

VOICE OF THE INDIGENOUS: PERSPECTIVE OF NORTH BENGAL

Dr. Kartik Chandra Sutradhar

Abstract:-

Since the attainment of independence of India in 1947 lot of discontents and grievances were being accumulated among the indigenous people of North Bengal, particularly, the people of Northern portion. As a result of the reformative measures taken by the British the socio-economic and cultural pattern of the people of North Bengal were being changed rapidly. Huge number of people of different castes, religion and classes immigrated in the region. These immigrated people including the English people dominated on the illiterate and simple minded indigenous people capturing the economy of this region. Culturally the immigrated people, particularly the Varnahindus or the people of 'Sanskritic culture' and the people belonged to Western culture dominated and extended their culture on the indigenous people. Needless to say, as a result of the immigration and their activities the indigenous people of the district were deprived and oppressed in different ways. It is relevant to mention here that in spite of attaining the independence on the 15th August, 1947 after age- long struggle by the Indians, the oppressions and depressions of the peasants, workers that were lower class or depressed class people could have not been ended at all. They were affected socially, economically and culturally as a result they protested against all sorts of deprivations and negligence in time to time organizing and conducting socio- political movements such as Uttarakhand- UTJUS, Kamtapur movement and Greater Cooch Behar movement etc. which has hampered peace and integrity of North Bengal.

Key words: North Bengal, Indigenous people, Kamtapur movement, Greater Cooch Behar.

Introduction:

Recently a socio political tension has seen in the sky of North Bengal which was known as the land of peace and cultural synthesis; by the reflection of the socio-political tension many social and political movements such as Uttarkhanda and UTJUS (Uttar Banga Tapashili Jati O Upajati Sangathan) movement, Kamtapur and Greater Cooch Behar movement have been going on gradually after independence against the oppressions and deprivations imposed on them by the immigrants, migrants and the higher classes and higher castes elites who immigrated in this region in time to time for different purposes. Government and administrators of different phases including colonial and post- colonial period deprived the indigenous people of this region. Many reasons were behind these movements which be classified in the following way:--

Firstly, at the time of attainment of independence and partition of India, Bengal was divided namely West Bengal and East Pakistan as a result of which North Bengal lost her major portions of valuable and developed areas such as Rajshahi, Bagura, Pabna and Rangpur districts and partly some portions of Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri districts, once these areas were under Rajshahi division and then Jalpaiguri division, known as undivided North Bengal. The regions which handed over to Pakistan were more developed and socio- culturally enriched; land was very fertile for agrarian cultivation. So, post- independent North Bengal became economically weak for losing this valuable tract. (Ghosh, 1416 B.S)

It is remarkable that the five thanas (Police station) of Jalpaiguri district had been handed over to Pakistan at the time of partition on the basis of the demarcation line- up of Radcliff. It was a tremendous affect to the people of northern portion of North Bengal, because this portion of North Bengal had been split out from the southern part of West Bengal; for this unavoidable and unfortunate political game played by the British Government and the Indian political leaders, the people of Northern portion of North Bengal had to communicate with the southern part of West Bengal, particularly the Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal where all the head- official works and passing law through various bill by Legislative Assembly were held and the people of this dis severing portion of West Bengal were bound to go by facing various troubles and expensive load. If the said thanas remained in the Jalpaiguri district as earlier the people of this region could have communicate with Calcutta, nay West Bengal in short time saving seven to

eight hours and of course less fare. It is unfortunate that these five thanas had been ceded to Pakistan illegally, because we are well known that the country was divided in accordance with religion and as such these thanas also handed over to Pakistan showing the majority of Muslims in these areas wrongly on the basis of census report. But originally in these areas Hindus were majority in such a way that the Hindus were shown separately i.e caste Hindus, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes etc. in the census report. Among the scheduled caste people majorities were Rajbanshis who were Hindus.

