

CHAPTER: SEVEN

IDENTITY–AUTONOMY QUESTION AND THE STATE: THE KAMTAPUR EXPERIENCE

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

7.1 FROM HITASADHANI MOVEMENT TO GREATER COOCH BEHAR MOVEMENT

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

7.2 CLASS COMPOSITION OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Hitasadhani Movement, the traditional left parties analysts discarded it as the movement of the land owners patronized by the royal family. This simple explanation fails to explain why this movement got the momentum with the massive support at its initial stage.

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

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

During the short span of life the Hitasadhani Movement under the banner of the Hitasadhani Sabha became very popular amongst the people of Cooch Behar mostly of the local origins. The Rajbanshi, Kshatriyas, were the majority of the population, Khens, Brahmins and the

Mohamedans also forming around 25 percent of the population of the princely state. Some outsiders who settled here and engaged themselves in different occupations like (Jotedhari), legal professional or traders also joined in the movement. In short, although among many scholars who were left in their belief described this organization was an organization of the land lord or the zaminders, in my observation; they failed to observe the participation of the common peoples. So they did not feel it necessary to search the background of the movement, which helped the organizer to build up this mass movement. As a consequence of this biased attitude they failed to judge about the influence of that movement upon the present demand of the Greater Cooch Behar movement.

7.3 FACTORS BEHIND THE HITASADHANI SABHA

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

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

Such kinds of organizations were formed in different times under the direct participation of the kings. Some of the examples may be given. The Dharma Sabha established by King Shibendra Narayan (1939-47) too made the correspondence of the subjects with the king easy.

The human relation became attractive and easy through the establishment of hats, markets, trade-centres and ports (Bandar) by the kings.

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

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

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

Although the national movement of India sparked in the minds of the common people of India it could not influenced the people of Cooch Behar partly due to the restriction that were imposed by the king to organize any political and social activity and partly due to the fact the middle class educated youth, mostly Bengali were part of the King's administration. But with the establishment of the educational institution in the state the fresh air of national sprit found its way in the mind of the students of the both communities. The students of Victoria College including the teachers involved secretly with the national movement. The persons like Narendra Ghosh, Ananta Kumar Roy, Debashish Mukhopadhyay, Ashruman Dasgupta, (a teacher of royal family) Suresh Chandra Bandopadhyay, Dinesh Biswas, Upendra Nath Burman, Khetra Singha were connected with the Anusilan Samity.

One interesting information I got from the writings of Prabhanandan Das ex headmaster and scholars in his article, '*The Hitasadhani Sabha and the Tension of Cooch Behar's Integration with India.*' There he revealed this interesting fact that 'inspite of hard rules the kings were not far away from the liberal attitude. Surendra Nath Bandopadhyay, the leader of 'Indian Association had a connection with King Nripendra Narayaan. Nripendra Narayan donated money to the Congress fund'¹

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

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

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

The very word 'Bahe' as already been discussed earlier is an abbreviated form of 'Baba he' just like 'Bapu he' in Bengali, is good in respect of addressing the senior or junior men. But this word became a word to show the disrespect or neglect to the Rajbanshi community by the those new 'Bhatias'. The 'Deshi' people also began to use 'Baghe Bangalees' in retaliation. It is also disgraceful name for the Bengali. A wall of division in the social atmosphere was built. The Rajbanshi could have plea that the new 'Bhatias' should remain grateful towards them because it is they who offered them shelter and way of living successfully. If they showed their antagonistic attitude towards them it would not have been possible 'for them to make their settlement in the state so peacefully. Political, party, no doubt took their initiative in building the political consciousness among the peoples inspite of the odd situation and helped to grow the anti royal

feeling as their political goal but they did not pay their attention to remove the under current as stated above that were flowing in the minds of the both communities of this state. Both the superiority complex of the educated Bengali and to some extent a feeling of inferiority complex in the minds of the Rajbanshi community has to be removed at the initial stage. In my field study I find that the political activists and the political parties were more interested in building their political support rather than to look into the social matter in the eyes of the social reformer. Moreover, they in many cases indulged to create this division among the peoples in the line of caste and religion to fulfil their narrow political gain.

Here, if the political leaders and the other intellectuals tried to measure the fathom of the wounded sentiment of the local people being marginalized in one hand, and on the another hand losing their identity and culture including their language and history, the situation would have not been taken this shape as it appeared to day. However, thanks to the good spirit of peoples of the state and after the merger with West Bengal no ethnic clash was allowed to take place in the soil of Cooch Behar. It should be mentioned here when the communal riots in Bengal rocked the pride of the Bengali culture either they belonged to Hindu or Muslim community engaged to kill each other the people of Cooch Behar showed their unique quality in maintaining the communal harmony between the Hindus and the Muslim. There was not a single incident of communal clash is recorded in the history of Cooch Behar.

One should recall the great movement of Quite India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi which influenced the Rajbanshi community as well during the 40s. The death of Panchanan Burman although weakened Kshatriya movement but it influenced many leaders to join in the national politics. For example, Upendra Nath Burman joined the National Congress along with his many followers and became the member of the Parliament. As it has been stated earlier that the political movement including social, economic, were forbidden in the princely state of Cooch Behar.

A very important political development took place in the 40s when at the insidences of the responsible governments in all the princely state of India, election were held in Cooch Behar. That was the first political events in the monarchy. At that time a signal of future alarm was flashed which was ignored by the then even radical leadership of that state. The subjects of the state were divided in to two groups – Deshi and Bideshi, the first open division in the line of community feelings. There emerged the Hitasadhani Sabha, an organization of Deshi people comprising Rajbanshi both the Hindu and the Muslim along with other indigenous groups.

