan of Koch Behar ceded his territory to the Dominion of the Government of India. The transfer of the administration to the Government of India took place on 12 September 1949, from which date Koch Behar was ruled as a Chief Commissioner's province by a Chief Commissioner appointed by the Government of India. By an order under section 290 A of the government of India Act, Koch Behar was transferred and merged with the province of West Bengal on 1st January 1950. Since then Koch Behar is being administered as a district of West Bengal."¹⁶

Pundra–Gour Kingdom

Now let us describe the brief history of the kingdom which was flourished on the other bank of the great river *Karatoya* in ancient, medieval and modern period. Pundravardhan was also a vast country and like Kamrup, its name is mentioned in the Ramayana, the Mahavarata and other Sanskrit literatures. Historians think that Mahasthangarh near Bogra (now in Bangladesh) is actually the relic of the ancient city of Pundravardhana. In fact, the administrative division of Rajshahi Division of colonial North Bengal was once a part of this region barring some parts of Rangpur and Jalpaiguri districts which were on the eastern side of the river Karatoya. However, the region, known as Varendra or Varendrabhumi was also under Pundravardhana.¹⁷ Ancient 'Pundravardhana' which was consisted of the area of Bogra, Rajshahi, Murshidabad, Malda and Dinajpur, later came to be known as 'Varendra' or Varendrabhumi. Pundravardhana lasted for several centuries specially from the Mauryan period to the end of the Gupta period.¹⁸ However, in the post Gupta period, the concept of 'Pundravardhana' or 'Pundrabhumi' began to change fast and most probably the area of North Bengal became a part of the kingdom of Sasanka of Gour.¹⁹ In subsequent time, the major portion of the region was included in the big empire of the Palas of Bengal. In the time of the Sena rule of Bengal, the importance of the region was gradually declined, because, under the Senas, Nadia emerged to be an alternative centre of politics and culture. During long Muslim rule, following the sudden incursion of Md. Baqtiar Khalji, the region became politically more important because of the practical emergence of the concept of Gour–Banga centering round Gour and Pandua in Malda.²⁰ Thus, the change of the area of a geographical denotation of the concept of North Bengal are found in the course of history. In other words, we can say that in the earliest times some parts of North Bengal roughly correspond with the northern half of what used to be called Pundravardhana. As the present North Bengal comprises Malda and a part of erstwhile Dinajpur, it can therefore, be said that ancient Pundravardhan and later

Varendri and Gour- Banga included a part of present day North Bengal. On the other hand, the Kamata and later Koch Behar kingdom was also included as a part of present day North Bengal i.e. Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri.

Though the hilly region of Darjeeling district i.e. Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, and Karseong will not come under the periphery of our present study, but the plains area or *terain* region will certainly come under the geographical jurisdiction of our dissertation theme. Considering this, the history of Darjeeling is to be discussed which is very relevant.

The whole region of present Darjeeling district of West Bengal before second half of the 18th century was a part of erstwhile Sikkimese kingdom. It was Prithvi Narayan Shah, the *Gurkha* leader who conquered Nepal on March 12, 1770 made Katmondu his capital. Thereafter, he began to expand the boundaries of his kingdom towards Sikkim and as a result, the Nepal-Sikkim conflict was started in 1780. On October 28, 1788, Rabdalge, the then capital of Sikkim was captured by the *Gurkhas*. By 1789, the whole of Darjeeling hills from the river Tista in the North barring Kalimpong and the *terai* region i.e. between Mechi river and Tista river came under Nepalese possession.²¹ Thus, by 1814, a large part of Sikkimese land came under the possession of Nepal. It is to be mentioned that Kalimpong sub- division of the district was possessed by the Bhutanese kingdom from Sikkim in 1706.²²

However, the expansionist policy of the *Gurkhas* was against the interest of the East India Company's rule in India. Consequently, Anglo-Nepalese conflict was inevitable and finally it was started in 1814.²³ The British Govt. of India made two campaigns and in the second of which the *Gurkhas* were defeated by the British. "By a treaty signed at Segaulie at the end of 1816, the Nepalese ceded the 4,000 square miles of territory.....which in turn by a treaty signed at Titalya on February 10, 1817, was handed over to the Rajah of Sikkim with the apparent object of hedging in Nepal with the kingdom of an ally, and preventing all possibility of further aggrandizement by the *Gurkhas*."²⁴ However, it is to be remembered that the whole tract between the Tista river and Mechi river returned to Sikkim on the condition that Sikkim would be

compelled to refer any dispute if arises with her neighbours in future to the Governor General of Company also guaranteed the sovereignty of the Rajah of Sikkim.²⁵ In 1828, again frontier disputes arose on the Sikkim–Nepal frontier. According to the terms of the treaty of Titalya (1817), the Sikkimese king referred the same to the Governor General. Accordingly, Captain Loyd and Mr. Grant were sent to settle the dispute. They penetrated the Sikkimese hills and advanced as far as Rinchinpong, and during this journey they were attracted by the position of Darjeeling village. The climate of Darjeeling also attracted them and therefore, they desired to make it a sanatorium. Besides, it had strategic importance being in the centre of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. They reported the same to the Governor General who in turn cordially accepted the suggestion and instructed to persuade the Rajah of Sikkim for acquiring the place. The result was the 'Deed of Grant' on 1st February, 1835.' By this Deed of Grant, all the lands, south of the great Rangit river, east of the Balasan, Kahail and Little Rangit river and west of Rungno and Mahanadi rivers were handed over to the British by the king of Sikkim as a mark of friendship.²⁶

The second phase of the cession of a tract of land by Sikkim was made in 1850 when a punitive force was sent by the British following the arrest and detention of J.D. Hooker and Dr.Cambell in 1849 by the Sikkimese Dewan. This resulted in the annexation of the terai, a portion of Sikkim hills, 'bounded on the North by the Ramman and the Great Rangit rivers and by the Tista river on the east and by the Mechi river on the west. In fact, it was the first 'annexation of the district of Darjeeling which covers an area of 640 square miles.'²⁷ Because of the constant violation of the Treaty of Titalya by Sikkim, an expeditionary force was sent first under Dr. Cambell and then under Col. Gawler with Ashley Eden as envoy in 1860. Finally, a treaty was concluded in March 1861 at Tumlung, the then capital of Sikkim which put an end to the frontier disturbance and thereby the annexation of Darjeeling was also confirmed.²⁸

But the formation of the full fledged district of Darjeeling was completed in 1866 only incorporating a hilly tract of 486 square miles, east of the Tista which was annexed from Bhutan following the Anglo–Bhutanese war of 1864-1865.²⁹ At that time, the

district was consisted of two sub-divisions i.e. Darjeeling Sadar and Tarai sub divisions. Kalimpong was kept in Darjeeling Sadar. The Headquarters of the Tarai sub division was first at Hanskhawa near Phansidewa from 1864 to 1880 and thereafter it was transferred to Siliguri (Siliguri was then in Jalpaiguri district but transferred to Darjeeling and made the Headquarters of Tarai sub division). However, in 1891 Kurseong was made the headquarters of a new sub division, named Kurseong and Tarai sub division was abolished and absorbed in Kurseong sub division. Later in 1907 Siliguri was made a new subdivision. It was in 1916 that the Kalimpong sub-division was created. The district of Darjeeling was included in the Rajshahi-Cooch Behar Division (Later only Rajshahi Division) till October, 1905 and after that it was transferred to Bhagalpur Division following the partition of Bengal in 1905. Again with the re-arrangement of the provinces it was retransferred to the Rajshahi Division on March, 1912³⁰ and till Independence the district of Darjeeling remained in the same Division. It was in the post independence period though the area of the district remained the same but a police station of the tarai region i.e. Phansidewa went to erstwhile East Pakistan which has already been mentioned earlier at the beginning of this chapter.

Thus it was during the colonial period that the geographical shape of North Bengal was substantially changed due to the inclusion of Darjeeling hills and later western Dooars as a part of Jalpaiguri district in the British Bengal. It has already been pointed out that as a result of the partition of India and post-independence integration the geographical shape of North Bengal was further drastically changed. Thus, in post independence era, and at its present shape, the present day North Bengal is constituted of the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda which is obviously the geographical region of our present study.

In our preceding discussion, the geographical and historical background of the concerned region has been explained briefly but clearly. Now an attempt is to be made to identify the ethnic identity of the very ethnic group of people which is related very much to the formation of the concerned political organization i.e. the Rajbanshis. The

Rajbanshis are considered to be the major ethnic group of people in the concerned region and have been inhabiting in the same region since long past. But it is not irrelevant to mention here that the geographical settlements of the Rajbanshis covered not only the present day North Bengal, but also other parts of India mainly Goalpara of Assam and Purnea of Bihar. The Rajbanshi people have also the habitation in Jhapa district of Nepal and Rangpur and East Dinajpur of present day Bangladesh. In the said two districts of Bangladesh, the Rajbanshis were thickly inhabited since long past and also during colonial period. However, the epicenter of Rajbanshi life and culture was Rangpur. Therefore, the Rajbanshis of Rangpur played a vital role in organizing a social mobility movement (Kshatriya movement) in the last decade of the 19th century which directly or indirectly helped to develop the idea of a separate ethnic based political party of the Rajbanshis in the post independence period. Therefore, it is very essential to explain the brief history of the ethnic identity and background of the Rajbanshi ethnic group of people of the concerned geographical area.

The society of North Bengal was composed of numerous and diverse social groups. The population generally belongs to different ethno-linguistic and cultural groups and to various castes and religious communities. It should be realized that the concerned region specially its northern part is the land of several autochthonous groups and among them the most significant are Rajbanshi, Mech, Dhimal, Rava, Garo, Toto etc. This northern portion of North Bengal, it is to be stated, popularly comprises with the districts of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and the tarai portion of Darjeeling. It has already been mentioned that the area was a part of the kingdoms of Pragjyotish-Kamrup-Kamatapur from time to time. In addition to this political connection, the people of the area have ethno-linguistically and socio-culturally had association with common characteristics. In this respect this part is different from other sections of North Bengal as well as the rest of West Bengal. Secondly, the southern portion with the districts of Malda and North and South Dinajpur (erstwhile Dinajpur-cum West Dinajpur) had an association with the Barendri region of Central Bengal (undivided) in one hand and Purnea and Bhagalpur divisions on the other and also with Salar-Bagri region

(Murshidabad). Therefore, the early inhabitants of these districts were mostly Deshi, Poliya, Rajbanshi etc. During colonial period a large number of tribes began to settle there.³¹ We can not also ignore the Muslim inhabitants of the concerned area which also constitutes a large number of total populations of North Bengal. The Muslims specially *Nashya-Sheik* should also be treated as autochthons because of the fact that most of them were converted Muslim from Koch, Mech, Rajbanshi etc. which will be discussed later.

Among the above mentioned ethnic groups the Rajbanshis were the most predominant Hinduized social group. This process of Hinduization and also Islamization had gone through long before the advent of the Britishers.³² The Rajbanshis constituted the most predominant section of the local Hindu population in northern districts of British Bengal. Numerically they were the third largest Hindu caste in Bengal as a whole.³³ The 1921 Census Report shows that about 89 percent of this caste population lived in the districts of Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar state of undivided North Bengal.³⁴

It has already been mentioned that the main ethnic group related to our present study is Rajbanshi population. Considering this point we shall make an attempt to look back the origin of this caste. However, the history of the origin of this caste is a puzzling one and there is a strong debate among the scholars, both foreign (Colonial British ethnographers) and indigenous, about their origin.

The earliest reference to the term 'Rajbanshi' is to be found in Buchanan Hamilton's report and then the same is mentioned in all subsequent ethnographic monographs, land revenue settlement reports, district gazetteers and census reports of Bengal.³⁵ It is very interesting to note that the basic debate among the scholars is around the question of their association with the Kochs. In this regard, the term 'Rajbanshi' denotes their association with the Raja (king) of Koch Behar, a Koch tribe of Bodo origin. Here mention shall be made that the area where Rajbanshis were to be found in large numbers formed parts of the old kingdom of Kamrup, of which modern Assam was also a part. It is evident from the history of Kamrup and medieval Assam

that many tribal groups like the Kiratas, the Ahoms, the Khens, the Kochs etc. ruled over different parts of Kamrup. Among these various groups, the Kochs under the leadership of Viswa Singha established their control in the western part of Kamrup by the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century.³⁶ But it is very interesting to note that nowhere at this stage can be found any reference to the Rajbanshis in the history of this locality. Moreover, the term Rajbanshi was not mentioned either in the Persian records, in the foreign accounts, in Assam Burunjis, or in Darang Rajvamgshavali (genealogical account of the Koch royal family).³⁷ On the other hand, in the Brahmavaivartta Purana there is an exhaustive list of mixed castes, but in this list also there is no mention of the 'Rajbanshis', or the 'Polyas' or the 'Deshis', though there is a reference to the origin of the Kochs.³⁸ Out of this above mentioned puzzle about the origin of the Rajbanshis, there are different official and non-official works on this question. Broadly speaking there are two different lines of arguments in this regard. One is, by the colonial official-cum-ethnographers and the other by an indigenous group of scholars including Rajbanshi caste exponents.

Among the colonial official-cum-ethno-graphers, the work of Buchanan Hamilton's report was pioneering one. In his report 'Accounts of the district of Rangpur 1810,' Sir Buchanan mentions that Koch and Rajbanshis, both being part of the large Bodo stock, belong to the same caste but not all the Rajbanshis are Kochs, although most of them are those who have become degenerated by adopting the profession of palanquin bearers are Koch and amongst them, those who have become further degraded by taking to the habits of eating pork, chicken etc. are 'Dahoi' or 'Garol'.³⁹ It means that the term 'Rajbanshi' is a greater connotation where the Mongoloid tribes get entrance after abandoning their tribal customs and accepting Hindu traditions and rituals. Hamilton Buchanan was supported by B.H.Hodgson who, in the 'Journal of Asiatic society of Bengal, 1849' wrote that when Biswa Singha, the grandson of Hazo, and the founder of the Koch Kingdom, embraced Hinduism, the country was renamed 'Behar'— the people became Rajbanshis.⁴⁰ He had further stated that the Koch and Rajbanshis belonging to the same stock and the former belonged to the distinctively

marked type of the Mongolian family.⁴¹ Waddell also expresses almost the same view that the Rajbanshis do not belong to the Dravidian stock, "but as distinctively Mongoloid though some heterogeneous..."⁴² This apart, E.T. Dalton, Thomson, Porter etc. have expressed the same view that the Rajbanshis belong to non-Aryan stock and large Bodo population. The basis of their observation was the physical appearance (physiognomy) of the Rajbanshi people.⁴³

W.W. Hunter makes his observation thus: "The Kochs, or Rajbanshis as they are now called, may be briefly mentioned among the semi-aboriginal tribes, although they are now recognized as a distinct caste of Hindus. The Koch race first came prominently into notice about the close of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Hazo established the Koch Kingdom upon the downfall of the more ancient Hindu Kingdom of Kamrup. Brahmanism was introduced among the people in the time of Visu, Hazo's grandson, who, together with his officers and all the people of condition embraced the new religion. The name of Koch was abandoned by the converts; who assumed that of Rajbanshi, literally of the royal kindred."⁴⁴ Hunter traces the use of the term 'Rajbanshi' since the time of Visu or Biswa Singha, a Koch king of Koch Bihar and believes that the Rajbanshis and Kochs are synonymous. Thus, all the aforesaid British officers cum ethnographers emphasize on the fact that the Rajbanshis and the Kochs are from the same Mongoloid stock.

Herbert Risely, on the other hand, expresses a different view from those of the above mentioned scholars. He observes that "Koch, Koch-Mandai, Rajbanshi, Paliya, Desi, a large Dravidian tribe of North-Eastern and Eastern Bengal among whom there are grounds for suspecting some admixture of Mongolian blood.....The original nucleus....of the Rajbanshi was certainly Dravidian."⁴⁵ In the Census Report of 1901, E.A. Gait expresses the view that there was basis for the assertion of the Rajbanshis of Rangpur that they did not resemble the Kochs and sprang from entirely different sources. He asserts that in spite of considerable racial intermixture in some places the Rajbanshis appeared to be Dravidian tribes.⁴⁶ He further says that though the Kochs freely call themselves Rajbanshis, it is believed that the two communities sprang from

entirely different sources; the Koch Kings are of Mongoloid origin, while the Rajbanshis are Dravidian tribes who probably own the name long before the Koch King rose to power.⁴⁷

However, the British officers cum ethnographers have expressed two different views about the ethnicity of the Rajbanshi community. One view is that the Rajbanshis were a section of the Koch people who had adopted the Brahmanical culture after abandoning their traditional cultural practices or tribal customs. The other view is that all the Rajbanshis were not Koch or Mongoloid like the Kochs but some of them were of Dravidian origin. Thus, it is found that there are sharp differences of opinion in colonial literature itself about the origin of the Rajbanshis.

Now let us see what the indigenous literature says about the racial identity of the Rajbanshis. In the indigenous literature, especially in the literature of some of the Rajbanshi caste exponents, the Rajbanshis were mentioned completely different from the Kochs and regarded as superior in rank to them. However, the leading exponent of the indigenous literature was Monomohan Ray. Ray had stated that “irrespective of any question as to identify or difference of origin, the Rajbanshis and Kochs form entirely distinct castes.”⁴⁸ Hari Kishore Adhikary, another writer of Rajbanshi Community on the indigenous literature argued that the Kochs and the Rajbanshis were not the same caste and were different in many respects. In this regard, Adhikary argues that the food habits, behavior and customs of the Kochs are the indicative of their lower social status and the upper caste Hindus including the Rajbanshis did not maintain social relations with them. He also refuted the argument that the Rajbanshis embraced Hinduism during the reign of Biswa Singha of Koch Behar and emphatically stated that the Rajbanshis were Hindus before his reign and were recognized as Bhanga Kshatriya. As according to the Shastras, term Bhanga Kshatriya had no meaning so they were recognized as Rajbanshis.⁴⁹ Upendra Nath Barman, another Rajbanshi personality on the subject has also argued that the Rajbanshis were *Kshatriyas* and lived in the land between the river Karatoya and Ganga called in ancient time ‘Pundra Desa’. Barman refuted the contention of colonial ethnographers and argued that the Rajbanshis had

been claiming the *Kshatriya* status long before the eighteenth century. He cited many examples from the Hindu Shastras and Puranas in this regard.⁵⁰ Other Rajbanshi scholars like Maniram Kabya Bhusan, Manbholā Barman had made the same claim of a Kshatriya origin.⁵¹ Ambika Charan Choudhury, an Assameese Rajbanshi scholar has expressed the same view as Upendra Nath Barman did.⁵²

However, very recently, a Rajbanshi scholar, Nalini Ranjan Ray notes: “The people were ancient but the term ‘Rajbanshi’ came in use in recent historical period. After the arrival of Aryan culture in the region, a new civilized culture developed in the plains and semi hilly terrains of the whole of North-East India. The Mongoloid stock of people from the plains started mixing up with the culturally more developed people of the region.....in the later ages, people of this vast region came to be known in different names such as ‘Kuvach’, ‘Kirata’ or ‘Chins’ and later ages one mainstream of their mixed culture, identified them as ‘Pundra Kshatriya’ or ‘Koch Rajbanshi’ or ‘Rajbansi Kshatriya’ meaning chain of royal lineage.”⁵³ Ray, thus, argues the contention of admixture of Aryan and the Mongoloid stock of people with regard to the origin of the Rajbanshis.

Other than the Rajbanshi scholars and writers in the indigenous literature, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee states that the masses of North Bengal region are very largely Bodo origin or mixed Austric-Dravidian- Mongoloid, where groups of people from lower Bengal and Bihar have penetrated among them. They are now mainly regarded as Koch i.e. Hindu or semi Hindu Bodo who have abandoned their original Tibeto- Barman speech and have adopted the Northern dialect of Bengal (which has a close affinity with Assamese) when they are a little too conscious of this Hindu religion and culture and retain at the same time some vague memory of the glories of their people particularly during the time of Bishwa Singha and Nara Narayan, they are proud to call themselves Rajbanshis and to claim to be called *Kshatriya*.⁵⁴

However, it is clear from the observations of various scholars that there are differences and contradictions in both the colonial and the indigenous literatures on the question of the exact origin of the Rajbanshi ethnic group of people and these were basically due to the differences in perceptions and purposes of the writers of such

literature.⁵⁵ So, the debate is inconclusive. Finally, it should be stated that whatever might have been their actual origin, there is no dispute about the fact that the Rajbanshis were the early settlers in North Bengal.⁵⁶

Though the ethnic background of the Rajbanshi people is the main concern of the present study, but a brief description of the process of Islamization in North Bengal is to be mentioned as because the local muslims (*Nashya-Sheiks*) are labelled by some scholars like Ranajit Dasgupta as 'Rajbanshi Muslim.'⁵⁷ Moreover, it is essential to discuss with a view to understand the involvement of some of the Muslim population with the Uttarkhanda Dal and its movement.

It has already been mentioned in the preceding discussion that a parallel process of Hinduization and Islamization was gone through long before the advent of the Britishers. It is worth mentioning that the second largest component in the population of the region was composed of Muslims.⁵⁸ The Muslims of North-Bengal however, did not constitute a homogenous community or group. They had two major segments- (a) the local Muslims, the bulk of whom was composed of converted Rajbanshis, Kochs and Mechs and (b) the Muslims who had migrated mainly from the east Bengal districts.⁵⁹ It can be said from above point of view that the local Muslims are identical with the local Rajbanshi Hindus, Mechs, Kochs etc. in all respects barring in religious beliefs. However, the early history of the local Muslims is in obscurity to a large extent. The local Muslims who are also known as *Sheiks* and *Nashyas* and formed more than 99 percent of the Muslim population of the Jalpaiguri district were native to the district. ⁶⁰ It is believed that the *Nashya-Sheiks* embraced themselves into Islamism, perhaps being attracted by the humane appeal and preaching made by the 'Pirs' and 'Darbeshes' etc. It is also believed that the term 'Nashya' is the corrupted form of 'Nasta' means fallen or degenerated.⁶¹ It is historically true that the Muslim rulers and their lieutenant governors along with military army troops invaded the kingdom of Kamrup or Kamatapur and Koch Behar in many a time in medieval period. In course of their invasion they must have taken water, foods etc. from the local inhabitants in their way and sometimes they had conducted loot and plunders in the villages. These areas, after

the departure of the Muslim troops were declared by the upper caste Hindus as 'Nasta' or corrupted, because they came in touch with the 'Mlechchas' or untouchable Muslims. These people being ignored and hated by the caste Hindu Society gradually inclined to Islamism. Thus the native autochthon group of people embraced themselves into Islamic fold. In course of time, these people gradually came in touch with the sufis (who were aristocratic migrants), which inspired them to throw off their lower caste and untouchable identity and got encouraged to have the title 'Sheik', being the disciples of the 'Pir' or 'Sheik'. Therefore, the largest section of the Muslims of northern region of North Bengal is *Nashya-Sheiks*'.⁶²

It can be said from the above explanation that the bulk of the local Muslims were converted Islamized autochthons like Rajbanshis, Kochs, Paliya and Mechs. However, with regard to the religious beliefs and practices of those Islamized Rajbanshis, Kochs or Mechs, it is to be mentioned that they were not very strict in adhering to orthodox Islamic faith and tradition.⁶³ Rather many of their observances had a folk form characterized by worship of 'Pirs' and 'Mursheds' and contained elements of nature worship and of non-orthodox Hinduism.⁶⁴

It has already been mentioned that North Bengal especially its extreme northern part i.e. the district of Jalpaiguri is the land of several autochthonous groups. We have made a detail discussion about the ethnicity of the Rajbanshi group of people and thereby the local Muslims. It needs to mention a few words about the Mechs, Garos, Rabhas and Totos.

The Mechs were one of the original and numerous inhabitants of the Dooars and adjacent tracts and exercised control over fairly large areas in earlier centuries. "The Mech and Kachari are considered as the same people, but in the Duars they also call themselves Bodo which means a great people." However, since the thirteenth century the Mechs experienced a process of both Hinduization and Islamization.⁶⁵ Ravas and Garos, a minor autochthon groups are also found in the Dooars of Jalpaiguri. However, all these ethnic groups were considered to be the western branch of the Kachari or Bodo tribe.⁶⁶

It is to be mentioned here that the references of autochthonous group of people like Mech, Garo, Rava and also the local Muslim are made along with the Rajbanshi ethnic group because all these ethnic groups of people were directly or indirectly related to each other at different stages of historical development.

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Chapter - 2

Socio-Economic and Political Background of the Origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal

In the present chapter, though we have placed the socio-economic and political background of the formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal, in the same structure and same line, but all these three had not taken shape at the same time. Therefore, the beginning of the three was at the different point of time and that is no doubt the interesting aspect of this chapter. Considering the above view point, an attempt has been made to discuss the same under three different parts.

2.1. In our first attempt, the social background of the emergence of the Uttarkhanda Dal will be discussed. It can be said that the foundation canvas of the Uttarkhanda Dal to some extent was provided by the *Kshatriya Samiti*, the first one that exposed the cause of the *Kshatriya* identity of the Rajbanshis. This new identity question was germinated in the minds of the Rajbanshis in the pre independence period.

It is historically evident that the Rajbanshis of North Bengal started uniting socially and that also very articulately, for the first time, from the last decade of the nineteenth century when the colonial government started its census in 1891. It would not be irrelevant to mention that the demand for *Kshatriya* identity in the last decade of the nineteenth century by a section of the Rajbanshi leaders caused a social rift very vividly between the Rajbanshis and caste Hindus of eastern Bengal and this rift was further widened in the post-independence era and became one of the potent factors for the formation of an ethnic based regional political party, by a section of Rajbanshi leaders. Therefore, the *Kshatriya* identity movement of the Rajbanshis is needed to be discussed and also to see how it caused the aforesaid social fissure.

However, at the outset of this discussion of the *Kshatriya* identity movement of the Rajbanshis of North Bengal, we have to study the background of the society there. It has already been mentioned in the foregoing chapter that the Rajbanshi people constituted the single largest community in undivided Bengal. Socially, they were a homogenous group in

the region. It is to be kept in mind that the main habitat of the Rajbanshi population was in the vast area of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, tarain portion of Darjeeling, the princely State of Cooch Behar, Goalpara of Assam, Purnea of Bihar during colonial period or even in pre-colonial period.¹ The Rajbanshis even lived in the 'tarai region' of Nepal. But this habitat of the Rajbanshis in subsequent period especially in the post Independence period suffered a change after partition in 1947.

It is a fact that the Rajbanshis had dominant position in the society and culture of North Bengal especially in the princely State of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Rangpur. But this situation began to change with the introduction of the Muslim rule over the region. Because in the wake of the Muslim rule, the caste Hindus from the other parts of Bengal started coming in the region as employees in the administration of the Muslim rulers. It is, of course, evident that there lived a few rich Hindu *Jotedars* before the advent of the Muslim rule in the concerned region.² Such a trend went on till the second half of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, the districts of Darjeeling (completed its formation in 1866) and Jalpaiguri (1869) were formed and with this the demographic picture of the region began to transform very rapidly. Besides this, Jalpaiguri made the Divisional Headquarters of Rajshahi Division. As a result of this, various govt. offices, law courts, dispensaries etc. were established there. Thus Jalpaiguri necessitated and accelerated the migration of educated upper caste Hindus from other parts of Bengal. These people settled there as govt. officials, office bearers, clerks and also as other professionals like doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and traders etc.³ Side by side, it is seen that the early settlers of the region, the Rajbanshis were primarily cultivators and associated with land. They did not show any interest in the modern process of development. Therefore, various kinds of facilities which were given by the colonial govt. in various fields were almost entirely availed of by those English educated migrant people. This English educated people had gradually become the most dominant group in the local society, economy and politics due to their proximity to the administrative authority of the colonial govt. They began to treat the local people, i.e. mostly of which were Rajbanshis, backward and inferior communities. Such kind of estrangement on the part of the migrant caste Hindus did indirectly promote caste solidarity among the Rajbanshi people of

the region.⁴ Thus, it is seen that with the changing demographic pattern of the concerned region, the Rajbanshis, once a dominant community of the region, began to be disintegrated. They were also disgraced and insulted socially by the migrant caste Hindus of eastern Bengal which, no doubt, led a fissure between them.

However, when such process of structural change in the society of North Bengal was going on, a new development was seen at all India level in post 1857 era with regard to the anti caste movement. Some scholars generally have argued that in the post Mutiny era, the British Govt. started systemic study about the caste society of India just to face the question of social reform in India. This resulted first census of India in 1872. It brought about an unprecedented response from the Indians to place their respective caste in the census but according to the traditional order in a recognized and prestigious stratum of the society.⁵ But after the publication of the first census report in 1872, the people who belonged to various caste category of South and Western India started a vehement agitation against the Brahmanical domination in the society. They demanded the intervention of the colonial govt. to change this social anomaly. In fact, the census of 1872 lit fire of anti-caste movement in south and western India when it made public the picture of social status of various lower castes existed in Indian society. The aims and objectives of these lower caste movements were against the age-long privileged caste groups and at the same time they demanded the protection of their own caste and opportunity of all kinds. This anti caste movement had its impact on the society of south Bengal. Now in south Bengal also, the intermediary and lower caste people started a same kind of movement against the Brahmanical domination there. It turned immediately into a caste solidarity movement and they began to demand a higher social status which they wanted from the British Govt.⁶

The most interesting feature of the caste movement of the nineteenth century Bengal was that most of the intermediate and lower caste group people demanded the recognition of their *Kshatriya* status. It should be mentioned that in north India we find the existence of four Vedic castes in the social caste structure, but in case of Bengal, it was found that there was no existence of *Kshatriya* caste. Therefore, the lower caste people following *Sanskritization* wanted to acquire *Kshatriya* status in the society which was the easiest path to elevate the social rank. However, this movement of south Bengal made its influence on the people of

North Bengal and there also was started a similar movement. The Rajbanshis of North Bengal, the predominant caste group, probably were inspired by the aforesaid movement of south Bengal. The movement of the Rajbanshis was provoked by the Census Report of 1891. “The census operations had created notion among the members of the various lower and intermediary castes that if they could have their names enlisted in the census reports in the category of twice born, their social rank would automatically be raised and recognized by the indigenous society. So, this kind of false notion of legitimacy that census created in local society led to the sudden growth of caste association and caste movements. This affected the Rajbanshis as well.”⁷ Consequently, the Rajbanshi of North Bengal also started the ‘Kshatriya identity’ movement from the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Thus, against the aforementioned background the ‘Kshatriya identity’ movement of the Rajbanshi of North Bengal was started. But we cannot ignore at the same time, the local condition which also provided a sufficient ground for their demand of ‘Kshatriyahood.’ With this objective in view, the Rajbanshis made effort to make caste solidarity. It has already been mentioned that with the gradual settlement of the immigrant upper caste Hindus in the region which was traditionally dominated by the Rajbanshis, the existing balance in the local power structure was radically changed. Furthermore, those immigrant of upper caste Hindus regarded the local Rajbanshis “as backward, uncultured and even as antyas.”⁸ Apart from this, the immigrant upper caste Hindus used to address them as *bahe* in the most contemptuous manner which they meant their cultural inferiority. Indeed, the word ‘bahe’ in the opinion of a Rajbanshi stalwart personality, was a distortion of the word *babahe* generally used to address a person very affectionately.⁹ Interestingly, the local Rajbanshi people, on the other hand, used to refer to the outsider as *bhatia* meaning a people who came from the direction of ‘bhati’ or ebb tide i.e. from lower part of Bengal.¹⁰ Therefore, it is evident that the attitude of the cultural superiority of the immigrant upper caste Hindus of eastern Bengal and their inclination to look down upon the Rajbanshis was a great hindrance to a closer relationship between the two and thereby chasm was visible in their social relationship. It is to be mentioned in this regard that a sense of alienation arose in the mind of the Rajbanshi elites because of the above mentioned developments. This feeling of estrangement was further enhanced when they were insulted and humiliated openly by some immigrant upper

caste 'bhadrak' who had their superior cultural attitude. In this context, some instances of such treatment can be cited. Upendranath Barman, a prominent advocate of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya movement described that lawyer Panchanan Barma, one day, by mistake, used the *Toga* (gown generally wears by a pleader) of some Mr. Maitra who was his high caste colleague in the bar of the Rangpur court and went to the court room. Returning from the court, when he realized his mistake, he tried to give it back to Mr. Maitra. But the latter very angrily threw it away saying "I hate to use a 'toga' used by a Rajbanshi." In another occasion, Barma narrated that in Rangpur Normal school boarding house cooked food was thrown away because a Rajbanshi boarder of the boarding house stepped into the kitchen and some higher caste students refused to have the cooked food as a result.¹¹ This resulted in the development of a sense of alienation among the Rajbanshis, leading to the generation of a spirit of community solidarity among them. Their search for *Kshatriya* identity was only a symbolic cultural expression of this emergent collective self consciousness.¹²

However, it should be mentioned that the demand for 'Kshatriya identity ' by a section of Rajbanshi people was not first raised in the first decade of the twentieth century. In fact, it can be traced back from as early as in the late eighteenth century when Ratiram Das, a Rajbanshi poet spoke of the *Kshatriya* origin of the Rajbanshis. It may be quoted a few lines from his 'Jaga Sangeet' in this connection.

"Hai Re Rajar Banse Lavia Janam,

Parshuramer Bhoye Ebara Saram,

Rane Bhanga Dia Mora Edese Asiachi,

Bhanga Kshatriya Rajbanshi Ei Name Achi."¹³

The free translation goes like this: "That due to the threat of Parshuram, the *Kshatriyas* had come to northern Bengal and were living there as *Bhanga* (broken) *Kshatriya*. Again the references to a Rajbanshi's claim of *Kshatriya* origin are to be found in Buchanan Hamilton's account of Rangpur and Dinajpur.¹⁴ But it was in the last decade of the nineteenth century that the demand for *Kshatriya* status was reiterated more articulately and more organized manner than the earlier occasions when in the Census Report of 1891, the

Rajbanshis were placed synonymously with the Kochs. Thus, it can be said that though the origin of the *Kshatriya* movement could be located in the hatred and humiliation meted out to the Rajbanshi community by the immigrant upper caste Hindus of eastern Bengal, the immediate factor which was responsible for the beginning of the movement was the census of India in 1891. Therefore, it needs to be discussed in brief the initiation of the *Kshatriya identity* movement which was launched practically in 1891.

It is very interesting to note that in various successive census reports since 1872, the Rajbanshi people were not well aware of the caste enumeration in the census. But when in the census in 1891, the colonial govt. decided to place the Rajbanshis and the Kochs on the line of the same caste group, the Rajbanshis for the first time made a protest against this decision of the colonial govt. and demanded to enroll themselves as *Bhanga Kshatriyas* to the census superintendent. But on the refusal of their demand, a movement was started by them in Rangpur. This movement was particularly organized by the leaders of the society, most of whom were *zamindars*, *jotedars* and rich peasants. But the census officials refused to enumerate the Rajbanshis as '*Bhanga Kshatriyas*.' As a result, the leaders of the community in many places of Rangpur declined to fill up the census returns.¹⁵ This event led ultimately to the formation of an organization named "Bhanga Kshatriya Jatir Unnati Bidhayani Sobha." This initiative was taken by Harimohan Roy Khajanchi, a local zamindar of Shyampukur (Rangpur) to promote their caste status in accordance with the Hindu social hierarchy. Several other Rajbanshi leaders of Rangpur also voiced their protest against the move of the census authorities along with Harimohan Roy Khajanchi.¹⁶ Thus, it is very much relevant to point out that Rangpur became the epicenter of the agitation of *Kshatriya* movement in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Following the aforesaid circumstances, the Rajbanshi leaders began to demonstrate openly against the order of the District Magistrate of Rangpur, Mr. F.M. Skyne on February 1891. The *Samiti* under the leadership of Harimohan Roy Khajanchi urged the District Magistrate to separate the Rajbanshis from the Kochs. In this situation, the District Magistrate sought the opinion of the 'Dharma Shova,' the mouth piece of the local 'pandits' of Rangpur. The 'Dharma Sobha' authorized Pandit Jadaveswar Tarkaratna to pass the judgement on the said matter. However, Jadaveswar wrote to the District Magistrate that

the Rajbanshis were the different caste from the Kochs and superior to them and therefore, the Rajbanshis of North Bengal should be regarded as *Bratya Kshatriya* but not as *Bhanga Kshatriyas*. Accordingly, an order was issued by the District Magistrate saying that the Rajbanshis should be permitted to enlist themselves as ‘Bratya Kshatriya’ in all Govt. Correspondences. The result was that the movement was pacified for the time being in 1891. The Rajbanshi leaders were hopefully waiting for the recognition of their *Bratya Kshatriya* status in the next census report.¹⁷

It would not be wrong to mention that the second phase of the *Kshatriya* movement was begun during the census in 1901. It was found that the expectation of the Rajbanshi leaders to their above mentioned demand to enlist themselves as *Bratya Kshatriya* after the census of 1891 was not entertained. With their great disappointment, this time also the census authorities issued order instructing the field workers to enlist the Rajbanshis just as ‘Rajbanshis’ and not as *Bratya Kshatriya*. Immediately a meeting was held by the leaders of the community in Rangpur and sent a ‘Protest Note’ to the District Magistrate, Mr. P.C. Mitra on 1st February 1901 and urged him to enroll them as *Kshatriyas* in the census. But Mr. Mitra in his order on 2nd February, 1901 firmly refused to reopen the case.¹⁸ Thus, it was clear that the recommendation of F. M. Skyne in 1891 were not granted at all. As a result, the Rajbanshi society made an appeal to the census superintendent but the latter replied that “It is now too late to issue any order on the point.” Thereafter, the Rajbanshi leaders made another appeal to Sir George Woodburn, K.C.S.I., the Lieutenant General of Bengal on 19th April, 1901 but without any result.¹⁹ However, this move of the census authorities made the Rajbanshis disappointed. Another significant incident which is worth mentioning in this context and which added flame to the fire was that Nagendranath Basu, a caste Hindu scholar, referred the Rajbanshis as ‘Mlechchas’ in his Encyclopedia in 1901.²⁰ It seems that opposition from some sections of higher caste Hindus was an important factor behind the rejection of *Kshatriya* status of the Rajbanshis.²¹

All those aforesaid factors clubbed together were enough to provoke the Rajbanshi leaders to start a tremendous movement with a renewed vigour and inspiration. This time the social issues were kept in the centre of main objectives of the *Kshatriya* movement. Just at this moment of the *Kshatriya* movement, Panchanan Sarkar, a young energetic, dynamic,

good organizer, resolute...., a lawyer by profession appeared in the picture. Panchanan, no doubt, emerged as the most respected and popular leader of the *Kshatriya* movement for he had great role in awakening the Rajbanshi community. It was under his able leadership that the *Kshatriya* movement took a significant turn. With a view to get the recognition of the *Kshatriya* identity, before the census of 1911, the *Kshatriya Samiti* was formed with Madhusudhan Roy (a lawyer from Jalpaiguri) as its president and Panchanan Sarkar as secretary in 1910 with its sole objective to achieve *Kshatriya* status of the Rajbanshis and their separate identity from the Kochs.²² It was seen that this time the movement was organized on more systematic ways by the *Kshatriya Samiti*. A large number of representatives of the *Samiti* met the Lieutenant Governor of East Bengal and Assam Mr. L. Hare and the Census Commissioner Mr. E. A. Gait and the *Samiti* also sent instruction to the leader of other districts of North Bengal and Assam (Goalpara) to apply to their respective district Magistrate to enlist them as *Kshatriyas* in the forthcoming census.²³ Thus, the demands took great momentum. The movement of *Kshatriya Samiti* this time was so continuous that LSS 'O Malley, the superintendent of the 1911 census in North Bengal remarked that it was 'a most persistent agitation was carried on by the Rajbanshis.'²⁴ He also made a remark in his 'Census Report': "The formal request was granted without hesitation as there is no doubt that as the present day, irrespective of any question of origin, the Rajbanshis and Kochs are separate castes."²⁵ But their *Kshatriya* identity was not granted.

With a view to understand the formidable task that was taken by the Rajbanshi leaders attaining higher social status, the response of the upper caste Hindus especially of eastern Bengal to it should be taken into consideration. Presumably, the upper caste section of Bengal did not welcome *Kshatriya* status movement of the Rajbanshi leaders, rather they made a stumbling block to it.²⁶ It is to be mentioned that during the pre colonial and colonial period upper caste Hindus dominated the socio-religious life of Bengal. Consequently, the *Kshatriya* status movement of the Rajbanshis in the social hierarchy opened the question of adjustment in power relation. Therefore, the upper caste Hindus tried to defy such movement. The caste Hindus also were of the view that there was no concept of *Kshatriya* caste in the prevailing caste system of Bengal. The demand of the Rajbanshi with regard to their *Kshatriya* status was refused by the 1901 census, perhaps, because of the opposition raised by the upper caste

Hindus. Besides, many Brahmin priests also refused to record the caste of the Rajbanshis as *Kshatriya* in various religious and social ceremonies.²⁷ But interestingly enough, the pandit of Mithila, Kamrup and some local Brahmins continued to support the cause of the Rajbanshis and even some of them participated in the movement,.....There were cultural exchanges between them and the Rajbanshis who adopted some of the customs of the Kamrupi Brahmanas.²⁸ It would not be irrelevant to mention here that a Kamrupi Brahmin was a bona fide member of the Uttarkhanda Dal, the main theme of our dissertation which will be discussed in the later chapters. But the important point which is to be kept in mind that the aforementioned incidents and development centering round the *Kshatriya* movement, organized by the Rajbanshi leaders in the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century caused a social and psychological rift between the Rajbanshi elites and the upper caste Hindu *bhadraloke* of eastern Bengal. In other words, the locals who were socially outdistanced as *bahe* and the immigrant caste Hindus known as *bhatias* were turn into two ethno-cultural polarities.