Secondly, The northern portion of North Bengal had much more distinctive character unlike other parts of Bengal. In the epic age it was under Pragjyotishpura, then Kamrup, after that the history of Kamtapura and Cooch Behar was well known to all. The Pragjyotishpura-Kamrup Empire was bounded by Karotoya to Brahmaputra River comprising the triangular shape. Needless to say, this tract was separate from other parts of Bengal in terms of geopolitics, society, economy and culture. The people of Indo-Mongaloid groups played a significant role in the society, economy, culture and polity of this region. (Chatterjee, 1951, pp, 45-46) Anthropologically, linguistically and culturally there are so many evidences and instances till now which prove that a distinctive society and culture was formed flowing over the tide of history unlike other parts of Bengal, nay India. There were so many rulers who ruled Kamrup with their pride and prestige. For the weakness of the Pala Empire, Baidyadeb, the minister of Ram Pal became the king of Kamrup taking the title 'Maharajadhiraj Parameshwar Parambhattacharak and he shifted his capital from Kamrup to Kamtapur. But it is debateable, many scholars denied this view. They opined that after Baidyadeb the rulers of Kamrup did not last long, the rulers lost their positions shortly. In these circumstances, Prithu became the king of Kamrup in 1195 and he extended his empire from Brahmaputra to Karotoya. In his old age he selected his son Sandhya Roy to be ascended the throne and ultimately Sandhya Roy became the King of Kamrup. After the death of Prithu, Sandhya Roy shifted his capital from Gauhati to Kamatapur to protect his empire from the Muslim invasion. N. N. Acharya wrote, "To check the further inroads of the Musalmans Sandhya shifted his capital from North Gouhati to Kamatapur, a few miles distance from the present city of Cooch Behar." Whoever the founder of the capital of the kingdom of Kamtapur, it had a glorious history. The three rulers namely Nildhwaj, Chakrdhwaj and Nilambar of Khen dynasty ruled Kamtapur from the capital founded in

Gosanimari, near Dinhata. The Kamtapur kingdom was destroyed by the invasion of Alauddin Hussain Shaha in 1498. After the downfall of Kamtapur kingdom a period of short breaking was going on. But within short period Biswa Singha, the son of Haria Mandal or Haridas Mandal, a Koch leader who ruled as a tribal chieftain in Chikna hill near Dhubri of Assam, occupied the Kamtapur kingdom and established his empire called Koch kingdom. Koch kingdom was ruled by the Koch rulers independently up to 1772 and from 1772 to 1947 it was ruled under British dominion as a tributary state. After independence King Jagaddipendra Narayan signed an agreement with Central Government on 28 August, 1949 and thereafter Cooch Behar became a district of the state of West Bengal on and from 1st January, 1950. Haripada Roy writes, “North Bengal has its own tradition, history, language and culture. The ancient tradition bound glorious history of North Bengal is completely different from Bengal. This region was famous under different names from ancient to the historical period – e.g. Paundra Desh, Pragjyotishpur, Virat, Kamrup and Kamtapur. It has maintained its separate identity till today.” (Roy, Haripada, 2007, p, 128)

Thirdly, the said region is a full of natural resources having fertile lands for agricultural cultivation, huge amount of various types of agricultural crops are produced since past to present, suitable lands and favourable climate, temperature and rainfall for tea- cultivation; needless to say that high quality of tea had been produced in North Bengal, particularly in the Duars and Darjeeling district; the quality of Darjeeling tea is world famous; there are huge areas covered with forest and hill wherefrom valuable natural resources are found. Apart from these there are so many rivers, sufficient rainfall and natural beauties. By utilising all these natural resources many developmental works could have been done through which the socio- economic uplift would be possible. But unfortunately, all these possibilities had been ignored and proper initiative had not yet been taken both from the central Government and state Government. Since the colonial period the Government used North Bengal as their source of income and as such the colonial imperialist power collected resources and revenues from different sources only for their own interest depriving the people of North Bengal. Unfortunately, after independence no change has been taken place in the question of the proper development of the people of North Bengal. Since independence both the central Government and state Government used North Bengal as their colony and source of revenue neglecting the people of North Bengal.

In terms of large scale industries North Bengal is laying behind still now for which it is said to have been North Bengal is neglected. It is unfortunate that after so long period of attaining independence not a single large scale industry have been established. Only the tea industry is laying in North Bengal though it was established in the colonial period and the profit of tea industries goes to planters. The local people are less benefited from these tea industries. It can be said neutrally that there are favourable condition and atmosphere including market and natural resources for establishing large scale industries. If both the central Government and the state Government would take initiate or measures to establish industries in North Bengal utilising natural resources and raw materials of North Bengal many industries could have been built up in the soil of North Bengal. Agro- based industries; Food processing industries, tourism industries could have been developed. Unfortunately, nothing has been done for the negligence and ignorance of the Government and dominating tendency of the Delhi and Kolkata oriented political leaders. Sukhbilas Barma pointed out, “Since the employment market is not growing as fast as the number of entrants, local middle class aspirants have started viewing migrants as blocks to their mobility and development” (Barma, 2007, p, 44). This negligence and biasness has given birth different types of crises and problems which led the people of North Bengal to various movements created socio- political tensions.