7.4 THE ROLE OF THE ROYAL FAMILY TOWARDS HITASADHANI SABHA

One should keep it remember in that context that the king himself was an indigenous people of Cooch Behar. On the other hand, the administration that he arranged in such a way that it was

completely under the control of the high caste outsiders i.e. the so called Bhatias and the indigenes people virtually had no role in the administration. When the election was declared the deshi leaders like Satish Chandra Singha Sarkar, Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah, Gajendra Narayan Basnia, Ansaruddin Ahmed assembled behind the Deshi people and participated in the election under the banner of Hitasadhani Sabha, an organization formed with a declared objective to look after the welfare and interest of the Deshi people as a whole. This newly formed organization virtually won all the seats of the council. The two leaders of Hitasadhani Sabha, Satish Singha and Amanatullah were inducted in the council of ministry and were given Education and Finance port Folio of the ministry respectively. This incident has a long drawn impact upon the Rajbanshi and other indigenous people as they first tasted the victory and saw their own men in the higher position of the administration. It was no matter for the common indigenous group to see the class character of the representative of the elected members of the Hitasadhani Sabha it appeared to them as the first victory of their community over the outsiders administrators. The example of the Independence Day can be cited in that context. The common people of India was no mood in that memorable day to judge the class character of the members of the minister of the central government except the few numbers of the left parties. Nobody was in mood to response the call of the Communist Party of India 'Eai Azadi Juta Hai'.

In Cooch Behar also, most of the indigenous peoples along with the so called Bhatia's were poor and illiterate. When I met with the present leaders of the political parties including both the left and the right they told that the Hitasadhani Sabha took the advantages of their ignorance and poverty through the trick to charge people fully with the ethnic feelings and emotions. They also further said that the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha projected their preaching in such a manner as if they had taken the task of the unfinished goal of Thakur Panchanan Burma for the emancipation of the Rajbanshi community. But basic question surfaced now how and why the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha could success in their preaching? Why the common Deshi or indigenous people who constituted the 80% of the population of the state relied upon them? Even under the left rule for more than 34 years how that ethnic unrest could raise their head? The question came because during my interview with Chandi Pal the then District Secretary of CPIM gave the explanation that the activities of the left progressive political parties of Cooch Behar was very weak and as such the impact of their ideology amongst the farmers and other poor were very insignificant then. The same argument was expressed by another left leader Dinesh Dakua in his article 'A journey from Hitasadhani Sabha to Greater Koch Behar' published in the book under the title '*Socio political Movements in North Bengal*'. (Ed).

It should be noted that from the time of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur during his short rule from 1913to 1922 AD an administrative change was found as the king appointed more and more local peoples in the administration. He was also supporter of the Kshatriya movement. At his initiative the sacred thread ceremony of Maharaj Jagaddipendra Narayan, Maharaj Kumar Jitendra Narayan Gautam Narayan was also held in the state.

7.5 MASS SUPPORT BEHIND THE HITASADHANI SABHA

It may be mentioned here that the Cooch State legislative Council was formed in the year of 1909 during the reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan but all the members in the council were either official or nominated. In 1941 A.D. The Cooch Behar Legislative Council act was passed during the reign of Maharaja Jagdipendra Narayan and provision was made therein for direct election of eight members – two members (one Hindu and one Mohamedan) by jotedars of the state, one member by the members of the legal profession of the state, and five members from each of the five sub-division of the state, namely Sadar Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Mekhliganj, and Tufanganj. Important leaders like Satish Chandra Roy Singha, Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah Ahmed, Ansur uddin Ahmed, Jogendra Nath Roy, Gajendra Nath Roy Basunia, Kumar Tikendra Narayan, Mosharaf Hossain Pradhan among others became the members of the State Legislative Council when the election was held in 1946 A.D. As mentioned earlier the win of Satish Chandra Roy singha, a lawyer from Dinhata sub Division defeating Makbul Hossain Ahmed, also a lawyer who happened to be the father of the former Bangladesh President Ersad Hossain was not an unexpected result at all. Another important leader Umesh Chandra Mandal, also a lawyer contested from Mekhligang. Other contesting candidates for that constituency were Susil Kumar Chakraborty and Mosaraf Hussain Pradhan. Mandal lost to Hussain in the triangular contest.

In an article written by Parabananda Das under the title *The Hitasadhane Sabha and the Tension of Cooch Behar's Integration with India* Published in 'Social and political tension in North Bengal' (Ed) an incident was mentioned which I think an important event in the life of Cooch Behar.

The clash between the students and the military hastened the movement against the king. A collision took place when between the two cycle riders running opposite each other on the street nearer to Victoria Collage and a Missionary School (Maraja Nripendra Narayan School). In one cycle carrying two military personnel dashed the other cycle. The military men got angry and began to beat the other cycle rider. Some students of Victoria College noticed this incident and snatched the cycle of the military men to hand over the cycle to the police station. At that time a large number of military men under the leadership of a captain entered the college. Satish Chandra Bhowmik, the Head master of the Missionary School tried to resist the Captain Kumarendu Narayan. But no honour was given to the head master. The military personnel entered the college ransacked everything. It was reported according to one eye witness that a breast of girl was cut; many students were wounded including girls and the principal and teachers.