However, it reveals from the discussion of the above paragraph that even by getting the *Kshatriya* status officially and also the *Kshatriya* identity through various social reforms and cultural adaptation, the Rajbanshis got no success in changing the social attitudes of the upper caste Hindus towards them.²⁹ It is evident that such attitude of the upper caste Hindus of Bengal continued even in the post independence period which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

In the post colonial period, Rangpur, the main venue of the *Kshatriya Samiti* went to the erstwhile East Pakistan as a result of the partition in 1947. Consequently, the *Kshatriya Samiti* activities lost their earlier vigour and. However, in the post 1947 period the main centre of *Kshatriya Samiti* became Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and in a less importance in the tarain of Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda of divided North Bengal. It is found during the first two decades of the post independence era that the psychological conflict between a section of educated Rajbanshi people and a section of educated higher Hindu castes of West Bengal, came to the fore. In this context, it should be mentioned that in the 60s (sixties) of the last century, the Rajbanshis were again termed as *bahe* by Shailesh Kumar Mukhopadhyaya in his Radio talk in ‘Akashbani Kolkata’ on 1st August, 1961. It was strongly protested by a

section of educated Rajbanshi youth under the leadership of Sri Kalindra Nath Barman, later the founder secretary of the Uttarkhanda Dal, in various public meetings. In 1967 again, a strong protest was demonstrated by the educated Rajbanshi youth against the inclusion of a short story named 'Bajikar' in the first part of fifth edition of the 'Pathsankalan,' edited by West Bengal Council of Education, which was a text book of class - x (Ten). In that short story of Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyaya, the term 'bahe' was mentioned and that was the cause of their resentment.³⁰

It emerges from the above discussion that the legacy of the attitude of the educated caste Hindus of eastern Bengal towards the Rajbanshis was still carried on by some sections of the higher caste Bengalee intelligentsia and regarded the Rajbanshis as *bahe* and on the other hand, the Rajbanshis of North Bengal following the same pre independence legacy regarded them as *bhatia*. Thus, this 'bahe' and 'bhatia' dichotomy created a social fissure between them and paved indirectly the way for the formation of an ethnic based political party in North Bengal i.e. the Uttarkhanda Dal.

2.2. It has already been pointed out at the beginning of this chapter that the socio-economic and political background of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal had not taken place at the same point of time but at different points of time. Keeping this in view, an attempt has been made to discuss the economic background of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal (U.K.D.). In the foregoing chapters it has been stated that the Rajbanshi people formed the single largest community in undivided North Bengal. But the number of the Rajbanshi population in the divided North Bengal after the partition of 1947 had been reduced to a large extent because a considerable portion of their habitats went to the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) as per recommendation of the 'Boundary Commission', headed by Sir Cyril Radcliff.³¹

In order to understand the economic background of the core theme of our study, the economic profile of the Rajbanshi people in colonial and post-colonial period is very imperative. It has already been mentioned in the previous chapter that the main habitat of the Rajbanshi people was the extensive area of Rangpur, Dinajpur, princely state of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, *tarai* portion of Darjeeling, Goalpara of Assam and in some areas of Purnia

of Bihar. According to the census report of 1921, which has already been mentioned, more than 89% of the Rajbanshi population lived in the districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and the princely State of Cooch Behar. The Rajbanshis are mostly agricultural people. Therefore, almost all of them lived in 'villages, which were very thinly populated and they had built their small huts around the house of a *Jotedar* or 'Giri'. Thus, a Rajbanshi village consists of comparatively a bigger house of a land holder and a group of smaller and meaner houses of his share croppers (*adhiars and bargadars*).³² It should be mentioned that almost all the *Jotedars* belonged to Rajbanshi community. However, it is clear that agriculture was the only economic activities of the Rajbanshi people in North Bengal during pre-colonial and colonial period nay some decades of the post colonial period too. But in the rural agrarian structure in the area under study, there was the rich farmer–share cropper system. To quote Sugata Bose, "The Jotedar-adhiar system of North Bengal grew out of conditions wholly a typical of the older settled origins of West Bengal and east Bengal." He continues, "During the nineteenth century, the Jotedar-adhiar pattern became the dominant feature of the agrarian structure in much of North Bengal."³³ The process of this agrarian structure in rural North Bengal was started in the way of the following developments. There were large tracts of waste lands and with a view to reclaim them, those lands were assigned to opulent persons at a low fixed rents. These wealthy land holders in turn gave to poor cultivators to bring them under cultivation. However, once the cultivation was started properly, the cultivators who were engaged by the land holders began to pay them half of the produce (in kind). Thus, those cultivators under rich farmers became the share croppers or *adhiars*.³⁴ In this process, the *jotedar-adhiar* system grew in North Bengal. But one important development in land revenue system in the colonial period should be noted that there were some regions of North Bengal viz. Rangpur, Dinajpur and part of Jalpaiguri (minusing Western Dooars) where the Permanent Settlement system was prevalent. On the other hand, in western Dooars of Jalpaiguri, *tarai* region of Darjeeling, and in Cooch Behar state *Jotedari* system was introduced. In the *Jotedari* system, land was given to *jotedars* and rich farmers by the Govt. on condition of annual payment of fixed rent.³⁵

However, whatever may be the origin of the *jotedari-adhiary* system but the fact was that the *jotedars* were the most dominant group in local agrarian social structure. An

interesting feature is to be mentioned that “till the coming of the nineteenth century most of the land in North Bengal was in the possession of the local people i.e. the Koch, the Rajbanshis, the Mechs etc. Unlike the upper caste gentry, these local people did not face the problem of status inconsistency if they themselves cultivated the lands.³⁶ Therefore, there was the absence of non-cultivating upper caste gentry in North Bengal. “But the situation began to change from the late nineteenth century onward with the immigration of the upper caste Hindu gentry in the area.”³⁷ Thus, the number of non-Rajbanshi *jotedars*, most of whom were upper caste Hindus, were increasing since then. For instance, in Jalpaiguri, while the number of *jotes*, held by the Rajbanshis decreased but those held by the non-Rajbanshis i.e. Marwaris, upper caste Bengalees increased sharply.³⁸ Thus, changes were found in the pattern of land control in North Bengal and in that process of transformation the Rajbanshis were gradually pushed by the immigrant non-Rajbanshis. Prof. Tapash Kr. Roy Chowdhury in this respect, made a discussion in length in his article “Duars-E-Bhumi Rajasywa Byabasthar Bibartan”(in Bengali)³⁹ about the land alienation with statistics that due to various reasons transfer of land from the hands of the Rajbanshis to the non-Rajbanshis took place in Jalpaiguri district. It has been also stated that the overburdening of taxes also caused the transfer of land very considerably in this region.⁴⁰ The same view was also revealed in various land revenue reports. In Falakata *Tahasil* only, it was reported that 205 *jotes* were sold off and buyers of those lands were Marwaris and other non-Bengalee businessmen, and “other persons” many of whom are Bengali *Babus*.⁴¹ Thus the situation which was created by the transfer of land (*jotes*) to the non- agricultural communities had serious consequences on the existing pattern of jote management. The number of absentee *jotedars* gradually increased.⁴² In Cooch Behar, it is found that there was a drastic change in the land-man ratios as well as the ownership of land in that state. Mr. Bucket, the settlement officer of Cooch-Bihar state wrote in 1872: “From calculation made, I found that out of about 150,000 “Bighas” of revenue paying lands 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 remainder by resident joteders, who did not actually cultivate lands but live on profits derived from Chukanidars(next to jotedars in land holding hierarchy)”.⁴³ Thus, the people from outside mostly of those were in the administration of Cooch Behar State and

who were more resourceful than the local people captured a large number of *jotes*. By 1872, in the State 50% of the revenue paying land had transferred to the hands of the immigrants.⁴⁴

It appears from the above explanation that there was a massive change in the land ownership in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The process of transfer of land continued even after the post independence era. It has been noticed that in the post First World War period when general economic depression prevailed all over the world, the Rajbanshi *jotedars* of North Bengal again started selling their *jotes* and such trend had changed in the ethnic composition of land holding class to a large extent.⁴⁵

It is to be noted in this respect that in North Bengal the land owners and their under tenants had the same social origin and mostly belonged to the ethnic group of the Rajbanshi community. Therefore, “a low level equilibrium existed in this society during pre-annexation and early British period which maintained its economic and social stability....., on the whole, the area did not show any socio-economic dynamism which would give rise to social stratification, economic inequality and political consciousness.”⁴⁶ Consequently, there was no social stratification based on caste in the concerned region. Thus, North Bengal showed a sharp contrast to other parts of rural Bengal in British India. However, this socio-economic structure in rural North Bengal began to change rapidly in the post First World War period which had already been mentioned. The result was that “the Rajbanshis who once dominated the local society were gradually subordinated by the newly settled dominant upper caste people mostly Hindus.”⁴⁷

Again the rise in prices of food grains and other necessities of daily life as a result of the Second World War seriously affected the middle and poor peasants and this culminated in the great Bengal famine. This crisis provided opportunities to the merchants, money lenders and speculators to invest their capital in land. The net result of this development was the transfer of land from small *jotedars* and middle peasants to rich farmers, money lenders and speculators.⁴⁸ “In North Bengal large scale transfer of land from the Rajbanshis to the non-Rajbanshis, which had been started from the late nineteenth century, was only accelerated further by these later developments.”⁴⁹

Thus, it is revealed very vividly that the alienation of lands which was started from

the late nineteenth century continued till 1947 caused economic displacement in the Rajbanshi society. Furthermore, it had other serious social effects. It is noticed that many of the Rajbanshi *jotedars* had turned into *Chukanidars* and in turn, *Chukanidars* into *Dar Chukanidars* and *Dar Chukanidar* into *Dar Dar Chukanidars* and ultimately into share croppers or *adhiars*, who sold their lands but they had become so under a new owner of the same land they once owned. “Although there is no record of any serious protest movement amongst the Rajbanshis against the immigrant *jotedars*, a mute resentment of the sufferers against this new social order was manifested in the reaction of the Rajbanshi *adhiars* at the time of the ‘Tebhaga movement.’”⁵⁰ It would not be wrong to point out that the phenomenon of the transfer of land from the hands of the Rajbanshis to those of the non-Rajbanshis, in course of time, developed a sense of resentment among the depressed group of Rajbanshi community.

Now let us explain the economic profile of the region under study and thereby the declining economic condition of the Rajbanshis as a whole in the post independence period. But in order to understand the problem the educational aspect of the Rajbanshi community in the colonial period is to be studied first. Because, the declining economic condition of the Rajbanshis as a whole was well related to their educational status or attitude towards modern education.

Educationally, the Rajbanshis were backward in comparison with other lower caste and backward communities of Bengal. There were various reasons for such backwardness in the field of education. It was found that the Rajbanshi in general did not show any interest to have education and as a result of such indifferent attitude of the community toward education, there was a few number of educated Rajbanshi till the first decade of twentieth century.⁵¹ It would be very pertinent to mention here a very popular rhyme prevailed among the Rajbanshis in this connection which goes thus: “*Jata Pada Tata Soda*”- the free translation is that “The more you read, the more you be corrupt.” It also reveals the general attitude of the Rajbanshi community as a whole towards education. This apart, the main source of livelihood of the Rajbanshis in general was the income generated from land which was in abundance and more than the need. For this reason, probably, the community as a

whole believed in the maxim: “*Uttam Krishi Madhyam Ban, Dhik Chakri, Bheg Nidan.*” It means cultivation is the best one, trading comes next, service is hateful, and begging is the last resort.

But another opinion in this context is to be mentioned. To the poor cultivators mostly the *adhiars* of the *jotedars* with huge debts which was to be repaid to their *Giri*, the question of education for their children was irrelevant to them. Contemporary sources reveal that they found that the half-educated or with minimum education, their children could neither work in the fields of cultivation nor could live a respectable life in the learned society. Moreover, the section of the community could not also afford to send their children to schools rather the children had to help their parents in the field of their livelihood.⁵² On the other hand, the *jotedars* who were the pivot of the Rajbanshi society and easily could afford their children to send for education, did not also feel it necessary to provide education to their children. “The *jotedars*..... objected to their children going to school or being taught, even at home, to read and write. They had an idea that children would desert ploughing and agriculture and take to writing petitions or doing *Babugiri* (acting the *Babu*).”⁵³ There was also a general concept among the *jotedars* that a minimum knowledge of keeping accounts for the purpose of maintaining *zamindari* or *jotedari* was sufficient for their sons, and that had been provided by their *sarkar* or accountants of their estates. In addition to that they did not want their sons having services in the govt. offices because they themselves recruited a number of employees in their *zamindari* or *jotedari* areas.⁵⁴ So, the *jotedars* also satisfied with their landed property and as a result, had no interest in govt. services. Apart from this, there were some practical social problems for the Rajbanshi students to take education staying in school boarding houses because of caste hatred existed in those hostels.⁵⁵ For instance, Upendra Nath Barman, one of the leading figures of the *Kshatriya Samiti* referred in his autobiography that he had faced such caste hatred from upper caste Hindus in his student days at Cooch Behar Victoria College hostel during 1916-20.⁵⁶ Such a situation was also a very discouraging for their education.

Another point is also to be mentioned that the *Zamindars* of other parts of Bengal had much contribution for the cause of educational development in their respective areas both in terms of economic and physical enterprises. But in case of North Bengal, the *jotedars* had no

such contribution in developing education in their respective areas.⁵⁷ However, it was considered that such kind of initiatives should be the concern of the govt., on the other hand, the govt. considered that schools should be set up in the urban areas not in the rural one. Therefore, no active measures were taken from any corner for setting up of educational institution to provide education among the Rajbanshis of the regions. It was only after the election of 1937 which was held as per the provision of Local Self Govt. Act of 1935, that the local Rajbanshi jotedars felt the necessity of higher education. And from that time onwards, initiatives were taken to establish M. E. schools in the villages. In Jalpaiguri, M. E. schools were elevated to the level of H. E. Schools not before 1945. Though there has been an all round quantitative development in education since 1947.⁵⁸

In the princely State of Cooch Behar, the picture of education among the Rajbanshis was also not so encouraging. Upendra Nath Barman quoted G.T.B. Dalton, the Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar (1882-1883) with regard to the condition of education in the state thus: “When we (the British) took charge of affairs in 1864 there were two schools aided or unaided are returned until 1866-67.” However, it was only during the reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur that many primary and secondary schools were set up. A college in the name of Queen Victoria was established by him in 1888. It was the first Degree College of the then North East India.⁵⁹ But the fact is that these opportunities mostly were availed of by the outsiders. The Administrative Report of 1931 reveals that out of forty seven candidates who appeared in the examination, only eleven were Rajbanshi students of Cooch Behar.⁶⁰

The Census Report of 1911 reveals that only 51 out of 1000 Rajbanshis of North Bengal (undivided) were literate, the male-female ratio was even worse.⁶¹ Thus, it is seen that like the people of other castes of Bengal, the Rajbanshis also were indifferent towards women education. Upendra Nath Barman in his autobiography quoting Walter Hamilton, the composer of the East India Gazetteer stated that so far as women education among the Rajbanshis was related “In Rangpur it is considered highly improper to bestow any education on women and no man will marry a girl who is known to be capable of writing” With regard to general education, Barman quoted, “Few indeed were born in this district are qualified even for the occupation of a common clerk or writer.”⁶² It was only in 20s of the

last century that Bimala Roy, daughter of Madhusudhan Roy, a leader of *Kshatriya Samiti* took initiative to run a Girls' school named 'Matrimandir' in Jalpaiguri in 1925.⁶³ Thus, it appears that majority of the Rajbanshi people remained within the fold of illiteracy and it was higher than other low caste communities of contemporary Bengal who were under the same socio-economic condition.

Thus, it is noticeable that the response of the Rajbanshis towards modern education was very poor. But at the same time it should be kept in mind that the centre of modern education almost during the whole colonial period was Calcutta and its surrounding areas. North Bengal on the other hand, being situated far away from Calcutta, the educational activities here in North Bengal did not get much attention. Therefore, the opportunities for education were limited as most of the people of Rajbanshi community lived in villages.⁶⁴

The above mentioned condition in the field of education of the Rajbanshi community during the colonial period had its adverse effect on their economic life which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

It is very relevant to mention that though the land reform policy of the Govt. of West Bengal were welcomed by all the political parties and accrued good results, but in case of the Rajbanshis of North Bengal, those reforms had adverse effects to a large extent, especially on the Rajbanshi *Jotedars* of northern part of North Bengal. It has already been said in the preceding discussion that the Rajbanshis were entirely dependent on land and agriculture for their income and livelihood. The lack of sufficient formal education kept them abstain from other professions like business, govt. service or any kind of entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is noticed that after the introduction of Zamindari Acquisition Act of 1953 and West Bengal Land Reforms Act of 1955 when a large number of *Jotedars* lost their *jotes* in excess to the limit 25 acres, led them to a miserable economic condition. It was a death blow to their basic economic foundation and traditional source of income, to say, the only source of income. Having no knowledge of modern education modern agricultural techniques as well as lack of experience of worldly life and traditional habit of consumption compelled them to live on selling their remaining lands. In maximum cases, the purchasers were the immigrant Bengali cultivators of erstwhile East Pakistan.⁶⁵ However, the *Jotedars* of the region under review

could not reconcile with the Land Acquisition Policy of the United Front Govt. This distinct landed gentry of this part of North Bengal could not bear the brunt of the Act of 1953 and was ruined economically within a decade and a half since 1965 when the land reform programme was implemented by the United Front Govt.⁶⁶

In post independence era, following the partition of 1947, a large number of refugees came from erstwhile East Pakistan in this region especially in its northern part. Like other parts of Bengal, the govt. was busy to give priority to the cause of rehabilitation and problems of the refugees. Therefore, most of the vested lands were distributed to those landless refugees.⁶⁷ It is deserved special mention that at this time the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* in its meeting at Checha Khata in Alipurduar sub division of Jalpaiguri in 1955 under the president ship of Upendra Nath Barman mentioned in one of its resolutions that the govt. should give priority at the time of distributing of those vested lands which were acquired after the Act of 1953 to the Rajbanshi landless cultivators as they were the original inhabitants of this region and dependent fully on land. It also recommended for the inclusion of one representative from the Rajbanshi community in the land distribution committee.⁶⁸ So far as the problems of the Rajbanshi *Jotedars* were concerned, their condition was phenomenally deteriorated because unlike the *Zamindars* of Eastern and Central Bengal they completely abstained themselves from other economic enterprises. Their absence in the tea enterprises industry in North Bengal is a peculiar one. They did not show any interest to provide their offspring's education or involved in trade, commerce and industry etc. instead, land was their sole source of livelihood.⁶⁹

However, it has been argued by scholars of this field that land acquisition policy of the United Front Govt. created a fear amongst the *Jotedars* and big land owners of the region because land was not only their source of livelihood but also a symbol of high social status. Another important point is that though a few *jotedars* kept in hidden a few *jotes* (benami lands),⁷⁰ yet in a long run they could not retain such lands and sold them to the migrant refugees for more profit. It was because they could not keep pace with the rapid change that was taking place around them due to their idleness and traditional dependence on fate.⁷¹ It should be mentioned in this connection that according to the social scientists the migrants are always vibrant enterprising.

Another mentionable fact is that it was frequently complained by the Rajbanshi leaders of the region that most of the leaders of the land grabbing movement were the refugee *bhatias* of erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Consequently, at the time of distributing of the vested lands to the landless cultivators the opportunity of occupying *Khas* (vested) lands was availed of by the 'outsiders much more than the landless Rajbanshis of the region under study. Therefore, a sense of deprivation among the landless Rajbanshis developed and discontent was started among them.'⁷²

So, it appears from the above discourse of the economic background that the land alienation process which was started from the late nineteenth century and continued during the whole colonial period and it culminated in the post 1953 and 1955 era with the abolition of *Zamindari* and *Jotedari* system. But it is to be mentioned here that though a substantial number of *jotes* was transferred to the non-Rajbanshi people during the colonial period, there was found no reaction on the part of the Rajbanshi people or their pivot, the *Jotedars* against the new immigrant *Jotedars* or colonial govt. The reason might have been the consolation that their lands were not physically transferred from them, only the ownership of *jotes* had been changed and they just became *adhiars* or under-tenant under the new *jotedars*. They, as usual, used to till the land and satisfied getting half-share of the produces. In this respect a Rajbanshi maxim `` *Paravati Hai, Tao Parahati Na Hai*,''⁷³ worked well in their psyche. Now they became 'Paravati'(dependent on others for food). But in the post independence period especially in the post 1965 era, the picture was different. This time, it is found, the *Jotedars* were almost alienated from their lands (physical transfer) and the same was transferred to the immigrant people. The latter became their real competitors in every field of worldly life even at the grass root social level, govt. jobs etc., and the failure of the Rajbanshis to compete with them for the reasons explained above, made them frustrated and prepared a ground for forming a political party of their own to address their grievances.

2.3. The political background of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal should be understood tracing it back from the changing character of the *Kshatriya Samiti* activities. In chapter 3, it will be seen that the Uttarkhanda Dal was born in the womb of the *Kshatriya Samiti* in the

late 60s of the twentieth century. It has already been noted while discussing the social background of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal that the Rajbanshi community was started uniting socially to maintain their ethnic identity from the last decade of the nineteenth century and the process of this social dynamism took a great momentum with the formation of the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* on May 1910 in Rangpur. Though it was started as a social organization, but with the passage of time it changed its outlook and decided to involve itself in electoral politics after 1920s onwards. This is evident from the fact that the *Samiti* fielded its candidates in Legislative Council elections between 1920 and 1929 and the Assembly elections of 1937 and 1946.⁷⁴

It is to be mentioned in this context that systematic efforts, initiated by the *Kshatriya Samiti* for all round socio-economic development of the Rajbanshi *Kshatriyas* were described by M.N. Sri Nibas as changing nature of mobility, 'the actual shift in emphasis being from acquiring the symbols of high status to the real sources of high status i.e. political power, economic power and education.'⁷⁵

It is well known to all of us that by the Montague-Chemsford Reform Act of 1919 the Diarchy was introduced in the province of British India and the size of the Provincial Legislative Assembly was further enlarged. Each Constituency was divided as Muhamadan and non-Muhamadan by this Act. Accordingly, in Rangpur, the non-Muhamadan Constituency was formed of two members and therefore, every voter had the right of two votes. In 1920 Council election, *Kshatriya Samiti* fielded Panchanan Barma as its candidate in the non-Muhamadan Constituency in Rangpur. The other candidates in that constituency were Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Asutosh Lahiri and Jogesh Chandra Sarkar. Sarkar was supported by the *Kshatriya Samiti*. Rai Saheb Panchanan Barma and Jogesh Chandra Sarkar were elected from that constituency.⁷⁶ It should be kept in mind that there was no reservation facility to the Rajbanshis till 1935. In the next Council election, *Kshatriya Samiti* this time fielded Panchanan Barma and Nagendra Narayan Roy as its candidates. The other candidates were Kshetra Nath Singha who was an independent candidate, Jogesh Chandra Sarkar and Bijay Chandra Dasgupta, the candidate of Swarajya Party. It is very interesting to note that though the Swarajya Party had won almost all seats in

Bengal but in Rangpur the two *Kshatriya Samiti* candidates defeated the *Swarajists*.⁷⁷ Thus the election results of two successive Council elections, proved the fact that Rangpur was the stronghold of the *Kshatriya Samiti*.

But in the election of 1926, *Kshatriya Samiti* candidate Panchanan Barma was defeated in East Rangpur Constituency. This time the Rangpur non-Muhamadan Constituency was divided into East and West Rangpur non Muhamadan Constituencies. However, in the West Rangpur Constituency *Kshatriya Samiti* candidate Nagendra Narayan Roy had won the election. In the East Constituency, Congress candidate was elected.⁷⁸ However, in the election of 1929, Panchanan Barma was again fielded as the candidate of *Kshatriya Samiti* and this time in the West Rangpur Constituency. Panchanan Barma defeated his nearest rival of Congress party Dr. Atul Chandra Saha.⁷⁹

It would not be wrong to mention that Rangpur was the ‘capital’ of socio-cultural renaissance of undivided North Bengal in the nineteenth century. It has already been discussed in the foregoing paragraphs that the *Kshatriya Samiti* movement too was flourishing centering round Rangpur from its very inception. In Rangpur there was a good number of Rajbanshi *Zamindars* and *Jotedars* who dominated the whole society. These Rajbanshi *Jotedars* and *Zamindars* like their counter parts of other castes also encouraged the cause of socio-cultural development and the spread of education.⁸⁰ Thus it is proved that Rangpur was the heart of all activities of the *Kshatriya Samiti*.

Meanwhile, there was an important development at all India level when the demand of Depressed Classes was published by “the Minorities Sub-Committee Report” of the First Round Table Conference. It is very significant to note that the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* also made an effort to figure the Rajbanshi community in the list of other backward classes and secure reservation. Interestingly, the demand of the Depressed Classes was the separation from the Hindu population and to be treated as a distinct community for electoral purposes which was a complete contrast to the *Kshatriyahood* demand of the Rajbanshi community. However, the matter was referred to the Indian Franchise Committee, headed by Lord Lothian.⁸¹ In the memorandum of 1932, submitted to the Indian Franchise Committee on behalf of the Bangiya Jana Sangh, an organization of the representative of the *Kshatriya*

Samiti and several other backward but 'non-touchable' caste groups formed in 1928, Panchanan Barma stated that 'the Rajbanshis and other backward classes should be represented by reserved seats....through joint Electorate.' Thus, the *Kshatriya Samiti* supported the provisions of the August Declaration of 1932 for reserved seats and separate electorate for the depressed classes and subsequently its modified versions i.e. reserved seats but joint electorate under the Puna Pact of 1932.⁸²

It is to be stated in this connection that the *Kshatriya Samiti* expressed its firm loyalty to the British Govt. very often from 1920 onwards. It is mentioned in the resolution of the seventeenth Annual Conference of the *Samiti*, dated-1333 BS (1926) that "We Kshatriyas were expressing our sincere and firm devotion and loyalty to the (British) Raj." Expressing such loyalty to the British Govt., the *Kshatriya Samiti* took several resolutions demanding their nomination to the District Boards, Union Boards, Municipalities etc.; suitable measures for spreading of education and the increase of job opportunities for the educated Rajbanshi youths as the community was educationally and economically backward. But the demand of the *Kshatriya Samiti* was not entertained by the Franchise Committee, headed by Lothian in 1932. Its demand was rejected on the ground that "it was clearly incompatible with their insisted demand to be recognized as twice born or Kshatriyas." Several other castes like Teli, Mahishya etc. had voluntarily withdrew their names from the list of backward classes.⁸³

However, there was a controversy within the community itself with regard to the question of enlisting the Rajbanshis in the list of scheduled caste. But the same was resolved with the initiative of Panchanan Barma who argued that without protection and reservation in electoral politics, education, service and administration, the community would not be able to augment their social position merely by caste pride. The *Kshatriya Samiti* at last accepted the suggestion of Panchanan Barma and made an appeal to the Reform officer, Govt. of Bengal for enlisting the Rajbanshis as scheduled caste. The *Samiti* pleaded the socio-political backwardness of the community to the Reform officer. In the mean time, the term 'Depressed Classes' was replaced by that of 'Scheduled Castes' by a resolution of the Govt. of India in 1933. Finally, when the list of scheduled castes for Bengal was published, the Rajbanshis were also figured in the list and till today, the community is enjoying the benefit of the system.⁸⁴

Under the Act of 1935, the first general election to the Provincial Legislative Assembly was held in 1937. The *Kshatriya Samiti*, this time also projected its candidates. The candidates were Pushapajit Barma and Kshetra Nath Singh from Rangpur Constituency, Upendra Nath Barman in Jalpaiguri–Siliguri Constituency, Premhari Barman and Shyamaprasad Barma from Dinajpur Constituency. All these candidates of *Kshatriya Samiti* were elected. It was ‘for the first time that such a large number of Rajbanshi leaders could win the election and this was a direct benefit derived from the reservation of seats.’⁸⁵ The Rajbanshi *Kshatriya* leaders associated themselves with both the ‘Jana Sangh’, and the ‘Bengal Depressed Classes’ Association.’⁸⁶ It should be mentioned that the Jana Sangh was formed by the Depressed classes in 1922 and Depressed Classes’ Association was formed in 1926.⁸⁷ After 1937 election, the Krishak Praja party under the leadership of Fazlul Haq formed the Coalition Govt. with Muslim League after being denied by the Congress Party. But within three years the govt. was toppled in 1940. As a result, a new Progressive Coalition Party was formed consisting of Krishak Praja Party, the Nationalist party under the leadership of Shyamaprasad Mukhapadhyay and Independent Scheduled Caste Party under the leadership of Yogendra Nath Mondal. The elected members of the *Kshatriya Samiti* joined with the Independent Scheduled Caste Party.⁸⁸

However, in the post 1937 era, there was a change to a large extent in the political attitude of the leaders of the *Kshatriya Samiti*. The confrontation and contention were started among the leaders of the *Kshatriya Samiti* for getting nomination from the *Samiti* in 1946 election. Consequently, in that Assembly election in Bengal, the Rajbanshi candidates won from Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur but not as candidates of the *Kshatriya Samiti*. It is found that Mohini Mohan Barman, a Rajbanshi leader won from Jalpaiguri-Siliguri Constituency with the support of the Congress, but Upendra Nath Barman in the same constituency was defeated though he was backed by the *Kshatriya Samiti*. Only one *Kshatriya Samiti* candidate from Rangpur, Nagendra Narayan Roy was elected in 1946. Thus, the *Kshatriya Samiti*, once a strong and powerful organization of the Rajbanshis in undivided North Bengal which contested and won over elections against the nationalist political parties like Indian National Congress, Swarajya Party, Communist Party of India etc. started disintegrating in post 1937 era.⁸⁹ It is argued by the scholars that the death of veteran leader

Rai Saheb Panchanan Barma must have an impact on the disintegration of the *Kshatriya Samiti*. Upendra Nath Barman also became a member of the Constituent Assembly of India with the support of the Congress Party.⁹⁰

In post independence India, the *Kshatriya Samiti* lost its earlier vigour and spirit due to the partition in 1947 both in respect of social and political activities. Again the main centre of *Kshatriya Samiti*, Rangpur went to the erstwhile East Pakistan which was a severe blow to the *Kshatriya Samiti* and its socio- political activities. It was, of course, Jalpaiguri next to Rangpur was another important centre of the *Kshatriya Samiti* movement in the pre and post Independence era.⁹¹ It was Upendra Nath Barman who was entrusted the responsibility by Panchanan Barma to expand the activities of the *Kshatriya Samiti* in and around of Jalpaiguri in 1925. Since then he toiled hard to spread the movement till 1946. It is very interesting to note that after his defeat in the election of 1946, Upendra Nath Barman joined the Indian National Congress and became member of the Constituent Assembly. With this, it would not be wrong to say, the *Kshatriya Samiti* lost its political dimension in post Independence era. Thus, it reveals from the above discussion that the *Kshatriya Samiti* not only maintained their separate social identity but at the same time a kind of feeling of separate political identity in Assembly joining in Independent Scheduled Caste Party in 1940. It can be noted therefore, that in the pre Independence era, both the social and political separation were completed both from theoretical and practical points of view.⁹²

In post independence era, because of the partition, the Headquarters of the *Kshatriya Samiti* in divided North Bengal was shifted to Dinhata first in 1954 and then to Jalpaiguri in 1957. Thus, initiative was taken to reorganize the *Kshatriya Samiti* in divided North Bengal. A very important part was played by Upendra Nath Barman in this respect. But it should be remembered that by this time, the *Kshatriya Samiti* was turned into merely a social organization because almost all its important leaders had joined the national parties in post Independence period. Besides, the Rajbanshi community was deprived of its geographical conglomeration because of the partition of 1947. It made a considerable amount of demographic dislocation which perhaps was a final blow to the socio-political movement of the *Kshatriya Samiti*. Although, the *Kshatriya Samiti* in divided North Bengal initially started its activities with full vigor and enthusiasm but it began to lose its spirit gradually. The

scholars are of the opinion that the socio-political programmes, taken by the *Samiti* in the pre independence period had lost its dynamism during the post independence period. Not only that, leaving aside the political issue it again transformed into a social organization. The resolution of the subsequent conferences proved that fact.⁹³ Thus the *Samiti* confined itself to the social reform programmes only and that also with limited ways. In the 1960s, it is found that, some of the members of the *Kshatriya Samiti* were not satisfied only with its social activities and clamoured for the revival of the political activities of the *Kshatriya Samiti* which will be discussed elaborately in the third chapter.

During the closing years of the colonial rule in India, an interesting political development took place in the princely State of Cooch Behar with the establishment of the *Hitasadhani Sobha* in 1946, the first political party which was recognized by the State. This political development in the princely State of Cooch Behar is needed to be discussed because, though the *Hitasadhani Sobha* did not make any direct influence on the formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal, but it had indirect impact on crystallizing the ethnic feeling of the Rajbanshi people of North Bengal in the post Independence period.

It has already been mentioned in chapter-1 that Cooch Behar was a princely State and became a district of West Bengal after Independence on 1st January, 1950. In this princely State also the majority of the population belonged to the Rajbanshi community. Apart from this, the Khens, Brahmins, mostly Kamrupi, the *Nashya-Sheikh* Muslims also made a part of the population. But the people who were in the State were broadly divided into two categories i.e. Cooch Beharis and non-Cooch Beharis. Cooch Beharis meant the local Rajbanshi Hindus and Muslims (*Naishya-Sheikh*), the Kamrupi and Maithali Brahmins (who settled there since the time of the beginning of the Hinduization) and some other low caste Hindus such as Sahas, Jogis and some local tribes.⁹⁴ The non-Cooch Beharis were constituted mostly by the outsiders who came into the State for the purpose of the state service and held different important and higher administrative posts. They mostly belonged to higher caste Hindus of eastern and central Bengal. A good number of outsiders also owned lands and became *Jotedars*. Besides, the higher caste Bengalees, the Marwaris, Beharis etc. were also there. However, the Bengali outsiders were termed by the local Rajbanshis as *bhatias* (the meaning has already been explained in foregoing discussion). The outsiders, on the other

hand, called the local people as *deshi* and in some cases *bahe* (this dichotomy also prevailed in other districts of undivided North Bengal which had already been mentioned). Thus “a good ground was already prepared for social and political conflagration in the princely State of Cooch Behar’.⁹⁵

However, in order to understand the birth of the *Hitasadhani Sobha*, the political situation in the Cooch Behar State is to be discussed in brief. The system of Govt. and administrative structure of the State was completely different from the British Indian territories because it was a princely State. In the state, the king (Maharaja) was the fountain head of all authority and power. After 1942 election, an Executive Council was formed with His Highness, the Maharaja as its president. Besides, the Chief Minister of the State was its vice president and also other three ministers were its members. All ministers were accountable to His Highness, the President.⁹⁶ However, it should be mentioned that a Legislative Council was there in the State since 1909 at the time of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur. But its members were either official or nominated. The election system in the said Council was introduced in 1941 by the State Legislative Council Act (No-3) at the time of Maharaja Jagadipendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur and provision was made there for a direct election of eight members. Out of these two members (one Hindu and one Muhamadan) would be elected by the *jotedars* of the State, one by the members of the legal professionals of the State, and five by the members would be elected from each of the five sub-divisions of the State.⁹⁷ It was against this background that the *Hitasadhani Sobha* was formed on 19 May, 1946. It has already been stated that it was the first political organization, recognized by the State. The interesting feature of this new political organization was that the leaders belonged to a particular ethnic group of people. The president of the *Sobha* was Khan Chaudhury Amanatullah Ahmed, the vice president was Dharani Shankar Bhattacharya and Satish Chandra Singha Sarkar, the secretary was Jaladhar Saha and assistant secretaries were Majiruddin Ahmed, Kumar Purnendu Narayan and Satish Chandra Roy.⁹⁸ But it is to be remembered that the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was established with the blessing of the Maharaja Jagadipendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur. Thus, with the support of the Royal authority the ‘Sabha’ spread its wings at the grass root level within a short time i.e. from 1946 to 1949.⁹⁹

The *Hitasadhani Sobha* immediately earned mass popularity and support which

moved the long drawn background of the aspiration of the Cooch Behari people. The objectives of the party clearly proved the undercurrent aspirations of the local people of Cooch Behar. However, in its programmes the leaders of the Sobha had identified the root cause of their problems to the deprivation of the indigenous people (Cooch Beharis) in all spheres of life and for this, they blamed the outsiders particularly the higher caste Hindus of central and eastern Bengal. According to the *Hitasadhani* leaders, these outsiders had encroached on their area of opportunities.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, they aimed at acquiring political power through which they could restore their privileges and established their hegemony over the State. So, it can be said that sharing of political power was given priority from the very beginning of the foundation of the *Hitasadhani Sobha* by its leaders. For this reason, they launched a tremendous movement against the caste Hindus and raised slogan 'Bhatia Hatao' (move out the *bhatias*). Abbasuddin Ahmed, a renowned '*Bhaoiya*' singer stated that the predominance of the outsiders was the main reason behind the '*Bhatia Hatao*' slogan.¹⁰¹ It is very interesting to note here that the meetings of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* used to be started with an inaugural song, composed by Anwaruddin, the younger brother of Abbasuddin Ahmed. The content of the song was fully anti outsiders or anti-*bhatia* in spirit. Few lines of the song will clear the statement which is as follows.

'O Mor Cooch Behari Bhai Re,

Sabar Ghare Jale Suraj Bati,

Tomar Ghare Kane Andhar Rati?'¹⁰²

(The free translation is, Oh my brother of Cooch Behar, the house of everybody is full of sunlight but why is your house full of darkness?).

So, an ethnic and caste based division took place in the state. Scholars of this area have argued that a kind of ethnic consciousness developed in this princely State which was reflected in the election of 1946 when *Hitasadhani Sobha* gained noticeable majority. Khan Chaudhury Amanadullah Khan Ahmed and Satish Chandra Singha Sarkar of the '*Sobha*' were elected and were appointed as the Revenue and Education Ministers respectively.¹⁰³

Thus, the Cooch Behari identity question of the *Hitasadhani Sobha* had encompassed

all the Rajbanshis in one point. Though it was not the objective of the *Sobha* it was actually, a byproduct of the *Hitasadhani Sobha*'s movement. However, the Hitasadhani-Cooch Behari identity as well as power politics was ended but with the remnants of the *Hitasadhani Sobha*, a new kind of politics was started, though in different ways. The basic issue was revised and enlarged from Cooch Behari identity to the Rajbanshi identity. It was not a prototype of the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* movement, though in many respects its objectives were identical.¹⁰⁴ It should also be noted that though the *Hitasadhani* movement had no any direct impact on the formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal, but the conception of *deshi* or indigenous people, coined by the leaders of the *Hitasadhani* movement had an indirect influence on the leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal when it was found that the latter was clamouring for the development of the local people (*deshi*) of North Bengal and expressed their grievances against Calcutta centric rule or the rule of the South Bengal political leaders especially of Calcutta. However, all these will be discussed in detail in the following chapters of our dissertation paper.

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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 Dinhata 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 Dinhata, 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 ‘Pathasankalan’, 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 Uttarakhand 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.¹⁴ The 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 Jaineswar 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 prolong 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 Dhirendra 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 Dhirendra 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'. Article-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 Sudhangsu 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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30. Lalit Chandra Barman, *op. cit*, p.31; He quoted Girija Shankar Roy; Interview with Babunath Barma, *op.cit*.
31. *Resolution No. 1, Proceedings of the meeting, held at Thakurpat Rajamohan Junior High School, dated July-5, 1969, (Unpublished).* In Bengali it reads thus: “Dirgha Din Dharia Uttar Banger Abahelita Krishok O Shramik Samaj Tahader Nyay Sangata Dabi Dawa Haite Banchita Hoye Asay, Adyakar Adhibeshane“Uttarkhanda Dal” Name Ekti Shaktishali Dal Gathan Korar Prostab Grahan Karilo.” (Collected from M. M. Mallick).
32. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, ‘The Uttarkhanda-Kamatapur Movements: A Historical Perspective’ in *Proceedings of North East India History Association; Tenth Session, Shilong,1989*, p.404.

33. Resolution No. 2, Proceedings of the meeting held at Thakurpat, *op.cit.*
34. Resolution No. 3, 4 and 5, of the Proceedings of the meeting , *Ibid.*
35. Resolution No. 6, 8, Proceedings of the meeting, *Ibid.*
36. Resolution No. 7 of the Proceedings of the meeting, *Ibid.*
37. Kalindra Nath Barman, *Keno Uttarkhanda ?*, Jalpaiguri, 1970, p. 7.
38. Dr. Rajat Shubhra Mukhopadhyay, 'Uttarkhanda Movement, A Sociological Analysis,' Special Lecture V111 in *Centre For Himalayan Studies*, University of North Bengal, April, 1987, p.31.
39. Dharendra Nath Das, *Regional Movements, Ethnicity and Politics*, Abhijit Publication, Delhi, 2005, pp. 27,53; A.K. Jana, 'Development (?) and Identity Politics in West Bengal: The Kamatapur Movement in North Bengal' in Bhupindrader Brar, Ashutosh Kumar et al.(eds.), *Globalization and Politics of Identity in India*, Pearson Longman, New Delhi ,2008, p.115; Rupkumar Barman, 'Contested Regionalism'', Abhijit publication, Delhi, 2007, p.130, (He particularly used the term Uttarkhanda or Kamatapur State).
40. *Proceedings of the Second Day Session of Thakurpat Conference*, date-6th July, 1969. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).
41. *Leaflet of the Uttarkhanda Dal*, Head Office, Jalpesh Mandir, Maynaguri, Dist- Jalpaiguri, *Karma Suchi*'(in Bengali), date-9.2.1970, Purna Press, Jalpaiguri, published By Kalindra Nath Barman on behalf of Uttarkhanda Dal.
42. *Resolution No.1 of the first meeting* of the Uttarkhanda Dal, held at. Thakurpat, Dhupguri, Jalpaiguri, Dated-July 5, 1969. (collected, M.M.Mallick).
43. *Draft Constitution*, prepared by Harimohan Barman, 1969, but the month is not mentioned. (Collected from M.M.Mallick).
44. *Ibid.*
45. Clauses a and b of the *first Draft Constitution*.

46. Art.1 of *the Draft Constitution*, prepared and submitted by Rabi Sarkar and Digendra Lal Roy, date-19.12.1970.

47. *Uttarkhanda Daler Gathan Tantra* (in Bengali), published by Sri Bhupendra Nath Roy, the secretary of the publicity dept. of the Uttarkhanda Dal, date- 15th August ,1980, Uttarbanga Press, Jalpaiguri, mentioned on the back of the book.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Chapter-4

Activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal and Its Organizational Response

In the previous chapter, a detailed study has been made on the foundation and organization of the Uttarkhanda Dal. In the present chapter, an attempt will be made to deal with organizational activities of the Dal (i.e. Uttarkhanda Dal) and its response. However, before entering into the main discussion of this chapter, it should be made clear that the activities of the 'Dal' during the entire period of our study have actually been discussed in two different phases and that too in two different chapters in accordance with their nature. In the present chapter the first phase under the aforesaid title has been discussed. In the first phase, the activities of the Dal, have been included. It covers the period from its very foundation to 31st May 1980. In fact, during this period, it was found that the activities of the Dal were limited to only strengthening its organizational structure and extending its public relation in the different blocks and districts of North Bengal. In addition to this, the leaders of the U.K.D. made an effort to bring the socio-economic and cultural backwardness of North Bengal to the notice of the State Govt. and at the same time tried to highlight the issues like Calcutta-centric rule in the state, the domination of the urban gentries in politics, society, and economy of the region under study, the then anarchical political situation prevalent in West Bengal etc., all these have been discussed in details later in this chapter. But all these issues, they had raised, probably with a view to gain public support in favour of their newly formed political organization and demanded redress through peaceful and democratic manners.