Fourthly, the indigenous leaders of North Bengal speaking in Kamtapuri language or Rajbanshi language as their mother tongue demanded that their language is not originated from Bengali language and added that Kamtapuri language is completely separate from Bengali language. They objected that their mother tongue has been neglected and dominated by the Bengali language and Bengali culture. They expressed grievance that in spite of having their separate language and culture Bengali people including elites and Government imposed the Bengali language forcefully on them in their every sphere of life such as taking education, studying, writing and official works. There is no Kamtapuri or Rajbanshi medium of language for giving education in school, college or university level; no official works held by this language. Girindra Narayan Rorwrites, “This led to vigorous attempt on the part of the Kamtapuri leaders as well as some intellectuals of the community to establish their identity in terms of a politics of cultural difference that took all pains to prove that their language was a different language from Bengali, not a distortion of it.” (Roy, Girindra Narayan, in Barma, 2007,

p, 257). It is true that many of the elite people or educated intellectuals belong to Bengali language; particularly living in the town insulted the Rajbanshi language. So it has become an issue of discontent of the Kamtapuri people.

There are many debates on the language issue of Kamtapuries whether it is separate from Bengali language or not. Their demand of language could not establish because of their weak instances and proofs in separating the language. There are many similarities in terms of morphology which proved that the Bengali language including all the dialects related to Bengali language, Assamese, Maitheli, Hindi, Oriya etc. are originated from same source of language; as a result of evolution of language there created many separate language in India. More over they had no grammar or no scripts which is a problem to justify a separate Kamtapuri language.

Fifthly, after independence in 1947, Indian Government wanted to abolish all the intermediary systems in the agrarian field. In view of the abolition of the zamindari system West Bengal Government passed the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act in 1953 and West Bengal Land Reforms Act in 1955. There were many big zamindars and jotdars who possessed thousand acres of lands till after the independence. So, the ceiling of lands to be possessed by any landholders was fixed up to 25 acres. The lands over ceiling under any landholders would be illegal which handed over to the Government and distributed to the landless people. But, unfortunately it was followed that the zamindars, jotdars and landholders yet occupied the ceiling surplus lands illegally. During the period of two spells of United Front Government in 1967 and 1969 and the Left Front Government since 1977 Land Reforms Programmes got a new motion. Thousand acres of lands were acquired and distributed to the landless people by the Government. Ceiling- surplus lands were also occupied forcefully by the different left Parties and distributed to the landless peasants. (Sutradhar, 2013, ,p 2004)

It can be said that the land Reforms Programmes had a positive role because by this programme many landless people including sharecroppers got their right on lands. The slogan 'Land to the tillers' became successful. But in the case of North Bengal unlike other parts of West Bengal the picture was slightly different. In North Bengal the indigenous people namely Rajbanshis, Tribals and local Muslims were completely dependent on agriculture for their

livelihood and all most all of them were illiterate. So, while going on Land Reforms Programmes many of the jotdars or landholders were failure to hold their lands for not to furnish their proper documents of lands to the authority of land department of the Government in time. Many of the jotdars having only 25 acres of lands fell into critical crisis for their livelihood, because suddenly the amount of land decreased from thousand acres to 25 acres. They had no alternative way to earn. So, they could not maintain their families by shortage income. Beside this, at the time of disease, marriage of daughters or sons or any crisis period they sold their lands or property gradually and ultimately they became landless or proprietors of little amount of lands. It is found from the field survey in different parts of North Bengal that many indigenous jotdars or landlords lost their everything soon after the land Reforms Programmes beginning and the successors of the said jotdars or zamindars or intermediaries became labourers, many of them stepped into different parts of the country for earning money as a labourer, many of them involved in unsocial and anti- social activities (Sutradhar, p, 215).

Sixthly, before occupation of the Duars area by the British in 1865, it was ruled by Koch Kings and Bhutias gradually. This area was full of jungles and ferocious animals. In the hilly areas and forest areas only the people of Indo-Mongoloid Tribes namely Mech, Garo, Rabha and Toto etc could live there. In the plain areas of the Western Duars the indigenous people of Rajbanshi community and local Muslims called Nasya Sekh lived there. No human being other than the Indo-Mongoloid tribes could live in the hilly and forest areas of the Western Duars.