The King was absent at the time of incident. After returning to the capital he discharged the captain along with the Subedar Nabin sing from their service by conducting the criminal procedure against them. This student movement was also a turning point in the political history of Cooch Behar. Before that nobody dare to show any voice of protest against the Royal Army and the king. At the same time the peasants movement initiated to its journey against the king by the leadership of Jiban Dey, the then a young Communist leader at Banshirhat where the unjustified tax on selling of goods was imposed on the sellers. Before that the peasant movement in Mathabhanga in 1930-31 though weak but helped to germinate the future movements.

When the national movement for freedom of India reached to its height and the change were seemed inevitable a fresh air for change began to blow in the political atmosphere in Cooch Behar also. Taking the advantage of the turmoil the people of Cooch-Bihar, different civil organizations of the state like, Cooch Behar People's Association, Civil Liberties Committee, and Cooch Behar Employees Association tried to organize themselves to establish democracy in the state and for this they began to make contact with the national leader of India for their help. Satish Chandra Roy singha, a very powerful leader of Cooch Behar at that time, whom the Statesman, a daily news paper of Calcutta once described him as the uncrown king of the state. Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah Ahmed, a highly respectable person of the state and many others holding respectable position in the state came forward to form an organization.

It was 4th Jaistha 1353 BS corresponding to the 19th may, 1946 , before a huge gathering of more than 60000 peoples on the Rash Mela maidan which was the wide open having no stadium and other construction thereon , the Hitasadhani Sabha was formed with great enthusiasm where Khan Chowdhury Amana tullah Ahmed declared as president, Satish Chandra Singha and Dharani Shankar Bhattachjee as the vice president, Jaladhar Saha as the secretary and Majir Uddin as assistant secretary of the organization. It should be kept in mind that during those days there was no bus communication yet the people came in thousands either on foot or carts and special trains had to provide for the peoples coming from the distance place.

Amongst others who addressed the gathering was Sonmani Devi, the first woman graduate amongst the local people. The 'Bhawaiya ' Samrat Abbas Uddin , a son of Cooch Behar sang in the gathering and sang the song which was composed by his younger brother Abdul karim for this occasion with the opening word ' O Bhai Morr Kuch Behari Re'. The same song now is sang almost in every cultural function of the Rajbanshi community, here it should be noted that Hitasadhani Sabha was the first political party which was granted recognition by the state.

The indigenous people who had no representation in the administration in the states so long, at least found two of their members were in the council of ministry with two very important portfolios and as such they got thoroughly elected and enthused. The common indigenous people

did not consider it to think the class character of the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha, The gathering of the meeting of Hitasadhani Sabha was its example.

The left party particularly the communist Party of India started their organization and initiated the farmer agitation following the movement of Te-Bhaga but could not produce much success for mainly two reasons: firstly they were not allowed to do their function openly, secondly, the leaders were almost Bengali who still then considered as Bhatia in the eyes of the indigenous people.

The Hitasadhani Sabha placed the demand to develop own area with their own men. They also said in their demand that they want to work through the elected representative under the shade of the central government. That call responded the mind of the indigenous people as they had a dream that their land would again be a land of the indigenous people. Hitasadhani Sabha capitalised this sentiment of the indigenous people and could create great enthusiasm among them.

They placed their demand to be submitted before the maharaja of Cooch Behar by claiming the development of Cooch Behar State in that mammoth gathering.

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| Khan Chowdhury Amanatullaya Khan | President |
| Dharani Shankar Bhattacharya | Vice President |
| Satish Chandra Roy Singha | Vice President |
| Jaladhar Saha | Secretary |
| Majiruddin Ahmed | Asst Secretary |

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|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Satish Chandra Roy | CoochBihar | Rajeswar Sarkar | ----- |
| Satinath Roy | Khagarbari | JatindraNathSinghaSarkar | Tufanganj |
| Aneswar Roy | Bhetaguri | PatalChandar Barman | Natabari |
| Dr. Jogendra Nath Roy | Mekhliganj | HafazuddinMiah | Premerdanga |
| Ekin Prodhan | ----- | Anchharauddin Ahmed | Cooch Behar Sadar |
| Mossahr Hussain | ----- | Kumar Purnendu Narayan | ----- |
| Gajen Roy Basunia | ----- | Kamini Kumar Barman | ----- |
| JogendraNathMandal | Tufanganj | Karamuddin Miah | ----- |
| Dhira Roy Basunia | ----- | Kumar Birendra Narayan | ----- |
| Jogen Ishore | ----- | | |

In addition to the above mentioned numbers many others from different villages were included as the ordinary member of the organization.

The method of declaring and including the names of the members was a new to the indigenous people of the state where not to speak of the formation of any organization in public was not allowed there such kind of the participation appeared to them a new venture for them.

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 7.2 The Legendary Folk song by Abbas uddin Oh, Bhai mor Cooch Behari re (Oh, My Cooch Bihari brother) Chaturdikke Jale Surujbati (The sun like lamp kindles on all sides) Tomar ghare kyane andhar rati (Why the dark night does prevails in your house) Haire, Hai! (Alas! Alas!) Parar Bojha tomara Katadin Baiben Bhai</p> |
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The left activists ignored the Hitasadhani Sabha completely as an organization of the landlords or the zaminders and hence they are very much reluctant to give any importance to their presence and discarded it. These intellectuals or the political activities now in dilemma to give the explanation why after the rule of national stream political parties like the Indian National Congress and there after left rule for 34years the demand for the separation from West Bengal could find its roots in the soil of West Bengal? Why the Rajbanshi community still feel that their language and culture are absorbed by the so called Bhatia after so long has been past?

In order to search the answer of this question and in the same time whether the same issues that were raised by the Hitasadhani Sabha almost 70 years back were kept like a dormant volcano waiting for the eruption that needed to be examined. For that reason I intended to peep in to the class position of the members of the Hitasadhani Sabha to know how an organization of the zaminders or land lords all on a sudden could become the inspiring source of the common mass.