However, it was noticed that from 31st May 1980 onwards, there was a marked change in the primary goal of the Dal and also in the nature of its activities. The think-tanks of the Dal took a volte-face from their earlier party programmes and raised, for the first time, the demand for a separate state consisting of five districts of North Bengal (at present seven districts) within Indian union. Accordingly, they had changed modus operandi of the party. In their new modus operandi the party leadership followed separatist and agitational activities in a bid to achieve their new goal i.e. a separate state of 'Kamotapur.' These activities of the

party have been treated as a separate phase and discussed in chapter-6.

It is a common feature of all political parties whether national or regional that they would first try to consolidate their organizational base through various party activities. The Uttarkhanda Dal was not exception to it. However, the leadership of the Uttarkhanda Dal, from the date of its very foundation, was making some initial efforts to strengthen its organizational structure forming various organizational units of the party namely, 'Anchalik Committees', 'Thana Committees', 'District Committees' etc.¹ Besides this, initiatives were taken to open different branch organizations of the party, such as students' organization, teachers' association, farmers' organization etc. to reach at all sections of the society of the region under the study. However, all these initiatives and decisions first were taken in various meetings, conferences of the party and thereafter the organizational campaigns were made through various public meetings, distributing party leaflets, pamphlets, handbills etc. However, all such organizational activities of the Dal as well as its other functional activities and responses would be reflected in the discussion, made in the present chapter.

Now let us first try to deal with the various organizational units which were embodied in the main structure of the Uttarkhanda Dal. The names of the various units of the party in hierarchical order were mentioned in the 'Draft Constitution' which has been already mentioned in the previous chapter (chapter-3). However, these units were the Anchalik Committee, Thana Committee, District Committee and at the top was the Central Committee. In the town areas, there would be 'Para' Committees and 'Town' committees and they would be treated as good as Anchalik Committees and Thana committees respectively.² Thus, it was found that the leadership of the Dal initially made effort to give a structural shape of the party theoretically. However, immediately after that, the leadership of the party devoted full concentration to form the above mentioned units of the party in different 'Anchals' (an administrative unit) 'Blocks' and 'Districts' of North Bengal. In this regard, the responsibility was shouldered by the forefront leaders of the Dal. The most important of them were Sri Panchanan Mallick (President of the party), Sri Haripada Ray (vice President of the party), Sri Harimohan Barman (ideologue of the party), Sri Pulin Behari Roy, Sri Soma Oraon (a tribal leader) to mention a few. But it is very interesting to note that at the initial stage, the

effort of the party to form aforesaid party units was confined to only Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts. The Dal even could not form its 'Anchal' and 'Thana' committees in all the blocks of Jalpaiguri district, the district of its origin. It was found in Jalpaiguri district that the 'Dal' succeeded to constitute its 'Anchal' and 'Thana' committees in Maynaguri, Dhupguri, Falakata, Madarihat, Jalpaiguri Sadar and Rajganj and only in one block of Cooch Behar district i.e. Mekhliganj.³ Thus it goes without saying that the party had no any penetration in other three districts of North Bengal viz., Darjeeling, erstwhile West Dinajpur and Malda at this stage of its organizational activities.

However, the Dal made a significant progress in terms of its organizational areas within a short period of time. Notably, when the first 'Protinidhi Sammelan'(Delegate Conference) of the party was held at Jalpesh Temple, Maynaguri of Jalpaiguri district in January 1970, it was found that representatives from almost all the blocks of Jalpaiguri district and from all the subdivisions of Cooch Behar district attended the said conference. Even some representatives from Darjeeling, erstwhile West Dinajpur and Malda districts also attended the aforesaid 'Delegate Conference' of the party.⁴ It would be very pertinent to mention some of the important aspects of the first 'Protinidhi Sammelan of the Uttarkhanda Dal in terms of its structural reorganization. It was noticed that the think tanks of the 'Dal' with due consent of party delegates of that said 'Sammelan' endeavoured to reorganize and restructure some of the committees and sub committees of the party which were constituted in the foundation meeting of the Dal in July 1969. In this context, the first step was the constitution of the Central Committee for the year 1970-71 with unanimous decision of the delegates present. It was consisted of 53 members including its functionaries.⁵ It should be remembered that there was an Executive Committee at the top of the organizational hierarchical structure of the party since its very formation.⁶ Therefore, the new Central Committee had taken the place of the Executive Committee. However, in the new Central Committee the founder president of the party Sri Panchanan Mallick was elected president unanimously. But the interesting fact which is to be noted here is that Sri Yogendra Nath Bhattacharya, a Kamrupi Brahmin and the priest of the famous Jalpesh Temple was elected vice president of the Central Committee, however, jointly with Md. Waejuddin Ahmed of Dhupguri. It is interesting because for the first time a Brahmin and a Muslim became the vice

president of the party. On the other hand, it was also found that though Sri Kalindra Nath Barman was re-elected the general secretary of the Central Committee, but Sri Jogendranath Narjinary (from Mech Community) of Madarihat and Sri Digendralal Roy were elected joint secretary of the party. Sri Satyendranath Basunia became treasurer.⁷ It would not be wrong to point out considering the caste and religion of the aforesaid party dignitaries that the 'Dal' seemed to have been tried to maintain non communal character in forming the Central Committee. In addition to these functionaries of the Central Committee, the remaining 46 members were the general members of the said Committee.

It appears from the nature of the constitution of the Central Committee of the Dal that for the first time the representations from all the five districts of North Bengal were included disproportionately in the Central Committee. It was found that out of total 53 members of the Central Committee only one was from Malda (Bamangola) district, Sri Dhirendra Nath Barman; only two from erstwhile West Dinajpur, Sri Manindranath Roy of Raiganj and Sri Pada Sarkar of Gosthinathpur; three from Darjeeling district; eleven members from Cooch Behar district and all the remaining members were from Jalpaiguri district. It was also found that almost all the office bearers of the Central Committee were from Jalpaiguri. Thus, as it has already been mentioned that the domination of the members of Jalpaiguri in the Central Committee was very much clear. But one important fact is very noticeable that in the formation of the Central Committee, for the first time, representation from all the sub divisions of Cooch Behar district were incorporated.⁸ Thus, it would not be wrong to state that the Dal succeeded to make progress in terms of its organizational activities in other districts of North Bengal especially in Cooch Behar. But the fact remains that the main organizational progress was visible in Jalpaiguri district only.

However, it has already been pointed out that in the aforesaid 'Protinidhi Sammelan' some changes in the main organizational structure of the party were made. In this connection, it is to be mentioned that a new unit in the main organizational structure was embodied and the same was named as 'Niti Nirdharak Committee' (policy making body) comprising seven members with Sri Harimohan Barman as its president and Haripada Ray as its secretary and other five members were Sri Girija Shankar Roy, Sri Balichanda Roy Karjee, Md. Abu Bakkar Siddiki, Sri Panchanan Mallick and Sri Kalindra Nath Barman.⁹

Thus, it can be said that with the passage of time, the leadership of the Dal felt the need for restructuring its organizational structure. And this process of restructuring was done now and then with the course of time. However, it was in November 1971 that the party formed another new committee i.e. 'Finance Committee' comprising four members viz. Haripada Ray, Bhupendra Nath Roy, Sri Padma Lochan Roy and Sri Babunath Roy with Sri Haripada Roy as its chairman. The committee was empowered to ask financial report from the party candidates who contested the last Assembly election in 1971. Thus, the committee had to look after the income and expenditure of the party.¹⁰ However, the Finance Committee entrusted Sri Digendra Nath Roy and Madhusudhan Sen with the responsibility of auditing the income and expenditure of the party since July 1969. Though the leadership of the party realized the necessity of sufficient fund for running a political party, but as the later developments, in this regard, showed, the party could not strengthen its financial position till its split.

In addition to the above mentioned units, another new unit was incorporated in the main structure of the Dal. That a 'Steering Committee' was constituted with a view to accelerate the progress of party activities and to extend its influence in different parts of North Bengal. It was constituted in the special session of the Central Committee, held at Mandalghat, Jalpaiguri. The 'Steering Committee' was constituted of seven members with Sri Panchanan Mallick as its president and Sri Dharma Narayan Barma of Tufanganj (Cooch Behar) as its vice president. Sri Satyabrata Goutam became secretary with Sri Sushankar Kr. Sarkar and Digen Roy as its joint secretaries. The important members were Sri Madhusudhan Sen, Sri Shudhansu Kumar Sarkar, Sri Nandeshwar Singha Roy, Md. Waejuddin Ahamed, Sri Babunath Barma, Sri Yogendra Nath Bhattacharya, Sri Jyotish Roy Barman, Sri Surendranath Roy, Sri Satyendra Nath Basunia, Sri Padmalochan Roy, Sri Haripada Roy and Sri Harimohan Barman.¹¹ However, the most interesting and important aspect of this newly constituted 'Steering Committee' of the Dal was that out of sixteen members, five members were from Cooch Behar district. But wonderfully, there was no member in that committee from Darjeeling, erstwhile West Dinajpur or Malda district. Thus, it may be stated in this connection that till then the domination of the party leadership was confined to Jalpaiguri district only and to some extent to Cooch Behar. However, another new development in the

organizational activities of the party was the appointment of whole time party workers in each 'Thana Committee.'¹² It should be mentioned that such a move on the part of the Uttarkhanda Dal reminds us the organizational tactics of the Left Parties especially of C.P.I.M. especially with regard to the policy of appointing the whole time party worker.

However, the 'Niti Nirdharak Committee' (policy making body), mentioned earlier was to be reconstituted because of the resignation of Sri Girija Shankar Roy, an important member of the said 'Committee'. It should be mentioned here that Sri Girija Shankar Roy who was not only the founder member of the Uttarkhanda Dal but also one of the procreators and ideologues of the Dal tendered his resignation even from the primary membership of the 'Dal.'¹³ The detailed discussion about such development will be made in the last part of this chapter. However, it was resolved at the time of reconstituting the aforesaid committee that the president of the Central Committee would automatically be the president of the 'Niti Nirdharak Committee' from now onwards.¹⁴

In later development it was found that the 'Niti Nirdharak Committee' decided to form a 'Working Council' which would take decision about the constitution or reconstitution of the Thana and District Committees. However, this 'Working Council' would be composed of five general secretaries for five districts of North Bengal in order to accelerate the progress of the organizational activities of the party in those districts. Again, each general secretary would be assisted by two joint secretaries .¹⁵ It should be remembered in this connection that till then the party was working with the ad hoc 'District Committees' in Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda districts. However, another important measure was taken by the Dal that the 'Central Committee' was divided into two different bodies viz., 'Executive Committee' and 'General Executive Committee' for the convenient of running the organizational activities of the Central Committee.¹⁶

It reveals from the above mentioned measures taken by the Dal for restructuring the main organizational structure embodying some new units in it that the think tanks of the Dal was making incessant efforts to strengthen or rather consolidate the internal organizational structure of the party. Therefore, it may be concluded that the leadership of the party was acquiring experiences with regard to the shaping of a political organization in course of the

passing days and applying the same in restructuring the organizational structure of the concerned Dal. It would not also be wrong to mention here considering the above discussion that the leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal were well conversant with the organizational structure of other national political parties of the time and the same had been well reflected in their own organization. In addition to this, it should be kept in mind that the party till then had no any permanent constitution and that is why, such organizational experiments were being done by the leadership of the party.

4.2. The think tanks of the Uttarkhanda Dal was not only busy with the forming and reforming its new organizational units but at the same time took sincere initiative to open different wings of the party in a bid to make its penetration in different sections of the society in the geographical region under study. In this respect, first of all, mention may be made of the initiative for opening up of a student organization of the Dal. It was resolved in the meeting of the ‘Executive Committee’ of the Dal that a central conference of the students’ representatives of all the five districts of North Bengal was to be convened where a student organization of the party was proposed to be formed. The responsibility of that task was given to Sri Shashi Bhushan Adhikary, a B.A. 3rd year student of A.C. college Jalpaiguri.¹⁷ However, it is not known whether the said student convention was held or not. But in another occasion, a proposal was taken to form “Uttarbanga Chhatra Samiti” under the stewardship of Sri Umesh Ch. Mandal.¹⁸ It is also not known whether this proposed wing with that nomenclature ever saw the light of the day. But in subsequent period, it was found that a student’s wing named ‘Uttarkhanda Yuva Chhatra Dal’ was formed with Sri Gobinda Ram Barman as its president and Sri Joymohan Barman as its secretary and this student wing of the party carried on its activities for some times.¹⁹ The activities of this branch organization will be discussed in later paragraphs.

It was also found that the Dal decided to organize a ‘Swechha Sewak Bahini’ named ‘Uttar Sena’ (an army of the North). The responsibility to constitute the said branch organization was offered to Sri Digendra Lal Roy and he would be assisted in this respect by Sri Madhushudhan Sen.²⁰ But later on, the responsibility was transferred to Sri Panchanan

Mallick, the party president in 1970 in order to make the branch organization stronger.²¹ It would be very relevant to mention here that the Dal organized this ‘Swechha Sewak Bahini’ in order to guard itself from the anarchical political condition which was prevalent in West Bengal during that period as the leadership of the U.K.D. thought so. From the above mentioned branch organization the Dal had proposed to open many other branch organizations in its ‘Protinidhi Sammalan’ in 24th January 1970. These proposed branch organizations were as follows.

(I) Uttarkhanda Dal Yuva Shakha (Youth Branch) under the headship of Sri Digendra Lal Roy.

(II) Hindu-Muslim Sanskriti Samanaya Samiti (Hindu-Muslim Culture Coordination Committee).

(III) Uttarbanga Trade Union under the charge of Sri Haripada Ray.

(IV) Uttarbanga Tapashili Jati, Upajati and Anagrasar Samaj Sanstha (The association of SC, ST and Backward Society of Uttarbanga) under the stewardship of Sri Rabindra Nath Sarkar.

(V) Halua Dal (Farmers’ organization) under the leadership of Sri Satyendra Nath Basunia.

(VI) Adibasi Sudhar Samaj (Tribal remedial society) under the leadership of Sri Soma Oraon.

(VII) Uttarbanga Vyavasayee Samiti (North Bengal Businessmen Society), organizer Sri Yogendra Nath Bhattacharya.

(VIII) Uttarbanga Shikshak Samiti (North Bengal Teachers Association), organizer was Sri Madhusudhan Sen.²²

However, all these aforesaid branch organizations of the Dal did not find the light of the day. Most of them were only in black and white. We come to know about the formation and activities of only three branch organizations so far.

It has already been stated that the ‘‘Uttarkhanda Yuba Chhatra Dal’’ was organized to extend the influence of the Uttarkhanda Dal among the college and university students of

North Bengal. With regard to its activities, mention may be made of its memorandum sent to the Prime Minister of India with a demand note in 1978. Some of the important demands figured in the demand note may be mentioned and these are as follows:

1. The educated youths of SC and ST members of North Bengal should be given job priority in both govt. and non-govt. organizations.
2. They should also be given training in technical education and in this context initiative should be taken by the govt.
3. Ninety five percent reservation of job for the candidates of North Bengal in all govt. sectors of North Bengal and out of which seventy five percent should be reserved for SC and ST candidates.
4. Separate Selection Board was to be set up for North Bengal and the same was to be constituted with the members taking from North Bengal only and eighty percent member of the Board was to be reserved for SC and ST communities.
5. Free school education up to class ten and free school books for SC and ST students up to class-x (ten) of North Bengal.
6. As the majority of the inhabitants of North Bengal are farmers, an agricultural college in each Thana was to be set up and education on local agrarian feature was to be imparted. ²³

It is very interesting to note and also known to all that in subsequent period the Govt. of India introduced free education up to class- X and also provided book grant for SC and ST students in schools. However, from this point of view, it may be pointed out that some of the demands of the 'Uttarkhanda Yuba Chhatra Shakha' were not impractical but logical one.

The next branch organization which had come to light and was active was the 'Halua Dal' later renamed as 'Uttar Khanda Krishak Samiti.' Sri Shankha Nath Barman was its president and Sri Satyabrata Goutam was its general secretary. It was found that this 'Samiti' along with 'Agavir Nalkup Samiti' (The Secretary was Sri Birendra Nath De) submitted a charter of 10 point demands jointly to the Chief Minister, Govt. of West Bengal in 1978. Mention may be made of some of the important demands.

1. Waiver of govt. and non govt. loans of the farmers of North Bengal who were badly affected by the devastating Tista flood of 1968.
2. Pecuniary assistance to the small farmers, Bargadars, (share croppers) and farmers possessing vested lands and also supply them with fertilizers, seeds, bullocks, and financial help to build their dwelling houses.
3. To bring all the major rivers of North Bengal under multi planning system and make North Bengal self sufficient in electricity and accelerate the irrigation system.
4. Provision for loan facilities to the farmers of North Bengal through govt. recognized banks should be accelerated in accordance with the list of farmers prepared by the village 'Cooperative Development Society.'
5. To expedite the release of govt. compensation for the lands which were acquired by the govt. for constructing Dams, Roads, and Railways etc.
6. Ration Card classifying 'A'(Ka) should be extended to the owners of 4 acres of land in the villages.²⁴

However, the fact is that how far the govt. of West Bengal responded to these demands of the 'Krishak Samiti' (an association of the farmers) of the 'Dal' is not known. But it can be pointed out from the above mentioned demands that the leaders of the 'Krishak Samiti' were very much conscious of the problems of the farmers of north Bengal. In other words, raising these demands , the Dal tried to woo the heart of the farmers of North Bengal in its favour.

Another branch organization of the Uttarkhanda Dal which was active to some extent was 'Uttarkhanda (Adibasi) Trade Union.' It has been mentioned earlier that a proposal was made to form 'Uttar Banga Trade Union'. Accordingly, the same was formed on 25th May 1970 with Sri Haripada Ray as its president and Sri Soma Oraon as vice president. Sri Harinath Oraon became secretary, Paulus Kauduluk joint secretary.²⁵ It should be remembered in this connection that Sri Soma Oraon, a founder member of the Uttarkhanda Dal and Sri Haripada Ray, the founder vice president of it were already entrusted with the

task of making contact with the tribal population of North Bengal.²⁶ It should be kept in mind that a large section of the population in the Dooars region of Jalpaiguri district and also its Rajganj block especially in the tea garden areas belonged to tribal community. It seems that considering the presence of such a large number of tribal population, the think- tanks of the Dal made a sincere effort to bring them under its umbrella. But it was seen that the Dal did not get much success in this direction. The reason might be the strong presence of the trade union organization of both the left and right national political parties.

4.3. It is a very common knowledge that the strength of a political party largely depends on its sound financial position and with this objective in view the Uttarkhanda Dal immediately after its foundation, took some primary measures to make its financial position sound. However, the fact is that though the leadership of the Dal left no stone unturned to raise fund from various sources, but it was found that the party earned no any major success in this direction. It is clear from the very fact that the members of the Executive Committee and later on the Central Committee expressed deep concern about the poor party fund from time to time. It is to be mentioned that though receipt books for raising fund had been distributed to the members of the party on several occasions, but it was found that most of the members made no sincere efforts in this direction. Consequently, the financial conditions of the party was never sound.²⁷ However, let us see the measures which were taken by the Dal in this direction from time to time. It was made compulsory for the members of each Thana Committee to make one hundred primary membership and the list of those new members along with the collected amount was instructed to be deposited within a given date.²⁸ In addition to this, the monthly subscription for each member of 'Thana Committee' and 'Anchalik Committee' was fixed at Rs. two and Rs. one respectively.²⁹ But the financial problem of the Dal was yet to be solved. As a result, it was found in subsequent time that in order to overcome the financial difficulties of the Dal it was made obligatory for each member of the Central Committee and District Committees to subscribe annually at Rs. five and three respectively to the party fund. It was instructed to send the subscription amount to the official secretary of the party on time.³⁰ In spite of such strong measure, followed by the party, the financial position of the Dal was not improved at all

As a result the Dal had to constitute a “Finance Committee” comprising four members viz. Sri Haripada Ray, Sri Bhupendra Nath Roy, Sri Padma Lochan Roy and Sri Babunath Barma with Haripada Ray as its chairman.³¹ It is to be stated that it was the first of such committee which was formed since the inception of the party. Besides such measures, the Dal also opened a fund named ‘Sangram Tahabil’ (Fund for Struggle). But the purpose of this fund was not known. However, for this purpose, coupons amounting Rs. 50 paisa to Rs.10/ per leaf were printed. In this case, also it was made compulsory for each secretary of the ‘Thana Committee’ and District Committees to get coupons paying in cash.³² But the amount was not stated.

However, it is clear from the aforesaid discussion that the Dal made all out effort to raise and strengthen its financial position. But the later developments related to financial position of the Dal proved the fact that the Dal could never make its financial condition very sound.

4.4. Apart from the aforesaid organizational activities of the Dal, it made great endeavour to increase the number of party membership. The initiative in this respect was taken by the Dal from its very foundation. It is known from the proceedings of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Dal, held in July 1969, that the initial goal to enroll primary membership was ten thousand and accordingly, decision was taken to print party *coupon* of the same number.³³ However, this attempt of the Dal was not achieved at all. As a result, it was found in subsequent period that the Dal printed some receipt books numbering the serial from 01 to 14,000 for the enrolment of primary membership of the party.³⁴ Two counter parts of the receipt books for primary membership bearing serial numbers 2040 and 2041 along with the signatures of the newly enrolled members have so far been unearthed. These two members were Sri Sunanda Roy and Amulyadhan Roy, both from Jateswar, Jalpaiguri. The date of their enrolment was 4 January, 1970. The membership subscription was 25 (twenty five) paisa only. However, the format of the counter part of the receipt has been given bellow.

Uttarkhanda Dal

No. UKD69-70/2040

Prodhan Karyalay (Head Office), Siliguri, District, Darjeeling.

Ami Uttarkhanda Daler niti o uddeshyer proti purna astha sthapan kariya 25 paisa chanda diye prathamik sadasya hailam. (I, expressing my full trust on the principle and objectives of the Uttarkhanda Dal and paying 25 paisa became the primary member).

Sadasyer Nam..... Abedan Karir Swakshar

(Name of the Member)

(Signature of the Applicant)

Thikana.....

(Address)

Sangraha..... Sri Kalindra Nath Barman

(Collector)

Swakshar (Signature)

Tang.....

Sadharan Sampadak

(Date)

(General Secretary)

(Source: *A counter part of the receipt book for primary membership*, Dated- 4.1.1970).

However, it is very much clear from the above information that the leadership of the Dal made every possible effort to extend its membership. But it is not possible to know that how many members in total were enrolled in the Dal. The reason is that no record book was maintained by the Dal in this regard.

4.5. In addition to the aforesaid organizational activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal, it was found that the 'Dal' had some other aspects of its organizational activities. It was seen that the 'Dal' had adopted some important resolutions in its various meetings, annual conferences and Protinidhi or Activists' conferences with regard to the contemporary socio-economic and political developments of the concerned region. It is very imperative to mention these resolutions and decisions here, because these were actually the reflection of the socio-economic and political viewpoints of the *Uttarkhandists*.

It is to be noted that the leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal were very critical of the vested land distributing policy of the State Govt. since its very foundation which was well reflected in the party programmes of the Dal and that has already been pointed out in the previous chapter (chapter-3). Hence, the Dal was very desperate to get its representation included in the 'Land Distribution Committee' of the Govt. of West Bengal. It was alleged by the Uttarkhanda Dal that the aforesaid Committee of the State Govt. was following partisan attitude towards the indigenous landless farmers and they were being deprived of vested lands. Accordingly the Dal instructed its general secretary to persuade the concerned authority for the inclusion of one member from the Uttarkhanda Dal in the above mentioned 'Committee' of the State Govt.³⁵ However, it is to be remembered in this context that in the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* meeting in the 1950s (1955) such a resolution was taken which has already been stated in chapter-2 in the economic background of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal.

It is very pertinent to mention that West Bengal witnessed increasing violence and political chaos, a crisis of governability, heightened factionalism and splits in Congress Party which ruled the state directly or through President's rule from 1969-1972.³⁶ Besides, the chaotic political situation during the rule of United Front Govt. also invited the President's rule in West Bengal. However, the stand of the Uttarkhanda Dal in this regard was that it welcomed the President's rule when it was imposed on 16th March 1970. But at the same time the Dal demanded through its party resolution, the immediate declaration of election of the state legislature, of course, after bringing the then anarchical political situation under control.³⁷

However, the great political event which rocked the erstwhile East Pakistan in the 70s of the last century was the 'Bangladesh Mukti Sangram.' It is very relevant here because this historical event had direct effects on the socio-economic and demographic sphere of West Bengal especially on the northern part of North Bengal. As a result of this 'Mukti Sangram' a large number of war refugees crossed the India-East Pakistan border and took refuge in different border districts of West Bengal. But the fact is that the districts of North Bengal had to bear the brunt of a large number of refugee problem. Therefore, the question arises in our mind that what was the attitude of the Uttarkhanda Dal towards these refugees, at least in the early years of the 70s of the last century. However, in order to understand the attitude of the Uttarkhanda Dal, the different resolutions and decisions which were adopted in this respect in its various meetings should be mentioned here. It was found that the Uttarkhanda Dal had sympathetic and positive attitude towards the refugee problem. It was also noticed that the Dal had instructed its members of every Thana Committee to put pressure on the govt. for setting up sufficient number of refugee camps so that the refugees would face no troubles. It was also instructed to look after whether each and every individual refugee was getting proper rationing facilities along with other govt. aids. Apart from this, the 'Thana Committees' were asked to seek help from the non-govt. organizations for the refugees. But the most important aspect of the attitude of the Uttarkhanda Dal in relation with the non-Rajbanshi refugees was well-expressed in the fact that it had instructed its activists to keep constant vigil on the matter that there must not have happened any communal feeling or conflict or disharmony in their respective areas.³⁸ Notwithstanding the above mentioned attitude of the Uttarkhanda Dal leads us to the belief that till then no anti refugee or anti-Namasudra feeling was germinated in the minds of the *Uttarkhandists*.

It is to be noted that the organizational activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal were not restricted to making or adopting resolutions relating to different problems or issues of contemporary North Bengal or structuring or restructuring various units of the party, but at the same time, it was found that the party leadership strove to make aware of the party ideology, programmes, demands, grievances to the masses of North Bengal through public meetings, circulating leaflets and also tried to draw the attention of the govt. to socio-economic problems of North Bengal submitting memoranda. Therefore, it is very relevant to

make a discussion on those activities of the Dal, mentioned above. Besides this, if we analyze the different proposal and decision of the Uttarkhanda Dal, adopted in the various meetings and conferences from 1969-1979, the modus operandi and character of the party during this phase would be clear to us.

However, the first public meeting of Uttarkhanda Dal so far as is known, was held at the premises of Bhandaripura High School, four miles away from Belakoba Railway Station, Jalpaiguri. It was reported that more than thousand peasants from nearby Shikarpur, Binnaguri, Panikaudi 'Anchals' of Rajganj Block attended the meeting. It was also reported that some tea garden workers also attended the said meeting. The organizers of this first public meeting of the Uttarkhanda Dal were some educated youths of the locality like Sri Krishna Kanta Roy, Sri Sarat Kumar Roy, Sri Jyotiprasad Roy and others. The said meeting was presided over by Bhudeb Singha Roy. The main speakers were Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Dal and Sri Kalindra Nath Barman, the General Secretary. These leaders mainly tried to explain the importance and need of the Uttarkhanda Dal to the people of North Bengal through their political speeches.³⁹ The interesting side of the above mentioned meeting was that Sri Girikumar Roy the then 'Prodhan' of Shikarpur Anchal and Sri Purna Chandra Roy, the then '*Prodhan*' of Panikaudi Anchal were also present at the meeting (but the name of the political party they belonged to is not known). Another important aspect of the meetings to be mentioned that the party slogans were *Inkilab Jindabad, Uttarkhanda Dal Jindabad, Krishok Shramik Eikya Jindabad, Partir Hamlabazi Bando Karo*, etc.⁴⁰ It should be mentioned in this connection that the actual party slogan of the Uttarkhanda Dal was *Uttarkhanda Daler Jay Houk* (Victory to Uttarkhanda Dal). It is very relevant to mention here that the U.K.D. probably imitated the slogans of the Left Parties of West Bengal.

It is also very interesting to mention the publicity tactics of the party. The leaders of the 'Dal' in their public speeches raised the emotive question of socio-economic deprivation of the indigenous people of North Bengal. Side by side, they promised them all round developments of North Bengal. They alleged that the people of North Bengal were bullocks of carts and the drivers were the people of South Bengal especially the Calcuttans.⁴¹ Therefore, they called the people of North Bengal to shun the association of the political

parties led by the leader of Calcutta and come under the umbrella of Uttarkhanda Dal, an organization of their own. Notably, the '*Uttarkhandists*' demanded the ceiling of not only lands but also of the property on money's worth and its application both in the villages and towns. It is to be remembered in this connection that the Govt. of West Bengal made this ceiling of lands by the Land Reforms Act of 1955. By this Act, the highest ceiling of lands per family was fixed 25 acres.

The front ranking leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal were of the opinion that it was the conspiracy of the urban based political leaders of West Bengal to jeopardize the rural landed gentry. They argued that the face value of 25 acres of land (in then time) was approximately about Rs. 75000/ altogether, whereas in town or city areas most of the businessmen as well as govt. service holders possessed palatial buildings, motor vehicles and also sufficient amount of lands sold on *Catha* and the face value of such individual property was higher than that of 25 acres of land in the villages. Therefore, they demanded that the property of an individual worth in excess of Rs. 75000/ in town areas also was to be vested by the govt. However, it was the simple meaning of socialism what the *Uttarkhandists* meant to eradicate the economic disparity between the village and town.⁴²

The leader of the Dal also argued in their public speeches that the productivity of the soil of North Bengal especially of its northern part was lesser than that of south Bengal. Therefore, they raised the demand to the state govt. that if the landless cultivators of South Bengal were allotted 6 *bighas* (two acres) of vested land per family, their counterparts in North Bengal should be allotted 12 *bighas* (4 acres) per family. They again pleaded that as North Bengal was educationally backward, schools and colleges were required to be established. In addition to this they urged the govt. to chalk out plan for the development of North Bengal keeping in view the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic feature of the region.⁴³ However, they sharply criticized not only chaotic rule of the United Front Govt. but at the same time the twenty years long rule of Congress party in West Bengal in terms of the development of North Bengal. According to them "the Congress Govt. sucked the poor and now the United Front govt. was drinking their blood by breaking their necks"⁴⁴

All public meetings, discussed above were held at different places of Jalpaiguri

district only. But such public meetings were not confined to the aforesaid district only but also were organized in other district of North Bengal for the publicity of the party programmes and objectives. For example, a public meeting of the Dal was organized at the school ground of Singimari Junior High School of Mathabhanga, Cooch Behar. It was attended by the heavy weight leaders of the Dal like Sri Kalindra Nath Barman, Sri Soma Oraon, Bhadrnath Roy and others.⁴⁵

Apart from this, the Dal used to hold regular public meetings at different places of Darjeeling *terai*. A massive gathering of the Uttarkhanda Dal in Darjeeling district was held at Atharakhai (Shibmandir) on 3rd July 1970. This public meeting was presided over by Sri Taranikanta Roy and the party flag was hoisted by Sri Yogendra Nath Bhattacharya, the vice president of the Uttarkhanda Dal. The inaugural speech was delivered by Sri Girija Shankar Roy (M.A.). Other important speakers were Sri Atin Roy (B.Com), Sri Suren Barman, (a B.A. student of Siliguri College). In addition to these leaders, the other Central Committee leaders who addressed the gathering were Sri Babunath Barma, Md. Waezuddin Ahmed, general secretary of the Dal Sri Rabindranath Sarkar (M.A.B.T) and finally, the convener of the meeting Sri Joynath Singha. The other members of the Dal who were present in the meeting were Sri Rameshwarlal Agarwal, Sri Bisheshwar Chakraborty (M.A.), Sri Kalindra Nath Barman and Sri Satyendra Nath Basunia.⁴⁶ It is to be mentioned that Sri Girija Shankar Roy and Sri Rabindra Nath Sarkar (also known as Rabi Sarkar) were instrumental to strike the root of the organization in the *terai* of Darjeeling especially at Patharghata, Salbari, Gosainpur, Bagdogra, and Phanshidewa.⁴⁷

However, with regard to other two districts of North Bengal i.e. West Dinajpur (now North and South Dinajpur) and Malda, it was found that Sri Panchanan Mallick and Sri Kalindra Nath Barman, the president and secretary of the Dal along with two other leaders viz. Sri Satyendranath Basunia and Surya Narayan Adhikary made a tour of the two districts in order to make an organizational penetration there but having a little result. However, during this tour, the leaders attended a series of organizational meetings in the places like Hemtabad, Kaliaganj, Gangarampur, etc. of West Dinajpur. As a result of these meetings, some Thana and Anchalik Committees were formed in those areas of the district. In Malda district, they held meetings at Buniadpur and Alampur only.⁴⁸

Another interesting feature of the organizational activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal deserves special mention. It was found that the party tried to propagate its ideas, objectives, programmes etc. through folk songs and poems to the people of the concerned region. We may cite a poem here which was published in the Uttarbanga (a local newspaper) in local ‘Adibasi’ language. The poem goes like this:

....*Jibi babu hai bourgeois*
Babuka nakhkhe biswas,
Shahar gaonka bived niti,
Hammier banalek kritadas,
Age bad, age bad,
Dabi kar aday kar,
Bol honsiar babuji,
Larai ke liye taiar UKD, UKD.
Ye hai mera apna patti ,
Sab jhuta kamred aur sathi,
Aja aja sab ek sath,
Kishan majdur bhai milaye hat,
Age bad dabi kad
*Aday ke liye larai, larai kar.’*⁴⁹

The free translation of the aforesaid poem goes thus: The service holder ‘*babus*’ who are bourgeois should not be trusted. Making economic disparity between city dwellers and country dwellers they have made us slaves. That is why, march forward, make your

legitimate demands and acquire them. Tell the *babujis* to be careful, because U.K.D. is ready to fight. It is our own party, the others including the comrades are false. So, you, farmers, labourers come together and march forward with holding each other's hands and fight to get your legitimate demands.

4.6. In addition to the foregoing organizational activities, the Uttarkhanda Dal had also submitted memoranda to the state govt. and semi govt. institutions with demand notes and also established political relations with other regional political parties. With regard to the submission of memoranda of the Dal, it was found that a representation of the Dal under the leadership of Sri Rabindra Nath Sarkar, the secretary of the party made the then Vice Chancellor of North Bengal University Sri Purna Chandra Mukhopadhyay and submitted a demand note mentioning the recruitment of local youths in different clerical posts of the said university. They also alleged that the local youths were not recruited or given job opportunities since its establishment.⁵⁰ In another occasion, the activists of the Atharakhai of the Dal ghared B.D.O. office of Siliguri and submitted a memorandum with a demand note on 4th July 1970. Their demands were namely (I) the small irrigation programmes in different villages of Siliguri subdivision; (II) the preservation of grazing lands; (III) immediate reconditioning of flood affected agricultural lands; (IV) Release of the compensation of those lands, acquired by military department and in that matter, the owner and *bargadar* (share croppers) should be compensated equally etc.⁵¹ Besides this, another representation of the Uttarkhanda Dal under the leadership of Sri Kalindra Nath Barman submitted a memorandum to the authority of the 'Basic Training College,' Belakoba, Jalpaiguri demanding the admission of 75 percent trainees from local educated youths and of which 50 percent was to be taken from SC and ST community. In that representation more than 400 local educated youths took part.⁵² It has already been stated that the Uttarkhanda Dal also tried to make contact with other regional political parties. In this respect, the 'Dal' contemplated of establishing relation with the All India Gorkha League, an ethnic based regional political party, was founded in the hill of Darjeeling in the closing years of the colonial rule in India. It was a political organization of the *Gorkhas* of Darjeeling hills and was founded on 15th May 1943. Its founder president was Sri Dambar Sing Gurung.⁵³ In that

direction, Sri Kalindra Nath Barman was asked to make contact with the leadership of the 'Gorkha League'⁵⁴ However, the result of this effort on the part of the Uttarkhanda Dal was that later in 1977, joint representations of the 'Gorkha League' and the Uttarkhanda Dal under the leadership of Sri Panchanan Mallick went to Calcutta to submit a memorandum with a charter of 34 point demands to the Chief Minister, Govt. of West Bengal. However, before mentioning some important demands of the joint memorandum of the said two parties, it is very important to mention the addressing note of the said memorandum. It was mentioned in the addressing note that 'this memorandum is being submitted by the 'Uttarkhanda and Gorkha League United Front' demanding all round development of North Bengal, opposing economic disparities, step motherly negligence, exploitation of the wealth of North Bengal. It was also mentioned that 'if these demands were not redressed properly by the govt. within six months, this front would start a tremendous movement in Uttarkhanda.'⁵⁵ The signatories in the above mentioned memorandum were Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Uttarkhanda Dal, Sri Sampad Roy, the general secretary of U.K.D., Sri Deo Prakash Rai, M.L.A., Darjeeling and general secretary of All India Gorkha League and Smt. Renulina Subba, M.L.A., Kalimpong Constituency of Darjeeling district. However, we have to keep in mind that it was the first political alliance between these two regional and ethnic based political parties under the nomenclature of 'United Front.' It was no doubt a new political development in the post independence North Bengal.

Now, let us mention the demands which were figured in the memorandum-cum-demand note submitted by that new 'Front.' However, only the new additions of the demands were mentioned here because the rest of the demands were already figured in the party programme of the U.K.D. and those were already mentioned in the previous chapter (chapter-3). It should be mentioned here that these new demands were added considering the alliance with Gorkha League, so far as the nature of them shows. This new demands are mentioned below:

1. Construction of the true history of North Bengal and its inclusion in the curriculum of North Bengal University as well as of its affiliated colleges within one year.
2. Preservation of the Cooch Behar palace and its adjacent lands and declare it as the centre

of the language, culture and heritage of North Bengal. Besides, the preservation and renovation of the antiques and historical places of Malda, West Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Darjeeling and the introduction of archaeological and historical research centers there.

3. Establishment of a full-fledged branch of Calcutta High Court at a centre place of North Bengal taking into account the public opinion.

4. North Bengal University, Law College, Engineering College and Medical College are to be reserved only for the students of North Bengal. Reservation of 70 percent seat in those institutions for S.C., S.T. and Nepali communities. Besides, reservation of 70 percent membership for the above mentioned communities in the governing and selection bodies of those afore said institutions.

5. Formation of 'North Bengal Development Council' within 3 months. Inclusion of 95 percent members in the council from among the inhabitants of North Bengal and of which 50 percent from among the SC and ST communities.

6. Introduction of a 'Kamotapuri Bhasa Sahitya Academy' in North Bengal University on the line of 'Nepali Sahitya Academy'. The recognition of 'Kamatapuri language' and the inclusion of Nepali Language in the 8th schedule of the constitution of India. Appointment of Urdu and Arbi teachers in every secondary school of North Bengal.

7. Acceleration of socio-economic and cultural development of Nepali, Bhutia (of both hills and plains) and others SC and ST population of North Bengal.

8. Equal distribution of per capita expenditure between North Bengal and South Bengal in the coming budget of the Government of West Bengal which is at present Rs.200/ and 25/ for south Bengal and North Bengal respectively.

9. All the tea gardens of North Bengal are to be brought under the ownership of tea garden labour cooperative society. Establishment of the head office of all tea gardens of North Bengal.

10. Equalization of the wage of the tea garden labourers of Dooars, tarai and the hills of

Darjeeling. Fixing to the daily wage of each tea garden labourer at Rs.10/.

11. Induction of one minister, in charge of North Bengal with the equal status of the Chief Minister, two cabinet ministers and three state ministers in the ministry, Govt. of West Bengal from among the M.L.A.s of North Bengal belonged to SC, ST, Nepali and Muslim communities. Freedom to the M.L.A.s of North Bengal to raise the problems of North Bengal in the session of State Legislative Assembly.

12. Employment opportunities and the construction of dwelling houses for the homeless poor people living under the trees, on the foot paths and in the open market places. Immediate measures for eradicating beggary.⁵⁶

However, the aforesaid memorandum having a demand note is very significant from many respects. It was for the first time that 'Uttarbanga' was termed as 'Uttarkhanda' officially in the said memorandum. Besides, the Rajbanshi language was termed as Kamotapuri one for the first time by the leadership of the Uttarkhanda Dal and demanded its recognition and there was with a little doubt, an overtone of a political movement for the future. Because, this demand for the recognition of the Kamotapuri language led a movement for a separate Kamotapur state at the beginning of the 80s of the twentieth century.

However, it would not be wrong to argue that in subsequent time the introduction of 'North Bengal Development Council,' decision of establishing 'Circuit Bench' of Calcutta High Court in North Bengal, induction of a cabinet minister, in charge of north Bengal in the ministry of Govt. of West Bengal - all these prove the justification of some of the demands of the Uttarkhanda Dal and Gorkha League 'United Front' in the 70's of the last century.