Jotedar were the mini zaminders. The persons belonging to the category of the jotedar were the land owner of 12/-13 hals or 20/-25 hals in extreme point. A hal constitutes of about 13 bighas of land that means they were the owners of 200 or 250 bighas of land. The cultivators who cultivated under the jotedar were called 'Haluas'. The 'giri who cultivate the land of their

own part of the land .Other parts of the land were distributed among the Halus. The Halus would give half of the crops produced. In this system the exploitation, deprivation or oppression by the joteders would prevail. But here the relation of the giris and the haluas were not always bitter rather in some time congenial which were not seen in other part of the country, the reason of which has already been discussed. The giris would take 2 mounds in exchange of 1 mound when he lends the crops to the Halus. But the giri would help the haulas when they were in distress. At that time there was no bank to give the loan. Giris were the last saviours of the haluas. The giris become liberal in respect of their halua' sons and daughters marriage. The custom of "panichhita" meant one who would sprinkle water on the head of the daughter or the son was turned into a father or mother, as the case may be, in the case of marriage. The Haluas took that advantages and the Giris were made father or mother of their sons and daughters. The relation became deep and they were treated as relative. It should be kept in mind that this relation was not like as the relation between labour and owner as in other part of the country. It was a social relation that had been the prevailing custom in the Rajbanshi society based on the relation of love.

When India became free as the two dominions of India and Pakistan and paramount of the British Government over the India states there were three options were left for the princely states : 1) to remain as independent states, 2) to accede to the Dominion of India and 3) to accede to the dominion of Pakistan.

It was evident that the intention of the Maharaja and Maharani of Cooch Behar was to remain as the independent states. The Hitasadhani Sabha also in the same line of opinion. The reason can be easily understandable. They from the very beginning organized themselves raising the demands for the authority of the local people. They were neither in favour of merger of Cooch Behar with Assam or West Bengal. They were in favour of creating an independent Cooch Behar state comprising the Dooars part of Jalpaiguri, a part of Darjeeling, which were at one time under the state of independent State of Cooch Behar.

Some influential leaders of the Dooars area named Bidhu Bhusan Karjee of Paropar, Alipurduar , Tarini Kanta Roy of Raichanga near Falakata, Gopal Chandra Roy of Shilbari, Tarakeswar Roy, G.Basunia of Khet-iFulbari and Md. Abdudhobahan of Falakata of the Dooars area expressed their desire by publishing a leaflet in the year 1947 A.D just on the eve of independence of India and before the merger with Cooch Behar to form a separate state comprising the said area under the Maharaja of Cooch Bihar.

It cannot be denied that the Hitasadhani Sabha enjoyed the overwhelming popularity in the state. The election result of the State Legislative Council which was held in1949 almost all the candidates of the Hitasadhani Sabha were elected.

7.6 THE ROLE OF HITASADHANI SABHA TO WARDS THE MARGER

In order to search the roots of the ethnic unrest of North Bengal nobody can deny the role of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Many of the scholars as mentioned earlier tried to ignore Hitasadhain Sabha as the organization of land lord and hence they are now irrelevant in the history of Cooch Behar. Many of them even expressed their opinion in the interview as part of my field study that to bring the episode of the Hitasadhani Sabha would be an attempt to invite the ethnic division which they thought that had buried under the grave with the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal and after the progressive political parties took the lead of the district .But with the emergence of the same demands that were raised by the Hitasadahani Sabha even during the rule of the left front government who claimed themselves as the government of the common people forced them also to re- think that the ethnic problems still remain there. It is not mere a regional problem but it is a universal problem that needs special attention to understand. No simple method not even the much publicized socialist theory after the debacle of the Soviet Union is proved sufficient. So it needs an open mind to judge the issue without prejudice beforehand. Under this context I felt it necessary to give an account of the evaluation of the Hitasadhani Sabha as it appeared to me inspite of their abolition but their demands still remains in one form to another.

Hiatasadhani Sabha cannot be discarded as the organization of land lords ignoring the fact that it emerged as the ethno-linguistic political group and played a very crucial role at the eve of the freedom of India as well as the closing phase of the princely state of Cooch Behar. Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh of University of North Bengal, and author of number of books on North Bengal rightly said, 'It emerged in the most critical phase of its history, and played a very significant role in shaping the fate of the lonely princely state of Bengal. What is more important is that the majority of the 'Coochbehari' people were emotionally associated with the Hitasadhani Sabha. Its popularity was beyond doubt whether one supports it or dislikes the Hitasadhani Sabha's aims and actions. Until now no serious attempt has been made by any academician or non-academician in the particular ethno- linguistic and social hierarchy of this tiny princely state.'

Without going through the studies of post colonial and the post modern political and social transformation the origin or the root of the present unrest cannot be judged. In order to make my journey I made a venture to see the social events of the immediate past of North Bengal specially, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and a greater part of Siliguri plains. Without taking the account of the role of the Hitasadhani Sabha no such discussion is possible.

In this context the demographic composition should be kept in mind and that was given the place in the study. It has already been stated that the religious composition, and the ethno-linguistic identity were completely different from the rest of Bengal. The demarcation line

between the Cooch Behar and the non-Coochbehari was very sharp in this princely state. It was thought that this difference has abolished after the merger with West Bengal and ruled by the centrally administered authority from Kolkata.

The sharing of power in the hands of man of the soil was the main slogans of the Hitasadhani Sabha which earned the overwhelming support of the local people. Although the king belonged to indigenous community but the common people had no scope to maintain the relationship with him. It is the members of the administrative staff maintained the administration and were entrusted with the task to look after the subjects of the king. The bureaucratic mentality of the administrative staff is inherited from the Colonial rule. After being the princely state the kings of the state introducing more and more colonial administrative procedure replacing the traditional customs which were the binding force between the feudal ruler and the subjects. As it is discussed earlier the administrative staffs were almost all belonged to the Bengali community with their different language and culture and they appeared as alien community. This attitude further got the chance to become strong because of their function as the bureaucrat in the administration office.

‘Man of the soil’ is not only voiced in the soil of Cooch Behar, it echoed every part of the country even in the midst of wide spread of the wave of the ‘Globalization.’ How one can define the egotism of the Maharstrian and emergence of the Shib Sena in such a big force based on the slogans ‘Maharashtra for Maharastirans or against the so called Hindi imperialism by the South Indian people. Even in the same state like West Bengal the people of one place obstruct the candidates coming to join for the proposed industry to be set up in the place of their residence. Very recently the prestigious University of international fame like Calcutta University declared that their students will get a preference in the admission for the post graduation course. It is also a manifestation of the same sentiment ‘Man of the Soil’ though in a sophisticate form.

The slogans of the power in the hand of the local people cannot be discarded as the demand of the landlords. If it is so then the movement of the freedom struggle of India has to be described as the movement of the land lords and the Indian big traders class as claimed by the then Communist Party of India by raising that slogans ‘Eai Azadi Zuta Hai’. The leadership of the Indian national movement no doubt was in the hands of the affluent class of peoples known in the Marxist term. ‘Bourgeois’ that does not mean that it is the movement of bourgeois class. The participant of the movement were the common people and their dream to free India and test the power through their own men. The leadership of the Hitasadhani Sabha was no doubt in the hands of the affluent class of people predominantly land owners but that does not mean the overwhelming participant of the common people should not be given the due importance. The sweeping victory of the candidates of the Hitasadhani Sabha in the election held in the year of 1946 was the clear indication that the Hitasadhani Sabha echoed the dream of the common people of the state. That was the first time for the local peoples find that persons belonging to

their ethno–linguistic group in the administrative chairs. This share of political and administrative power that they tasted through the movement of the Hitasadhani Sabha encouraged their aspiration to gain political power at the eve of freedom of India as they sensed with the leaning of the colonial ruler a new political door is going to be opened.

7.7 THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE HITASADHANI SABHA

During my field study when I met several persons to know their views about the Hitasadhani Sabha. I felt it needed to examine the demands that are raised by the present leadership of the movement for a separate state or for the recognition are more or less similar with the demands that were raised by the present leadership of the movement for a separate state or for the recognition for the more or less similar demands that were raised by the Hitasadhani Sabha.

Everybody admits that there was a grave grievance in the mind of the common people of Cooch Behar. But it should not be forgotten that there is a long distance between the grievance and the organization unless someone take the task of forming an organization by capitalizing of the grievances.

During my study I found that the indifferent attitude towards the Hitasadhani Sabha not only by the left oriented scholars but also from the side of the government made it very difficult to open the pages of the facts. So very little evidence or to say record are available to judge who were the real strength behind this organization so that it could appear with such massive strength. It requires to examine to know the roots of the ethnical unrest so that everybody should take the note that what appeared dead it may not be so and the seeds of that apparent dead issue may germinate in the near or distant future as the ethnic conflict between the Cooch Beharis and the Non–Cooch beharis which was thought died with the disappearance of the Hitasadhani sabha.

There was a convention that in any organization that were formed in the Cooch Behar Dynasty either the Maharaja or the Maharani would be the president. In the same time it needed the prior permission of the king. That happened at the time of the formation of the Praja Hitasadhani Sabha in 1859. The Maharaja by virtue of the throne became the president of the Praja Hita Sadhani Sabha. But there was a deviation in the case of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Neither the king nor the queen held any post of the organization. So a mystery is still there whether there was any prior permission was granted from the royal administration? Or the organization was formed without taking the permission of the king? But that probability was remote. Because some names that have already mentioned in the earlier who were not only the organizer of the organization but also holding the ministerial post in the royal cabinet.

So, it can be taken as granted that the Hitasadhani Sabha had the blessing of the king in disguised. The famous folk singer Abbas Uddin Ahmed who took part in the meeting wrote in his memories that the Maharaja had the blessing for the organization. It was also told that Maharaja on many occasion addressed the meeting of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Indrajitendra Nrayan, a scion of the Royal Family had also delivered a speech in the meeting of the Hitasadhani Sabha at Mekhligang. By searching the record in the government department where all the records are kept for that period but I could not find the document showing the support of the king towards the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha. It needs further investigation for the future researcher.

One more point waits for the discussion. It is the role of the Royal administrative staffs. In the case of the Kshatriya movement it is found that the same Royal administration of the predecessor of the last Maharaja did not allow any activities of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti in the princely state of Cooch Behar. Naturally question appeared what compulsion forced the king not to allow opening the branch of the Kshatriya Samiti in the state. Here also, there is no clear answer in this regard. Some of the Rajbanshi intellectuals tried to say that it is due to the fact that almost all the higher administrative post of the Royal administration was occupied by the high caste Hindu Bengali and they were under the influence of the Hindu caste Brahmin who was very much against the Rajbanshi Kshatriya movement. They influenced the king not to support the Kshatriya movement and their branch should not be allowed in the state. However it is also presumption but no conclusive proof is found in this regard.