It is to be mentioned that the then Chief Minister, Govt. of West Bengal, Sri Jyoti Basu did not feel it necessary to make courtesy to acknowledge the aforesaid memorandum as it was alleged by Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Uttarkhanda Dal in an interview.⁵⁷ It is very much relevant to state in this connection that it was the turning point in terms of the beginning of a movement for a separate state in North Bengal by the U.K.D. and the same will be discussed in details in chapter-6. In subsequent period, it was found that a political conference was organized by the U.K.D. on behalf of the 'Uttarkhanda-Gorkha

League Front' at Chaterhat , near North Bengal Medical College in 28 January 1978. The chief guests of that conference were from All India Gorkha League viz., Smt. Renulina Subba, M.L.A. (Kalimpong) and Sri Deo Prasad Rai M.L.A. (Darjeeling) and general secretary of All India Gorkha League.⁵⁸

In addition to the above mentioned political alliance of U.K.D. with 'Gorkha League' it was found that a political relation was established with the Republican Party. It should be mentioned that the Republican party was organized by the backward class communities and its main support base in West Bengal was among the scheduled caste communities especially among the Matuas and Namasudras (Bengali sub castes). The Republican party believed in the ideology of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. However, later the U.K.D., Gorkha League and the Republican Party united together and a new front called 'Mukti Front' was formed. A joint public meeting of these new 'Front' was organized at the Chaterhat School ground on 12 November 1979.⁵⁹ Besides, it was found that Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the U.K.D. contested the general election of 1980 as a candidate of the Mukti Front of three parties, mentioned above.⁶⁰

It is very pertinent to mention here that the organizational activities of the U.K.D. got a setback due to the declaration of Emergency throughout India w.e.f. 26 January 1975. During the time of Emergency the Govt. of India imposed prohibitory rules and amended the MISA. The Emergency continued up to June 1977. The activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal became very weak during this period.⁶¹

4.7 In the preceding paragraphs, an elaborate discussion was made on the organizational activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal. Now let us gauge the response to its activities reflected in different sections of socio-political circle. If we carefully analyze the composition of the Executive Committee and later the Central Committee of the Uttarkhanda Dal, it will be found that most of the influential and front ranking leaders and members of those said committees belonged to Jalpaiguri and only a few members were from Cooch Behar and Darjeeling districts and not mentionable numbers from erstwhile West Dinajpur and Malda districts. However, it is very interesting to note that almost all the general secretaries of the

party till its split in 1987 barring one i.e. Sri Satyabrata Goutam were from Darjeeling district viz, Sri Kalindra Nath Barman, Sri Rabindra Nath Sarkar and finally Sri Sampad Roy. If we cite the example of the formation of the Central Committee, it would be found that out of 53 of total members of the committee only one was from Malda, two from erstwhile West Dinajpur, three from Darjeeling, eleven from Cooch Behar and the remaining 36 members from Jalpaiguri.⁶² It reveals the fact that the response from other districts of North Bengal especially from Malda, West Dinajpur and Darjeeling was microscopic in this phase of the organizational activities of the Dal. Moreover, it was found that most of the meetings of the Central Committee of the Dal were held at different places of Jalpaiguri. Only a few meetings were held in Cooch Behar and Darjeeling. But no such meeting of the Central Committee was held at Malda or West Dinajpur. So, it is clear from the above fact that the organizational strength of the Dal was confined to Jalpaiguri district only.

So far as the response of the indigenous (autochthonous) communities of the region under study was concerned, it was found that whatever support base the Uttarkhanda Dal had, it had among the Rajbanshi community. It had very little influence among the Muslims, Mech, Adibasi and other autochthons. As for example, in another conference of the Central Committee of the Dal as well as its 'Activists Conference held at its Head office (Jalpesh Temple) on 1 January 1971, it was found that out of 118 activists of the Dal so far as present, only 4 from Adibasi, 2 from Mech and 3 from Muslim communities all the remaining activists were from Rajbanshi Community.⁶³ Therefore, the fact remains that the Dal was largely organized and led by the people of the Rajbanshi community.

The party also failed to earn any response from the women of concerned region. It also failed to constitute any women's branch organization. However, only one exception was Smt. Usha Roy, an assistant teacher of Helapakri High School, Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri in this place of the activities of Uttarkhanda Dal. She was the member cum-accountant of 'Padamati Anchal' committee of the Dal.⁶⁴ Moreover; she was one of the members of editorial board of the party mouth piece 'YogaYog'.

Apart from this, if the election results of both Parliamentary and Assembly, so far as the U.K.D. had contested in 1971, 1972, 1977 and 1980⁶⁶ are also considered as a barometer

for gauging its support base on the response of the general people, it can be said without reservation that it had no solid support base in any level during the “present phase of our discussion.” However, the details of the election results of the Dal will be discussed in chapter-5. In respect of the poor election result, the scholars argue that the weak organizational activities of the U.K.D. were completely unmatched with the powerful activities of the Indian National Congress and the regimented Left Parties. Thus, “the presence of strong and nationalist parties in this region did not provide any opportunity for the U.K.D. for expanding its organization.”⁶⁷ Haripada Ray, the founder vice president of the Dal, on the other hand, was of the opinion that the main reason for miserable performance of the U.K.D. in the election was for the lack of funds that were necessary for contesting election.⁶⁸ In this respect, it is also to be mentioned that the Uttarkhanda Dal entirely failed to draw attention of the urban people. It proves by the fact it failed to field any candidate in the election of various municipalities of North Bengal.⁶⁹

Again an important aspect relating to the response of the educated section of the Rajbanshi community deserves special mention. It was found that most of the educated activist and leaders especially the educated youth activists of the Dal were gradually withdrawing their support or distancing themselves from the party. The best examples in this regard are the resignations of Sri Girija Shankar Roy and Sri Rabindra Nath Sarkar even from the primary membership of the party.⁷⁰ It should be remembered in this connection that both were the front ranking leaders of the Dal. Sri Girija Shankar Roy was even the personality who advocated the need for a political organization for the Rajbanshis. However, the reason of such gradual alienation of the educated section of the Rajbanshi community from the Uttarkhanda Dal was according to Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, “The neo-middle class of the Rajbanshi community is more interested in getting facilities of the reservation system than any direct confrontation with the govt.”⁷¹ It would not be wrong to mention that the result of such gradual alienation of the educated section of the Dal especially the ‘neo-middle class’ was the transfer of sole leadership to its president Sri Panchanan Mallick and its general secretary Sri Sampad Roy till the split of the party in 1987. It is also very interesting to note that both these aforesaid leaders were from *jotedary* background and themselves were ‘*jotedars*.’ It was probably because of this fact that the opponents and critics of the

Uttarkhanda Dal, especially leftist labeled it as the 'Jotedars' Party' which is to a large extent was a misnomer so far as our discussion reveals.

The reaction or response of other political parties to the activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal is also to be noted. The first reaction, however, was from the Forward Block in 1970. The spokes person of that party termed the Uttarkhanda Dal as 'reactionary' and 'separatist'.⁷² But on the basis of the above discussion which was made on almost all the available sources of information, it can emphatically be stated that during the period from 1969-1979, there was as such no any reactionary or separatist tendency on the part of the Uttarkhanda Dal. During this period the leadership of the Dal made only toilsome efforts to extend its support base as an ethnic based regional political party among the various sections of the people of North Bengal raising the emotive issues like the socio- economic backwardness of North Bengal and blaming the Calcutta centric leaders for such backwardness and also urged the govt. to take proper measures in that direction. Therefore, this phase of the organizational activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal (from 1969-1979) should be regarded as a search for separate political identity of the autochthons of North Bengal but not a search for a separate state.

Notes and References

1. *Proceedings of the meeting of the Executive Committee*, held at Temple Street, Jalpaiguri, 20th July 1969.(collected from Madan Mohan Mallick, the eldest son of Panchanan Mallick, the founder president of the U.K.D.). [hereafter collected, M.M.Mallick].
2. *The first Draft Constitution of the Uttarkhanda Dal*. (Collected, M. M. Mallick).
3. Proceedings of the meeting of the Executive Committee, *op.cit*.
4. *Protinidhi Sammelan* of the Uttarkhanda Dal, held at Jalpesh Temple, Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri, 29th January 1970. (It proves by the presence of the members whose signature and address were figured at the end of the Resolution). [Collected, M.M.Mallick.].
5. Proceeding of the meeting of the Executive Cmmittee, *op.cit*, Resolution No. A.
6. *Foundation meeting of the Uttarkhanda Dal*, held at Thakurpat Rajamohan High School (now H.S.) P.S. Dhupguri, Dist. Jalpaiguri, 5th July 1969.
7. Proceedings of the Protinidhi Sammelan of the Uttarkhanda Dal, *op.cit*.
8. *Ibid.*, (list of the Central Committee and their addresses show this figure.)
9. *Ibid.*, Resolution No. B.
10. *Proceedings of the Special Session of the Central Committee*, held at Jalpesh Temple , Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri, 5th November1971. (Collected, M. M. Mallick).
11. *Proceedings of the Special Session of the Central Committee*, held at Mandalghat, Jalpaiguri, 1st January1972, Resolution No.2. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Proceedings of the Conference of the Central Committee*, Resolution No. E, held at Jalpesh Temple, Maynaguri,Jalpaiguri, in February,1972. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).

14. *Proceedings of an emergent meeting of the Niti Nirdharak Committee* (Policy making body), 10th March, 1973. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).
15. *Ibid.*, Resolution No. 4.
16. *Ibid.*, Resolution No. 6.
17. *Proceedings of the meeting of the Executive Committee*, Resolution No.-3, held at Belakoba, Jalpaiguri, 23 November 1969. (Collected, M. M. Mallick).
18. *Proceedings of the Protinidhi Sammelan*, *op.cit.*, Resolution No. d(2).
19. *A letter*, addressing the Prime Minister, govt. of India, New Delhi, sent by the Uttarkhanda Dal, 26th March 1978 (Bengali version of this letter, printed at New Printing works, Kadamtala, Jalpaiguri). (Collected from Sri Babunath Barma, a founder member of the U.K.D.).
20. *Proceedings of the meeting of the Executive Committee*, *op.cit.*, Resolution No.4.
21. *Proceedings of the Protinidhi Sammelan*, *op.cit.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *A letter*, addressing the Prime Minister, Govt. of India, sent by the Uttarkhanda Yuba Chhatra Dal, n.d.
24. *A letter* with a charter of 10 point demands, submitted by the ‘Uttarkhanda Krishok Samiti’ and ‘Agavir Nalkup Samiti’ jointly to the Chief Minister, Govt. of West Bengal, 22nd March. 1978. (Letter was printed in a pamphlet).
25. *Proceedings of the meeting* of the ‘Uttarbanga Trade Union, held at Ethelbari Tea Estate, Dhupguri, Jalpaiguri, 25th May 1970. (Collected, M. M. Mallick).
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58. *A leaflet*, published by Sri Sampad Roy, General Secretary, Uttarkhanda Dal, n.d.

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Chapter- 5

Electoral Politics of the Uttarkhanda Dal and its Results

Almost all the political parties either national or regional in a democratic set up of a country generally involve themselves in electoral politics in order to gauge their support base among the people and also with an aspiration that their party candidates are to be elected and will represent in legislative bodies at central and provincial levels as well as in local legislative bodies of a country. Similarly the Uttarkhanda Dal, the theme of our present study, being in a democratic set up, had involved itself in electoral politics fielding its party candidates in different Bidhan Sobha (State Legislative Assembly) elections, held in West Bengal from 1971 to 1982 and Lok Sobha (Parliamentary) elections, held in India from 1971 to 1984 before its final split. However, in the following discussion of this chapter an attempt has been made to explain elaborately the electoral activities and electoral politics of the Uttarkhanda Dal and also the results vis-à-vis the presence of other national political parties in the region of our study. The present discussion will be limited to the Parliamentary election of 1984 for the Uttarkhanda Dal witnessed its split in 1987 and followed its rapid decline thereafter. It should be mentioned that the Uttarkhanda Dal had boycotted the Bidhan Sobha (State Legislative Assembly) election, held in West Bengal in the early month of 1987. Though, the Dal had participated in both Bidhan Sobha (State Legislative Assembly) and Lok Sobha (Parliamentary) elections even after 1987 as a split group but the main focus of our present discussion would be on the election years mentioned above.

The Uttarkhanda Dal, as it has been mentioned earlier in chapter-3, was formed in July 1969 at Thakurpat of Dhupguri of Jailpaiguri district. Hence, the U.K.D. made its election debut in Parliamentary and State Legislative Assembly (West Bengal) elections held simultaneously in March 1971. It was, in fact, the sixth State Legislative Assembly election in West Bengal (mid-term) and fifth Parliamentary election (mid-term) of our country.¹ However, the U.K.D. resolved to field the candidates in both Bidhan Sobha (West Bengal) and Lok Sobha elections in its special party session, held in March 1970.² Accordingly the

Dal fielded its candidates in the Bidhan Sobha seats in Dhupguri, Maynaguri, Falakata, Rajganj, Jalpaiguri Sadar---all are in Jalpaiguri district and in one seat of Cooch Behar district i.e. Mekhliganj. The Dal also fielded its two candidates in the Lok Sobha seat of Jalpaiguri (ST) and Cooch Behar. It is very relevant to point out here in this context that the organizational activities of the Dal at this very initial stage were confined in to some Blocks of Jalpaiguri district especially those mentioned above and Mekhliganj Block of Cooch Behar district and the same has already been mentioned in chapter-4. It should be mentioned that the Dal till then could not make its presence in other districts of North Bengal. Therefore, it was found that the Dal fielded its candidates in 1971 elections mostly in above mentioned seats of Jalpaiguri district. However, the candidates of the Dal contested in those elections mentioned above as independent one for it had no registration from the Election Commission of India.

However, in its debut election, the Uttarkhanda Dal went to the voters with no any specific election manifesto. Rather, it put before the voters the party programmes,³ formulated at the time of its formation, as its election manifesto. That very party programme of the U.K.D. has already been mentioned in chapter-3. In this connection mention may be made of some of its programmes such as the economic deprivation of the people of North Bengal by the Govt. of West Bengal, the Calcutta centric rule, socio-cultural backwardness of North Bengal and indifferent attitude of the State Govt. towards this backwardness.

However, the result of the Bidhan Sobha seats, the Dal contested so far, it may be said, was encouraging for the U.K.D. to some extent, leaving two Bidhan Sobha and two Lok Sobha seats aside. The matter will be very clear if we take a look at the result sheet of the Bidhan Sobha and Lok Sobha seats where the U.K.D. had fielded its candidates. The following tables will vividly show the percentage of votes, secured by the U.K.D.⁴

First of all, the results of the Bidhan Sobha seats of the election of 1971 where the U.K.D. candidates were fielded, has been shown. It has already been mentioned that probably the U.K.D. has no registration from the Election Commission, therefore, its candidates contested as independent candidates Star mark against the name of the candidate in each table indicates the candidature of the U.K.D. The tables are as follows.

1. Falakata(SC), Jalpaiguri 1971, Vote polled-43,634, Table-1.1

	Name of the candidates	Name of the party	Valid votes secured	Percentage
1	Jagadananda Roy	Cong(R)	13,410	30.72%
2	Abhay Charan Barman	CPM(I)PSP	11,415	26.15%
3	Jitendra ch. Das	RSP	1,320	3.02%
4	Deben Barman	RSP	2,408	5.51%
5	Nripendra Narayan Roy	SSP	4,885	11.19%
6	*Panchanan Mallick	IND*	4,302	9.85%
7	Hiralal Singha	Cong(o)	1,642	3.76%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D. 9.85%.

2. Dhupguri (General), Jalpaiguri 1971, Vote Polled -42330. Table-1.2

	Name of the candidates	Name of the party	Valid votes secured	Percentage
1	Bhabani Poul	Cong(R)	11,471	27.8%
2	Anil ch. Guha Neogi	SSP	11,279	26.64%
3	Wayazuddin Ahamed*	IND	5,321	12.57%
4	Bimal Bhattacharjee	BC	1,400	3.30%
5	Mangu Munda	IND	1,440	3.40%
6	Suresh ch. Dey	CPM	7,054	16.66%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D- 12.57%.

3. Maynaguri (SC), Jalpaiguri, 1971. Vote Polled-39173. Table-1.3

	Name of the candidate	Name of the party	Valid votes secured	Percentage
1	Bijay Krishna Mohanta	Cong(R)	12,781	32.62%
2	Anil ch. Roy	PSP	1,768	4.51%
3	Janakinath Roy	BC	3,353	8.55%
4	Dinanath Roy	Cong(o)	1,225	3.12%
5	Nilcharan Roy	CPM	3,851	9.83%
6	Basanta kr. Roy	CPI	2,328	5.94%
7	Jatindranath Basunia	RSP	5,161	13.17%
8	Haripada Roy	IND*	6,075	15.50%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D-15.50%.

4. Jalpaiguri Sadar (General), Jalpaiguri, 1971. Vote Polled- 54,552. Table-1..4

	Name of the candidates	Name of the party	Valid votes secured	Percentage
1	Anupam Sen	Cong(R)	25608	46.94%
2	Girish ch. Singha*	IND	1,928	3.53%
3	Aninanshu Bhowmik	Cong(o)	988	1.81%
4	Paresh ch. Mitra	CPM	14,520	26.61%
5	Bibhuti Bhusan Sikdar	BC	743	1.36%
6	Manu Chakraborty	CPI	7,551	13.84%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D- 3.53%.

5. Rajganj (SC), Jalpaiguri, 1971. Vote Polled-35,963., Table-1.5

	Name of the candidate	Name of the party	Valid votes secured	Percentage
1	Bhagaban SinghaRoy	Cong(R)	25608	46.94%
2	Imaneswar Roy	BC	1,032	3.83%
3	Jiban Roy	Cong(o)	988	8.43%
4	Jyoti PrasadBarman*	IND	2,778	2.72%
5	Dhirendranath Roy	CPM	10,345	28.76%
6	Bhabendranath Roy	SSP	4,118	11.45%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D -2.72%.

6. Mekhliganj (SC), Cooch Behar district, 1971. Vote Polled-47,666., Table-1.6

	Name of the candidates	Name of the party	Valid votes secured	Percentage
1	Mihir Kr. Roy	FB	19,880	41.70%
2	Kshir Pr. Barman	CPM	3,996	8.38%
3	Taraprasad RoyBasunia	Cong(o)	3,745	7.85%
4	Mani Bhusan Roy	Cong(R)	15,902	33.36%
5	Sudhanshu Kr. Roy Sarkar*	IND	1,687	3.54%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D-3.54%.

Below is the result of the U.K.D. IN Lok Sobha election of 1971.⁵ It has already been mentioned that the U.K.D. fielded its candidates in two Lok Sobha seats this time i.e. Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar (Parliamentary).

Jalpaiguri (ST) ,1971. Vote Polled-3,06,173., Table-1.7

Sl.No.	Name of the candidates	Name of the party	Valid votes secured	Percentage
1	Tuna Oraon	Cong(R)	1,13,104	37.67%
2	Ganga Ram Oraon	SSP	26,098	8.69 %
3	Birendranath Katham	Cong(o)	15,763	5.25%
4	Birsan Kujur	CPM	60,137	20.03%
5	Raphael Toppo	IND	22,141	7.37%
6	Stephen Kujur	RSP	40,443	13.47%
7	Soma Oraon*	IND	11,097	3.69%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D-3.69%.

Cooch Behar, 1971. Vote polled-3,59,788., Table-1.8

	Name of the candidates	Name of the party	Valid votes secured	Percentage
1	Binoy Krishna Das Choudhury	Cong(R)	1,50,869	42.16%
2	Amarendra Nath Roy Pradhan	FB	77,090	21.54 %
3	Nagendra Nath Roy	CPM	80,265	22.43%
4	Prasenjit Barman	Cong(o)	34,874	9.74%
5	Rabindra Nath Sarkar	IND	4,660	1.30%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D-1.30%.

However, the result of the concerned Bidhan Sobha and Lok Sobha elections, shown in the aforesaid table, show that the contestant candidates of the Uttarkhanda Dal fared well in most of the Bidhan Sobha seats so far as the Dal fielded its candidates, though the Dal failed to win a single seat. It may be stated, for instance, that the candidates of the U.K.D. secured 12.57% and 15.50% of the total votes polled in Dhupguri and Mainaguri Bidhan Sobha seats respectively. The above mentioned percentage of votes, secured by the U.K.D. which crossed the double figure marks should be taken into account. In other two assembly seats i.e. Falakata and Raiganj, the U.K.D. candidates had secured 9.86% and 2.72% respectively which also should be counted. The important aspect is that the U.K.D. was then a political party of merely two years old. However, it was found that the Dal could not achieve any mentionable success in Jalpaiguri Sadar and Mekhliganj assembly seats and also in two Lok Sobha seats of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. The above mentioned fact proves that the U.K.D. failed to make its presence felt in urban area of Jalpaiguri and it also could not make its organizational inroads in Cooch Behar district. In addition to this perhaps the lack of the organizational strength and poor financial condition of the Dal brought its electoral failure in two Lok Sobha seats.

However, in West Bengal Bidhan Sobha election of 1971, no political party received absolute majority. Therefore, a Coalition Govt. with Ajoy Mukherjee as Chief Minister was formed in West Bengal. But this newly formed govt. lasted only for three month and the chief minister voluntarily resigned on 19 June 1971. Thereafter, the president's rule was imposed on 29 June 1971 which continued till March 10, 1972. In the same month of 1972, again the Bidhan Sobha (Assembly) election (mid-term) was held in West Bengal.⁶

In Bidhan Sobha election of 1972, the U.K.D. was again in the fray.⁷ But it is very interesting to note that in this election the U.K.D. fielded its candidates only in three Bidhan Sobha seats-two in Jalpaiguri i.e. Dhupguri and Mainaguri Assembly seats and one in Cooch Behar district i.e. Mekhliganj. It was very surprising that in 1971 the Dal had contested in six Assembly seats but it was found that in 1972 the Dal had contested only in three Assembly seats. However, no evidence is available for explanation of such limited participation of the Dal in Bidhan Sobha election of 1972. One reason may be pointed out that the Dal had no financial strength to meet the expenditure of consecutive two elections.

It is to be mentioned that the U.K.D. had the clear cut election manifesto in the election of 1972. Its election manifesto contained the following points.

1. Protesting against the exploitation of resources of North Bengal.
2. Removing the economic differences between rural and urban areas.
3. Giving permanent tenancy rights to the landless farmers on the vested lands.
4. Providing the free education in rural areas.
5. Setting up industries according to needs.
6. Nationalization of tea industry of North Bengal.
7. Introduction of the principle of single profession and family based job distribution with a view to solving the unemployment problems.
8. Allocation of budgetary funds for North Bengal's development in accordance with the revenue earned from North Bengal.
9. Vesting of surplus houses or homestead plots of the city owners to solve the refugee problems.
10. Amending Agricultural Income Tax law in consonance with the Income Tax law for welfare of the farmers.
11. Resolving the 'Chhit mahal' (enclave) problems of India and Bangladesh.⁸

Though the U.K.D. went to the people for vote with the above mentioned manifesto underlining the development of rural North Bengal but so far as the election results of 1972 show the response of the voters of the constituencies where the party fielded its candidates was not encouraging for the party. The election results of the assembly election where the U.K.D. fielded its candidates have been shown in the table below.⁹ Star marks against the name of the candidates belonged to the U.K.D.

Mekhliganj(SC), 1972. Vote polled-45,990., Table-2.1

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid Votes	Percentage
1.	Madhusudhan Roy	Cong	25,816	56.13%
2.	Amarendranath RoyPradhan	FB	18,233	39.64%
3	Sudhanshu Kr. Sarkar*	IND	675	1.46%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-1.46%.

Dhupguri (General)-1972. Vote polled-41,286., Table2.2

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid Votes	Percentage
1.	Bhawani Paul	Cong	22,670	54.90%
2.	Nishit Nath Bhowmik	SOC	13,810	33.44%
3	Bimal Ch. Bhattacharjee*	IND	2,326	5.63%
4.	Manga Munda	IND	675	1.68%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-5.63%.

Maynaguri (SC) – 1972. Vote polled- 35,903., Table2.3

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid Votes	Percentage
1.	Bijay Krishna Mohanta	Cong	19,716	54.91%
2.	Panchanan Mallick*	IND	6,862	19.11%
3	Jatindra Nath Basunia	RSP	8,318	23.16%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-19.11%.

The aforesaid result of the U.K.D. in the assembly election of 1972 shows that the percentage of votes cast for the U.K.D. declined almost 2% in Mekhliganj seat, almost 7% in

Dhupguri Assembly seat compared to what it had obtained in the Assembly poll of 1971. But the same time it should be remembered that in Maynaguri Assembly seat where the president of the Dal himself was the party's candidates increased its percentage of votes from 15.50% to 19.11%. It is very interesting to note that the Dal fielded a Brahmin candidate Sri Bimal Bhattacharya in Dhupguri Assembly Seat (general) in that election. But in spite of that the percentage of votes (which has already been shown) in Dhupguri was dropped sharply for the party. However, the leadership of the Dal claimed that throughdefeated, the U.K.D. earned popularity even in the remote villages in spite of the existence of well established political parties.¹⁰

However, in the above mentioned Bidhan Sobha election of West Bengal (1972), the Congress (R) party won 216 seats out of 281 and Sri Sidhartha Shankar Roy took over the charge of Chief Minister of West Bengal. During Sidhartha Shankar Roy's Chief Minister ship, though the U.K.D. continued its activities very strongly for next five years but received a setback due to the promulgation of emergency throughout India on 26 June 1975. It should be mentioned that at the time of emergency, the Govt. of India imposed prohibitory rules and amended the MISA (maintenance of internal security act). The govt. also banned political activities of Ananda Margi, RSS, CPI(ML), Jamat-i-islamic etc. The emergency continued up to June 1977. However, during the said period the activities of the U.K.D. became very weak.¹¹

After the end of emergency in June, 1977, the Lok Sobha election was declared and at the same time Bidhan Sobha election of west Bengal was also declared. This time also the U.K.D. fielded its candidates in one Lok Sobha seat and three Bidhan Sobha seats. It fielded its candidate in the Lok Sobha seat of Jalpaiguri and Bidhan Sobha seats of Dhupguri, Maynaguri and Kranti of Jalpaiguri district. It is very interesting to note that the Dal could not field its candidate even in some of the Assembly Seats where its candidates were in the Bidhan Sobha election of 1971 and 1972. It was no doubt revealed the organizational weakness of the party at that time. However, in the election of 1977, the Dal more or less followed the manifesto of the last election of 1972. But the Dal failed to achieve any mentionable success in this election too. The following tables show the result of the Dal very clearly.

The seats where the U.K.D. fielded its candidates in the Bidhan Sobha election of

1977 are mentioned below in the tables. Star marks indicate the U.K.D. candidates.¹²

Dhupguri (SC), Bidhan Sobha election, 1977. Vote polled-36,502., Table-3.1

Sl. no.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Banamali Roy	CPM	10,870	29.77%
2.	Kehab Ch. Choudhury	IND	1,527	4.18%
3.	Gunadhar Barman*	IND	3,381	9.26%
4.	Jagadananda Roy	CONG	8,894	24.36%
5.	Jagneshwar Roy	IND	4,738	12.98%
6.	Satish Ch. Roy	IND	94	0.025%
7.	Haripada Roy	IND	142	0.38%
8.	Haralal Singha	JAN	6,146	16.91%

Percentage of Vote for the U.K.D.-9.26%.

Maynaguri(SC), 1977. Vote polled-40,915., Table-3.2

Sl no.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Tarakbandhu Roy	RSP	14,376	35.13%
2.	Barmadeb Das	IND	1,164	2.84%
3.	Bhabendranath Roy Hakim	JAN	11,017	16.92%
4.	Matilal Roy*	IND	2,073	5.06%
5.	Mridulendra Deb Raikat	CONG	9,228	22.55%
6.	Sadananda Baidya	IND	248	0.60%
7.	Harish Ch. Mandal	IND	1,358	3.31%

Percentage of Vote for the U.K.D.-5.06%.

Kranti (SC), 1977. Vote polled-42,339.,Table-3.3

Sl. no.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Parimal Mitra	CPM	13,940	32.92%
2.	Anil Guha Neogi	IND	37	0.08%
3.	A.H. Md. Abu Saleqile	CONG	11,865	28.02%
4.	Panchanan Mallick*	IND	4,012	9.47%
5.	Bhawani Poul	IND	387	0.91%
6.	Rabindranath Sikdar	JAN	5,894	13.92%
7.	Radhaballav Saha	CPI	4,159	9.82%
8.	Sudhanshu Bhusan Das Gupta	IND	959	2.24%

Percentage of Vote for the U.K.D.-9.47%.

It has already been mentioned that the U.K.D. fielded its candidate in one Lok Sabha seat only i.e. Jalpaiguri Lok Sabha. The result is shown in the following table.¹³

Jalpaiguri Lok Sabha election, 1977. Vote polled-3,15,866.,Table-3.4

Sl. no.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Khagendra Nath Das Gupta	IND	1,73,484	54.92%
2.	Smt. Maya Roy	CONG	1,15,786	36.65%
3.	Joydev Mandal	SUC	8,640	2.73%
4.	Panchanan Mallick*	IND	5,071	1.60%

Percentage of the vote for the U.K.D.-1.60%.

The above mentioned Assembly election results which has been shown in different tables indicate that the U.K.D. had slightly improved its percentage of votes comparing the result of 1972 Bidhan Sabha election but it is found that the percentage of vote secured in the Assembly election of 1977 could not touch the result of 1971. It was found that the Mekhliganj Bidhan Sabha seat that there was sharp decline of the percentage of vote comprising the previous election results. With regard to Kranti Bidhan Sabha seat, it should be mentioned that it was a newly created seat and that is why, there was no scope for any comparative explanation. With regard to the result of the lone Parliamentary seat that the Dal fielded its candidate i.e. Jalpaiguri, a sharp decline of percentage of votes was found comprising to that of the Lok Sabha election of 1977. Thus, it is to be stated that the Dal failed to garner the support of the people of the area of its origin till 1977 in spite of the repeated clamor for the all round development of the region. However, it is well known to all that the left front came in power in West Bengal with absolute majority and in the center, the Congress Party was ousted from power and Janata Party came in power in its place along with other regional parties like D.M.K., Akali Dal, CPIM, etc.¹⁴

It is very relevant to mention that the functional struggle within the Janata Party (Janata Party was a conglomeration of many parties) in the centre took an acute form in the middle of 1977. As a result of which Morarji Desai Govt. reduced to a minority due to the withdrawal of support by Charan Singh and other socialists and in 15th July, 1980 Desai Govt. was dissolved. In the next development Charan Singh formed the Govt. which lasted till 20 August, 1980. Thereafter, the President dissolved the Lok Sabha and announced a mid-term election which was held in January 1980.¹⁵

However, the U.K.D. also fielded its candidates in this mid-term Lok Sabha election in three Lok Sabha constituencies viz, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Darjeeling. The Dal issued its manifesto-cum-party program with which it went to the voter in the aforesaid election. The manifesto of the Dal contains the following programmes.

1. The U.K.D believed in socialism and its aim is to acquire its various demands through constitutional and democratic manner.

2. Fixing the ceiling on individual property without making any discrimination between town and village.
3. Introduction of irrigation system to increase the productivity of the soil of North Bengal.
4. Introduction of jute, paper, cement, tobacco, sugar and wood industries in North Bengal.
5. Setting up of Agricultural College in every district of North Bengal.
6. Preservation of the culture and heritage of North Bengal.
7. Establishment of circuit Bench of the high court in Jalpaiguri.
8. Introduction of Arbi and Urdu in Higher Secondary level for Muslim Students in place of Sanskrit.
9. Establishment to the educationally qualified offspring of the tea Garden labourers in the same tea garden.

Apart from the above mentioned programmes, it has also been mentioned in the manifesto that 'North Bengal' is a resourceful region but the people here were kept in abject poverty. The inhabitant of North Bengal was one sixth of the total population of West Bengal and the agricultural production was also one third of that of total production of West Bengal. It has also been mentioned that during the last three 'Five Years Plan' when the total expenditure for the whole of West Bengal was Rs. 687 (Six hundred and eighty seven) crores whereas the expenditure for the five districts of North Bengal was only 15 crores i.e. for the people of South Bengal the per capita expenditure was Rs.200/ and for that of North Bengal was Rs. 25/ only. Because of the aforesaid disparity in all the walk of life for the people of North Bengal as the U.K.D. thought so, it made a clarion call to join in it and vote for its candidates for the total development of North Bengal.¹⁶

Now let us see what response the U.K.D. received from the voters of North Bengal vis-à-vis its party programmes cum manifesto. The election results will show it vividly which are as follows.¹⁷ (Tables are in the next pages).

Cooch Behar (SC),1980. Vote polled-5,24,577.,Table-4.1

Sl no.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Amar Roy Pradhan	FB	3,04,158	57.98%
2.	Ambika Charan Roy	CONG	1,86,012	35.45%
3.	Dharma Narayan Barma*	JAN(S)	11,532	2.19%
4.	Durga Charan Roy Karat	IND	6,752	1.28%
5.	Paresh Ch. Barman	JAN	2,809	0.53%
6.	Surendra Mohan Roy	IND	609	0.11%

Percentage of the vote for the U.K.D.-2.19%.

Jalpaiguri, 1980. Vote polled-4,46,409. , Table4.2

Sl.No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Subodh Sen	CPI(M)	232751	52.08%
2.	Sri Ram Singh	CONG	142355	31.85%
3.	Rabindranath SIKDAR	JAN	14404	3.22%
4.	Manmath Nandi	IND	13078	2.92%
5.	Joydev Mandal	SUC	9269	2.07%
6.	Anen Kr. Maitra	CONG(U)	8028	1.79%
7.	Bankim Ch. Roy	IND	7136	1.59%
8.	Panchanan Mallick*	IND	3440	0.76%
9.	C.C. Kiran	IND	745	0.16%

Percentage of Vote for the U.K.D.-0.80%.

Darjeeling, 1980. Vote polled-4,19,397. Table-4.3

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Ananda Pathak	CPI(M)	185612	44.25%
2.	K.B. Chhtri	CONG	167451	39.92%
3.	Abul Kami Chowdhury	CONG(U)	20153	4.80%
4.	Ranjit Monotosh Pal	JAN(S)	8468	2.01%
5.	Md. Ekzamul Hag	JAN	8123	1.93%
6.	Lakshmi Kanta Joshi	IND	5192	1.23%
7.	Tapan Kr. Biswas	IND	5048	1.20%
8.	Ramendranath Barman	IND	3960	0.94%
9.	Sampat Roy*	IND	1778	0.41%

Percentage of Vote for the U.K.D.-0.41%.

The above mentioned Lok Sabha (House of people) election results for the U.K.D. was very miserable. If it compares with the results of previous Lok Sabha elections, it would be found that while in 1971, in Jalpaiguri Lok Sabha Constituency the percentage of vote for the U.K.D. was 3.84 percent, and in 1977 it was 1.67 percent but in 1980 the percentage of vote declined sharply and dropped further to 0.80 percent. In case of Cooch Behar Lok Sabha seat the result was more or less the same. However, the Dal fielded its candidates for the first time since its birth in Darjeeling Parliamentary seat but the election result was very much poor. The Dal received only 0.43 percent vote and lost its security deposit.

It is very relevant to state that if we consider the election result as a barometer for gauging the support base of the U.K.D., we can say without reservation considering the analysis of the above mentioned election results that it had failed to garner the support of the people of North Bengal as an ethnic based regional political party.

However, the Eighth Legislative Assembly in West Bengal was dissolved on 24 May 1982. Before its dissolution the Assembly election was held in April 1982. The Uttarkhanda Dal was again in the fray and fielded its candidates. It should be mentioned in this connection that meanwhile the U.K.D. raised for the first time the demand of a separate state of 'Kamotapur Mukta Pradesh' (Though the prevailing spelling is Kamatapur, but the U.K.D. leader in their memorandum to the P.M. OF India in 1980 had mentioned the term 'Kamotapur') consisting of the five districts of North Bengal.¹⁸ Later the leadership of the Dal sent a memorandum to the then Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi in this context mentioning the separate state of 'Kamotapur' only in place of 'Kamotapur Mukta Pradesh.'¹⁹ Therefore the U.K.D. this time went to the State Assembly election of 1982 with the manifesto containing mainly the demand for a separate state of 'Kamotapur'. In this Assembly election of 1982, the U.K.D. fielded its candidates in three seats of Cooch Behar, 5 seats of Jalpaiguri and one seat in Darjeeling district. However, the manifesto of the Dal had included the following points, published in two languages viz., Bengali and Rajbanshi.

1. The formation of a separate state comprising five districts of North Bengal viz., Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda and the end of the Calcutta centric colonial exploitation would be the chief responsibility of the Uttarkhanda Dal.
2. Priority would be given to all the poor and helpless families of North Bengal without making racial or religious (Hindu-Muslim) discrimination with regard to job, education and business opportunities.
3. The income from various resources of North Bengal would be expensed for all round development of all the people of North Bengal and agriculture based industries would be set up for meeting employment problems of the region.
4. Measure would be taken to develop the history, literature, education, language, sculpture of this neglected region of North Bengal.
5. Murder, killing, rape, violence, dacoitis, plunders, arson etc. would be put down with strong hand for the sake of peace and order in all the parts of the state.

6. A radical change was to be made Railway, Motor and Air services for the convenience of transport system.

7. The U.K.D. would take initiative to wipe out the economic disparity between the rural and urban areas which was like hell and heaven (huge economic disparity); all the farmers of North Bengal would be given agricultural aids and land revenue up to 24 bighas of land would be exempted. All the loans provided by the Govt. of West Bengal to the small businessmen and farmers would be let off. Landless farmers would be given four acres of vested lands per family.²⁰

Considering the above stated election manifesto of the U.K.D., this election was very crucial for it, especially for the demand of a separate state of Kamotapur in the concerned region. Therefore, it is very important to go through the details of the said election results which are shown in various tables below.²¹

Star mark against the name of the candidates is that of the U.K.D.

Cooch Behar District (Assembly Election), Year-1982.

1. Mekhliganj (SC), 1982. Vote polled-80,807. Table-5.1

Sl.No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Sadakanta Roy	FB	40,958	50.68%
2.	Niren Chakraborty	CONG	28,528	35.30%
3.	Arun Roy	SUCI	6,426	7.95%
4.	Sibendra Nath Roy	IND	1,628	2.01%
5.	Manindra Nath Roy*	IND	1,114	1.37%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-1.37%.

2. Cooch Behar West (General), 1982. Vote polled-93,524. Table-5.2

Sl.No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Bimal Kanto Basu	FB	53,170	56.85%
2.	Shyamal Chowdhury	CONG	37,065	39.63%
3.	Nirendra Karjee	IND	646	0.69%
4.	Jahiuddin Miya	IND	617	0.65%
5.	Janabuddin Bepari*	IND	227	0.24%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-0.24%.

2. Cooch Behar North (General), 1982. Vote polled-83261. Table-5.3

Sl.No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Aparajita Gopi	FB	46,180	55.46%
2.	Sunil Kar	CON-1	33,873	40.68%
3.	Rabindra Nath Sarkar*	IND	766	0.91%
4.	Bhabeswar Das	IND	458	0.55%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-0.91%.

Jalpaiguri District (Assembly Election), Year-1982. Table-5.4

1. Dhupguri (SC), 1982. Vote polled-70,333.

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Banamali Roy	CPM	35,929	51.08%
2.	Jagadananda Roy	CON-1	28,340	40.29%
3.	Panchanan Mallick*	IND	2,959	4.20%
4.	Paresh Ch. Roy	JAN	1,074	1.52%
5.	Bamkim Ch. Roy	IND	318	0.45%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-4.20%.

2. Maynaguri (SC), 1982. Vote polled-71,613. Table-5.5

Sl no.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Tarak Bandhu Roy	RSP	37,491	52.35%
2.	Mridul Deb Raikat	CON-1	28,240	39.43%
3.	Panchanan Mallick*	IND	2,150	3.00%
4.	Ranu Roy	JAN	1,811	2.52%
5.	Upendra Nath Roy	IND	268	0.37%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-3%.

3. Jalpaiguri (General), 1982. Vote polled-73,389. Table-5.6

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Nirmal Base	FB	35,220	47.99%
2.	Anupam Sen	CON-1	34,084	46.44%
3.	Dilip Mukherjee	SUCI	1,410	1.93%
4.	Rukmini Ranjan Roy*	IND	899	1.22%
5.	Prabir Ranjan Roy	IND	281	0.38%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-1.22%.

4. Rajganj (SC), 1982. Vote polled-84,574. Table-5.7

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Dhirebdra Nath Roy	CPM	48,787	57.68%
2.	Jiban Kr. Roy	CON-1	28,332	33.49%
3.	Barmadeb Das	JAN	1,268	1.49%
4.	Harendranath Barman*	IND	1,264	1.47%
5.	Manomohan Roy	BJP	1,173	1.38%
6.	Purenda Nath Roy	SUC	1,125	1.33%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-1.47%.

5. Madarihat (ST), 1982. Vote polled-65,132. Table-5.7

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Sushil kumar	RSP	36,837	56.55%
2.	Jagat Baria	CON-1	20,373	31.27%
3.	Julias Toppo*	IND	2,265	3.47%
4.	Sanjay Kr. Oraon	IND	1,458	2.23%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-3.47%.

Darjeeling District, 1982.

1. Phanshidewa (ST), Vote polled-94,203 Table-5.8

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Patras Minz	CPM	41,362	43.90%
2.	Iswar Ch. Tirkey	CON-1	36,076	38.29%
3.	Teresa Sorang Chacho	JAN	5,120	5.43%
4.	Edwar Tirkey*	IND	3,973	4.21%
5.	Santi Munda	IND	2,735	2.90%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D. -4.21%.

However, the above mentioned election results show that though the U.K.D. this time went to the voters with a demand of a separate state comprising five districts of North Bengal but there was no encouraging response from the side of the voters of the assembly seats where the Dal fielded its candidates. It was even found that the percentage of votes at every Assembly seat where the Dal had been contesting since its birth was downward direction

including Dhupguri and Maynaguri assembly seats; the places of its origin. Therefore, it would not be wrong to state that the majority people of North Bengal had rejected the conception of creating a separate state by the U.K.D. in-toto so far as the election results of 1982 West Bengal State Assembly had shown. But at the same time, it should be admitted that the Dal extended its organizational base in some parts of Cooch Behar and Darjeeling districts.

The last election so far as the U.K.D. had contested before its split was the eight Lok Sabha election which was held on 24 December 1984. It should be mentioned that this general election was held after the assassination of the then Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi. In this general election the U.K.D. fielded its candidates in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling Parliamentary seats with the following promises which were include in its election manifesto.²²

1. The U.K.D. is determined to form a separate Bidhan Shobha (Legislative Assembly) comprising of five ditriacts of North Bengal and apart from this, the Dal has the demand for setting up a High Court in North Bengal for the convenience of the people of this region.
2. The Dal is in great effort to make the education system very pragmatic.
3. Introduction of ceiling system on the basis of income and the Dal is firm in resolution to wipe out economic disparity between rural and urban area.
4. The Dal is very active to create employments, preserving forests, developing agriculture and industries in North Bengal.
5. The Dal is determined to change the system of Tribal reservation based on inter-colonial pattern and in its place the reservation would be on the basis of number.