Here again, an interesting points should be noted. Although the Royal Administration did not allowed the Rajbanshi Kshatriya samiti to function in the Cooch Behar state inspite of the fact that the personality like Takhur Panchanan Barma was its leader. But after 30 years we find another organization in the name of Cooch- Behar Kshatriya Society in Cooch Behar with the approval of the king. It is therefore a pertinent question why the king wanted a separate Kshatriya organization in the name of the Cooch Behar Kshatriys Society? It is well known fact that the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti who performed their movement for the elevation of their status in the Hindu caste system. On the other hand, Coochbehari identity was more emotional than the Rajbanshi identity and they feel proud to be identifying themselves as the Coochbehari rather than to be known as the Rajbanshi. During the pre merger period they seldom identified them as the Rajbanshi and called the Rajbanshi of Rangpur or Rangpuriya. The conflict in the question of Kamta Behari is that reflection.

This needs to be discussed in the historical perspective; otherwise the dichotomies of the Rajbanshi Society of the colonial phase will be misunderstood. Similar kind of problems that was found in the Western Assam where there is a big Rajbanshi community lives. They were also reluctant to welcome of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samity Movement. This part of Assam where a large number of the Rajbanshi community live needs separate discussion.

We cannot ignore the change that was taken place in the Cooch Behar Royal family after the marriage of Prince Jintendra Narayan with Indira Devi, the princess of Gaikawar state. Before that Bengali domination was prevailed in the Royal administration. But after this marriage that domination began to reduce due to the direct intervention of the Maharani Indira Devi. She began to appoint the higher post of the Royal administration from other state. So the administrative structure of the state which was headed by Dewan Calica Das Dutta, ICS had been revised with the consent of the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur.

| Table 7.3 | |
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| List of Administration in Cooch Behar Kingdom | |
| 1 | Dr. A.R. Seconhdey, Chief Medical Officer of the State. |
| 2. | Mr.L.B.God, Chief Engineer of the state. |
| 3. | Mr. Hanuman Sah Routh, Revenue Secretary of the State. |
| 4. | Mr. I Sekhar, Education Secretary and publicity Officer of the State. |
| 5 | Mr. P.k. Kaul, Commandant , Home guard of the state. |
| 6. | G.C. Fookan, Police commissioner of the state. |
| 7. | Capt. K. Grey. Piolot of the State. |
| 8. | Mr. K.R. Singh, Minister –waiting – of the state. |

It is evident from the above list that the de-Bengalisation processes was started although the Coochbehari did not like it as whatever the discontentment was there in the mind of them but that does not mean they would prefer to invite the person from the other state. Some scholars alleged that the Hitasadhaani Sabha was the brain child of Nawab Khasru Jang, relative of the Nizam of Hyderabad and also the personal assistant of Maharani Indira Devi, the Queen-Dowager of Coach Behar state. But there was no proof in support of it.

It is therefore remains a misty about the promoter of the growth of the Hitasadhani Sabha. But it is true that the Hitasadhani Sabha got the blessing of all above mentioned groups or persons otherwise it would not have been possible for the organization to held such massive gathering and within the short period of its growth it could not expand in such massive way without the support or blessing from them whatever might be the support of the common people behind their demands.

Every programme must have some objective it may good or bad. Naturally there was an objective of the Hitasadhani Sabha to be fulfilled. As no study as such was conducted about one of the most important event that was taken place it is very difficult task to formulate the very specific objective that the Hitasadhani Sabha set forth its journey to achieve.

They had launched their crusade against the caste Hindus i.e. in the name of the outsider against the Bengali community raising the slogan ‘Bhatia Hatao’. Abbas uddin, the legendary

folk singer candidly said that the predominance of the outsiders was the main reason behind the ‘Bhatia Hato’ slogan.

The emotion in this direction was so deep that the folk singer like Abbas uddin Ahmed sang the song ‘ O Mor Cooch Behari ‘with such emotion that many elders who had the opportunity to attend the gathering although young at that time told me that an emotional wave swept over the whole gathering . The people on way to going back from the gathering they were singing the song. Now that song has become a regular song almost in all the function of the Rajbanshi community. It is taken to be granted that Cooch Behari people were not against the non Cooch Beharis. Some like Prof. Ananda Goplal Ghosh opined that a new kind of communalism developed in this princely state. I like to differ with Prof. Ghosh on the term ‘Communalism’. It appeared to me after the inspection of the facts in the available documents and from the interaction of several peoples of these areas that it was not communalism as stated by Prof. Ghosh in his article, ‘The Hitasadhani Sabha –Power struggle’ it can be described as the strong ethnic feeling against the supremacy of the other ethnic community. In describing the movement as the communal movement it should bear in mind that when the so called advanced cultured community like the Bengali in undivided Bengal engaged in the one of the ugliest communal riot in the name of religion there was not a single communal riots took place in the soil of Cooch Behar State. I could not find any incident where the Koch / Rajbanshi and Bengali community engaged in the communal fighting.

It is true, after assuming the minister ship , the two minister Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah and Satis Chandra Singh Roy, minister of Revenue and education respectively introduced some measure to appoint the candidate from the Cooch Behari community which was previously the monopoly of the outsiders i.e. mainly from the Bengali community. Prof. Ghosh described this measure as ‘communal measures ‘in his same article. Here it also I like beg to differ on this term as it appears to me that those two ministers gave the opportunity to the ‘man of the soil’ who happened to be the member of the same ethnic community.

It is true that the role of the Muslim members of the Hitasadhani Sabha was not good at all, rather they were using their ugly communal card for their own interest. Practically they were acting as the counter part of the Muslim League in Cooch Behar. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan’s call for ‘Great Bengal’ influenced the Muslim of Cooch Behar. Here it should be noted that the Rajbanshi Muslim who were the indigenious people they did not respond to this call in general. It is reported that Khan Chowdhury, the president of the Hitasadhani Sabha and the Revenue Minister of the state encouraged the Muslim immigrants especially of Rangpur and Mymensing to settle in the Cooch Behar state. The agricultural land in East Bengal was scarce. So the land hungry farmers took that advantage and came to Cooch Behar and many of them married the girls of the Rajbanshi community. It is reported that at the invitation of Khan Amanatullah, Majahed four (Army of liberation, Sirajganj, Pabna) came to Cooch Behar with his army to organise for the merger of Cooch Behar with Pakistan.

Another organization in the name of Cooch Behar State Praja Mandal led by Umesh Chandra Mandal, advocate of Dinhat and belonged to Rajbanshi community was founded. This organization got the support of both the Communist Party of India and Forward Block. They actively supported the cause of merger of Cooch Behar with Indian Union. In a memorandum, dated July 20, 1948, addressed to Sardar Ballabhai Patel the Praja Mandal stated that the Maharaja and his pro league Muslim Ministers and the minister belonged to the schedule caste were hobnobbing with Pakistan. They also alleged that the Maharaj himself met Suhrawardy, the prime Minister of Bengal and invited his opinion about the merger referring to the fact that his state would be surrounded by three sides by the territories of Pakistan.

It is no doubt that the Hita Sadhani Sabha could sale their slogans effectively among the Koch/Rajbanshi community of Cooch-Bihar in general with an objective of the establishment of their political power but they were in dilemma in what way they would achieve their goal. At the first stage their demand was to merge Cooch Behar with Assam, later it wanted to remain as a state not as a district, on the other hand, the Muslim members of the Sabha wanted the merger of the Cooch Behar state with Pakistan.

The letter which was sent to the Joint secretary. Government of India dated 22nd November, 1949 by Nanjappa, the Chief commissioner of Cooch Behar reflected the attitude of the power hungry leadership of the Hitasadhan Sabha. Mr. Nanjappa wrote in his letter, 'it is interesting to note that the Hitasadhani Party is willing to merge Cooch Behar with Gorkha districts of Darjeeling or with Assam. Their real intention appears to be to try to maintain political influence in the area.'

Here it should be noted that, with an aim to create a new state the representative of different parties met at Darjeeling on 30th October, 1949. Their demand was the formation of the state comprising the above depicted areas and for that objective they formed an organization named "Uttara Kanda Pradesh Sangha."

When the political atmosphere over the Cooch Behar State clouded with the conglomeration of different shaded of interested elements to form a separate state a new kind of political climate developed in the Dooars area of Jalpaiguri District, the historical background of this area has already been discussed in the earlier chapter of this study. A section of the Rajbanshi people of both the Hindu and the Muslim community demanded the inclusion of Dooars with Cooch Behar State. Their argument was that that this part of the land originally was the part of the Cooch Bihar dynasty and it was conquered by the Bhutan government and then the British Government took it from the hand of Bhutan and merged with Jalpaiguri. Two leaflets had been published in the name of the people of Western Dooars. Of course, almost all the people of Western Dooars were ethnically and linguistically belonged to the same stock of the Cooch Beharis.

It can be clearly said from the above facts the ethno-caste-linguistic agglomeration of different parts of the North Bengal as mentioned above took place during this period. It is again from the present ethnic unrest shows that the said ethno-caste –linguistic issues still remain very active.

In this study though I have concentrated my area of study within the boundary of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri district but the two districts of western Assam, namely Goalpara and Kamrup automatically takes its place in the discussion as in these two districts 75% of the total population belonged to Rajbanshi community. Not only that the Rajbanshi community in Assam already enjoyed the test of power of the state. Sarat Chandra Sinha who belonged to Rajbanshi community became the chief minister of the state.

The 1874 is the very important year for the Rajbanshi community. In this year, Goalpara, the Rajbanshi concentrated district was separated from North Bengal and merged with newly formed Assam province. The separation of Goalpara from North Bengal not only changed the geographical area of North Bengal but also greatly damaged the traditional belt of the Rajbanshi homogeneity dividing the history of Rajbanshi community.

It should bear in mind that since 1874, either due to the reorganization or partition whatever have taken place, in each time the Rajbanshi community has been marginalized some time linguistically, sometimes in demographically and sometimes politically and culturally. Rangpur, Goalpara and the princely state of Cooch Bihar all these were known as the land of Rajbanshi. The separation of Goalpara district initiated the split of the homogeneity of the Rajbanshi community. Then came the partition. The loss of Rangpur in one hand and the influx of the Bengali refugees on the other hand. This continuous marginalisation gave birth a sense of inferiority as well as insecurity in their mind. This also led to form the different types of the movement in different times and different forms. Whatever may be the name or form of the movement the root causes of the movements are their continuous marginalization and consequently losing their hold on their customs language, and culture. In addition to this, the severe economic disparity due to the indifferent attitude of the government toward this region aggravated this sentiment.

After the year 1874 this is for the first time the Rajbanshi of Assam and North Bengal came together to unite themselves and formed a common platform 'Greater Kamta United Forum with an aim to reunite again. It is no doubt in embryonic stage but from an embryo a baby grows and develops in full grown man if he gets nourishment from the different sources. Similarly ethnic feeling remains in the embryonic form at the initial stage but it turned in to the ethnic clashes if it gets the provocation as its food from the surrounding environment.