Apart from the above mentioned promises, it has been started in the aforesaid manifesto of the Dal that Calcutta centric economic and political exploitation made the manual labours and the farmers of the region shelter less and had driven them out from their homesteads. Therefore, most of the people of North Bengal had become street beggars without food and clothing. It has also been mentioned that most of the people of rural North

Bengal were living in the country *hats* and becoming slaves for their daily living. Besides this, educated youths are jobless. Therefore, in order to get relief from all these woes viz., sorrow, troubles, poverty etc. the U.K.D. called all people of North Bengal to vote for it and make it win in the election and provide an opportunity to make a society on North Bengal without exploitation.²³

However, though the Dal had contested the aforesaid election with above mentioned election manifesto which was, it is to say pro-people, but the election result this time also was not up to the expectation for the Dal. The following tables show the election results of the Uttarkhanda Dal.²⁴ Star marks against the name of the candidates indicate the candidature of the U.K.D.

Lok Sabha Election, 1984.

Jalpaiguri Constituency. Vote polled-5,80,864. Table-6.1

Sl. No.	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Arun Moitra	CONG(1)	25,2447	43.43%
2.	Joydev Mandal	SUCI	6,134	1.05%
3.	Tapan Biswas	BJP	7,513	1.29%
4.	Panchanan Mallick*	IND	8,362	1.43%
5.	Bmkim Ch. Roy	IND	2,086	0.35%
6.	Manik Sanyal	CPM	2,85,619	49.17%
7.	Sitansu Bhusan Das	IND	3,543	0.60%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D. -1.43%.

Darjeeling Constituency-1984. Vote polled-5,61,738. Table-6.2

Sl.No	Name of the candidates	Party	Valid vote	Percentage
1.	Ananda Prasad Pathak	CPM	228679	40.70%
2.	Dawa Norbula	CONG	2,27,290	40.46%
3.	Padam Bahadur Rai	IND	5,010	0.89%
4.	Sampad Roy*	IND	3,441	0.61%
5.	Sidhartha Sankar Roy	IND	80,557	14.34%

Percentage of vote for the U.K.D.-0.61%.

The above mentioned election results of the U.K.D show that the Dal could not win over the mind of the people of the region in spite of their pro-people manifesto or the call for a separate state of Kamotapur. But it should be mentioned that in Jalpaiguri parliamentary seat, the Dal improved its percentage of votes from 0.80% to 1.48% in this election. On the other hand, it was for the first time that the Dal fielded its candidates in Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat and secured only 0.63% of total votes polled so far and lost its security deposits. However, it is to be mentioned that till 1984 the Uttarkhanda Dal could not gain the support of even the Rajbanshi population in spite of its demand for a separate state of 'Kamotapur'. Therefore, it clearly proved the fact that the Rajbanshi population as a whole did not extend their support to the demand for the creation of a separate state in the region under review.

The Bidhan Sabha election of West Bengal was held on 23 March 1987 just before the split of the Uttarkhanda Dal on 10 Oct.1987. However, it is very interesting to note that the Dal for the first time refrained itself from participation in the aforesaid election. But we need not go too far to seek the reason for its abstention from the above stated election. The Dal in this regard circulated leaflets mentioning the reasons for abstaining itself from the State Assembly election of 1987. The following reasons were being pointed out by the Dal.

1. We have pledged touching our religious scripture the *Gita*, *Tama* (copper), *Tulsi* (sacred basil), *Mati* (earth) and the sacred water of the *Ganga*, *Agni* (fire), *Shiva Linga* (phallus);

Muslim comrades touching their religious scripture the Quran, Christian touching their religious scripture the Bible that we would abstain ourselves from casting vote in the Bidhan Sobha election (MLA) until or unless a separate state of 'Kamotapur' is formed.

2. We have totally ruined casting our votes in favour of the Calcutta centric political parties viz. Congress and left parties almost for last forty years. Therefore, we have no trust on the Calcutta centric politics. The present Govt. (Left Front Govt.) is not our Govt.

3. The election which is going to be held on 23 March is for West Bengal and for the people of the 'Kamota'.

4. That the people of 'Kamota' (Uttarbanga) would not be beneficial or gained whichever party (Calcutta Centric) is elected to the Bidhan Sobha (State Assembly) of Calcutta because out of total 294 M.L.As of West Bengal Assembly, 245 from South Bengal and only 49 from North Bengal and the latter have no any importance to the former.

5. There is no questing of casting vote and electing a Govt. in West Bengal Assembly by the people of North Bengal as because West Bengal Govt. generally consider North Bengal its maternal uncle's house and use the administration for the interest of the ruling party. It is the West Bengal Govt. that has created communalism, separatism and regionalism and above all made the people of North Bengal its slave.

6. That the West Bengal Govt. which is ruining humane characteristics and is not allowing the people of North Bengal to be developed or advanced citizen uprooting completely the language, literature, history and culture of Kamotapur (North Bengal), then what is the gain of electing such a Govt. in West Bengal Assembly? Why would we cast our vote to elect a Govt. which would vitiate and destroy the freedom of the people of North Bengal? So, we would not cast our vote, would not would not ,.....

7. That respected Jyoti Basu (Chief Minister of West Bengal) has gifted 'Tin Bigha' (Three Bighas) to Bangladeshi Govt. and thereby pushed forty thousand people in Cooch Behar district on the point of death. Therefore, no further vote is for the formation of the Govt. of West Bengal.

8. That the police of Jyoti Basu Govt. made inhumane treatment to the picketers of the *Rail Rokho* movement (25 January 1987) which was peaceful and democratic and four of them were shot and two of them.....Jagadish Roy and Gajen Roy were died on the spot. It is in protest of this and also in favour of forming the separate State of 'Kamotapur' all the people of the region are being requested to abstain from voting.

9. That the development by a Calcutta centric Govt. would mean the development of the people of Calcutta and not the Kamotabasi (the people of North Bengal).²⁵

However, the above mentioned leaflet of the Uttarkhanda Dal was address by Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Dal, Sri Sampad Roy, the general secretary and the president of the 'Yuva Uttarkhanda Dal' Sri Jagadish Chandra Roy.²⁶

Thus it was found that the U.K.D. made an appeal to the voters of North Bengal for refraining from voting in Bidhan Sabha election 1987. However, the turnout of voters in the concern region in that election reveals the fact that the appeal of the U.K.D. for refraining from voting had its little effects on the voters. However, it is to be mentioned that it had its effects, to some extent, on the voters of Dhupguri and Maynaguri Assembly Seats.....the place of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal. But in other Assembly Seats where the Dal fielded its candidates had its effect on the voters. In case of Dhupguri and Maynaguri, it was found that the percentage of votes so far as was polled in the Assembly election of West Bengal in 1982 was 80.8 percent and 76.95 percent respectively.²⁷ Whereas in 1987, as a result of the Dal's appeal for refraining from voting, percentage of votes so far as polled was slumped into 71.5 percent in Dhupguri and 74.1 percent in Maynaguri respectively.²⁸

However, if the electoral activities of the U.K.D. since its debut in the electoral politics in 1971 till 1984 are to be analyzed, it will be found that the percentage of votes so far as the Dal earned was not countable at any rate, even after raising the demand of a separate state in the 1980s, when as the DI failed to gain considerable percentage of vote in its favour. Thus it was found that the Dal had no any solid support base since its very inception till its final split in 1987.

Apart from this, it is very interesting to note that the Dal failed totally to extend

organizational base in other districts of North Bengal barring Jalpaiguri, a few part of Cooch Behar and Darjeeling. The Dal could never field any Bidhan Sobha or Lok Sobha candidate in West Dinajpur and Malda districts. It was even found that in case of Darjeeling, the Dal fielded its candidates only in Phansidewa Assembly Seat in 1982 and Lok Sobha Seat in 1984. Thus, the Dal tried to gauge its support base through various Bidhan Sobha and Lok Sobha elections, it was found that its candidates not only failed to win any seat whether Lok Sobha or Bidhan Sobha but even in most cases lost their security deposits in the election.

Thus it is almost clear from the aforesaid analysis that the appeal of the Uttarkhanda Dal first to abolish Calcutta centric rule and later to form a separate state for North Bengal to the people of the concerned region especially to the Rajbanshi community and other indigenous people was not heard of. Therefore, it would not be wrong to point out that the ethnic solidarity which was found among the *Gorkhas* in the Darjeeling hills, the same was almost completely absent among the Rajbanshis in the plains of North Bengal, so far as the electoral politics of the U.K.D. and its results show.

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Chapter-6

Separatist and Agitational Activities: The Response of the Government

It has been mentioned at the beginning of chapter-4 that the activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal during the entire period of our study would actually be discussed in two different phases that too in two different chapters. The first phase has already been discussed in chapter-4. In this chapter, attempt shall be made to discuss the second phase i.e. separatist and agitational activities of the Dal and at the same time an attempt will be made to gauge the response of the govt. It has also been stated in previous chapter (chapter-4) that the activities of the Dal were only limited to strengthening its organizational structure, extending its public relation in different parts of North Bengal, criticizing the attitude of the Govt. of West Bengal towards the socio-economic and cultural developments of this part of West Bengal. Thus, there found no sign of separatist attitude in its activities in the first phase i.e. during almost one decade from its very foundation.

However, it is very interesting to note that at the beginning of 1980s and onwards, the Uttarkhanda Dal radically changed not only its aims and objectives but even its modus operandi. Thus, turning a complete volte-face, the Dal has raised, for the first time, the demand for a separate state of 'Kamotapur' consisting of five districts of North Bengal (at present 7 districts) viz., Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda and thereby added a new dimension to the political scenario of post independence West Bengal. It was a new dimension in this sense that a political organization, completely dominated by a section of an ethnic group of Rajbanshi people in post independence West Bengal made such demand for a separate state of 'Kamotapur' for the first time. It was since then that the Dal started its separatist and agitational activities for acquiring a separate state of North Bengal, first it was named as "Kamotapur Mukta Pradesh" and later only 'Kamotapur' which will be explained later in this chapter.

It is very important to point out that though this demand for a separate state of Kamatapur, for the first time, was raised by a section of Rajbanshi people in post independence West Bengal, but it would be wrong to ignore the historical background of

such demand in the region under study by various political organizations just on the eve of our independence and also in post independence era.

Now, let us discuss the historical background of such demand. Historically it was found that the first demand for the formation of a separate state for a scheduled caste people of the northern region of Bengal in modern period towards the end of the colonial rule was made by Sri Jogendranath Mondal, the leader of a East Bengal scheduled caste community in a public meeting at Kharibari in the Darjeeling district of Bengal on the 4 May 1947. He strongly opposed the proposed partition of Bengal and stated that “if it is being implemented at all, then we demand a separate state viz. ‘Rajasthan’ in the name of Rajbanshi People. The proposed Rajbanshi state (province) will consist of Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur district as well as Purnea district of Bihar and Goalpara district of Assam.”¹ But it is very interesting to note that in the proposed ‘Rajasthan’ province of Sri Mondal the native state of Cooch Behar was not included, though it was a citadel of the Rajbanshi community. Historians say that as Sri Mondal was an outsider and belonged to a non-Rajbanshi scheduled caste community of Eastern Bengal, so he did not include Cooch Behar state in his proposed state of Rajasthan.² However, at the same time we should keep in mind that the political fate of the native state of Cooch Behar was not decided till then and also it was not decided whether it would remain independent or join in India or Pakistan. Again, another question may be put here that why did Sri Mondal only included the Rajbanshi inhabited area and not other non-Rajbanshi scheduled caste area including his own district of Barishal. He just, it may be said, was advocating for the Rajbanshi people only, though he belonged to non-Rajbanshi scheduled caste community. It was a fact of great mystery.

However, the first demand of the local people i.e. the Rajbanshis, for a separate state was raised by a section of Rajbanshi community of the Cooch Behar *Hitasadhani Sobha*, a local group or party, controlled and dominated by the Muslim and Hindu Rajbanshi *Jotedars* (Landlords) which has already been mentioned in chapter-2. But it is to be mentioned that the *Hitashadhani Sobha*’s concept of separate state was totally different from that of the Uttarkhanda Dal, the main theme of our discussion. In fact, the *Hitasadhani Sobha* was concerned about Cooch Behar native state. However, in the different stages the *Hitasadhani Sobha* had changed its demands. In the first stage, it demanded a separate state, in the second

stage, it demanded that Cooch Behar should be a centrally administered territory, in the third stage, it demanded that Cooch Behar should be merged with Assam and not with West Bengal.³ But ultimately the demand of *Hitasadhani Sobha* for a separate state was not acceded by the Central Govt. However, its demand to make Cooch Behar a centrally administered territory was partially conceded by declaring Cooch Behar state a Chief Commissioner's province after its merger with India on 28th August, 1949. Ultimately, by an order under section 290A of the Govt. of India Act, 1935 Cooch Behar was transferred and merged with the province of West Bengal on 1st January, 1950.⁴ It is very relevant to note in this connection that the *Hitasadhani Sobha's* activities greatly influenced the people of the Dooars of Jalpaiguri district. A section of the Rajbanshi people of both the Hindu and Muslim Communities demanded the inclusion of Western Dooars (belonged to British India) with Cooch Behar state.⁵ However, this demand was ultimately not conceded. It should also be mentioned that in later course of Dooars' history it was found that it became the birth place of the Uttarkhanda Dal and later, Kamatapur Peoples' Party.

Again, it would not be irrelevant to mention here another political development that happened after the accession of Cooch Behar to the Indian Union. It was found that a section of the Rajbanshi of Cooch Behar wanted the merger of Cooch Behar with Assam but on the other hand, another section of Rajbanshi community wanted a separate state if not a union territory status. In this political doldrums of Rajbanshi community, a great Rajbanshi political personality and member of Lok Sobha Sri Upendra Nath Barman of Jalpaiguri and Sri Umesh Chandra Mondal, a Gandhian Rajbanshi pleader of Dinhata, Cooch Behar firmly supported the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal.⁶ It may be said that it was Sri Upendra Nath Barman who spear headed the crusade against the inclusion of Cooch Behar with Assam and his effort greatly strengthened the cause of West Bengal. It would not be irrelevant to refer here that the lack of community solidarity between the Rajbanshi of Goalpara (Assam) and Cooch Behar in the pre State Reorganization Commission (SRC) period and post independence period caused a great loss to that community in relation to the re-unification of the Rajbanshi of Assam and North Bengal of West Bengal. It has been pointed out by the historians of the region that "if Goalpara had been reunited with West Bengal, the Rajbanshi would become the half of the population of North Bengal district despite the influx of

refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan.”⁷ However, it has been observed by the political observers that this golden opportunity of the re-unification was lost due to the lack of farsightedness of Sri Sarat Chandra Singha (later the first Rajbanshi Chief Minister of Assam) and others. It should be mentioned that Sri Sarat Chandra Singha of Assam had organized a movement against the inclusion of Goalpara with West Bengal when a tug-of-war was started between West Bengal and Assam with regard to the merger of Cooch Behar with Assam and Goalpara of Assam with West Bengal. However, when the State Reorganization Commission went to Assam to gauge the mind of the local people, the majority of Rajbanshi of Goalpara district under the leadership of Sri Sarat Chandra Singha and Goalpara immigrant Muslims under the leadership of Md. Omaruddin organized a mass movement against the inclusion of Goalpara with West Bengal.⁸ They demanded, on the contrary, the merger of Cooch Behar with Assam. It is said that had Sarat Chandra Singha showed his commitment to community solidarity, the course of the history of the Rajbanshi in the post SRC period might have been totally different.⁹

Thus, it would not be wrong to mention that it was the most important turning point in the history of the Rajbanshi community of North Bengal and North East India in the post colonial period.

In another political development which took place immediately after independence, it was found that some chosen representatives of different political parties of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri Sikkim and Darjeeling met at Darjeeling on 30th October, 1949 to discuss the question of a separate state for this region. These parties were viz., ‘All India Gorkha League’ of Darjeeling, Sikkim Praja Sanmelan of Sikkim, Cooch Behar State Praja Congress of Cooch Behar which is opposed the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal, District Committee of All India Gorkha League of Jalpaiguri.¹⁰ About this meeting Mr. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar state wrote to the joint secretary, Govt. of India on 22nd November, 1949, “It is interesting to note that the Hitasadhani Party is willing to merge Cooch Behar with Gorkha District of Darjeeling or with Assam. Their real intention appears to be to try to maintain their political influence in this area.”¹¹ However, they formed a committee named “Uttarakhand Pradesh Sangh or Uttarakhand Sangha Committee” with Rupnarayan Singha as its president and adopted a resolution in the meeting to carry on their

political exercise and power for the formation of a separate state to be called 'Uttarakhand'.¹² It can be stated here that though the proposal was viable geographically but politically it was problematic because at that time Sikkim was under an independent monarchical rule of the 'Chogyals' (name of the ruling dynasty of Sikkim) though Cooch Behar was a native state. Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling were under the Govt. of West Bengal. Notwithstanding the abovementioned committee submitted a memorandum in this regard to the Prime Minister of India, but the demand was not conceded.¹³ In subsequent time, it was found that when Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India visited Darjeeling in 1952 the Gorkha League renewed the old demand for the formation of a separate "Uttarakhand State" but this time also the prime minister did not pay any heed to the demand.¹⁴

Again in May 1955, when the two members of the State Reorganization Commission viz, Dr. Hridaynath Kunzou and Dr. K.M. Pannikar visited Darjeeling, the 'Sarba Sampradaya Zella Samgathan' (All communities' district organization) demanded the formation of a separate state consisting of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, and Sikkim.¹⁵ It is to be stated in this connection that the state Reorganization Commission was formed in August, 1953 by the Govt. of India under the chairmanship of justice Fazal Ali and other two members viz. Hridaynath Kunzru and Dr. K. M. Pannikar. However, it is also evident that at that time the Gorkha League separately placed the same demand. But both the demands were out- rightly rejected by the member of SRC.¹⁶

Apart from the above mentioned political developments with regards to the demand of a separate state for the region, organized mostly by various political organizations within the state of West Bengal, the same demand was raised outside the state of West Bengal when the State Reorganization Commission was formed in August 1953. It is very interesting to note that this demand was put forward not by any political organization but by the Govt. of Bihar. Bihar demanded the creation of a new state to be known as 'Uttarakhand' consisting of three districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar to the S.R.C. However, when in the second week of May 1955, two members of S.R.C. which has already been mentioned visited Darjeeling and invited the West Bengal leaders to express their view on Bihar's claim, the then chief minister of West Bengal Dr. B.C.Roy succeeded to convince the members of S.R.C.to keep these three districts within West Bengal.¹⁷

It would not be wrong to mention that the above mentioned political developments regarding the demand of a separate state for this region was the first phase between the period from 1947 and the visit of the members of S.R.C. in Darjeeling in May, 1955. And it is very interesting to note that from 1955 to 1980 no such demand for the creation of a separate state for this region was raised by any kind of organization. It may be pointed out that it was a general phenomenon all over India that immediately after independence various regional political organizations and ethnic group of people aspired for a separate state of their own within the federal structure of India. The demand for a separate Andhra state for the Telegu people was an example. Again, the formation of a State Reorganization Commission to review the reorganization of various provinces of independent India on the linguistic line led the various linguistic aspirants and regional political organization to place the demand of separate states and the region of our study was not exception to that. Another special aspect of the demand for a separate state in the region of our study was that claimants of the state only included the three districts of northern part of North Bengal i.e. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling barring one exception when Sikkim was included. Interestingly West Dinajpur and Malda the other two districts of North Bengal were not included. It will be found in later developments that the Uttarkhanda Dal included all the five districts of North Bengal in their proposed state of Kamotapur for the first time. However, it will be discussed in the second stage or phase of the demand for a separate state.

However, it is very interesting to note that the 'Gorkha League' frequently demanded a separate state till 1955 which has been mentioned earlier but after 1955 no such demand was raised by this party. On the contrary, they participated in the Bidhan Sabha election of the State of West Bengal, sent its M.L.As to the Assembly and even Deoprasad Rai, the leader of 'Gorkha League' had become a minister, in charge of Tribal Welfare Department, Govt. of West Bengal in United Front Govt. in 1967.¹⁸ It is also very interesting to state that after 1977 when govt. was changed and Left Front came to power 'Gorkha League' joined hand with the Uttarkhanda Dal and submitted memorandum to the govt. of West Bengal demanding the socio-economic and cultural development of the region which has already been mentioned in chapter-4. It has also been explained in chapter-4 that though the Uttarkhanda Dal was formed in July 1969 but no demand for a separate state was raised by

this regional political organization till 1980.

Now the new political phenomenon which was occurred from 1980s may be regarded as 2nd phase. It was found that from 1980s onwards again the demand for a separate state in the region under study was raised by two major regional political parties viz. the Uttarkhanda Dal (U.K.D.) and Gorkha National Liberation Front (G.N.L.F.). The former raised such demands in the plains of North Bengal and the latter in that of Darjeeling. But it is no doubt very interesting to note that though in earlier occasion, the Uttarkhanda Dal and the Gorkha League (a hill based party) jointly fought against the Govt. of West Bengal for the all round development of North Bengal especially after 1977 (chapter-4). But it is very peculiar to note that in the new changing political scenario the U.K.D. and the G.N.L.F. did not raise their joint voice for a separate state of North Bengal. It was also found that though the Uttarkhanda Dal included all the districts of North Bengal in its proposed state but the G.N.L.F. kept its demand confined to three hill subdivisions (Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong) of Darjeeling district where the Gorkhas are a major ethnic group of people. Though, it was found that the G.N.L.F. later made an effort to include the *Tarai* and *Dooars* of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts. Side by side, it was also found that the demand of the Gorkhas was on the basis of ethnic identity but the main slogan of the Uttarkhanda Dal was socio-economic and cultural backwardness of the region and against the Calcutta centric rule at least at the initial stage of its separatist movement. Interestingly, it was found that when the Uttarkhanda Dal turned its movement gradually into linguistic and ethnic identity base movement and towards violent one to some extent, it tried to communicate with Subhash Ghising, the G.N.L.F. supremo which will be discussed in the later part of this chapter.

However, it has already been stated at the very beginning of this chapter that from 1980 onwards, the Uttarkhanda Dal raised the demand for a separate state which initially was named “Kamotapur Mukta Pradesh” in *Uttarbanga* (North Bengal).¹⁹ But later it was found that the nomenclature of the proposed state was renamed as only ‘Kamotapur.’²⁰ This demand for a separate state of North Bengal (Kamotapur) consisting five districts viz. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda was no doubt the first of its kind in the history of the plains of North Bengal nay West Bengal. It has also been stated earlier that West Dinajpur and Malda districts were not included in the proposed separate state in earlier

occasions or in the first phase, demanded by the various political organizations of the region. From this point of view it was also the first initiative taken by the U.K.D. to include those two districts- West Dinajpur and Malda.

However, before going into the details with regards to the demand of a separate state, made by the Uttarkhanda Dal and its activities with that regard it would be very relevant to mention here that a separate state with the nomenclature 'Kamatapur' was first raised by the Uttarkhanda Dal in West Bengal but not first in post independence India. In fact, it first came from Assam in 1955 when a representation under the leadership of Santosh Borua of Gouripur (Assam) submitted a memorandum to the S.R.C. for the creation of the separate 'Kamatapur Rajya' consisting of Goalpara of Assam, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, and West Dinajpur of West Bengal and the same was supported by the personalities like Raja Ajit Narayan Deb, Raja of Sidli (Assam) and Prakitesh Chandra Borua (Lalji) of Gouripur royal family.²¹ This demand was however, not conceded by the S.R.C. It is very interesting to note that Darjeeling district was not incorporated in their demand which was included in all the proposed state demanded during this time. It was again in 1967 that the Kamatapur Sangram Parisad of Assam raised the demand of 'Kamatapur Rajya' (province) when the Plain Tribal Council (P.T.C.), headed mainly by the Bodos, had demanded the Udayachal Rajya.²² Thus, it was found that the demand for a separate state with the nomenclature 'Kamatapur' raised by the U.K.D. was the first only in post independence West Bengal and not in India.

Now let us discuss the relevant question that why did the U.K.D. make a U turn on its policy and objectives and raised the demand of a separate state within the Indian federal system long after almost one decade since its foundation in July 1969. However, the first argument in this regard was put forward by the president of the U.K.D. Sri Panchanan Mallick in his interview, published in a leading Bengali Journal, issued from Calcutta. In this interview Sri Panchanan Mallick alleged that as the then chief minister of the Govt. of West Bengal Sri Jyoti Basu did not feel it necessary to acknowledge their memorandum which they went to submit jointly with the 'Gorkha League' party on September 1977²³ demanding immediate development of North Bengal and redress their grievances nor even the chief minister felt any courtesy to meet them, so the U.K.D. leadership was compelled to turn to the demand for a separate state to the central govt. Now the think tanks of the U.K.D. thought

that only a separate state of North Bengal could satisfy the aspiration of the people of the region and free them from clutches of Calcutta centric rule.²⁴ Thus, it is clear from the interview of Sri Panchanan Mallick and other leaders of the Dal that as their grievances and demands were neither sympathetically considered nor paid heed to by the Govt. of West Bengal for quite a long period, they had no alternative but to resort to the demand of a separate state to the Central Govt. bypassing the Govt. of West Bengal. However, the same tone was reflected in the memorandum, submitted by the president of the U.K.D. to the then Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi on 24th August 1981. It was mentioned in the memorandum that “the people (of North Bengal) had become displeased and restless because of their genuine fear of extraction socially, politically, economically and culturally and feel in their hearts of hearts that the only way to come out of this sorry state of affairs is to organize themselves in a separate state under the name and style of Kamotapur state within the union.”²⁵

However, though the leadership of the Uttarkhanda Dal had given direct blame to the then Govt. of West Bengal for leading them to the demand of a separate state of their own but it is evident that the leaders of the Dal were psychologically inspired with the demand of separate state raised by some regional political organizations in Bihar and Assam before the year 1980. It is well known that the Jharkhand movement in Bihar took an important turn with the formation of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (J.M.M.) in late 1972 which raised the demand the Jharkhand state under its charismatic leader Sibu Soren.²⁶ It should be mentioned in this regard that one leader of the U.K.D. wrote a letter to the president of the Dal mentioning that Jharkhand Dal was demanding Jharkhand where Purulia, Bankura and some parts of Midnapur were included and if the grievances and demand of Uttarkhanda Dal were not conceded to by the Govt. of West Bengal, the demand of a separate state should be raised.²⁷ It was also stated in a leaflet of the Uttarkhanda Dal: “If Jharkhanda of Ranchi, Gorkhas of Darjeeling, Uttarakhandists of U.P., Bodos of Borolands, Mizos of Mizorams, Nagas of Nagalands peoples of Chhatishgarh can unite for their demand, why not we can?”²⁸ So, we cannot ignore the psychological inspiration that the leadership of the U.K.D. received from the Jharkhand movement prevailed in Bihar in 1970s and also the movements prevailed in other states of eastern India. That the movement for separate state of the U.K.D.

was directly or indirectly influenced by the regional political movements going on at that time in Assam was evident when it was mentioned in the memorandum of the U.K.D. submitted to Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, “.....in recent times the Dal has witnessed with almost pain that the Govt. of India did not pay any heed to the movement in Assam on the issue of detection, deletion and deportation of foreign nationals till the movement took seriously violent turn.....”²⁹ It was found that after a few month of submitting the above mentioned memorandum, the U.K.D. was taking resolution in its party meeting that the foreigners coming from Bangladesh, Assam and Tripura should not be given refuge in the districts of North Bengal and the people without citizenship was not to be given voting right and even the Dal demanded the recognition of the Kamotapuri language with a strong voice.³⁰ It should be remembered that the movement for the expulsion of the outsider or foreigner (*Bangal Khedao*) in Assam was started in 1979.³¹ Thus, the influence of contemporary political developments in Assam on the psycho of the leaders of Uttarkhanda Dal cannot be ignored in toto. It can rather be said that the Uttarkhanda Dal was enlivened (rejuvenated) with a new vigour (life) with the success of the AASU (All Assam Student Union) in 1980s of the last century. Apart from this, the leadership of the Uttarkhanda Dal has regular correspondence with that of the AASU and the centre of their meeting was the temple of Sankardev at Madhupur Dham of Assam and similarly the U.K.D. had also its correspondence with A.G.P. (Assam Gana Parishad).³²

Thus, it may be mentioned from the above discussion that in the second phase of the activities the Uttarkhanda Dal was largely influenced and inspired by the contemporary regional movements prevailed in India particularly in Eastern and North Eastern India especially in Bihar and Assam. It will be found in later discussion that the U.K.D. though initially raised the voice of socio-economic and cultural deprivation as the reason for demanding a separate state but gradually it was found that it included in its demand note the recognition of Kamotapuri language and expulsion of foreigners. Thus, ultimately the question of identity crisis of the indigenous group of people came to the fore.

However, there may be more other reasons for the demand of a separate state of Kamatapur by the U.K.D. apart from the aforesaid reasons. However, the Dal with a view to materialize its new demand followed a series of separatist and agitational activities since

1980s and onwards.

The first and foremost step the Dal had taken in this regard was the amendment of its constitution on February 1980 and the same was published on August in 1980. In the amended constitution of the Dal the new objective incorporated in it which goes thus: “The objective of the Uttarkhanda Dal is to form a dignified separate state within the federal structure of India for the all round developments of the neglected, oppressed and exploited people of North Bengal.”³³ It should be remembered that before this amendment of the constitution of the Dal, its main objective was the commitment to socialism.(detail discussion in chapter-3).

However, it is to be mentioned here that the first formal decision in the form of party resolution for a separate state of Kamotapur was taken by the Dal in its Central Committee meeting (*Kendriya Sanmela*n), held at Bijlimani Primary School of Darjeeling district on 31st May, 1980. It is very relevant to mention that one representative from the Gorkha League Sri Y. V. Subba from Kalimpong was present in the Sanmela as a special guest.³⁴

After the above mentioned formal decision for demanding a separate state, the think tanks of the Dal decided to mould public opinion in favour of their demand. In this regard they circulated leaflets appealing the people of all level of North Bengal irrespective of caste, creed, religion and political affiliation to support the demand for the creation of a separate state. It is evident in the leaflet and in its memorandum submitted to the prime minister of India, dated-24th August, 1981 that the Dal submitted one memorandum to the Prime Minister of India for the first time in earlier occasion but no resolution of the Dal in this regard was found.³⁵ However, it is to be mentioned that initially, the leadership of the Dal expressed repeatedly their dissatisfaction against the Calcutta centric rule, step motherly treatment and indifferent attitude towards the socio-economic development of North Bengal and these were the primary reasons for raising the demand of a separate state of North Bengal, as had been claimed by the leaders of the Dal and the same was reflected in the aforesaid leaflet of the Dal. But only after one year it was found that the think tanks of the Dal added other issues to justify the demand for a separate state. They raised the issue like the huge infiltration of the Bangladeshis in North Bengal and blamed the Calcutta centric rulers and Calcutta based govt.

for looking to the interests of the refugees at the cost of and with the sheer neglect of the indigenous people. It was even found that the leadership of the Dal expressed their fear of the gradual extinction of the socio-political and cultural domination along with severe economic position of the indigenous people of North Bengal. Because, these new influx of the Bangladeshi refugees, most of whom were basically agriculturists, began to refuge and live in the country side (village) of North Bengal specially in the two districts i.e. Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri which were largely inhabited and dominated by the Rajbanshi people. The continuous flow of the infiltrators and refugees changed the demographic picture of the villages of North Bengal, specially northern part of North Bengal where the majority was Rajbanshi population.³⁶ It should be kept in mind and had already been mentioned in earlier chapters that the economy of Rajbanshi population mainly dependent on land and agriculture. And now the Bangladeshi refugees and infiltrators made inroads in the agricultural land and thereby aggravated the economic grievances of the indigenous people. In other words, the huge influx of Bangladeshis made tremendous pressure on agricultural lands of North Bengal. It is to be mentioned here that the refugees who migrated to the above mentioned area immediately after partition of Bengal in 1947 mostly belonged to caste Hindus (Higher Caste Bengalis of erstwhile eastern Bengal) and took shelter in the *bazar or mofussil* town area and as a result there was no any kind of confrontation with the local Rajbanshi people. Rather it was a matter of cooperation and cohabitation between them to some extent. But as it has been mentioned earlier, the picture was different after 1980. However, the above mentioned new issue which was raised in 1981 was well reflected in the memorandum, submitted by the president of the Uttarkhanda Dal, Sri Panchanan Mallick to the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi on 24th August 1981. It was mentioned in that memorandum: “As a result after thirty three years of independence the indigenous population of the area irrespective of their caste, creed and religion have become hewers of wood and drawers of water to the refugees who are now lording it over the original people so to speak.”³⁷ In later course of the movement, it has already been stated, the leadership of the Dal termed them (refugees who came after 1971) as foreigners and demanded their expulsion and allowed no citizenship and voting right. It has also been mentioned in this chapter that the leadership of the Dal was influenced largely by the foreigners’ expulsion (*Bangal khedao*) movement of AASU. In fact, the Dal wanted to mould public opinion in favour of its demands for separate

state blaming the W.B. Govt. for sheltering the infiltrators in this region of West Bengal. However, such foreigners' expulsion movement was also organized by "Uttarbanga Taposili Jati O Adibashi Sangathan" popularly known as UTJAS which was formed in early 1977. The UTJAS was middle class based youth organization. It should be mentioned in this connection that though it fiercely opposed the separate state demand of Uttarkhanda Dal but in some cases as mentioned above their demands were identical with the U.K.D.³⁸ One of the members of the policy making body of the Uttarbanga Tapasili Jati O Adibashi Sangathan Sri Jugal Kishore Roy Bir stated in an interview that his organization did not support the formation of a state on the basis of only language and culture.³⁹ In addition to this, earlier the president of UTJAS Sri Pravat Sen Ishore a lawyer by profession denied outrightly any relation with the Uttarkhanda Dal.⁴⁰ Thus, it was found that all the aims and objectives of the U.K.D. and UTJAS were not identical.

However, it would not be irrelevant to refer here that some sociologists and political scientists think that the main motive behind Uttarkhanda agitation was to brand a section of people (*bhatias*) as outsiders and demand their expulsion from North Bengal.⁴¹ But an in depth analysis of the activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal proved the fact that the leadership was not against the *bhatias* (Rajbanshis usually address the immigrant Bengalis from the lower place of Eastern Bengal as *bhatias*) in general. It has already been mentioned that the activists of the Dal were very sympathetic towards the refugees who migrated to this region after 1947. It was even found that Sri Bimal Bhattacharya (a so called Bhatias), a Bengali Brahmin and a resident of Dhupguri town, Jalpaiguri, was the candidate of the Uttarkhanda Dal in Dhupguri Assembly (General) seat in the Bidhan Sabha election, held in March, 1972.⁴² Again it should be mentioned that leadership of the Uttarkhanda Dal demanded the expulsion of the foreigners who were from Bangladesh, Assam and Tripura making 1971 as the base year. The Dal nowhere mentioned the term *Bhatia*.⁴³ In this connection it seems that the problem cannot be explained fully within a particular sociological and theoretical framework.

Another new issue which has been raised by the Dal after 1980 which was very important deserves analysis. Along with the above mentioned issue, the think tanks of the Dal began to demand the recognition of the Kamotapuri language.⁴⁴ It is very interesting to note that before raising the demand for the recognition of Kamotapuri language, the leadership of

the Dal used the nomenclature with regard to this local language the 'Rajbanshi language'. In this regard mention may be made of a literary journal named 'Kalsanji' issued by the literary wing of the Uttarkhanda Dal in 1970s.⁴⁵ But it was found that when the conception of the separate state of Kamotapuri came to the fore and the same was demanded by the U.K.D. and the Dal was trying to rename the language too as 'Kamotapuri' and demanded its recognition.

However, it can be argued that the motive behind the change of nomenclature of the language by the *Uttarkhandists* was political to a large extent. In this regard, it would not be irrelevant to mention here the report of the State Reorganization Commission, submitted its report in October, 1955. In its report while it laid down the due consideration to administrative and economic factor for the reorganization of the state, it recognized for the most part the linguistic principle and recommended redrawing of state boundaries on that basis.⁴⁶ The Uttarkhanda Dal perhaps was inspired by this report of SRC and wanted to use its linguistic provision as one of the legal weapon in favour of statehood demand. In this regard, Sri Harimohan Barman, a veteran leader and an ideologue of the U.K.D. and a retired Headmaster of a Higher Secondary School is of the opinion that as the name of the dialect 'Rajbanshi' had the overtone of communal colour, the Dal took the decision to use the nomenclature 'Kamotapuri' to avoid the same and at the same time it would help a lot for acquiring a separate state of Kamotapur in this region.⁴⁷ Thus, the argument so far as put forwarded by the *Uttarkhandists* was that this local language (as was termed by the *Uttarkhandists*) is the mother tongue not only of the people of the Rajbanshi community living here at North Bengal, but a large number of local Muslims (*Nasya-Sheikh*), jogis and some other people also regard it as their mother tongue and they have been speaking this language for generations at least since the creation of the Kamata kingdom in early medieval period. Thus, it was argued by the *Uttarkhandists* that statistically more than fifty percent of the population of North Bengal speak this language and thereby it was viable to make a separate state of North Bengal on the linguistic basis as was recommended by the S.R.C. At present the protagonists of the Kamatapur Peoples Party and some Rajbanshi intellectuals like Dharmanarayan Barma also follow the same argument mentioned above.

However, when the census of 2011 was began, it was found that the '*Ai Bhasa Nathikaran Pancha*' organized by those who plead for the term Kamatapuri language made

an appeal to the people of North Bengal specially who speak this language to write the term ‘Kamotapuri’ in the column of language and strongly slammed those who were pleading for the term ‘Rajbanshi.’ Some of the names of the members of this organization deserve special mention. The names were viz. Sri Naren Das, a pleader and once the founder leader of UTZAS from Jalpaiguri; Dr. Dhiren Das, a school teacher from Dinhata; Dr. Girindra Narayan Roy, a Professor , Dept. of English N.B.U. and two K.P.P. leaders- Atul Roy, president of the K.P.P. and Nikhil Roy, the general secretary.⁴⁸ In this regard, the content of another leaflet should be mentioned here which goes thus in Rajbanshi/Kamatapuri language.

“Hamara Kamotapuri, Kamotapuri Hamar Bhasa ,

Jar Nai Apon Bhasa , Kaneko Nai Tar Asha,

Bhasay Rakhe Man Bhasay Mansir Paran

Bhasa Nai Jar Tay Marar Saman”⁴⁹

The free translation goes thus : we are Kamotapuri and Kamotapuri language is our mother tongue, those who have no their own mother tongue , they have no any hope because language or mother tongue is the symbol of self respect, is the symbol of a life of a race or community. So, those who have no language are as good as dead.⁴⁹

Side by side another section of Rajbanshi intellectuals formed an organization named ‘Rajbanshi Academy.’ The members of the Rajbanshi Academy also made an appeal to the people of the same group of people mentioned above to write the term ‘Rajbanshi’ in the column of language and also in the column of race. They argued in this appeal letter that the Sahitya Academy had also given recognition to this language with the nomenclature ‘Rajbanshi’ language offering first ‘*Bhasa Sanman*’ to Dr. Girija Sankar Roy, a Rajbanshi scholar and a member of Rajbanshi Academy. The members of Rajbanshi Academy were Dr. Girija Sankar Roy; Dr. Nikhilesh Roy, Dept. of Bengali, North Bengal University; Dr. Dipak Kr. Roy, Dept. of Bengali, North Bengal University; Dr. Nirmal Kr. Roy, Dept. of

Philosophy, North Bengal University; Prof. Kanak Sarkar, Jadavpur University; Prof. Haripada Sarkar, Calcutta University; Keshab Chandra Singha, Vishyabharati Vishya Vidyalaya and also some other college teachers and school teachers.⁵⁰ Thus, it is found that there is a controversy among the Rajbanshi intellectuals which till now is going on. In the meantime the Govt. of West Bengal has established Rajbanshi Bhasa Academy.

Whatever nomenclature might be of the language as argued by the above mentioned two groups of Rajbanshi intellectuals, but one argument is there that in the wake of Uttarkhanda movement, the inclination towards Rajbanshi dialect as a distinct language (Kamotapuri) of the region merely an attempt to establish a separate identity for the Rajbanshi. Thus the leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal wanted to bring the language issue not only to strengthen the loyalties of the Rajbanshis to this movement but also to prevent the community from being assimilated into Bengali fold. Moreover, by bringing this language issue into the fore, they wanted to show how as a result of linguistic reorganization of states, having a mother tongue other than state language, they have become 'minorities', in the linguistic ethnic term, in their own territory. Apart from this, by mobilizing the Rajbanshis on language issue, they perhaps wanted to make a ground that at least linguistically there was sufficient ground to create a separate Kamotapur State."⁵¹

However, the Uttarkhanda Dal also tried to mould public opinion in favour of their demand through the circulation of leaflets, pamphlets and holding a series of public meetings. In this regard we can mention of a pamphlet which was circulated on 22. 06. 1980 appealing the people of North Bengal irrespective of caste, creed, religion for favouring the statehood demand. It was found that the Dal not only vehemently criticized the Calcutta centric rule of the Govt. of West Bengal but it was termed as internal colonialism i.e. North Bengal was being exploited by the political leaders of all Calcutta based political. In the same pamphlet, the leaders of the U.K.D. made focus on the pristine glory of early medieval Kamatapur Kingdom.⁵² It was found in leaflets that the leadership of the Dal used the famous call of Mahatma Gandhi made in 'Quit India Movement' in 1942 '*Karenge Ye Marenge*' (Do or Die) in order to inspire their activists for acquiring separate state of North Bengal.⁵³ The Dal also changed its earlier slogan. Previously, the party slogan was 'Bande Mataram' (chapter-3)

and now it adopted a new slogan of the Dal i.e. '*Joy Kamotapur*.'⁵⁴ Thus, it should be mentioned that the Dal continued its activities to win over the mind of the people of the region till 1984 i.e. in favour of statehood demand up to the Lok Sobha election of 1984.