The new Assam province was created in 1874 comprising five Assamese speaking districts namely, Sibsagar, Darang, Lakhimpur, and Kamrup. These areas were geographically known as the Brahmaputra valley. Dibrugarh known as Ujani Assam was included it and after that in the same year the Bengali speaking Surma Valley's Sylhet district and the Rajbanshi dominated Goalpara district which was formerly a part of Rangpur were also included in the new province.

The Rajbanshi people of Goalpara where they represented eighty percent of the total population could not understand the far reaching consequences of this separation. Had the Rajbanshi leaders of that time resisted this decision of incorporating of Goalpara with Assam the history of the Rajbanshi might have been different. They lost their two hundred years connection i.e. from 1639 to 1822 with Bengal. It should be noted here that in 1639 the region of the present day Goalpara was incorporated with Rangpur and it was severed from Rangpur in 1822 when the district of Goalpara was created. One important thing in this connection may be mentioned. When the colonial government had created the province of Assam the total Assamese speaking population was at that time was 35 lakhs. On the other hand, the number of the Rajbanshi population was also 35 lakhs. But there was a difference in question of geographical distribution of the Rajbanshi population. The Asamese got their linguistic state because they used to live and still living in their own territory while the Rajbanshis had been living in Goalpara and the Kamrup of Assam province the princely state of Cooch–Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Terai, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Purnea of Bihar, Jhapa and Morang of Nepal.

Although there was no formal demand voiced by the Assamese until 1874 the colonial government created Assam province for the Assamese. After the British conquest of Assam proper in 1826, Bengali was the medium of instruction in the British administered Assam territory. But the Western educated Assamese exerted pressure to introduce Assamese as the medium of instruction in the educational institute. Following the demand the colonial ruler formed the province of Assam to provide the linguistic state. That was a good decision no doubt, after the merger of Sylhet and Goalpara the process of Assamization ultimately converted into linguistic Chauvinism. When the Bengali speaking peoples of Sylhet registered their protest the Rajbanshi leaders of western Assam had never raised the demand of their mother tongue, Rajbanshi or Kamtapuri language.

Another important incident to be noted here that after the second Anglo-Bhutan war of 1864-65 the seven Dooars known as Eastern Dooars was merged with Goalpara district. It was a vast tract with thinly populated tribal zone. Goalpara was the permanently settled populated area while the newly added eastern Dooars was land of non permanently settled areas.

An interesting point in this context is seen if it can be compared with the district of Jalpaiguri. Both the district originally was with Rangpur District. Jalpaiguri district comprised

the permanently settled area and the non-regulation areas of the western Dooars. The Western Dooars also brought under the British rule after the Second Anglo–Bhutan war of 1864-65. Like the Western Dooars the Eastern Dooars also thinly populated tribal areas. Both the districts are now facing the problems Rajbanshi linguistic ethnic identity.

In Assam the processes of Assamanization and in West Bengal the Bengalisation converted in to linguistic Chauvinism. In Assam the Rajbanshi of Goalpara accepted and embraced the Assamese language step by step. In fact, the processes of Assamanization started in 1874. The separation of Goalpara was the most setbacks for the history of the Rajbanshi community. Because this separation separated the Rajbanshi community into two opposite platform. The different administration and linguistic set up of Assam and Bengal had also created a different outlook in question of their position, status, and opportunities between the two groups of Rajbanshi population. This difference was exposed in question of the dispute regarding the merger issue of Cooch Behar State.

In the hearing of the State Re-organization commission in 1953-55, Upendra Nath Burman, the Rajbanshi leader of West Bengal had fervently supported the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal. On the other hand, Sarat Chandra Sinha, the Rajbanshi leader of Goalpara had fervently advocated the retention of Cooch Behar with Assam. On that hot debate both of them had forgotten the question of the community solidarity and creation for their linguistic state. Had there strong educated middle class emerged as it was emerged in the Bengali Community in the 19th century and later in the Assamese community the history of the Rajbanshi would have been written in another form and the state of Kamtapur might have there in the map of India comprising at least three districts, Goalpara, CoochBehar and Jalpaiguri. The slogan of Hitasadhani Sabha although evoked tremendous response from the common people but it could not retain its support because of their internal squabble and lack of direction. The Pro Pakistan group led by Khan Chowdhury was also responsible for the failure as his communal interest was much greater than the community interest. When he took the Pro Pakistani Muslims of Cooch Behar forgetting the basic nature of the Rajbanshi community that they are non communal in spite of the fact they were converted into Muslim during the short period of the Muslim rule of Cooch Behar they were more Rajbanshi than the Muslim. Those supported the call of Khan Chowdhury for joining with Pakistan they mostly came from East Bengal at the time of distribution of the fellow land which I mentioned in this study earlier.

Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah the ex Revenue Minister of Cooch Behar State was asked to leave Cooch Behar within 24 hours. On the other hand, Satish Chandra Singh Sarkar was rewarded as the Deputy Minister Transport and Communication in the cabinet of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. Umesh Chandra Mandal the leader of the Praja Mandal was also inducted in the cabinet of the state ministry. The power struggle for the community turned into the gain of personal power as in the most cases of the mass movement. Thus there was the end of the

power struggle of the Hita Sadhani Sabha the stormy cloud of Cooch Behar politics on the eve of the merger was ended .But the roots of the ethnic unrest still remained in the political soil of North Bengal. But the basic issue germinated from the shoots that were left even after the Hita Sadhani Sabha revised from the Coochbehari identity to the Rajbanshi identity.

Hitasdhani Sabha needs another field of study which I excluded from my research study.

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