It is to be mentioned that the U.K.D. though raised the demand of a separate state but at the same time the leadership was not abstained from participating in the Bidhan Sobha election in 1982 and the Lok Sobha election of 1984. The leadership of the Dal participated in those elections with the manifesto of the separate statehood demand with the hope of garnering public opinion in their favour. But the fact is that the response of the people of North Bengal in this regard was not very encouraging. The people of North Bengal did not respond well even to such issue of Uttarkhanda Dal like expulsion of foreigners, the recognition of Kamotapuri language along with other issues advocated by them since the foundation of the Dal. It was found that the Uttarkhanda Dal achieved no mentionable success in the election (chapter-5) and even in some Assembly seats and Lok Sobha seats its candidates lost security deposits.

Thus, it was found that the U.K.D. had no social support base in any level. It has already been mentioned in chapter-4 that there were several causes for this situation. It has been stated earlier in this chapter that the presence of strong Left and Nationalist parties in this region did not provide any opportunity for the U.K.D. for expanding its organization. Again it is mentioned earlier that the pro-people policy of the Left Front Govt. at that time like the introduction of Panchayati system, *Barga* operation, Bank loan facilities for the poor and marginal cultivators prevented the lower class people for supporting the U.K.D. In this regard we may cite the observation of a social scientist that 'in recent years some spectacular changes have taken place at local level political processes as well as power structure. Extreme politicization on class line made considerable dent in the domain of power traditionally enjoyed by the Rajbanshis. Now classes rather than castes act as strong interest as well as pressure groups in political sphere. Therefore, in the new political process and mobilization the leaders moulded in an older milieu have certainly lost their age old supremacy over local level power structure.'⁵⁵

However, the above mentioned failure of the Uttarkhanda Dal in the elections which

revealed the weakness of its organizational strength and public support base led the think tanks of the Dal to change their techniques, for garnering support of the Rajbanshi population. It was found that the leadership of the Dal for the first time decided to use the 'Panchanan Card' to unite the Rajbanshi community as a whole. In this regard, the Dal tried to project Roy Saheb Panchanan Barma, the great social reformer of the Rajbanshi society at the first half of the twentieth century (mentioned in chapter-2) as the symbol of the religious 'guru' of the party. The decision was taken to use the prefix '*Sri Sri Thakur*' before Panchanan Barma's name i.e. "Sri Sri Thakur Panchanan Barma". Again, it was decided that as Panchanan Barma was a devotee of Lord Shiva, so the followers of the U.K.D. would follow the same god i.e. Lord Shiva. Accordingly, it was decided to change the colour, shape and symbol of the flag of the Dal. The colour of the flag was decided to make red with triangular shape (considering the religious flag of the Rajbanshis generally is posted at the top of the temple of Lord Shiva and also posted at the premises of the *gram than* of every Rajbanshi family). In the middle of the flag there would be a symbol of noon sun.⁵⁶ Thus it was found that the Dal, for the first time, played the card of Rajbanshi ethnic sentiment making Roy Sahib Panchanan Barma as its religious guru. At the same time the religious sentiment of the Rajbanshi population was tried to be exploited by the leadership of the party. It was again decided to adopt the gospel of the Gita as the main ideology of the party.⁵⁷ The think tanks of the Dal very shrewdly made effort to exploit the Panchanan sentiment, *Gram Thakur* (Shiva) sentiment and Vaishnava sentiment (making the gospel of the Gita their main ideology) of the Rajbanshi population. It should be remembered that most of the Rajbansahi people believe in Vaishnavism and *Hari shankirtan* (religious devotional song of Lord Krishna) and *Hariseva* (religious feast in the name of Lord Krishna). In those religious ceremonies or feasts, recital from *Sri Mat Bhagabat Gita* was must. Thus, it can be stated that the Dal now was proceeding towards the policy of ethnic solidarity. Though the Dal aimed at channelizing all these sentiments of the Rajbanshi people to the movement for a separate state but very interestingly, it was seen that there was no any specific policy with regard to other autochthones of the region viz, the indigenous Muslims (*Naisya-Sheikh*), Bodos, tribals etc so far as adopted by the leadership of the Uttarkhanda Dal.

The natural sequence of the above mentioned organizational policy of the Dal was the

‘religious pledge’ that was to be taken by the activists and the supporters of the Uttarkhanda Dal. It was the oath of unconditional allegiance to the Dal and commitment to the demand of the separate state of Kamotapur. However, this religious oath was first taken by the president of the Dal, Sri Panchanan Mallick on the 21st September 1985 at the oath taking ceremony, organized at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Dal, held at the premises of the residence of Sree Panchanan Mallick at Bhangerhat, Maynaguri Block, Jalpaiguri. The aforesaid ceremony was arranged on special religious day of the 536th Sankarabda and the auspicious day of ‘Radha Asthami.’ The ceremony was performed following the religious rites. First, the president of the Dal was anointed by a Rajbanshi religious priest Sri Manta Kamini Mohan Adhikary putting *Chandan-Tilak* (sectarian mark on the forehead with paste sandal wood) on the forehead and after that the oldest member of the Dal Sri Manta Satyendra Nath Basunia made the president (now Sri Mant Panchanan Mallick) to recite the oath sentences which was written in Rajbanshi language and the same goes the following.

‘Aji Panchai Asvin Deobar 536 Tama Shankarabdat Radha Asthami Tithit Mui Iswarer Namat Pratigya Karo Je Kamata Rajya Pratisthar Karanat Sarba Prakar Dayitya Palane Raji Thakim.’⁵⁸

The free translation goes thus: ‘I, on the 536 Shankarabda and on the auspicious day of Radha Asthami do hereby swear in the name of god that I must perform every kind of responsibility for the sake of establishing Kamota Rajya’.

It is to be stated that the top leaders of the Dal began to prefix the term ‘Sri Mant’ before their name in place of ‘Sri Yukta’ following the prefix used by the religious Vaishnavite saint Sri Mant Shankaradeva. It should be mentioned that Sri Mant Shankaradeva was the Vaishnavite guru of North Eastern India in the medieval period who got patronage at the court of Naranarayan, the king of the Koch Kingdom of Cooch Behar.⁵⁹ It was Shankaradeva who perhaps first preached the Vaishnava cult among the Rajbanshis.

However, after the oath taking ceremony of the president of the Dal was performed, the next turn was for the activists presented at the ceremony. Now the president of the Dal made them recite the pledge mentioned above. The activists who took oath on that very day

were 175 (one hundred and seventy five) in number. It is very relevant to mention the name of those oath takers along with their address which were entered into the resolution. The same has been mentioned bellow.

Sl.	Name	Address
1.	Sri Panchanan Mallick	Bhangerhat
2.	Sri Laxmi Narayan Deb Barman	No Address
3.	Sri Shirish Ch.Ded Singha	No Address
4.	Sri Kamini Mohan Roy	No Address
5.	Sri Debendra Nath Roy	No Address
6.	Sri Suranjan Roy	No Address
7.	Sri Rukkini Roy	No Address
8.	Sri Bhabesh Ch. Roy	No Address
9.	Sri Manindra Nath Roy	No Address
10.	Sri Jitendra Nath Roy	No Address
11.	Sri Laxmi Kanta Roy	No Address
12.	Sri Lalmohan Roy	No Address
13.	Sri Bulendra Nath Roy	No Address
14.	Sri Badal Ch. Adhikari	No Address
15.	Sri Sachindra Nath Roy	No Address
16.	Sri Satyendra Nath Basunia	No Address

1. It should be mentioned that after this serial, the name of the oath takers, their fathers' name, age and address are clearly signed and mentioned by the individual oath takers. So, it is mentioned here in ditto as it was entered in the Resolution.⁶

Sl No.	Name	Father's Name	Age	Address
17	Sri Narayan Ch.Dakua	Padma Dakua	41	Madhya Khagra Bari
18.	Sri Manindra Nath Roy	Tarini Mohan Roy	55	Nirendrapur
19.	Sri Tarapada Roy	Mohan Roy	24	Nirendrapur
20.	Dhirendra NathRoy	BidyamanRoy	50	Ratherhat
21.	Sri Kahar ChanRoy	Sri Jhila	40	Ratherhat
22.	Sri Thailu Roy	Sri Thanda Roy	30	Daukimari
23.	Sri Bijay Roy	Dhairya Mohan	22	Daukimari
24.	Nripendra Nath Adhikary	Kokil Adhikary	25	Daukimari
25.	Munu Roy(Lt.)	Shukurchan	26	Daukimari
26.	Sahadeb Roy	Brajomohan Roy	22	Churabhandar
27.	Jagadish Basunia	Satyen Basunia	25	Do
28.	Gobinda Mohan Roy	Ananda Roy	28	Do
29.	Sarbananda Roy	Bisaru Roy	30	Ratherhat
30.	Tarani Kanta Roy	Sadaru Roy	25	Do
31.	Fatik Ch. Roy	Dhan Mohan Roy	25	Do
32.	Jagadish Ch. Roy	Tipa Roy	28	Do

33.	Dinesh Roy (Lt.)	Jitendra Roy	22	Do
34.	Harikanta Barman	Jitendra Nath Barman	28	Domohini
35.	Shibendra Nath Sharma	Shashi Prasad Sharma	55	Ratherhat
36.	Brajendra Nath Roy	Joymohan Roy	49	Dwarikamari
37.	Chitta Roy	Shiben Roy	24	Ratherhat
38.	Madhusudhan Roy	Shibendra Roy	23	Chapsad
39.	Biswanath Roy	Jitmohan Roy	55	Ratherhat
40.	Ramsing Roy	Rajmohan Roy	75	Do
41.	Ramendranath Roy	Surendranath Roy	22	Kathalbari
42.	Amulya Roy	Jogendranath Roy	32	Do
43.	Madhusudhan Barman	Baidyanath Barman	26	Do
44.	Gajendranath Sharma	Manikanta Sharma	50	Ratherhat
45.	Ajay Roy (Lt.)	Jogendranath Roy	23	Domohini
46.	Suresh Roy (Lt.)	Mutu Roy	25	Dwarikamari
47.	Sahadeb Roy (Lt.)	Mahadeb Roy	25	Ratherhat
48.	Soma Oraon	Bas Oraon	55	Khagenhat
49.	San Roy (Lt.)	Chaitamohon Roy	50	Dwarikamari

50.	Ganesh Ch. Roy	Shashimohan Roy	22	Ratherhat
51.	Bholanath Roy	Thandamohan Roy	24	Dwarikamari
52.	Jogesh Roy	Dupuru Roy	50	Ratherhat
53.	Jitendra Roy	Jogendranath Roy	68	Khagrabari
54.	Rathindranath Roy	Rukkini Ranjan Roy	49	Boalmari, Jalpaiguri
55.	Subhas Roy Sarkar	DwijendranathRoy Sarkar	19	Do
56.	Bhotta Sing Roy	Godala Roy	58	Jhar Baragila
57.	Banka Behari Barman	Basanta Kr. Roy	47	Bhuskardanga
58.	Halindranath Adhikary	Bhengana Adhikary	30	Uttar Khagrabari
59.	Dharen Roy	Brajomohan Roy	20	Ratherhat
60.	Shyam Mohan Roy	Nava Roy	20	Do
61.	Sadhu Roy	Indramohan Roy	55	Churabhandar
62.	Nalini Roy	Gourikanta Roy	35	Do
63.	Ramkishore Roy	Ramsundar Roy	45	Bhangarhat
64.	Jitendranath Roy	Harendranath Roy	53	Ratherhat
65.	Bimal Ch. Roy	Saren Roy	20	Do
66.	Kalin Roy	Layman Roy	25	Dwarikamari

67.	Rajkumar Roy	Manindranath Roy	25	Do
68.	Birendranath Roy	Jhila Roy	30	Do
69.	Sataru Roy	Pancha Roy	32	Churabhandar
70.	Pravas Roy	Priyanath Roy	30	Do
71.	Bhadramohan Roy	Mangulu Roy	30	Do
72.	Basanta Ch. Adhikary	Binod Adhikary	22	Dwarikamari
73.	Domasu Roy	Harimohan Roy	45	Do
74.	Sakindranath Roy	Jibdhan Roy	45	Char Churabhandar
75.	Bankim Ch. Barman	Khirod Ch. Barman	29	Do
76.	Namala Kanta Roy	Jaymohan Roy	28	Dhaulaguri
77.	Anukul Roy	Hariprasad Roy	50	Dwarikamari
78.	Malin Ch. Roy	Jajneswar Roy	35	Do
79.	Saday Kr. Roy	Thanda Mohan Roy	15	Do
80.	Prafulla Ch. Roy	Sadhu Mohan Roy	25	DO
81.	Keshab Sharma	Khoka Ch. Roy	18	Ratherhat
82.	Jogesh Roy	Mongal Chan Roy	20	Do
83.	Paltan Bagchi	Dhirendranath Bagchi	34	Do
84.	Dinanath ROY	Dharani Mohan Roy	25	W. Magurmari

85.	Kachua Roy	Shabda Roy	65	Ratherhat
86.	Katar Roy	Kerkeru Roy	55	Do
87.	Dharen Roy	Nenda Roy	25	Do
88.	Arjun Pande	Chulai Pande	65	Do
89.	Biswanath Roy	Dhan Prasad Roy	60	Do
90.	Dinabandhu Sharma	Sadakanta Sharma	40	Do
91.	Surendranath Roy	Shibendranath Roy	60	Do
92.	Budhmohan Roy	Mohan Roy	50	Do
93.	Shasanka Shekhar Roy Basunia	Gajendranath Basunia	29	Bhuskar Danga
94.	Shyamal Kr. Roy	Shyamacharan Roy	22	Do
95.	Bichuram Roy	Hari Roy	45	Ratherhat
96.	Dhajin Roy	Gobra Roy	42	Do
97.	Dwigambar Roy	Sudhamohan Roy	44	Dwarikamari
98.	Dalim Ch. Roy	Bini Roy	45	Do
99.	Bimal Roy	Suredra Nath Roy	30	Ratherhat
100	Birendranath Roy	Tunu Roy	32	Do
101	Madhu Adhikari	Bhadu Adhikari	24	Do

102	Jaydev Ch. Roy	Dhiren Roy	16	Bashila Danga
103	Ajay Kr. Roy	Dhana Mohan Roy	18	Dwarika Mari
104	Tukusu Roy	Khirod Roy	50	Do
105	Taraman Roy	Venda Mohan Roy	52	Do
106	Balcharan Roy	Fakai Ch. Roy	52	Bhagerhat
107	Bhusan Roy	Bartaman Roy	41	Dwarikamari
108	Sadhan Ch. Roy	Indramohan Roy	32	Dwarikamari
109	Joykanta Roy	Mankanta Roy	32	Bhangerhat
110	Nagendra Roy	Bidyamohan Roy	45	Dwarikamari
111	Chantamohan Roy	Rasik Ch. Roy	58	Do
112	Keshav Ch. Roy	Chandrakanta Roy	51	Bhangamali
113	Suredranath Roy	Bhogamohan Roy	42	Dwarikamari
114	Bhagin Roy	Budharu Roy	20	Basilar Danga
115	Satish Ch. Roy	Garo Roy	70	Bhangerhat
116	Bhabendranath Roy	Kailash Ch. Rpy	65	Ratherhat
117	Shakalu Roy	Fodang Roy	22	Dwarikamari
118	Perperu Roy	Tartaria Roy	45	Dhaolaguri
119	Gokul Ch. Roy	Gajen Roy	21	Dwarikamari

120	Fatumohan Roy	Sukhmohan Roy	49	Dhaolaguri
121	Mohan Roy	Tunu Roy	16	Ratherhat
122	Suresh Ch. Roy	Sakindra Roy	25	Do
123	Haren Roy	Kutha Roy	20	Dwarikamari
124	Kalani Roy	Baneswar Roy	28	Do
125	Joymohan Roy	Nenda Mohan Roy	30	Do
126	Sachin Roy	Mohan Roy	17	Do
127	Dhajen Roy	Andharu Roy	25	Do
128	Dhulia Roy	Mudikanta Roy	60	Ratherhat
129	Jagadish Barman	Umananda Barman	40	Dhupguri
130	Basunath Barma	Tisya Ram Roy	50	Salbari
131	Rabindra Roy	Kutha Roy	25	Dwarikamari
132	Bidesh Roy	Dhipa Roy	22	Ratherhat
133	Jatindranath Roy	Pailsanju Roy	58	Dwarikamari
134	Amulya Kr. Mallick	Ratneswar Mallick	34	Ratherhat
135	Amulya Roy	Ram Ch. Roy	18	Chura Bhandar
136	Satish Sharma	Gita Nath Sharma	40	Ratherhat

137	Nirendranath Roy	Kalin Roy	40	Amguri
138	Rathal Ch. Adhikary	Rasikmohan Adhikary	40	Dhapra
139	Bhabani Roy	Farku Roy	55	Daukimari
140	Harendra Nath Roy	Ramkanta Roy	40	Dhaolaguri
141	Kaleswar Roy	Dulu Roy	42	Dhoulaguri
142	Kartik Roy	Majkila Roy	25	Bakshir Danga
143	Bishwer Adhikary	Rachana Adhykary	17	Do
144	Deo Roy	Gadela Roy	52	Chura Bhandar
145	Praneswar Roy	Mahikanta Roy	60	Do
146	Biren Roy	Chandra Mohan Roy	25	Ratherhat
147	Deben Roy	Dupuru Roy	60	Dhaolaguri
148	Laxmi Roy	Braben Roy	40	Do
149	Dhiren Ch. Roy	Budhmohan Roy	20	Ratherhat
150	Babulal Roy	Sukhdev Roy	35	Dwarikamari
151	Dinesh Roy	Somaru Roy	30	Do
152	Prabin Ch. Roy	Thalla Roy	27	Ratherhat
153	Gajen Roy	Kutha Roy	20	Dwarikamari

154	Asala Roy	Gondo Roy	20	Ratherhat
155	Nimai Sharma	Upen Sharma	25	Do
156	Nagendra nath Roy	Taraknath Roy	48	Betgara
157	Purna Ch. Sharma	Kalimohan Sharma	60	Ratherhat
158	Nityananda Sharma	Sitanath Sharma	45	Do
159	Ramesh Roy	Satish Roy	25	Dwarikamari
160	Mahim Roy	Chintamohan Roy	33	Do
161	Santosh Roy	Sonamohan Roy	25	Do
162	Satyanath Das	Shamimohan Roy	31	Do
163	Golimohan Roy	Bamamohan roy	18	S. Khagrabari
164	Satish Ch. Adhikary	Harish Ch. Adhikary	17	Do
165	Sunil Roy	Sachin Roy	25	Ratherhat
166	Gobinda Roy	Thella Roy	22	Chura Bhandar
167	Upendranath Roy	Dhirendranath Roy	47	Purba Daha
168	Dhirendranath Roy	Bhogdev Roy	60	E. Salbari
169	Nebu Roy	Jorkatu Roy	35	Do
170	Dhupendranath Roy	Kalikanta Roy	45	Do

170	Dhupendranath Roy	Kalikanta Roy	45	Do
171	Surendranath Roy	Jyotish Roy	35	E. Bhangamali
172	Niranjan Roy	Nagendranath Roy	19	Purba Daha
173	Bikash Roy	Surendra Nath Roy	20	Purba Daha
174	Bimalakanta Chakraborty	Srikanta Chakraborty	64	Salbari
175	Malindranath Roy	Laxmikanta Roy	nil	Purba Daha

It is to be mentioned that though the beginning of taking oath by the activists of the U.K.D. was at the residence of the president of the Dal at Bhangarhat but later on it was found that the Jalpesh temple near Maynaguri of Jalpaiguri district had become the venue of oath taking programme. It was reported by a well circulated daily newspaper that a section of leaders were committed to the creation of a separate homeland for themselves 'Kamotapur' as they called it. It was mentioned in that 'daily' that every member was asked to swear by the 'Gita' that he would not give up the struggle until Kamotapur became a reality and then he is blessed with water which is first 'purified' by pouring it on the *Shivalinga* in the temple. When they were asked why choose a temple as the venue for political deliberation, the people who gather there have readymade answer for this "just as the agitation for 'Khalistan' began from golden temple so will that for Kamotapur take off from Jalpesh."⁶¹ But the leaders like Manindra Nath Roy gave paper statement that they were against the 'Khalistan Movement' of the Panjab.⁶²

However, the oath taking programme of the Dal was not only confined to the Jalpesh temple or the Jalpesh temple was not the only venue for that but also it was found that the Dal organized such oath taking programme to the new active activists of the Dal in the villages. The responsibility of such oath programme was given to the representatives of the president.

The representatives also had to take oath for that purpose which goes thus in Rajbanshi language.

‘‘Mui Iswarer Name Pratijna Karia Kamata Rajyer Uddharer Karane Sabhapati Mahashaier Pratinidhi Hisabe Sapath Kariya Parichalanar Dayitya Bhar Grahan Karinu.’’

The free translation goes thus: ‘I, in the name of God swearing that I will perform the responsibility to organize ‘oath taking programme’ as a representative of the president.’

We can mention here the name of some of such representatives of the president of the Uttarkhanda Dal which are as follows.⁶³

1. Sri Yadav Chandra Tandra, Age-72 S/O Late Krishna Kanta Tandra, Village-West Dharmapur, Po.-Jorpakri,P.S.-Maynaguri Dist-Jalpaiguri, Oath was taken on 28.01.1987.
2. Sri Haren Roy, s/o-Kaichalu Roy, Village-Uttar Jhar Khattimari, PO.-Lataguri, P.S. Malbazar,Jalpaiguri,date-08/02/1987.
3. Sri Dhirendra Nath Roy, s/o-Bhogdev Roy, Village-Salbari,PO.- Jalpesh Mandir, P.S.- Maynaguri, Dist. Jalpaiguri,Dated- 13.02.1987.
4. Sri Jogendra Nath Roy, s/o-Late Rupnath Roy, Village-Sakirajot, P.O.-Rajganj, Dist-Jalpaiguri. No date is mentioned .
5. Sri Shashimohan Adhikari, s/o Late Bangshimohan Adhikari, Village-Dabgram, Po.-No -1 Fulbari, P.S.-Rajganj, Dist.-Jalpaiguri. Date is not mentioned.
6. Sri Debendra Nath Roy, s/o-Late Golai Roy, Village-Panchabati, P.O.-Debi Thakurbari, P.S.-Rajganj, Dist-Jalpaiguri.
7. Sri Saken Roy, s/o-Late Mohan Roy, Po.-Shikarpur, P.S.- Rajganj, Dist.-Jalpaiguri, date-05.04.1987.
8. Sri Nabakumar Deb Adhikary, s/o-Late Mahendra Deb Adhikary,Village-Sardarpara, P.O.-Belakoba, P.S.-Kotowali, Jalpaiguri, date-04.07.1987.

All the above mentioned representatives of the president of the U.K.D. having the responsibility to perform oath taking programme to the new activists signed on a particular oath taking letter along with their fathers' name and address. However, all these above mentioned persons belonged to Rajbanshi ethnic group. But it is very important to mention that some persons belonged to indigenous Muslim community (*Nasya-Sheikh*) also took oath in the name of 'Allah' for performing oath taking programme to the new party supporters. However, the draft of the oath letter and the name of such two representatives are mentioned below.

"Mui Allahar Name Shapath Karea Kamotapur Rajyer Dabite

Sabhapati Mahashaer Pratinidhi Hisabe Shapath Grahan Karya

Parichalanar Dayitya Var Grahan Karinu" (in Rajbanshi Language).

The free translation is: 'I do hereby in the name of Allah, swear that I shall perform the oath taking programme as the representative of the president.'

In this regard the name of two such representatives are Samaru Muhammad, s/o Late Nathisuddin Muhammad, Vill.- Bhandarigach, Rajganj, Dist.-Jalpaiguri and Md. Abdul Kudduj, s/o Md. Maijuddin, Gaora, Rajganj, Jalpaiguri, date- 02.01.1987.⁶⁴

It can be said from the aforesaid oath taking programme that not only a section of Rajbanshi Hindu but also a section of indigenous Muslim though in small number took oath to dedicate themselves for the cause of acquiring 'Kamotapur' state. The oath taking programme was not confined to recite the aforesaid oath letter but also it was mandatory for the new members to swear by the Gita and the Mahabharata in case of the Hindus and by the Quran in case of the Muslims for dedicating their lives for the sake of forming separate Kamotapur state.⁶⁵

In fact, the leadership of the Dal made desperate effort to keep their supporters under control exploiting the religious sentiment in the teeth of strong presence of the national parties especially the Left Parties in West Bengal. Side by side, they were also preparing themselves to turn the movement towards violent situation as the later sequence of events

proved. The Dal also proposed to form a regiment named 'Rai Sena' ⁶⁶ after the name of Chila Roy (Shukladhwaj), the famous military general and younger brother of Maharaja Naranarayan, the king of Koch Kingdom in the early 16th century. This measure on the part of the Dal also proved the above mentioned intention. Thus, the Dal was adopting every possible means to reach at their goal of acquiring the separate state of Kamotapur.

Now let us discuss the violent activities of the Dal which it pursued in order to materialize its demands for a separate state. In this regard, it is to be mentioned that the Dal perhaps received inspiration from the neighboring state of Assam. It is very pertinent to state here that Dr. Purna Narayan Singha, the president of Bharatiya Koch Rajbanshi Kshatriya Mahasobha with its Head Quarters at Tezpur, Assam wrote a letter to Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the U.K.D. and also the vice president of the above mentioned organization of Assam where Dr. Singha mentioned that as the Rajbanshi of North Bengal could not lead the movement to the forceful and violent mood, they were not getting any importance or drawing the attention of the govt. He quoted the example of Jharkhandis and Gorkhaland movement under the leadership of Subhas Ghising.⁶⁷ That the Uttarkhanda movement was well inspired by the movements in Assam was also clear from a newspaper statement of Sri Panchanan Mallick where he claimed that the Rajbanshis of Assam had sympathetic attitude towards the movement for a separate state organized by the U.K.D. Even the Assam Gana Parishad (A.G.P) had supported their movement.⁶⁸ In the same statement Sri Mallick claimed that Gayetridevi, a princess of Cooch Behar kingdom and former Maharani of Rajasthan Kingdom sympathized the Uttarkhanda Movement.

However, it is very interesting to note that the Uttarkhanda Dal had formed a shadow ministry (however, an interesting turn of the policy of the Dal was reported in some daily newspapers which also should be mentioned here) of proposed Kamotapur Rashtra (not Rajya). The geographical area of this proposed Kamotapur Rashtra was defined from Dhubri of Assam to Malda district of West Bengal with Cooch Behar as its capital. The colour of the national flag of this proposed state would be yellow and green. It was reported that a meeting of the Central Committee of the U.K.D. with 22 (twenty two) activists was held on 24 September 1985 that was chaired by Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Dal. In the shadow ministry Sampad Roy was declared minister in charge of the Foreign and Home

Dept.; Banku Behari Barman become a minister in charge of Agriculture and Planning Department; Bhupendra Nath Roy, minister in charge of Broad Casting and Culture Department; Sudhansu Sarkar, minister in charge of Law Department and Administrative Department was given to Sri Manindra Nath Roy.⁶⁹ The Head of the Cabinet was Sri Rukmini Roy. However, later it was completely denied by the president of the Dal, Sri Panchanan Mallick giving a statement in the newspaper.⁷⁰

It is very relevant to state on the basis of above reporting of a news paper that the leadership of the Uttarkhand Dal had the dormant aspiration of becoming ministers in a state i.e. a ministry of the Rajbanshi people. That is why, they formed such a shadow ministry. In other words, it may also be stated that such a measure of forming a ministry was taken to rejuvenate the morale of the activists and the supporters of the Dal. However, with regard to such political aspiration of an ethnic group or backward class or Dalit of India is very natural as has been observed by the scholars. Scholars argued that the main reason of such sub regional movement, generally organized by an ethnic group of people or scheduled caste group is their socio-political and economic deprivation for a long period of time and also because of the domination of the upper caste people.⁷¹

However, the movement of the U.K.D. was gradually turning towards hot mood at least in words which were published in daily news papers. The leadership of the Dal began to threaten both the State Govt. and Central Govt. that they would take the path of armed movement if it became necessary. Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Dal gave newspaper statement where he stated, 'there would be no troubles to get fire arms from foreign countries'. According to Sri Mallick, the Dal had sent representatives to the leaders of all regional parties of India and they suggested armed movement.⁷² But Sri Mallick did not mention the name of the regional parties with which they had made contact. However, the CPI (M) party, the main constituent of the then ruling Left Front Govt. was also providing fire arms to their activists to face the probable challenge of the *Uttarkhandists* which was according to its leadership just a "preventive measure". The *Uttarkhandists* also made complaint armed attack on them at that time.⁷³

Thus, it was found that the movement at this point of time was gradually drifting

towards volatile situation especially towards the end of the year 1986. However, at the beginning of the new year, the think tanks of the Dal took the decision of *Rail Rokho* (the blockade of the train movement) programme to intensify the demand of separate state of Kamotapur. It is to be mentioned that the Dal held its Central Committee meeting at its head office at Jalpesh Temple. The Dal first decided to proclaim emergency in the party because of the above mentioned programme. Then the programme of the *Rail Rokho* was resolved on 25 January 1987 for twelve hours from 6a.m. to 6p.m. The responsibility to carry out programme was given to Sri Sampad Roy, the general secretary of the Dal and other four leaders viz. Jagadish Roy, Manindra Nath Roy, Babunath Barman and Bhatta Sing Roy.⁷⁴ It is to be mentioned here that the president had no consent to this *Rail Rokho* programme. It was Sri Sampad Roy, the secretary of the Dal insisted on adopting such programme and the majority of the members of the Dal supported him.⁷⁵ However, the objective of this *Rail Rokho* programme was to draw the attention of the Central Govt. to the demand of separate state, made by the U.K.D. Because, in spite of the repeated demand for a separate state by the Dal through memoranda and letter correspondences, the Central Govt. did not respond. At the same time the Dal wanted to gauge the organizational unity, strength and morale of the activists of the Dal.⁷⁶

However, on the very day of 25 January, 1987, the 'Rail Rokho' (Train Blockade) agitation was started at Altagram Railway station, a few kilometers away from Dhupguri P.S., Dist.-Jalpaiguri. According to police report the number of agitators (Uttarkhandists) was about five thousand. In fact it was at the pattern of AASU (All Assam Student Union).⁷⁷ Ultimately, the agitators were dispersed with police firing. The police opened fifteen rounds of fire and two agitators were killed on the spot.⁷⁸ They were identified with Jagadish Roy, Vill.-Shaudangi P.S.-Rajganj, Jalpaiguri district and Gajen Roy, Vill.-Jalpesh, Maynaguri P.S. of Jalpaiguri district.⁷⁹ However, the police of Dhupguri Police station registered a FIR (First Investigation Report) against some leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal on the same date. The description of the police case is given below as per police record.

Dph (Dhupguri) Ps case No.-10/87, dt.-25.01.87, 23-00 hrs. Po. -S. Sarkar, O/C Dph PS.

VS

1. Bulendranath Roy, 2. Gunadhar Barman, 3. Debendranath Roy (all Dhupguri), 4. Lalmohan Roy of Maynaguri P.S., 5. Bijay Roy of Malbazar P.S., 6. Badal Ch. Adhikary of MN GP. and 5000 other of PHD, Katawali, Mal, MNG (Maynaguri) M.K.G.(Makhliganj), DPH (Dhupguri), F.K.T.(Falakata) and other area of North Bengal Dist.

Apart from the above mentioned list of defendants another fresh list was prepared by the police which is mentioned below serially as per the police record.

1. Bulendra Nath Roy alias Bulu, s/o-Late Umesh of Purba Magurmari.
2. Debendra Nath Roy, s/o Late Bhupendra Nath of Madhya Daukimari.
3. Gunadhar Barman, s/o Late Dinanath of Purba Daukimari.
4. Basuruddin Mia, s/o Basenin Mia of Par Kumlai.
5. Ainul Haque, s/o Md. Ali of Do.
6. Nalu Roy, s/o Late Gangaram of Do.
7. Rupeswar Roy, s/o Late Dhowla Roy of Do.
8. Suresh Ch. Roy, s/o Late Debesh Roy of Do.
9. Ganesh Ch. Roy, s/o Late Kartik Roy of Do.
10. Pradip Kumar Roy, s/o Late Kandalu Roy of Do.
11. Pramoth Ch. Roy, s/o Dasharath Roy of Do.
12. Anil Barman, s/o Prem Narayan of Ranibari, Mathabhanga.
13. Shashikanta Barman, s/o Surendra Nath Barman of Falakata.
14. Rukini Roy, s/o Late Madan Roy of Boalmari P.S. Kotwali.

15. Kamini Mohan Adhikary, s/o Late Rajanikanta Adhikary of Rakhaldevi, P.S. Kotwali.

16. Sampad Roy, s/o Late Sebulal Roy of Bengogarh, PHD

17. Lalmohan Roy, s/o Late B. Roy of Ratherhat, MNG.

All the above mentioned accused persons were later charge sheeted on 01.11.90.⁸⁰ But no records are available for the final verdict.

It has already been noted that two activists of the Dal were killed in police firing, the Dal had made a condolence note in its Central Committee meeting on 28 January 1987 and gave them the honour of martyrdom. At the same time resolution was taken condemning police atrocities and undemocratic arrest of its activists at random by the police of the Govt. of West Bengal.⁸¹ It should also be mentioned that since then the 25th January was generally celebrated as 'Martyr Day' by the activists of the Uttarkhanda Dal.⁸² The Dal also constructed an altar in the commemoration of those two martyrs (as the U.K.D. considered so) at Shaudangi village of Rajganj Police station in Jalpaiguri district.⁸³ However, it is very relevant to mention that the *Rail Rokho* programme of the U.K.D. achieved no success at all. On the contrary, the failure of the *Rail Rokho* programme led an intra-party conflict which will be discussed in details in the next chapter (chapter-7). It is very interesting to state that the name of Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Dal was not registered in police F.I.R. The Dal in protest of the police firing on the blockaders of the 'Rail Rokho' movement submitted deputation to the B.D.O. of Maynaguri under the leadership of Sri Satyen Basunia with a demand note. It was mentioned in the demand note that judicial enquiry about police firing was to be made, punishment for accused police officer, govt. help to the nearest of the family of those two killed persons, immediate release of arrested leaders and the formation of Kamotapur State. About five hundred persons took part in the deputation. It was on that very day a deputation was also submitted to the B.D.O. of Dhupguri. About two hundred activists of the Dal made procession and moved around the Dhupguri town wearing black badge on the right arm in protest of the police firing at Altagram Railway Station.⁸⁴

However, as a result of the killing of two of their activists by police firing at Altagram incident the immediate reaction of the Dal was to boycott the Bidhan Sabha Election of West

Bengal dated 23 March 1987. A leaflet which was circulated by the Dal with the address note of Panchanan Mallick, the president and Sampad Roy, the general secretary as well as Sri Jagadish Chandra Roy, the president of Yuba Uttarkhanda Dal categorically mentioned in serial no. 8(eight) of the leaflet that 'the chief minister of the Govt. of West Bengal Sri Jyoti Basu applied his police force undemocratically on the blockaders of the 'Rail Rokho' movement which was going on at democratic and peaceful manners. As a result of the inhuman and cruel acts of police firing, two of their activists (the name has already been mentioned) were killed on the spot. In protest of such inhuman act on the part of the Govt. of West Bengal, the U.K.D. called for boycotting the Bidhan Sabha Election of March 23, 1987.⁸⁵ However, it was the last mentionable separatist activity of the Dal. After this the Dal was gradually losing its tempo and vigour and fast running towards intra party conflict with the result of the split of the Dal which will be discussed in details in the next chapter.

It has already been mentioned that the first demand of a separate state was raised in May 1980 and the first memorandum in this regard was submitted to the Prime minister of India in the same year. It was found that the Govt. of West Bengal expressed grave concern about this new political development in North Bengal. The high level officers of the administration, the leaders of the Left Front and the ministers of the then Govt. left for North Bengal to take stock of the situation. The then Chief Minister of the Govt. of West Bengal termed this movement as separatist and anti national while he attended a meeting with some intellectuals at Lansdown Hall of Cooch Behar town on 7 July 1980.⁸⁶ It is also been mentioned that some members of West Bengal Legislative Assembly belonged to both opposition and treasury bench expressed their deep concern about the separatist movements in North Bengal and suggested to take initiative to make the people conscious about such activities. Kamal Guha, the then minister in charge of Agriculture Department demanded whole day discussion on the matter in the full session of the Assembly.⁸⁷ Apart from this, it has already been mentioned the 'Rail Rokho' movement of the Uttarkhanda Dal and the response of the police of the Govt. of West Bengal. However, it should be mentioned that though the Uttarkhanda Dal time and again tried to draw the attention of the Central Govt. to their demand of a separate state of Kamotapur submitting memoranda, corresponding letters, through public meetings, *Rail Rokho* movement and even boycotting the Assembly election

of West Bengal on 23rd March 1984, but there was no any response from the part of the Central Govt. The Central Govt. did not take any initiative in this regard. It was found that the leadership of the U.K.D. alleged that in spite of their frequent request to the Central Govt., the Govt. was not responding at all and that is why, they were preparing to take the movement up to Delhi, the capital of India.⁸⁸

It is also pertinent to mention the response of the various political parties to this separatist movement of the Uttarkhanda Dal. In this regard, the left political parties which were the constituents of the then Left Front Govt. of West Bengal had given early response. It was found that the 'Jalpaiguri Jela Krishok Sobha', 'Sangjukta Krishan Sobha', 'Jalpaiguri, Agrarian Krishan Sobha' and 'Jalpaiguri Krishak Samiti'-all these were the branch organizations of the Left Front political parties jointly published a leaflet. This leaflet was the result of the joint convention of those organizations. In the joint convention, all the organizations expressed deep concern about the separatist activities not only in Assam, Mizoram and Tripura, the Uttarkhanda movement of North Bengal was also a matter of deep concern. They appealed the labour classes, farmers, middle class people and also the intellectuals not to respond to the call of the *Uttarkhandists*. They regarded the U.K.D. as a political party organized by a group of *Zamindars* and *Jotedars*. Thereby they reminded the people that they had formed a democratic platform which was free from the clutches of the *Zamindars* and *Jotedars*.⁸⁹ However, when the movement of the Uttarkhanda Dal for separate state was gradually intensifying in the year 1986, the C.P.I. (M) party, the chief constituent of the Left Front had formed a committee to investigate the separatist activities in North Bengal. The said committee was consisted of eight members including Sri Shibben Choudhury, state minister in charge of Transport and some local C.P.I.(M) leaders like Shantimay Ghosh.⁹⁰ Apart from this, a pamphlet was issued by the West Bengal committee of the C.P.I.(M) calling to resist the Uttarkhanda-Kamotapuri separatist movement. It was stated in the pamphlet that a separatist movement for forming an independent state was organized by the Uttarkhanda Dal, though the *Uttarkhandists* outwardly demanding a separate state within the Indian federal structure. It cited the example of forming a shadow cabinet ministry on 24th September 1985 under the leadership of Sri Rukini Roy of the U.K.D. However, the C.P.I.(M) blamed the Congress for helping such separatist movement in West Bengal. It was

stated in the pamphlet that the Uttarkhanda Dal was an organization of the declining Jotedars and the Congress (1) had a very sympathetic stance towards the U.K.D. However, the party considered that the class struggle was the main weapon to defeat such anti- national and separatist elements.⁹¹ However, it should also be referred that the then chief minister Sri Jyoti Basu himself directly made Congress (1) responsible for helping separatist activities of the U.K.D. He alleged that Sri Prasenjit Barman, the Rajya Sobha member of Congress (1) from Cooch Behar was involved in submitting the demand note for a separate state of North Bengal. The same allegation was made against Sri Upendra Nath Barman, the ex M.P. from Jalpaiguri. However, Sri Prasenjit Barman denied all the allegations giving statement in the Rajya Sobha.⁹²

Thus, it was found that the then Govt. of West Bengal vehemently opposed this separatist movement coining it as anti-national and so did the left parties. It was also found that the Govt. of West Bengal did not take any initiative to bring the leadership of the U.K.D. on the table of discussion regarding their demand. Rather the Govt. tried to meet the problem administratively and politically. On the other hand, the Central Govt. was completely kept itself mum about this movement.

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52. *A Pamphlet of the U.K.D.*, addressed by Sri Panchanan Mallick, president of the Dal and Sri Sampad Roy, general secretary of the Dal, printed at Uma Press, Dhupguri, date-22.06.1980.
53. *A leaflet*, circulated by the Dal, date-25.09.1980.
54. *Resolution No.-I*, Jalpaiguri District Committee, held at Shovar Hat, date-14-12 1981. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).

55. Rajat Subhra Mukhopadhyay, *op.cit.* p. 32.

56. *Resolution No. 2, Central Committee Meeting of the U.K.D.*, held at the Head Quarters of the Party, Jalpesh Temple, Maynaguri, Dist- Jalpaiguri, date-09.07.1985 (the resolution was taken in Rajbanshi language). [Collected, M.M.Mallick].

57. *Ibid*, Resolution No. 3.

58. *Oath Taking Ceremony*, organized by the U.K.D. at its Central Committee meeting, held at the residence of Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Dal, Bhangarhat, Maynaguri, date-21.09.1985. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).

59. Sukumar Das, *Uttarbanger Itihas* (in Bengali), Kumar Sahitya Prakashan, 1982, Calcutta, P. 164; Khan Choudhury Amanatullah Ahmed, *Cooch Beharer Itihas* (in Bengali), Vol.1, first published 1936, Cooch Behar State Press , reprint, Hiten Nag (ed.), 2005, N.L. publishers, Siliguri, p. 61.

60. Resolution No. 2(B), Oath Taking Ceremony, *op. cit.*, date- 27 .09.1985.

61. *The Times of India*, ‘Now its separate Kamatapur’, date- 03.09.1987.

62. *Uttarbanga Sambad*, a Bengali Daily, published from Siliguri, date-17.10.1987.

63. All these representatives of the President had taken oath individually from a hand written draft and signed along with fathers’ name and address on the oath letter. (All those oath letters collected from the house of Sri Prabin Chandra Roy, an activist of the U.K.D., Belakoba, Rajganj, Jalpaiguri, date- 05.07.2012).

64. *Ibid*.

65. *Pratyahik Sambad* (in Bengali), issued from Cooch Behar, date- 26.09.1986, Friday; Also *Uttarbanga Sambad*, a Bengali daily, issued from Siliguri, date-23.10.1986, Thursday.

66. *Ibid* .

67. *A letter* (in Bengali), sent by Dr. Purna Narayan Singha, president, Bharatiya Koch-Rajbanshi-Kshatriya Mohasobha, Head Quarter, Tezpur, Assam , to Sri Panchanan Mallick, president, U.K.D., date-10.10.1986. (Collected from Smt. Tapati Mallick, the eldest daughter of Panchanan Mallick, the founder president of the U.K.D.).
68. Uttarbanga Sambad, *op.cit.* date-23.10.1986.
69. *Antar Darshan*, a Fortnightly Newspaper, published from Siliguri, date-06. 09.1986; Yugantar , a leading Bengali Newspaper, issued from Calcutta , 12.10.1986.
70. Uttarbanga Sambad, *op.cit.* date-23.10.1986.
71. Shekhar Bandopadhyaya , *Jat Pater Rajniti ‘Paschat Pat’ Nay*”(in Bengali), published in Ananda Bazar Patrika, a popular daily of West Bengal, issued from Calcutta and Siliguri, date-27.02.2014.
72. Uttarbanga Sambad, *op.cit.* date-14.11.1986, an interview with Sri Panchanan Mallick.
73. *Bartaman*, a daily (in Bengali), issued from Calcutta, date-24.12.1986.
74. *Resolution No.-1 and 2, the Central Committee Meeting*, held at the Head office, Jalpesh Temple, at 4 p.m., date-08.01.1987. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).
75. *An interview* with Sri Suranjan Roy, founder member of the U.K.D., Village-Chowhaddi, P.O.-Daukimari, PS-Dhupguri, Dist-Jalpaiguri, date of birth-21.12.1936, a retired primary school teacher, date of interview- 19.12.2012,
76. *Interview* with Sri Tushar Barman, an activist of the U.K.D., Vill.+P.O. - Rangalibazna, PS-Madarihat, Dist-Jalpaiguri, date of birth - 01.09.1956, date of interview-23.12.2010.
77. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, ‘Uttarkhanda Andoloner Eitihashik Prekshapat’, *op. cit.*, p. 513.
78. Lal Nakshat, *op. cit.*, date-06.02.1987.
79. *A leaflet of the Uttarkhanda Dal* calling the boycott of Bidhan Sobha Election of 1984, printed at Goutam Press, Nutanpara, Jalpaiguri. (nd).

80. File's Name, *Khatian, DPH/1987*, Dhupguri P.S., Record Room, Dist.-Jalpaiguri.
81. *Resolution No. 1 and 2, Central Committee Meeting of the U.K.D.*, held at its Head Office, date-28.01.1987.(Collected, M.M.Mallick).
82. *Interview* with Sri Prabin Chandra Roy, a leading figure of the Uttarkhanda Dal , date of birth-05.01.1942, Belakoba, P.S.Rajganj, Dist.-Jalpaiguri, date of interview-05.07.2012, a retired Primary School teacher ; Interview with Tushar Barman, date of birth -01.09.1956, Vill.+P.O.-Rangalibazna, P.S.-Madarihat, Dist-Jalpaiguri, date of interview-23.12.2010.
83. *Field Studies*, date-04.08.2012
84. Lal Nakshatra, *op. cit.*, date-06.02.1987.
85. *A leaflet* of Uttarkhanda Dal with the tittle 'Keno Uttarkhanda Dal 1987 Saler Sadharan Bidhan Sobha (M.L.A.) Nirbachane Vote Dane O Grahane Birota?' (in Bengali), no date is mentioned, published and circulated by Mahendra Roy, Sudhir Roy, Hiren Roy and Kamana Roy, printed at Goutam Press, Nutan Para, Jalpaiguri; Resolution No. 5, Central Committee meeting , held at its Head Office , date- 08.02.1987.(Collected, M.M.Mallick).
86. *Bartaman Dinkal*, a Bengali daily literary journal, issued from Calcutta, July,1965, p. 26
87. Uttarbanga Sambad, *op.cit.*, date - 22.08.1986, Tuesday.
88. *Ibid.*, date -17.10.1987.
89. *A leaflet*, published and circulated by Comrade Sudhan Raha on behalf of Jela Krishak Sobha, printed at Singha Printing and Binding Workers, Jalpaiguri, date -17.06.1980.
90. Uttarbanga Sambad, *op.cit.* date-22.04.1986.
91. *A pamphlet* of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), West Bengal Committee, entitled 'Pratirodher Ahawan,' published and circulated by Sushil Choudhury, on behalf of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), West Bengal Committee, 31 Alimuddin Street, Calcutta-18, printed at Ganashakti Printers (Private) limited.(nd).

92. Paribartan, *op. cit.*, date-16.08.1980.

Chapter-7

Intra-Group Conflict within the Party: Its Decline

In this last chapter of our dissertation paper an attempt will be made to deal with the internal feud of the U.K.D. which ultimately led its split on October 10, 1987. However, it was also found that the Dal witnessed its rapid decline in the 90s of the last century immediately after its divide. It will be found in later discussion of this chapter that the dissension arose among the leaders of the Dal with regard to different issues such as failure of the leadership to acquire success politically in the region; what would be the future course of its movement; and formulate political strategies of the Dal vis-a-vis the policy of the govt. to meet the challenge of the latter. In fact, this dissention ultimately caused the final divide of the Dal and the result of this divide was the formation of a new political party named 'Kamotapur Gana Parishad' under the steward ship of Sri Panchanan Mallick, the existing president of the U.K.D. severing all its ties with the mother organization. However, it is to be mentioned that in spite of the split the U.K.D. into two different political organizations, the aims, objectives and ideology remained the same which will be discussed later in this chapter.

It is very relevant to mention that the U.K.D. saw its split and rapid decline within a short span of time i.e. within eighteen years since its very birth. It may be argued in this connection that the strength and support base of a regional political party depend, to a large extent, on the charismatic leadership of that very regional party as it is visible in case of almost all regional political parties especially the ethnic based political parties in India. For example, the name of the leaders like Shibu Shoren of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha; Prafulla Mahanta of Assam Gana Parishad; M. Karunanidhi of Dravida Munetra Khajagam (D.M.K.); J.Jaylalita of All India Dravida Munetra Khajagam (A.I.D.M.K.); Subash Ghising of Gorkha National Liberation Front (G.N.L.F.) etc. may be mentioned. But it would not be wrong to mention that in case of the U.K.D., the main theme of our research paper, no such charismatic leader emerged. Though it can not be denied that Sri Panchanan Mallick, the founder president of the U.K.D. and in subsequent time Sri Sampad Roy, the general secretary were the main pillars of the Dal. But it is to be noted that both the leaders could not reach at the height of charismatic leadership, neither within the community nor in the region under the

purview of our study. Therefore, it was seen that the failure of one big political programme like *Rail Rokho* on 25 January 1987 led the Dal on the verge of decline and thereafter the microscopic response of the people to the call of refraining from voting in March 1987 (Assembly Election) by the Dal ultimately led its final split centering round the question of able leadership. In later discussion of this chapter, it will be found that the programme of *Rail Rokho* movement was the seed of dissension among the top brass of the Dal. However, one opinion of the local historian can be cited in this context: “....after the total failure of the ‘movement, the Uttarkhanda Dal was divided into two groups. In fact, the U.K.D. had received a rude shock in that year of 1987 and as a result the Dal was formally divided in that year and the Kamatapur Gana Parishad was formed in the pattern of Assam Gana Parishad.”¹

Now let us discuss the background of the dissension that arose among the top leaders of the Dal. It is clear from the above discussion of the earlier chapters (chapter-4 and chapter-6) that Sri Panchanan Mallick emerged as an undisputed leader of the Dal and remained its president from the very foundation of the Dal till its final split in October 1987. It was also seen that for about eighteen years, there was no any difference of opinion with regard to any issue or any party programme among the top brass of the Dal. However, the difference of opinion arose among the members of the Central Committee of the Dal, so to say, for the first time, on the proposal of the *Rail Rokho* movement. In this regard, the opinion of Sri Suranjan Roy, a founder as well as Central Committee member of the Dal is very relevant to mention here. In his opinion, it is revealed that Sri Sampad Roy, the general secretary of the Dal was the chief advocate of the *Rail Rokho* programme in the meeting of the Central Committee of the Dal, held on 8 January 1987 at the Jalpesh Temple, the Head Office of the Dal, near Maynaguri of Jalpaiguri district. The argument of Sri Roy was that the Dal should have to be proved its organizational strength and at the same time attention of the Central Govt. was to be drawn through such movement. On the other hand, Sri Panchanan Mallick fully opposed such programme which according to Sri Mallick might be turned into violent one and might invite govt.’s wrath resulting repression on the party activists.² Another view in this regard is that the main difference of opinion was between Sri Pravash Singha Shastri, an important member and later on the president of the mother organization who was from Cooch Behar and Sri Panchanan Mallick who was from Jalpaiguri. Thus, virtually it was the difference of

Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri mentality.³ However, it was found that the proposal of 'Rail the same was fixed on 25 January 1987.⁴ It seems that Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the Dal had to give his consent against his will. Thus, the beginning of the intra-group conflict (intra-party feud) may be traced from that Central Committee meeting of the Dal where the main agenda was *Rail Rokho* programme.

However, as a result of the above mentioned difference between Sri Panchanan Mallick and Sri Sampad Roy, Pravash Singh Shastri and others, it was found that the 'Rail Rokho' movement was virtually led by Sri Smpad Roy. It was very interesting to note that the president Sri Panchanan Mallick abstained himself from the direct involvement of the said programme. In fact, he was not present on the spot where the *Rail Rokho* programme was started on 25 January 1987⁵ i.e. at Altagram Railway Station, a few kilometers away from Dhupguri Police Station of Jalpaiguri district. It should also be mentioned in this context that no police case was registered against Sri Panchanan Mallick after the 'Rail Rokho' programme was held where police firing was taken place to scatter the violent agitators while the same was registered against almost all the top leaders of the U.K.D.⁶ It seems that such a development aftermath the *Rail Rokho* movement widened further the dissension between the two groups. In this connection, it is very relevant to point out the opinion of Sri Pravash Singh Shastri who was the president of the split Uttarkhanda Dal. Sri Shastri stated while remembering the two dead party activists who were killed at police firing at the time of *Rail Rokho* movement and whom the Dal considered as martyrs that when the activists of the Dal were ready to sacrifice their lives for acquiring 'Kamota Rajya,' the former president of the Dal (Panchanan Mallick) was afraid, terrified and was hesitant.⁷ Thus, it is clear from Shastri's statement that the critics of Sri Panchanan Mallick within the Dal criticized him strongly for his non-violent leadership. However, the differences of opinion that arose among the leaders of the Dal centering round the 'Rail Rokho' movement were never bridged.

It would not be wrong to state that Sri Panchanan Mallick, an experienced and veteran leader of the Dal could feel the pulse of the majority members of the Central Committee of the Dal who were trying to step him down from the presidential post of the Dal. As a matter of fact, Sri Mallick seemed to have been decided to form a new political party with the support of his 'loyalists' within the Dal just to keep his leadership intact. Thus,

a new political organization was formed on 10 October 1987 under the president ship of Sri Panchanan Mallick severing all ties with the mother organization i.e. the Uttarkhanda Dal. But it is very interesting to note the opinion of Sri Mallick who claimed that no new political party was formed but “the Central Committee of the Dal took a resolution unanimously merely to rename the Uttarkhanda Dal under the new name and style ‘Kamotapur Gana Parishad’” (K.G.P.).⁸

However, on the other hand, it was found that Sri Sampad Roy, the then general secretary of the Dal made a statement in a newspaper saying that Sri Panchanan Mallick was expelled from the Dal for his anti party activities in an emergent meeting of the Central Committee of the Dal held on 31st October 1987 at Dhupguri, Jalpaiguri district. Sri Pravas Chandra Singha Shastri was nominated as the pro-tem president of the Dal in the said meeting.⁹ However, it should be mentioned that subsequently Sri Sampad Roy made another statement in a newspaper saying that Sri Panchanan Mallick was not expelled but Sri Mallick himself tendered his resignation from the Dal on the issue of the nomenclature of the Dal which Sri Mallick preferred to be renamed as ‘Kamotapur Gana Parisad’.¹⁰ This statement of Sri Sampad Roy deserves some truths. In this regard, the opinion of one of the important members of the Dal may be mentioned. According to that member, the bone of contention between Sri Panchanan Mallick and Sri Sampad Roy and Sri Provas Chandra Singha Sastri was centering round the nomenclature of the Dal. It was said that while Sri Panchanan Mallick made the proposal to renamed the Uttarkhand Dal as ‘Kamotapur Gana Parisad’ arguing the fact that as the language of the majority population of the region was ‘Kamotapuri’, so the name of the Dal should be renamed as the above space mentioned nomenclature, but on the other hand, Sri Sampad Roy, Sri Provas Chandra Singha Shastri and others strongly opposed the proposal of Sri Mallick which ultimately led the split of the Dal.¹¹ However, another view is very relevant and to be mentioned here to make the matter more clear. Sri Suranjan Roy, a founder member of the Dal thinks that Sri Mallick was influenced by the ‘Assam Gana Parisad’ of Sri Prafulla Mahanta of Assam so much so that he was determined to rename the Dal in the pattern of Assam Gana Parisad.¹² However, the political observers were of the opinion that it was the result of the dissension among the top leaders of the Dal on the question of making its policy, political programme as well as the

future course of its movement and action.¹³ But at the same time it is to be mentioned that the leaders of the Dal failed to bridge the dissension and thereby to arrest the decline.

Thus, it was seen that the Uttarkhanda Dal witnessed its final break up because of the aforesaid intra party feud. Notwithstanding the 'Kamotapur Gana Parishad' was clearly a new break up political organization of the U.K.D. so far as the sequences of the events, discussed above prove. Therefore, it emphatically noted that there was parallel existence of two different political factions after the formation of the K.G.P. However, it has already been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that the aims and objectives of both the factions remained the same but their paths were different.

It would not be irrelevant to discuss the activities of both the break up organizations as well as their decline separately. Let us discuss first about the activities of the 'Kamotapur Gana Parishad.' It was found that in this newly formed political organization Sri Panchanan Mallick was nominated its president which was quite natural. Sri Rukkini Roy and Sri Upendra Nath Karjee were nominated its general secretaries. Apart from this the names of Sri Satyendra Nath Basunita, Sri Gunadhar Barman, Sri Suranjan Roy, Sri Debendra Nath Roy, Sri Badal Roy, Sri Babu Nath Barma, Sri Bhatta Singha Roy, Sri Jagadish Barman, Sri Soma Oraon, Sri Lalmohan Roy deserve special mention from among the eighteen members of the Central Committee.¹⁴ Besides this, the newly formed political party (K.G.P.) formed its students' wing which was named as 'All Kamotapur Students' Union' (AKSU) in the pattern of All Assam Students Union (AASU) with its Head Office at Boalmari of Jalpaiguri district.¹⁵ At the same time 'Kamotapur Sahitya Parashid' was also formed in order to create literary consciousness among the Rajbanshis people. Later it was found that the Kamotapur Sahitya Parishad began to publish a literary journal called 'Ratna Pith,' the historical name of the region.¹⁶

It is to be mentioned that no any mentionable political activities were found on the part of the Kamotapur Gana Parishad till its ultimate extinction. However, let us first discuss its electoral politics. With regard to its electoral politics, it was found that the Kamotapur Gana Parishad fielded its candidates in the Bidhan Sobha (Legislative Assembly) elections of 1991 and 1996 and in the Lok Sobha (Parliamentary) elections of 1989 and 1991. In both type

of election, it was found that the candidates of the K.G.P. lost even the security deposits; not to speak of winning a single seat. It is very interesting to note that Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the K.G.P. and the Lok Sobha candidate of the party in Jalpaiguri Parliamentary seat in 1989 secured only 0.43% (percent) of total valid votes so far as polled and Sri Rukmini Ranjan Roy, the general secretary of the K.G.P. and the Lok Sobha candidate of Jalpaiguri parliamentary seat in 1991 secured only 0.38% (percent) of total valid votes so far as polled.¹⁷ Thus, it was found that the percentage of votes, the K.G.P. candidates secured in the Lok Sobha election of 1989 and 1991 so far as in the Jalpaiguri parliamentary seat was much lesser than the previous ones that they faced before the split of the U.K.D. Thus it would not be wrong to note that the support base of the K.G.P. under the leadership of Sri Panchanan Mallick was plunging day by day and its organizational activities began to confine to Jalpaiguri district and that too only in Maynaguri, Dhupguri and Boalmari of Jalpaiguri Sadar.

With regard to other activities of the K.G.P. it is to be mentioned that it raised the demands of the establishment of a university at Madhupur Dham in Assam after the name of Sri Mant Shankar Dev and the formation of 'Chila Roy' regiment in Indian army in honour of Chila Roy (Shukladhwaj), the commander-in-chief of Maharaja Naranarayan of Koch dynasty of Cooch Behar kingdom in the middle of the 16th century along with the main demand of a separate state.¹⁸

However, it is very interesting to mention that the role of Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of this newly formed political party was that of a theorist or ideologue and not that of such a political leader who could lead a political movement of a violent nature from the front. His statements and writes up in the literary journal of the K.G.P. 'Ratna Pith' prove the same. Consequently, no such mentionable activities of the K.G.P. were found from its birth and till its gradual extinction with the formation of the 'Kamotapur Peoples' Party' on 7 January 1996 with Sri Atul Roy as its president and Sri Nikhil Roy as its general secretary.¹⁹ It is very relevant to state that the organizers of the Kamotapur Peoples' Party (K.P.P.) preferred the term Kamotapur to Uttarkhanda while the name of the K.P.P. was given. Thus, it proved the political farsightedness and sagacity of Sri Panchanan Mallick at least with regard to the use of the term 'Kamotapur' which was one of the causes of the dissention

among the U.K.D. leaders before its split.

Now let us discuss the activities of the U.K.D. after its break up in 1987. It was found that the Uttarkhanda Dal after its split formed its new Central Committee in its “Kendriya Sammelan” (Central Committee), held at Paschim Magurmari Prathamik Vidyalaya under Dhupguri police station of Jalpaiguri district where 180 representatives of the Dal attended from the different parts of Japaiguri, Cooch Behar and Darjeeling districts. It should be mentioned that this ‘Kendriya Sammelan’ of the split U.K.D. was organized under the leadership of Sri Sampad Roy and at the same time it is also to be noted that it was for the first time in the history of the U.K.D. that its Central Conference was being held without the presence of its founder president Sri Panchanan Mallick. However, in this conference Sri Pravash Singha Shastri was nominated the new president of the Dal and Sri Sampad Roy as its general secretary. The new Central Committee of the Dal was consisted of 23 members. Moreover, a youth branch organization named ‘Kendriya Yuva Sangha’ comprising 13 members was also formed with the approval of the Central Committee of the Dal at the conference. Sri Jagadish Chandra Roy and Sri Dinesh Chandra Roy were declared president and secretary of the ‘Kendriya Yuva Sangha’ respectively.²⁰ The plough and the sword were made the new emblem of the Dal. The Dal also formed ‘Kamotapur Bhasha Parishad’ under the chairmanship of Sri Gokul Chandra Roy. The Dal also began to publish a journal named ‘Northern Express’ in ‘Kamotapuri’ language to create literary and political consciousness among the Rajbanshi people.²¹

However, it should be noted that some changes of the Uttarkhanda Dal were visible after its split. It was found that the Dal had made printed pro forma of ‘Oath Taking’ letter in Kamotapuri language which as follows. (The pro forma is at the next page).

“Bande Mataram”

Uttarkhanda Dal

Dangaria Sabhapati (Respected President)—Sri Pravash Chandra Singha Shashtri.Sadharan Sampadak (General Secretary)—Sri Sampad Roy. Khajanchi (Treasurer)—Sri Banko Behari Barma.

Mahakaranalay (Head Office)—Ratna Pith.

Sankalpa Patra No (Pledge Letter).....

Muin Sri (I, Sri)....., Pita (Father) Sri....., Sakhin (Village).....,Dakghar (P.O.)....., Thana(P.S.).....,Mahukuma(Sub Division)....., Jella (District)....., Rajya (State) Kamotapur,

Bharatiya Sambhidhaner 3 No. Dhara ‘Ka’ Anujai Bhasha Sahitya, Darshan, Itihas, Sanskar O Samskriti Sampurna Prithakatye Bharatiya Darshanad Suprathista Uttarkhanda Daler Karmashuchi Kamota Rajya Prathistarthe Sajnane Suswastha Sarile Charam Kartabya Bodhe Shesh Rakta Bindu Dane Sabhya Haiya Apanak Utswarga Karlung. Daler Gathantantra Anusare Chalim, Anyathai Dalia Dandabidhite Dandaniya Hoim. Tate Kona Apatti Nai.**

Iti, Sapatkarir Swakshar(Signature of the oath taker).....

Janma Tarikh (Date of Birth).....,Shikshagata Yogyota (Educational Qualification)....., Pesha (Occupation)....., Matri Bhasha (Mother Tounge).....,Jati Bharatiya (Nationality Indian), Dharma (Religion)---Sanatan Hindu/ Muslim/ Baudha/ Christian/ Barna Hindu.

Adi Basastan(Earlier Settlement)---Bharat/ Pakistan/ Nepal/ Bhutan/ Bangladesh.

Age....., Pung/ Estri (Male/ Female)....., Paribarastha Manshir Sankhya (Number of the member of the family).....

Praptya Bayaska (Adult)....., Apraptya Bayaska (Minor).....

Samparka (Relationship)....,Bhashagata Yogyata (Qualification of Language)...., Ananya Bishayak Yogyota (Other Qualifications)....,

Prathamik Anudan Ek Taka (Primary Contribution is Rs.-One).

Pranantey Anya Daler Sadashya Na Hoim (I would not be the member of any other political party till my death).

Sabhapatir Swakshar Sampadaker Swakshar Sapath Karir Swakshar

(Signature of President) (Signature of Secretary) (Signature of Oath)

Date....., Date..... Date.....,

Khachanchir Swakshar, Sapathi Sadasya (Oath Taker) Sri.....,

(Signature of the Treasurer)....., Address.....,

Anudan Artha Ek Taka Khushi Haiya Dilung (I offered Rs.-One with pleasure).

Sapath Karir Swakshar (Signature of the Oath Taker).²²

** (The free translation goes----‘ I Sri.....after being the a member dedicate myself to shed the last drop of my blood for acquiring the Kamota State, aim of the Uttarkhanda Dal which is established itself following the philosophy of India and having a separate language and literature, philosophy, history and culture.’).

It should be mentioned in the context of the aforesaid printed ‘Pledge Letter’ of the Dal that some new words incorporated in that well thought new ‘Pledge Letter’ of the Dal comparing to those of previous ones. However, in the new ‘Pledge Letter’, it was found that one activist of the Dal was not only to be pledged to sacrifice himself for the cause of establishing a separate state of Kamotapur, but at the same time, he was to be pledged to follow the constitution of the Dal. Another interesting addition to this new ‘Pledge Letter’ that the name of the proposed separate state was vividly printed in the ‘Pledge Letter’ as ‘Kamota Rajya.’ Therefore, it may be pointed out that the Dal in its new thinking began to mention North Bengal as ‘Kamota Rajya’ at least in its party documents. Another interesting aspect of the ‘Pledge Letter’ was that particular space was provided for the person of different religious groups and castes. It was found that even the Varna Hindus (Higher Caste) had access to the party after signing the ‘Oath Letter’. The Dal in this connection strove to keep up its secularity and non-ethnic character. In fact, this ‘Pledge Letter’ was more articulate than the previous one.

However, the Uttarkhanda Dal in its new shape and position also published its demand note which was adopted in the meeting of the Central Council (Kendriya Parishad) under the president ship of Sri Pravash Chandra Singha Shastri 23 April 1989. In this demand note, it was found that the Dal had claimed that it was the only political party which could meet the socio-economic and political aspiration of the ‘son of the soil’ of Kamotapur (so called North Bengal, the term ‘so called’ had been used by the *Uttarkhandists*). However, there were twenty points demand which were incorporated in the demand note of the Dal since its very foundation which has already been mentioned in chapter-4 and chapter-6. The newly incorporated demands of the Dal are mentioned bellow:

1. The re-introduction of English subject examination at primary level.
2. Establishment of Nabodaya (model school) at every district of Kamotapur.

3. Imparting education through Kamotapuri language up to school level.
4. 1971 was to be treated as the base year of issuing citizenship to the Bangladeshis in accordance with the Indira-Mujib Pact.
5. 'Tin Bigha' (a corridor to Bangladesh) of Cooch Behar district was not to be transferred to Bangladesh.
6. The service of the non formal teacher, teachers of adult school and the I.C.D.S. (Integrated Child Development Service) employees were to be made permanent.
7. The exchange of Chhit Mahal (Enclaves) between India and Bangladesh.
8. Reservation of seats for the SC/ STs in the three tier Panchayet System according to the ratio of population.
9. Extension of reservation for the SC/ ST communities up to 2000.²³

It is very interesting to note in this connection that the Dal had given up the demands like all round development of North Bengal after 1980 and raised the demand of a separate state instead. But after its split in 1987, it was found that the Dal again returned to its earlier demands which they made before 1980 along with abovementioned demands though it kept demanding a separate state of Kamotapur. Therefore, it would not be wrong to state that the U.K.D. was in complete confusion during this time regarding its main objective of separate state, otherwise, there was no question of returning its earlier demands like all round development of North Bengal. It should be remembered that the main slogan of the U.K.D. after 1980 was that only the creation of a separate state was the ultimate solution of the problems of North Bengal.

However, with regard to the electoral politics of the U.K.D., it was found that the Dal fielded its candidates in the Bidhan Sobha (Assembly) elections of 1991 and 1996 and the Lok Sobha (Parliamentary) elections of 1989 and 1991. In both type of elections, it was found that the candidates of the U.K.D. like those of the K.G.P. lost even their security deposits, not to speak of winning any seat.²⁴ Thus, it was noticed that the support base of the U.K.D. after its break up was decreasing day by day and it was also found that the U.K.D.

could field its candidates only two Bidhan Sobha (Assembly) seats of Maynaguri and Rajganj of Jalpaiguri district in the Bidhan Sobha elections of 1996 securing only 0.27% (percent) and one percent respectively.²⁵ Perhaps, the main reason behind such election debacle of both the factions i.e. the U.K.D. and the K.G.P. in the Bidhan Sobha (Assembly) and Lok Sobha (Parliamentary) elections which were held simultaneously in two phases on May 2 and May 7 1996²⁶ was the formation of a new regional political organization named 'Kamotapur Peoples' Party' (K.P.P.) in January 1996 which was already been mentioned in this chapter. It should be mentioned that this newly formed political organization was largely supported by the old activists of the U.K.D. and the K.G.P. In fact, both the factions virtually merged together with this new regional political party that started the Kamotapuri movement with a new vigour raising a demand for a separate state of Kamotapur, already demanded by the U.K.D. and later by the K.G.P. It is to be remembered that Sri Panchanan Mallick retired himself from the politics and all the activists of the K.G.P. joined the K.P.P. On the other hand, though most of the activists of the Uttarkhanda Dal joined the K.P.P. but it was still then existed under the president ship of Sri Sampad Roy with a few supporters.²⁷ Finally, it is also very interesting to note that even today the Uttarkhanda Dal is still existed but struggling for its survival with its president Sri Upendra Nath Roy of Amguri, P.S. Maynaguri, District-Jalpaiguri²⁸ visa-a-vis the existence of the K.P.P.

Thus, the Uttarkhanda Dal, a regional political party which was formed with a great hope to make all round development of North Bengal first and then started a movement for a separate state of Kamotapur creating a socio-political tension in the region under review for along two decades, ultimately saw its decline for various reasons which are stated briefly in the following paragraph.

There is no denying the fact that the intra-party conflict which has been discussed elaborately in this chapter was one of the potent causes for the early decline of the Uttarkhanda Dal. But at the same time some other important factors directly or indirectly were also responsible for such early decline of the Dal. However, though these causes have already been explained scatteredly in different chapters particularly in chapters 4 and 6 but in the present occasion these are being mentioned in summery form. However, it is to be mentioned with regard to the decline of the U.K.D. that the party completely failed in

electoral politics in spite of the presence of the large number of the Rajbanshi population in the region of our study. The main reason, in this connection, may be pointed out, was the lack of ethnic solidarity among the Rajbanshi population which was found during the *Kshatriya* movement, led by Roy Saheb Panchanan Barma in the colonial period when the *Kshatriya Samiti* candidates used to win the elections to the Legislative Council (chapter-2) and is being found in case of the *Gorkhas* of Darjeeling of the state of West Bengal. So, the U.K.D. could not strengthen its support base at any level of the society. Apart from this, it has already been mentioned in chapter-4 that weak organizational activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal were completely unmatched with the powerful activities with the national parties like Indian National Congress and regimented Left Parties. Thus, the presence of the strong national political parties in this region did not provide any opportunity for the U.K.D. and later the two split factions to expand their organizations. Again the Dal was completely a rural based political party and failed to make its inroad in urban areas which was also a necessary aspect for the existence of a political party. Alienation of educated Rajbanshi middle class population and their indifferent attitude to the Uttarkhanda Dal stopped the supply line of the party leadership which was very necessary with the changing course of time. In addition to this, the financial insolvency which the U.K.D. had been suffering from its very inception was not less responsible for its weak organizational condition. In fact, the finance is the life blood of a political organization.

Finally, it is to be mentioned categorically that one of the important aspects or impacts of the activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal is that it left a separatist tendency in the minds of a section of Rajbanshi people of the region under study which again took its expression in the form of the K.P.P. movement. In fact, the movement of the K.P.P. for a separate state of Kamotapur is still going on which no doubt, the legacy of the Uttarkhanda Dal. It should be stated that the discussion of the K.P.P. movement is not within the purview of the present paper.

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Conclusion

The present study is the first ever attempt to analyze historically the origin, growth and decline of the Uttarkhanda Dal in the academic field. Therefore, it has explored many virgin and untouched areas of the subject under review. Though the scholars, historians and social scientists have attempted academic discourse on the Noxalite movements of the 60s, Gorkha land movement of the 80s of the last century, occurred in northern part of North Bengal of West Bengal but unfortunately a very little study has been made on the Uttarkhanda Dal and its movements by the academicians. A few scholars have attempted to discuss the Kamotapuri movement organized by the K.P.P. but without attempting to find out the root of that movement. In fact, the Kamotapuri movement was started by the U.K.D. for the first time in the region of our study nay in West Bengal in the 80s of the last century. Therefore, without analyzing the history of the origin and growth of the U.K.D., any discussion on the Kamotapuri statehood movement remains incomplete. But the history of the origin and growth of the U.K.D. is completely an untouched area of historical research. Considering this, the present study has attempted to analyse critically and historically the present theme.

It is well known to the scholars, historians, political and social scientists that the development of the regionalism or sub regionalism and the socio-political movements of the marginal ethnic group of people and thereby the emergence of numerous regional and sub regional political parties had become a general phenomenon in the post independence political scenario of India. The regional aspiration, the socio-political aspiration of the small ethnic group of people, regional and sub regional socio-economic and political disparity, the scholar generally argue, work well behind such development of regionalism. Scholars like Shekar Bandopadhyaya argue that the main reasons of such regional or sub-regional movements, generally organized by an ethnic group of people or scheduled caste group are because of their socio-political and economic deprivation for a long period of time and also because of the domination of the upper caste people (Shekhar Bandhopadhyay- *Jat Pater Rajniti*, Paschat Pat, in Bengali, published in *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, a popular Daily published from W.B. Date-27.02.2014). The formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal, a regional

political party, by a section of Rajbanshi people, a major ethnic group of people of North Bengal of West Bengal and the main theme of our study was not exception to the aforesaid development in post independence India. In fact, the genesis and development of the most of the socio-political movements and regional political parties in the post independence period had their historical roots in the colonial period for variety of reasons. Likewise the Uttarkhanda Dal and its movement for all round development of the region under review which was directed against the then Govt. of West Bengal and later its movement for a separate state of Kamotapur comprising the then five districts of North Bengal had also its historical root in the colonial period. It is historically evident that the political consciousness among various small ethnic groups and communities of India was created by the caste mobility movements organized during the colonial period. This political consciousness based on caste mobility movements, in fact, became almost irrelevant in the post independence period because such political consciousness then was well connected with the national politics.

Keeping the above stated explanation in view it has been explored in the present work that the Uttarkhand Dal was born from the wombs of the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* in the late 60s of the last century. In fact, the Rajbanshi community was started uniting socially to maintain their ethnic identity from the last decade of the Nineteenth Century and the process of this social dynamism took a final shape with the formation of the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* in May 1910 in Rangpur, the heart of Rajbanshi culture in undivided Bengal. It has been shown in chapter-I that the Rajbanshis constituted the most predominant section of the local Hindu population in northern districts of British Bengal. Numerically they were the third largest Hindu caste in Bengal as a whole. The 1921 census report shows that about 89 percent of this caste population lived in the districts of Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar (Cooch Behar, the native state of British India) of undivided North Bengal. However, though the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* was formed as a social organization, but with the passage of time it changed its outlook and activities and decided to involve itself in electoral politics after 1920 onwards when the Bengal Legislative Council was formed by the Montego- Chemsford Reform Act of 1919. Since then the *Samiti* contested the Council elections of 1920 and 1929 and the Assembly elections of 1937 and 1946. Such a shift on the

part of the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* has been described by M.N. Srinibas as “the actual shift in emphasis being from acquiring the symbol of status to the real sources of high status i.e. political power, economic power and education.” The *Kshatriya Samiti* got tremendous electoral success in the Rajbanshi inhabited constituencies of Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur till 1937. However, in the post 1937 era especially after the demise of Panchanan Barma, the undisputed leader of the *Kshatriya Samiti*, there was a marked change in the political attitude of the leaders of the *Kshatriya Samiti*. Thus it was seen in the election of 1946 that most of the leaders of the Samiti engaged in confrontation and contention for filing nomination as candidates of the *Kshatriya Samiti*. As a result, some Rajbanshi leaders of the Samiti switched over their allegiance to other national political parties especially to Indian National Congress and were elected. As a sequence of such development only one *Kshatriya Samiti* candidate was elected from Rangpur in the election of 1946. Thus the *Kshatriya Samiti* once a strong and powerful organization of the Rajbanshi community in undivided North Bengal and which challenged the national political parties now started disintegrating in post 1937 era. It is argued that the death of veteran leader Panchanan Barma must have an impact on the disintegration of the *Kshatriya Samiti*.

In the post independence era, the *Kshatriya Samiti* lost its earlier vigour and spirit due to the partition of 1947 both in respect of social and political activities. The obvious reason was that Rangpur, the stronghold and birth place of *Kshatriya Samiti* went to the erstwhile East Pakistan as a result of the partition and that was a severe blow to the socio-political activities of the *Samiti*. In divided North Bengal in post independence period, it was found that the fore front leaders of the *Kshatriya Samiti* like Upendra Nath Barman joined Indian National Congress and became a member of the Constituent Assembly. In fact, the *Kshatriya Samiti* in post independence period leaving aside the political issues and activities it was again transformed into a social organization what it was in the beginning phase. This changed attitude and objectives of the *Kshatriya Samiti* in the post independence period created internal feud among the leaders of the *Samiti*. This internal feud and other numerous adverse socio-economic changes in the post colonial period as a result of the influx of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan after partition and the abolition of *Zamindari* and *Jotedari* system in 1953 and Land Reform Act of 1955 led a section of educated youth of the *Kshatriya Samiti* to

contemplate over forming a political organization of their own and the same was formed in a meeting of the *Kshatriya Samiti* in July 1969 at Thakurpat of Dhupguri of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal.

Another important area of our exploration is that the Uttarkhanda Dal had never raised the demand for a separate state of Kamotapur with its very foundation. The prevalent conception of all the scholars, historians and social scientists are that the Uttarkhanda Dal was formed just to raise the demand for separate state of Kamotapur. But the present study has proved this conception wrong in toto. Consulting critically the first party resolution, party programmes, activities and other documents hitherto unearthed and untouched, it has been found that nowhere in those documents was mentioned the demand for a separate state of Kamotapur before May 1980. However, the idea of raising the demand for a separate state of Kmotapur arose in their minds when they began to search for their own political identity in late 70s of the twentieth century after being denied by the Govt. of West Bengal to fulfill their regional and ethnic aspiration and also the contemporary statehood movements of other regional political parties of India especially of Eastern and North Eastern India had also great impact on the statehood demand of the U.K.D.

In order to understand vividly the attitude of the Uttarkhanda Dal, the present study has critically examined and explained the periodical changes of the aims, objectives and activities of the Dal with the changing political scenario of all India regional politics. Accordingly, the activities of the U.K.D. have been discussed into two phases---the first phase from 1969 to 1979 and the second phase from 1980 till its final split and decline. In these two phases two different characteristics of the aims and objectives of the Dal were manifested. In the first phase, the Dal appealed time and again to the State Govt. for the socio-economic development of North Bengal and the Dal also demanded the maximum job reservation for the indigenous people in various official posts of both the State and Central govt. in North Bengal and also in various policy making bodies especially with regards to North Bengal, so that the local people might have participated in the developmental works of North Bengal. The Dal always blamed the Calcutta centric leadership for the backwardness of North Bengal and uneven distribution of wealth and distribution of vested lands to the non-Rajbanshi landless people especially those who were migrated from erstwhile East Pakistan

as refugees. But when all these grievances of the Dal were ignored by both the Central and State Govt. they began to contemplate about the creation of a separate state within the framework of Indian constitution for the indigenous people of North Bengal. Thus the indifferent attitude of the State Govt. towards the development of North Bengal was responsible to a large extent for changing the attitude of the leadership of the U.K.D. and thereby raising the demand for a separate state of Kamotapur. But at the same time we cannot ignore the influence of various statehood movements, organized by other regional political parties of India especially of Eastern and North- Eastern India, for example, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) of Bihar and Gorkha National Liberation Front (G.N.L.F.) of Darjeeling. Thus it has been shown in the present work that the aforesaid immediate factors led the U.K.D. to raise the demand for a separate state of Kamotapur for the all round development of the people of North Bengal in May 1980.

Again it has been shown that with the demand for a separate state of North Bengal, the nature of activities of the Dal had been radically changed. Now the Dal raised the issues like the recognition of Kamotapuri language, the expulsion of the foreigners from the soil of North Bengal who settled here after 1971 along with the previous issues raised by the Dal. In this phase of the movement of the Dal, the socio-political tension had been increased to a great extent in the region of our study. This time we found the response of the govt. but that was not positive one. With regard to the demand of the Kamotapuri language it has been noticed that the Dal decided to use the linguistic provision for the creation of a separate state, recommended by the S.R.C. in its report in Oct. 1953. It has been unearthed that before 1980 the Dal termed the language spoken by the indigenous people as Rajbanshi language but after 1980 it changed the nomenclature of the language and it was termed as Kamotapuri. The leadership of the U.K.D. argued that this language was not only the mother tongue of the people of the Rajbanshi community alone living in North Bengal, but a large number of local muslims (*Nashya-Seikh*), Jugis and the people of some other communities regard it as their mother tongue. Therefore, the nomenclature of the language was to be termed as Kamotapuri and the state on the basis of this linguistic group of people was to be named Kamotapur. Thus the U.K.D. wanted to make a ground that at least linguistically there was a significant ground to demand a separate state for the indigenous people of North Bengal. However, the debate

on the nomenclature of the language is still going on among the leaders of the K.P.P. and the intellectuals of the Rajbanshi community itself.

Another important and very interesting measure, the U.K.D. adopted to keep its supporters loyal to the Dal was the religious pledge which was to be taken by the activists and the supporters of the Dal. It was the oath of unconditional allegiance to the Dal and commitment to the demand of the separate state of Kamotapur. In this oath taking programme it is evident that not only the supporters and activists of the Rajbanshi Hindu but also the muslim supporters though in small number took oath in the name of “Isvar” and “Allah” respectively to dedicate themselves for the cause of acquiring “Kamotapur State”. Thus the leadership of the Dal made desperate effort to keep their activists and supporters under control exploiting their religious sentiment in the teeth of a strong presence of the national parties especially the left parties such as C.P.I.(M.), F.B., C.P.I. etc in the region. It was only after carrying out such oath taking programme that the think tanks of the Dal decided to lead the movement gradually towards violent direction. The obvious intention of the leadership of the Dal was to draw the attention of both the Central and State Govt. to their demands through violent and forceful manner following the example of A.G.P., J.M.M, G.N.L.F. etc. Therefore, the Dal took the decision of *Rail Rokho* programme to intensify its movement in January 1987. The *Rail Rokho* programme at Altagram Railway Station of Dhupguri Block of Jalpaiguri district was so volatile that the police compelled to open firing of fifteen rounds and as a result two agitators were killed on the spot. But it was the last flicker of the lamp before its extinguishment, because after this *Rail Rokho* programme and the death of these two activists created a dissension among the leaders of the party which ultimately led its final split and thereafter drifted towards rapid decline.

The present study has also measured the support base of the U.K.D. from the beginning of its formation to its final split as an ethnic based regional political party explaining critically the election results of both Parliamentary and State Assembly election so far as the Dal fielded its candidates from 1971 to 1984. If the election results are taken as a barometer for gauging the support base of a political party, it is a fact that the U.K.D. had no any solid support base in any level during the whole period of its electoral politics. If we take the example of the election result of Jalpaiguri parliamentary seat, the strong hold of the

U.K.D. to some extent, it is found that in the Lok Sabha election of 1971 the U.K.D. candidate secured only 3.84 percent, in 1977 secured 1.67 percent, in 1980 secured 0.80 percent and in 1984 secured 1.48 percent. Thus, it is clearly revealed from the percentage of mentioned votes so far as the Dal secured in the above elections in the place of its birth that the appeal of the Dal to the indigenous people of North Bengal against Calcutta centric rule in the first phase of its movement and later its clarion call for creating separate state in North Bengal in the second phase of its movement and also the clamouring for the recognition of the Kamotapuri language were not heard of by the major section of the indigenous people even of the Rajbanshi community itself. Thus, it is vividly led us to believe that the movements initiated and organized by the U.K.D. whether through peaceful or violent manner failed to make any headway or political tension to the true sense of the term in the region under study or in West Bengal which was apparently viewed by the scholars, social scientists and also the policy makers of the Govt. of West Bengal.

Another important finding of the present work is that most of the educated youths and the rising neo-middle class from among the members of the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* who played an important part to the formation of the U.K.D. began to distance themselves for their self interest of availing of the job reservation facilities in govt. offices and in other public sectors and for getting the favour of ruling party at the cost of any kind of ethnic bond and it had no doubt weakened the supply line of leadership in the Dal.

It has also become as clear as day light that though the U.K.D. saw its decline in post 1987 era but it left surely a visible mark of separatist tendency in the mind of a section of Rajbanshi community and a glaring example of it, is the formation of a new regional political party in 1996 with the same aim of achieving a separate state of Kamotapur as that of the U.K.D. by a section of people of Rajbanshi community namely the Kamotapur Peoples' Party (KPP). Therefore, there is no doubt that the K.P.P was the true legacy of the U.K.D.

The overall study of the present theme tells us the fact that as the U.K.D. was born from the womb of *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* so the K.P.P. took the birth from the ashes of the decline of the U.K.D. Therefore, it is historically proved that the socio-political movement which was started by the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* under the competent

leadership of Roy Saheb Panchanan Barma in the pre independence period and later carried on by the leadership of the U.K.D. in post independence period even today it is alive and is being carried on by the K.P.P. In fact, it is a continuous historical development of the socio-political movement of an indigenous community of undivided and divided North Bengal. The said movement has only been changing its character, nature and direction from time to time in course of its developments. It would not be wrong to conclude that even today the movement is still going on and awaiting for a large scale mass response from among the people of Rajbanshi community and other autochthons of North Bengal vis-à-vis the pro-people policies and programmes as well as political measures initiated by the Govt. of West Bengal. But the fact remains that the election result in the State Assembly seats so far as the K.P.P. fielded its candidates till the Assembly election of 2011 are almost the same as it was in 1971 at the time of the U.K.D. Thus, it can be said without any reservation that the movement for a separate state of Kamotapur for the indigenous people of North Bengal organized first by the U.K.D. and then by the K.P.P. is now facing some practical difficulties to earn mass support and the same is not possible, it seems to, without the occurrence of a kind of political earthquake in the region under review.

Finally, the humble submission of the present researcher is that as the present work is a pioneering one, it has some limitations. It is the earnest hope on the part of the researcher that it would definitely help the future researchers and scholars to make further research on the subject making comparative study between the U.K.D. and other ethnic based regional political parties of India. The present study will also positively help the policy makers to adopt constructive and positive measures with regard to the socio- political movements and developments of the people of North Bengal especially to those of its northern part which are prevailing at present or may prevail in future.

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উত্তর

শ্রমিকদের দিয়ে গত শনিবার
শ্রমিকের কতিপয় সি.পি.

শ্রীযুক্তেশ্বর রায়

এম, এল, এ কর্তৃক প্রতিষ্ঠিত—

স্থাপিত ইং ১৯৬১/১০৬৮

সংখ্যা ৯৮৬

১৫ই মার্চ রহস্যবিহার, ১৩৭৬ ইং ২৯শে জানুয়ারী ১৯৭০

মূল্য বার্ষিক সডাক ৬৫০ পরস
প্রতি সংখ্যা ১৩ পরস

বঙ্গালীবাজনার ইউ, কে, ডি

বঙ্গালীবাজনা গত ২১শে জানুয়ারী বঙ্গালীবাজনা
হাট খোলায় উত্তরবঙ্গ দলের এক বিরাট সমাবেশ হয়।
জাতির গোপের এই সমাবেশে সভাপতিত্ব করেন স্থানীয়
শ্রী ব্রজনাথ শৈব মহাশয়। উত্তর বঙ্গ দলের প্রয়োজনীয়
গুণের কথা উল্লেখ করিয়া ভাষণ দেন শ্রীযোগেন্দ্র নাথ
মজুমদার। তারপর দলের সহ সভাপতি শ্রীবিপদরায়
এ্যাডভোকেট দলের স্যোঃ ই হোস ও ইহার প্রয়োজনীয়-
তার কথা আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গ বলেন যে দক্ষিণবঙ্গ উত্তর
দলের মধ্যে সববিধে যে বিরাট পার্থক্য সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে
তাহা এই জুড়ি এই দলের প্রয়োজন। উত্তরবঙ্গের জমি
ও দক্ষিণবঙ্গের জমির উর্বরা শক্তি একমুখে উত্তরবঙ্গের
ভূমিহীন কৃষকরা ও বিদ্যা জমি পাইলে উত্তরবঙ্গের
এক অন্ততঃ ১২ বিদ্যা জমি দরকার। তারপর দলের
সম্পাদক শ্রী ব্রজনাথ বর্মণ রাজবংশী ভাষণ দীর্ঘভাষণ
দেন। পল্লীরাষ্ট্রের জন্য গ্রামীণ ভাষণ তিনি বলেন যে
উত্তরবঙ্গের উন্নতি করিতে হইলে কলিকাতার নেতার দ্বারা
পরিচালিত কোন দলের সাহায্যে উদ্যোগ হইবে না।
উত্তরবঙ্গের কৃষক শ্রমিক শিল্পের সম্ভাবনার নেতৃত্ব
দল গড়িয়া উঠিবে তাহার দ্বারা উত্তরবঙ্গে উন্নতি সম্ভব
তিনি তপশ্বী উপজাতিদের মত তপশ্বীদিগের জ্ঞান ও
অশৈল্পনিক মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষার দাবী জানান। তিনি আরও
বলেন ৬ বিদ্যা জমির জ্ঞান গ্রামের কৃষকরা যে অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই
গ্রামে বসবাস দিতেছে তাহা অতীব মর্মান্তিক। শ্রেণী
সংগ্রামের নামে আমরা কৃষক হত্যা চলিতে দিবনা।
আমাদের দাবী অন্ততঃ বার বিদ্যা জমি এবং তাহা লাঠি দিয়ে
নয় আইনদিয়ে বন্টন করিব। সর্বশেষে শ্রীহারমোহন বর্মণ
রাজবংশী ভাষণ বর্তমান ক্ষুদ্র শাসনের সরিকী সংঘের
কাহিনী বর্ণনা করেন তাহার স্বভাব গুলভ ভাষণে সভাস্থ
ঘনঘণ হৃদয়নিত কম্পিত হইতে থাকে। তিনি বলেন শুধু
মাত্র জোতদারের জমি দখল করিলেই চলিবেনা। শহর ও
গ্রামের পার্থক্য দূর করিয়া সর্বত্রই সমাজতন্ত্র প্রতিষ্ঠা
করিতে হইবে। সেই জ্ঞান জোতদারের ভেট্টেজ জমি ও
নোমী জমি দখলের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শহরেরও বাড়ীওয়ালা-
দের বাড়ী দখল করিয়া বংশ বংশ ধরিয়া যাহারা
ভাড়া বাড়ীতে বাস করিতেছে তাহাদের মধ্যে বন্টন

করিতে হইবে। কোটি পতিও নাথো পতিদের ব্যাঙ্ক ব্যালেন্স
খাস করিয়া দেশের কাজে বিশেষ করিয়া শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে ব্যয় করিতে
হইবে তাহাই সত্যিকার সমাজতন্ত্র প্রতিষ্ঠা হইবে। ইহাই রাজী-
তার নেতাজীর স্বপ্নের ভারত। এ তত্ত্বের জন্য মার্কস, লেনিন
এবং মার্স ওর দ্বারা ধর্ম দিতে হইবে না।

আকাশ মেঘনা থাকায় বহু লোক সভার উপস্থিত হইতে
পারে নাই। জনগণের মধ্যে ইউ, কে, ডি, বিশেষ সারা আগাইয়াছে
বলিয়া মনে হয়।

অজয়বাবুকে সি পি এম ফ্রণ্ট নেতা ব'লে মানে না

(ষ্টাক রিপোর্টার)

কলকাতা, ২৭শে জানুয়ারী—সি পি এম অজয় মুখার্জিকে
ব্রজনাথের নেতা হিসাবে স্বীকার করেন না। পার্টির নেতা প্রমোদ
দাসগুপ্ত বলেন, এটা পরিহার্য হওয়া দরকার অজয় বাবুকে
'টেকনিক্যাল' দল থেকে নেতা বলা হয়েছিল। তিনি সি পি এম
এর 'রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক' নেতা নন। শুধু ফ্রণ্ট সরকার গঠনের জন্য
একজনকে নেতা করা দরকার, তাই তাঁকে নেতা করা হয়েছে।
তিনি প্রশ্ন তুলেছিলেন কি করে অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক দল তাঁকে
নেতা বলে স্বীকার করে, তা তিনি বুঝে উঠতে পারছেন না। তবে
কি ধরে নিতে হবে, এ সকল পার্টির অবলুপ্তি ঘটবে।

তিনি প্রশ্ন দিয়ে বলেনঃ ছাগলের গলার দুধ দেখে যদি
কেউ ভাবে বড় দুইলে শেখী দুধ বেরবে, তবে সে ভুল করবে।

এদিকে রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক মহল মনে করেছেন যে, ৩০শে জানু-
য়ারীর ফ্রণ্টের বৈঠকে চারটি সত্তের মধ্যে অন্ততঃ একটা (প্রত্যেকটি
দলেরই সঙ্গে একটি করে উপদেষ্টা কমিটি গঠন) সর্ব বহি
সি পি এম স্বীকার করে না মেন তবে জটিলতা পূরণের চূড়ান্ত
পর্যায় দিয়ে পৌছবে। কিন্তু সি পি এম-এর মতিগতি
মনে হচ্ছে তার কোন সম্ভাবনা নেই।

তাঁদের মধ্যে কাগো কারোর ধারণা, রাজ্যপালের ধন্যবাদস্বত্বক
প্রস্তাব বিধানসভায় গৃহীত না হওয়া পর্যন্ত যদি মন্ত্রিপরিষদ কোন
দকন বিদ্য ফ্রণ্ট হয়, তবে নিয়মতান্ত্রিক পথে রাষ্ট্রপতির শাস
চালু হবেই। কেউ তা যোগ করতে পারবে না।

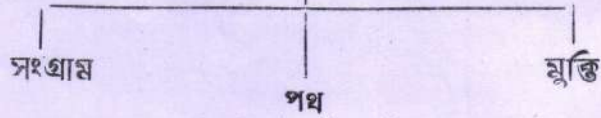
এদিকে বাংলা কংগ্রেস ও তাঁদের সমস্তাবাপন দলগুলি সম
দিতে চাইলেও সি পি এম-এর হাতে তত্ত্ব স্বরাষ্ট্র দপ্তরের ওপ
তদারকী ব্যবস্থা আরোপ করতে বদ্ধপরিকর। শোনা গেছে, বাংলা
কংগ্রেস তো আর এক মুহূর্ত সময় নষ্ট করতে চাইছেন না। তাঁদের
ধারণা, দেরী করলে দেশের প্রভুত্ব ক্ষতি হয়ে যাবে। গতকাল
তাঁদের মধ্যে উক্ত পর্ষায়ে বৈঠক হয়ে গেছে বলে জানা গেছে।

(যুগান্তর—২৮/১/৭০)

অতী-ভবিষ্যৎ স্বর্গাদপি গরিমাসি

• ঐক্য, • নিকা, • শান্তি, • গতি, • বিজা, • বুদ্ধি, • জ্ঞান • কর্ম

শক্তি



উত্তর প্রান্ত বিপ্লবজীবন পার্টি ও গুর্জালোগের সমন্বিত

“মুক্তি ফ্রন্ট” সংগঠিত উত্তর প্রান্ত দলের প্রার্থী

আপত্তগত মাস্টিক কে

এই



জিহ্বা

জাতি দিন

উদ্দেশ্য ও লক্ষ্য :— ১) সমাজতন্ত্র ২) তপশীলি ও অতুলিত সমাজের প্রতি
বিশেষ গুরুত্ব প্রদান। ৩) কৃষির শিল্প ও ক্ষুদ্র শিল্প গড়ে তোলা। ৪) বহুমুখি
কাটিগরি বিজ্ঞা। ৫) (গ্রামীন ও শহরে) অর্থনৈতিক বৈশিষ্ট্য ছড়িকরন।

প্রাকৃতিক ও উৎপাদন সম্পদে সমৃদ্ধ উত্তরবঙ্গ বৃষ্টিশ্রম শোষণের কালেও
ভূমিজ (Native) জনগণ স্বাধীন ও সম্পদে সমৃদ্ধতার সহিত ধনী ও নিধন
সবাই এক প্রকার সুখী ছিল। কিন্তু স্বাধীনতাস্ত্রের দীর্ঘ ৩০/৩১ বৎসরে
জনগণ যে প্রকার অধোমুখী ও দিন রাত নিঃশ্রমণী হইয়াই চালাইয়াছে,
তাহাতে প্রায়শঃ ৮০% ৯০% জন সম্পদ জীবন, মান ইচ্ছা হারায়া
ফেলিয়াছে। অবশিষ্ট সেই প্রসব পথের পথিক হইয়াছে।

এই ক্ষতি সর্বনাশের মূল উৎস কোথায়?

শোষণ কাহারা?

গতিবোধের উপায় কোথায়?

কিন্তু আমরা সবাই এই মহতী নির্বাচনে ঐক্য শক্তি সংযোজিত করিয়া
অতীত ও উপায়াদি উদ্ভাবন করি। গতিবোধ শক্তি গড়িয়া প্রতিভাবের
জন আমাদের প্রার্থীকে ভোট দিয়া জয়যুক্ত করিয়া উত্তরবঙ্গের শোষণ মুক্ত
সমাজ গড়িতে বদ্ধ পরিকর হই।

বিপ্লবী অভিনন্দন সহ—

উত্তর প্রান্ত দল

হুগুত আট প্রেস, বদমতলা, ভলপাইগুড়ি।

পৃথক রাজ্যের দাবীতে জনসভা

স্থান :— জলপাইগুড়ি (জল) মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণ

তাং— ২৫শে সেপ্টেম্বর, ৮০ বিকাল ৩ ঘটিকা।

প্রিয় ভাই বোনেরা

ভারতের স্বাধীনতা প্রাপ্তির পর হইতে কলিকাতা কেন্দ্রিক শাসক, শোষণকারী ও স্বৈরাচারী রাজনৈতিক ধ্বংসরদের দ্বারা শোষিত, নিপীড়িত ও অবহেলিত উত্তরবঙ্গের সকল স্তরের মানুষের স্বম্বাদা, অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা ও সার্বিক উন্নতি কামনার উত্তরবঙ দলের তরফ হইতে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ পঞ্চানন মল্লিক ও সম্পদ রায়ের নেতৃত্বে চারিজন সদস্যযুক্ত একটি প্রতিনিধিদল গত ২২শে এপ্রিল, ১৯৮০ ভারতের প্রধান মন্ত্রী শ্রীমতি ইন্দিরাগান্ধী, স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রী শ্রী জৈল সিং রাষ্ট্রপতি শ্রীনীলম সঞ্জীব বেড্ডী, খনি ও বিজ্ঞান মন্ত্রী শ্রী এ. বি. এ. গণিখান চৌধুরী, অগ্রাঘ্য মন্ত্রী মহলা ও গ্রাম, শ্রী গণেশ্বর নিকট এক স্মারকলিপি পেশ করিয়া আসিয়াছেন। উক্ত স্মারকলিপির ১৮ দফা দাবীর ভিত্তিতে উত্তরবঙ্গে 'কামতাপুর মুক্ত প্রদেশ' নামে ভারতভুক্ত একটি পৃথক রাজ্য গঠনের উদ্দেশ্যে কর্মপন্থা চূড়ান্তভাবে গ্রহণ ও রূপায়ণের নিমিত্ত একটি সন্মেলন আয়োজন করা হইয়াছে। তাই উত্তরবঙ্গের পাঁচটি জেলার শোষিত, বঞ্চিত, উৎপীড়িত, ভূমিহীন, জীবিকাহীন, গৃহহীন ও ভিক্ষুকে পরিণত মা, বোন ও ভাইগণের উক্তরূপ রক্তপ্রাণ হইতে মুক্ত করিবার জঙ্গ জাতি, ধর্ম, দল নির্বিশেষে সকল শ্রেণীর মানুষকে এই সন্মেলনে যোগদান করিবার জ্ঞাত্য সাদর অন্তর্যনা জানাইতেছি।

উত্তরবঙ্গের এই চরম দুর্দশার মোকাবিলা করিবার জঙ্গ উত্তরবঙ্গবাসী দলে দলে সন্মেলনে যোগদান করিয়া 'করেঙ্গে ইশ্বে মরেঙ্গে' এই জীবনমুত্যাঙ্গণ মহামন্ত্রে দীক্ষিত হইয়া সন্মেলনের উদ্দেশ্যকে সাফল্যমণ্ডিত করতঃ উত্তরবঙ্গের এই মুক্তি আন্দোলনকে জোরদার করুন। 'বন্দে মাতরম'

—: প্রধান বক্তা :—

- ১। শ্রীপঞ্চানন মল্লিক
- ২। শ্রীসম্পদ রায়
- ৩। শ্রীমরিয়াক্স টিগুগা
- ৪। ইসমাইল আজাদ

—: আস্থায়িক কমিটির পক্ষে :—

- ১। কামিনী মোহন অধিকারী
- সভাপতি
- ২। জীতেন রায় সরকার
- কোষাধ্যক্ষ ও সহঃ সভাপতি
- ৩। জনারঞ্জন রায় সরকার

—: সম্পাদক :—

সদ্ব্য ৭ ঘটিকায় জলপাইগুড়ি জেলা কমিটির সদস্যদের প্রতিনিধি সন্মেলন প্রতিনিধি ফি ২ টাকা।

জলপাইগুড়ি পানা কমিটির পক্ষে শচীন্দ্র নাথ রায় ও বাবুল রায় কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত ও প্রচারিত।

উত্তরখণ্ডের জেলা সম্মেলন

স্থান ৪-শোড়ার হাট

ছ ব পা ই গু ডি

প্রতিনিধি সম্মেলন— ১৩ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৮১ (২৭শে অগ্রহায়ণ ১৩৮৮) রবিবার।

প্রকাশ্য সম্মেলন— ১৪ই ডিসেম্বর ১৯৮১ (২৮শে অগ্রহায়ণ ১৩৮৮) সোমবার।

বন্ধুগণ,

ভারত স্বাধীন হয়েছে। উপনিবেশবাদী ও সাম্রাজ্যবাদী রুটিগের ফল হতে আমরা মুক্ত। কিন্তু নয়া বদীর উপনিবেশবাদী ও সাম্রাজ্যবাদী শাসন ও শোষণের নাগপাণে আমরা কামতাপুরবাসীগণ আবদ্ধ। সহজ প্রতিশ্রুতির প্রলোভনে প্রলুব্ধ করে আমাদের সর্বনাশ ও ধ্বংসের পথে ঠেলে পেওয়া হচ্ছে।

স্বাধীনতার পরে দীর্ঘ ত্রয়োবৎসর কেটে গেল। এতটা সময় একটা দেশ ও আত্মকে গড়ার পক্ষে যথেষ্ট। কিন্তু দেশ ও জাতি জন্মগত উন্নতির পরিবর্তে জন্মগত পশ্চাদ্গতিতে চলেছে। এর মূলে কলিকাতা কেন্দ্রিক শাসক গোত্রের ও রাজনৈতিক বৃহৎসংখ্যের কামতাপুরবাসীর প্রাক্তি চরম দলীয়, অবিচার, অত্যাচার, বৈষম্য ও বিনাচুক্তি আচরণ নহে কি?

অগত কামতাপুর বা উত্তরখণ্ড বহিজ, বনজ, খনিজ, শ্রমীক প্রভৃতি প্রাক্তিক সম্পদে সমৃদ্ধ। উত্তরখণ্ডের পাঁচটি জেলায় যা উৎপন্ন হয় তাতে প্রধানকার মাছের পূর্বে কোন মতাব অনুমতিই ছিল না কিন্তু এখন এই চরম চোখদুর্দশা কেন? আত্মসাধারণ মাছের পেটে ভাত নেই, গায়ে কাপড় নেই, মাথার উপর কোন আচ্ছাদন নেই। সাধারণ খেতে খাওয়া, মেহনতী মানুষ কুমিহীন, পুষ্টিহীন হয়ে কুলি মজুর, দিন মজুর, ভিক্ষারীতে পরিণত হচ্ছে। নারীর ইজত পর্যন্ত বিলুপ্ত হচ্ছে। কেন?

উত্তরখণ্ডের অশক্ত রাজনৈতিক স্বার্থক জনপ্রতিনিধিগণ কলিকাতা কেন্দ্রিক কুচক্রী, পক্ষপাতভূত, রাজনৈতিক ভাণ্ডারজনের তাবোয় ও দালানে পরিণত হয়েছে। তারা জনগণের বাটার ও উন্নতির পথ রুদ্ধ করে দিয়ে অপশাসন, শোষণ ও নির্যাতন চালাচ্ছে। জনগণের স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য ও স্বাধীন মৌলিক অধিকারকে হুত্বভাবে ধ্বংসে পদদলিষ্ট। এর কারণ কি?

বন্ধুগণ! উত্তরখণ্ড আজ শনি রাহর করাল গ্রাসে চরম দুর্দশাগ্রস্ত ও বিপন্ন। তাই, উত্তরখণ্ডের সার্বিক কল্যাণের জয় পূরক “কামতাপুর” রাজ্য গঠন ইতিহাসের অব্যর্থ গতি। উত্তরখণ্ড দলের তরফ হতে জাতি, ধর্ম, দল নির্বিশেষে সর্বস্তরের জনগণের নিকট আবেদন যে আসন্ন ভূগপাইগুড়ি জেলা সম্মেলনে যোগদান করে সম্মেলনের মহতী উদ্দেশ্যকে সাফল্য মণ্ডিত করুক: উত্তরখণ্ড দলের মজি সংগ্রামকে শক্তিশালী করুক। জয় কামতাপুর!

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Figure - 1



Figure - 2



Figure - 3



Figure – 1 Panchanan Mallick, the founder president of the U.K.D (Source, Bartaman Dinkal, July 1985

Figure – 2 Rukmini Roy, frontline leader of the U. K. D (Source, Desh, 13 September 1986)

Figure – 3 The U. K. D leaders in a public meeting, (Source, Ibid.)

Figure - 4



Figure - 5



Figure – 4 The leaders of the Left Front are in a meeting with the intellectuals against the U.K.D at Lansdown Hall, Cooch Behar, 7 July, 1980. (Source-, Bartaman Dinkal, July 1986).

Figure- 5 A Procession of the U.K. D with a Flag of the party. (Source, Desh, 13 september 1986).

Map no - 1

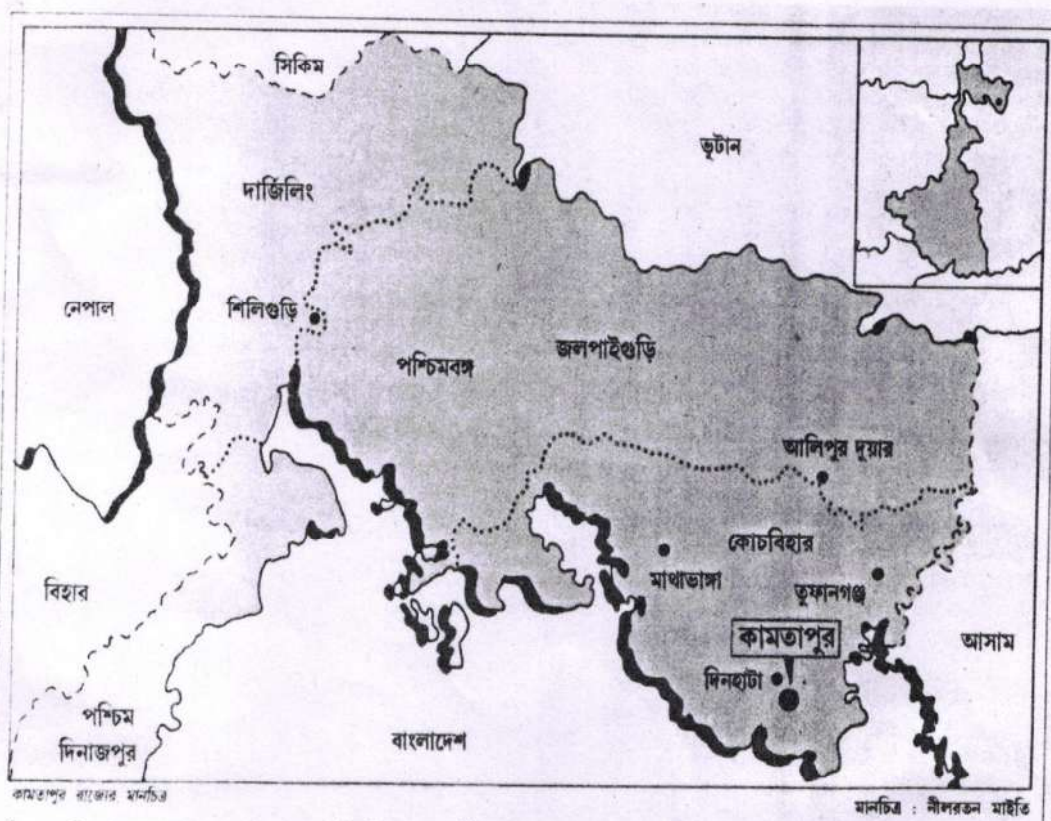


Northern part of West Bengal i.e. North Bengal.

The proposed Kamatapuri State of the U.K.D.

Source: [www. Map of N.B. com](http://www.MapofN.B.com) (Internet)

Map no - 2



Map of Kamatapur Rajya (Source – Desh , 16 August 1980).

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Raj Sekhar Basu

Activities of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti and the Formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal : A Historical Discourse

Nirmal Ch. Roy

Abstract

The article tries to explicate the activities of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti and the formation of the Uttarkhanda Dal. By tracing the historical background this focuses on the demand for a separate state of Kamtapur in the 1980s. The socio-political atmosphere has also been explained in the light of the event. It is very significant to note here that most of the founder leaders and members of the aforesaid 'Uttarkhanda Dal' were the active members and also the forefront leaders of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti of divided North Bengal. Therefore, it needs to have a scholarly discussion on the theme on the basis of available source materials. The present author has made a humble attempt to throw some lights on the theme on the basis of some available source of historical materials.

Keywords: Kamtapur, Rajbanshi, Samiti, Uttarkhanda Dal, West Bengal.

The demand for a separate state of 'Kamatapur' by the 'Uttarkhanda Dal' in the 1980s of the last century had created a great socio-political tension in north Bengal specially in its northern part i.e. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and in the plains of Darjeeling. It was, no doubt, a significant political development in the history of west Bengal in the post independence era. However, it should be mentioned here that the Uttarkhanda Dal was organized by a section of Rajbanshi ethnic group of people in July 1969.¹ It is again to be remembered that it was for the first time that an ethnic group of people of plains of west Bengal formed such a regional political party for meeting their socio-political aspiration. ~~Movement in India~~. Therefore, it needs to have a scholarly discussion on the theme on the basis of available source materials. The present author has

made a humble attempt to throw some lights on the theme on the basis of some available source of historical materials.

It is very significant to note here that most of the founder leaders and members of the aforesaid 'Uttarkhanda Dal' were the active members and also the forefront leaders of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti of divided North Bengal. It is, therefore, the main thought provoking aspect of the present theme of our discussion. An attempt, in this respect, has been made to understand the political background of the origin of the Uttarkhanda Dal in the changing character, which occurred at times of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti activities since its foundation in May, 1910.² However, the present theme is yet to get any scholarly attention by the historians, scholars or social scientists of academic and non-academic world. But the theme is very important from historical points of view, particularly in the context of the history of regional Movement in India. Therefore, it needs to have a scholarly discussion on the theme on the basis of available source materials. The present author has made an humble attempt to throw some lights on the theme on the basis of some available source of historical materials.

The geographical area of the present discussion is North Bengal consisting of six northern districts of west Bengal of India viz. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling (excluding hill areas), North and South Dinajpur and Maldah. The hills of Darjeeling have been excluded because; the Rajbanshi ethnic groups of people do not exist there. It should be remembered in this respect that the proposed 'Kamatapur' state, demanded by the Uttarkhanda Dal is consisted of the aforesaid districts of West Bengal.

(II)

It is historically evident that the Rajbanshis started uniting socially to maintain their ethnic identity from the last decade of the nineteenth century during the colonial period and the process of this social dynamism took a great momentum with the formation of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti in May 1910 in Rangpur of undivided north Bengal. However, though it was started as a social organization, but with the passage of time it changed its outlook and decided to involve itself in electoral politics after 1920 onwards. This is evident from the fact the Samiti fielded its candidates in Council elections held between 1920 and 1929 and the Assembly elections of 1937 and 1946.³ It is very relevant to mention here that systematic efforts which were initiated by the Kshatriya Samiti for all round socio economic development of the Rajbanshi Kshatriyas was described by M.N. Sri Nibas as changing nature of mobility, 'the actual shift in emphasis being from acquiring the symbols of high status to the real sources of high status i.e. political power, economic power and education.'⁴

It is very well known that the "Diarchy" was introduced in the provinces of British India by the Mont-Ford Reform Act of 1919 and the size of the provincial Legislative Assembly was further enlarged. According to the provision of the aforesaid Reform Act, the Council Election in the British provinces was held in 1920. In this very Council Election, it was found that the Kshatriya Samiti fielded its candidates in the non-Muhamadan constituencies in Rangpur. Thus it was no doubt a turning point in the history of the Kshatriya Samiti. The Samiti, for the first, time involved itself in political activities besides its social activities. However, the Kshatriya Samiti candidate in this election was Panchanan Barma and another candidate Sri Jogesh Ch. Sarkar was being supported by the Samiti. Both the candidates were elected from that constituency.⁵ It is to be kept in mind in this connection that there was no reservation facility to the Rajbanshi till 1935. In the next Council Election, the kshatriya Samiti again fielded its candidates. The candidates were Panchanan Barma and Nagendra Narayan Roy. Side by side, Jogesh Ch. Sarkar and Bijoy Ch. Das-Gupta were the candidates of Swarajya party. It is very interesting to note that though the Swarajya party had won almost all seats in Bengal but in Rangpur the two Kshatriya Samiti candidates defeated the swarajya party candidates.⁶ The election results of two successive council elections proved the fact that Rangpur was the stronghold of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti.

The Kshatriya Samiti again fielded its candidates in the elections of 1926 and 1929. Thus it may be said that the Samiti fully involved itself in electoral politics. However, in the election of 1926, Kshatriya Samiti candidate Panchanan Barma was defeated in East Rangpur constituency, though its candidate in the West constituency of Rangpur was elected.⁷ But in the election of 1929 Panchanan Barma was again elected as kshatriya Samiti candidate, this time, from the West Rangpur constituency.⁸ Thus it is seen that the Kshatriya Samiti's political activities also were flourishing centering round Rangpur like its social activities from its very inception. It is very important to mention that in Rangpur there was a good number of Rajbanshi Zaminders and Jotedars like their counter parts of their castes also encouraged the cause of socio-cultural development and the spread of education.⁹ So, there was, no doubt, that Rangpur was the main centre of all kinds of activities of the kshatriya Samiti.

It is to be stated here that the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti, meanwhile, made an effort to figure the Rajbanshi community in the list of other backward classes and secure reservation when the demand of depressed classes was published by the 'Minorities Sub-Committee Report' of the First Round Table Conference. Interestingly, the demand of the Depressed Classes was the separation from the Hindu population and to be treated as a distinct community for electoral purpose, which was complete contrast to the Kshatriyahood demand of the Rajbanshi community. However, the matter was referred to the Indian Franchise Committee headed by Lord Lothian.¹⁰ In the memorandum of 1932,

submitted to the above mentioned committee by the representatives of the Kshatriya Samiti and several other backward caste groups, Panchanan Barma stated that, 'the Rajbanshis and other backward classes should be represented by reserved seats through joint electorate.' Thus the Kshatriya Samiti supported the provisions of the August Declaration of 1932 for reserved seats and separate electorate for the depressed classes and subsequently its modified versions i.e. reserved seats but joint electorate under the Poona Pact of September 1932.¹¹ But the demand of the Kshatriya Samiti was not entertained by the Franchise committee, headed by Lothian in 1932. Its demand was reputed on the ground that "it was clearly incompatible with their insistent demand to be recognized as twice born of Kshatriya."¹² It is to be mentioned, however, that there was a controversy within the community itself with regard to the question of enlisting the Rajbanshis in the list of scheduled caste. But the same was resolved with the initiative of Panchanan Barma who argued that without protection and reservation in electoral politics, education, service and administration, the community would not be able to augment their social position merely by caste pride. This suggestion of Panchanan Barma was accepted by the Kshatriya Samiti and made an appeal to the Reform Officer, Govt. of West Bengal for enlisting the Rajbanshis as Scheduled Caste. Thus, when the list of scheduled castes for Bengal was finally published, the Rajbanshis were also figured in the list and till today, the community is enjoying the benefit of the system.¹³

The Kshatriya Samiti again became very active particularly when under the Govt. of India Act of 1935 the first general election to the provincial Legislative Assembly was held in 1937. This time also candidates were fielded by the Kshatriya Samiti. It was found that all the candidates (5 candidates altogether) were elected. It was for the first time that such a large number of Rajbanshi leaders could win the election and it was the direct benefit derived from the reservation of seats.¹⁴ However, in the post 1937 era, there was a change to a large extent in the political attitude of the leaders of the Kshatriya Samiti. The confrontation and contention were started among the leaders of the Kshatriya Samiti for getting nomination from the Samiti in 1946 election. As a result, in that Assembly election in Bengal, the Rajbanshi candidates won from Rongpur, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur not as candidates of Kshatriya Samiti but with the support of the Congress. Only one Kshatriya Samiti candidate was elected from Rongpur. Thus it was found that the Kshatriya Samiti once a strong and powerful organization of Rajbanshis in undivided North Bengal which contested and won over elections against the nationalist political parties like Indian National Congress, Swarajya party, Communist party etc. started disintegrating in post 1937 era.¹⁵ It has been argued by the scholars that the death of Rai Saheb Panchanan Barma in 1935 must have an impact on the disintegration of the Kshatriya Samiti. It should be remembered that Upendranath Barman, a forefront Kshatriya Samiti leader was also become a

member of the Constituent Assembly of India with the support of the Congress party.¹⁶

However, in the post-independence India, the Kshatriya Samiti lost further its earlier vigour and spirit due to the partition in 1947 both in respect of social and political activities. It is to be stated that as a result of partition of Bengal, the main centre of Kshatriya Samiti, Rongpur went to erst while East Pakistan and that was a severe blow to the Kshatriya Samiti and its socio-political activities. In this connection, it is to be remembered that Jalpaiguri next to Rongpur was another important centre of the Kshatriya Samiti movement in the pre and post independence period.¹⁷ It is very interesting to note that Upendranath Barman who was given the responsibility to expand the activities of the Kshatriya Samiti in and around of Jalpaiguri since 1925, joined the Indian National Congress after his defeat in the election of 1946. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say, the Kshatriya Samiti lost its political dimension in post independence era.

Thus, it delves from the above discussion that the Kshatriya Samiti not only maintained their separate social identity but at the same time a kind of feeling of separate political identity when it joined in Independent Scheduled Caste party in 1940. Therefore, it is very obvious that in the pre independence era, both the social and political separations were completed both from theoretical and practical points of view.¹⁸

But it is interesting to note that in post independence period, pre-independence character of the Kshatriya Samiti was changed almost drastically. But this time the Kshatriya Samiti was turned into merely a social organization, the roll which it played before 1920. The reason was that almost all its leaders had joined the national parties in post-independence period. Besides, the Rajbanshi community was deprived of its geographical conglomeration because of the partition in 1947. It made a considerable amount of demographic dislocation which perhaps was a final death blow to the socio-political movement of the Kshatriya Samiti. In this connection it may be quoted, "the socio-political programmes taken by the Samiti in pre independence period lost its ground during the post independent period. Not only had had that, leaving aside the political issues, it again transformed into a social organization."¹⁹ In fact, the Samiti confined itself to the social reform programmes again in the post independence period in divided North Bengal.

(III)

It should be mentioned that in post independence period i.e. in divided North Bengal or in west Bengal the first Kshatriya Samiti was organized in 1954 and the first conference of the Central Committee of the Samiti was held at Dinhata of Cooch Behar under the chairmanship of Sri Upendranath Barman. The next full-fledged conference of the Samiti was held at Jateswar in Falakata

block of Jalpaiguri district in 1955 and in this conference again Upendranath Barman was the president...²⁰ However, it was in 1956 that the head office of the Kshatriya Samiti was shifted in Jalpaiguri.²¹

The changed character of the Kshatriya Samiti which was discussed in the preceding paragraphs, was well- reflected in two Kshatriya Samiti meetings. The first one was the annual conference of the Samiti was organized at Rabindra hall, Maynaguri of Jalpaiguri district, December 27, 1967. The conference was presided over by Sri Harimohan Barman. In that conference, Haripad Roy, the general secretary of the Samiti, it was found, merely read out the annual report of the social activities of the Samiti. The other members who were present in the conference, merely participated in the stereotyped discussion that how to develop the socio-economic condition of the community. Apart from this, on the origin of the Rajbanshi Kshatriyas, on the history of Kamatapur and also how to restore the pristine glory of the Rajbanshis, generally discussion was made.²²

The second general meeting of the Kshatriya Samiti, held in Jalpaiguri on 16 December 1968 in the office of the Kshatriya Samiti and the same was presided over by Sri Purna Chandra Roy. It was found that in this meeting the discussion was initiated on the development of scheduled caste scheduled tribe communities of the region.²³ thus it reveals from the agenda of the aforesaid two Kshatriya Samiti meetings that its main concern was social issues and not political one. Besides, no political activities of the Kshatriya Samiti were evident in the post independence period. But one important feature of the Kshatriya Samiti activities during the period was the emergence of protestant attitude among some section of the educated youths of the Rajbanshi community especially in respect of caste hatred. It is to be remembered in this contest that after the partition in 1947, people of other castes infiltrated in a large number and settle as refugees in divided north Bengal which had given a fresh impetus to the caste solidarity movement in post independence period though the nature was different. The movement was, however, described by the scholars as 'identity Movement'. However, a section of Rajbanshi youths under the leadership of Sri Kalindranath Barman raised their protestant voice whenever, the derogatory term 'bahey' meaning the Rajbanshis was used by some intellectuals of other castes.²⁴ It is also very relevant to note that even in the colleges, the Rajbanshi students were insulted with the derogatory term 'bahey' and therefore, the Rajbanshi students in maximum occasions felt ashamed of introducing themselves as Rajbanshi.²⁵ In an interview, Sri Shashibhushan Adhikary, the then youth leader of the Kshatriya Samiti and also the founder member of the Uttarkhanda Dal had 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 derogatory term 'bahey'. Though they wanted to protest but they could not do anything besides remaining

as a helpless spectator for the want of every political platform of their own through which they could ventilate their grievances.²⁶ Another youth leader of the Kshatriya Samiti of the time Dhirendranath Roy and also a founder member of 'Uttarkhanda Dal' while echoed the view of Shashibhushan Adhikary on caste hatred, he had expressed his personal experience in that respect. In addition to this, he added the political anarchy all round in West Bengal which was prevalent as a result of the role of the United Front govt. And also partisanship and deprivation of the local Rajbanshi landless people in distributing vested lands- all these led the youth and educated section of the Kshatriya Samiti thinking of the formation of apolitical organization of their own to meet all those challenges they faced in the socio-economic arena in the then period.²⁷

(IV)

However, against the above mentioned activities of the Kshatriya Samiti and a new socio-political development in the post independence North Bengal, the annual conference of the Kshatriya Samiti was convened at Charerbari of Maynaguri block in the district of Jalpaiguri on 31st May and 1st June 1969. In this conference of the Samiti, the Rajbanshi dignitaries, who were present, the names of Sri Upendranath Barman, Sri Jagneswar Roy (ex-M.L.A.) also known as 'Doors Gandhi' Sri Jagadananda Roy (ex M.L.A. and Deputy minister in the cabinet of W.B. Govt.) deserve special mention. The open session of the conference was chaired by Sri Upendranath Barma.²⁸ It is very relevant to mention in this connection that all these three dignitaries were associated with Indian National congress. The historic importance of this conference was that the educated 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 stereotyped speech or lecture of those three dignitaries.²⁹ 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 made by the South Bengal leaders (political) on the people of North Bengal. However, it was youth leader Girija Shankar Roy who argued to the youth present there, that as the Rajbanshis were majorities in North Bengal, so, they could form a political party of their own.³⁰ However, on the other hand, according to Sri Girija Shankar Roy himself, it was kalindranath Barman who had made a statement to a newspaper (Yugantar) that a political party was going to be formed just on the eve of that conference.³¹ However, 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 movement and space to come out and finally it was burst out into that conference. Again, it should be mentioned that they raised their voice against the political domination of the

south Bengal political leaders which indicates that the regional political aspiration of the youth section of the Kshatriya Samiti also worked behind the formation of a new regional political party besides social discrimination.

However, 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 for the time being. The youth were probably not satisfied and as a result, a meeting was held at 2p.m. on the same day. After a prolong discussion, a resolution was taken to form a new political party by the members present. The new party was named as 'Kshatriya Samiti' for the time being.³² In addition to this, an executive Committee was constituted of seventy two members. Therefore, a 'samsad' meeting was convened by Sri Haripada roy, the general secretary of the Kshatriya Samiti on 21st June, 1969 and in the meeting 15th July, 1969 was fixed for a general meeting of the Samiti with a view to give a political shape to a new political party. The vanue was fixed at Thakurpat Rajamonan Junior High School, P.S. Dhupguri, Jalpaiguri District. The Dhupguri branch of the 'Kshathiya Yuba Samiti' simultaneously convened another public meeting at the same vanue on the next day.³³

However, in that general meeting of the Kshatriya Samiti, a prolonged discussion for hours went on about the question whether a new political party was to be formed. The forefront and senior leaders of the Samiti viz. Sri Harimohan Barman, Sri Panchanan Mallick, Sri Haripada Ray, Sri Babunath Barma and others were not in favour of forming a new political party just at that point of time. But the educated youths viz. Sri Pulin Bihari Roy, Sri Shashibhushan Adhikary, Sri Dhirendranath Roy, Sri Girija Shankar Roy et-al like earlier occasion, this time also made repeated and tremendous pressure on them to form the same. At last, the decision was reached and the senior leaders agreed to form a new political party. Thus, the historic resolution was adopted by ball the members present there forming a new political organization for the people of North Bengal and this new organization was named 'Uttarkhanda Dal'.

Thus it was found that the Uttarkhanda Dal was organized by some of the Kshatriya Samiti members and it also was noticed that the initiative to form this new political party was exclusively taken by a section of Rajbanshi community of north Bengal. At the same time it should be remembered that effort was made to include some other autochthons of the region like Mech, Adibashis, Muslims (Nasya-Shikh).

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