There are many debates on the origin and ethnic identity of the indigenous communities namely Rajbanshis, Mech, Garo, Rabha Toto etc. It can be said that these communities in spite of having of having separate identities they originated from Indo-Mongoloid race. They were simple in habit, habituated with shifting cultivation (except Rajbanshis) treating the lands and natural resources as the property of God which was not saleable or transferable. After living in a particular place some years, they shifted into another place and started to live there. The main occupation of these tribes was shifting cultivation and hunting. These communities lived out of the ambit of civic society, governed by their own leaders called Moral or Mondals. Though they had separate groups or gotras among themselves, they had no castes or classes. They would never go out of their own ethnic society for any kind of necessity. They had their own culture,

own system for treatment; own system for judgment or solution any kind of problem or crisis among them. It was the ethnic culture.

After the second Anglo-Bhutanese war in 1865, the British-India government occupied the Western Duars and they cast their commercial eyes on the area because it was full of natural resources and the soil was favourable for cultivation. As a part of their agrarian reforms the Britishers divided the lands into three categories namely (1) Lands for agricultural purposes (2) Lands for tea cultivation and (3) Lands for reserve forest. In the field of agriculture, they introduced jotdari system in new forms like other parts of Bengal. After each settlement a large number of jotes were created and these were given to the jotdars by agreement or lease. Most of the jotdars did not cultivate lands directly; therefore, further devolution of land was necessary on the basis of an agreement of revenue named pattani to the intermediaries called Chukanidars, dar-chukanidars, Tasyachukanidars, dar-darchukanidars. Moreover, there were bargadars or share croppers who had no right on lands. They cultivated lands as well as of the intermediaries called 'Giri' only for 50% share of crops.

In the western Duars, Britishers introduced tea cultivation since 1874. As the local people or indigenous tribes of the Western Duars and the neighbouring areas were less interested to work in the tea-garden, so the Planters imported labourers from Santal Parganas and Rajmahal areas of Bihar through 'Sardar' by commission. Not only labourers, but also planters of different communities and castes, officials immigrated in the Duars for earning.

On the other hand in the agrarian field also many people of different communities, castes and classes immigrated into the Duars. They obtained lands from the Govt. by lease or agreement and became jotdars. In such a way population in the Western Duars increased rapidly, for example population in the Western Duars in 1872 was 90668 in 1901 it increased to 4,10,606 and in 1931 it became 6,61,068.

As a result of the increasing population in the Western Duars and initiation of the economic reforms by establishing tea industries, jotdari system etc. by the Britishers the indigenous tribes faced an identity crisis because they had been losing their rights and liberty in

the Western Duars. They had been transferred to settled cultivation from shifting cultivation. They had to pay revenue to the government which was not earlier.

Apart from this socio-economic crisis, they also faced a cultural crisis because of losing their ethnicity for entering into the civic society. Many of them had been converted into Hindus, some converted into Islam and many tribes had been converted into Christian. So, facing such type of crisis many tribal people left the place towards east and settled different places of N.E. India. Even after independence the Indo-Mongoloid tribal people have been facing different types of crises and problems. Proper development has not been taken place in their localities. They are lying behind educationally from the other sections of the society. Few among them have obtained government job.

Besides, these tribal communities having their ethno-cultural identity crisis because of their conversion into other religions, now-a-days, many of them are going to forget their mother tongue and their traditional customs, usages etc. By entering into global world and global culture the young generations are going to forget many things of their own traditional culture. Sukh Bilas Barma writes, “The dominance of migrants in the world of economic, social and political fields has led the local youth to emulate their dress, their style of living, even their language. But they have now grown with a feeling that the migrants have forced them to lose their own cultural identity” (Barma, 2007, p, 45). So, lot of discontents and grievances have been accumulated in the minds of the tribal people in the Western Duars as elsewhere in North Bengal as a result of which socio-political tensions are going on in the soil of North Bengal, sometime it has been bringing violence and destroying the environment of peace and integrity of North Bengal.

Seventhly, since independence the politics of North Bengal, nay West Bengal was controlled by the leaders of the elite class oriented higher caste people. Most of the top- rank leaders including Ministers, Amlas, higher class officers belonged to higher caste and higher class. The main remote control was in the hands of these classes of people, particularly the people of Kolkata oriented Babus. Though after few decades of independence, particularly after coming of Left Front Government in power the indigenous people got chance to participate in politics, not only that a good number of ministers were selected from indigenous people.

Moreover a large number of indigenous people getting education and joined in services in different sectors of the Government and Private Companies also. In spite of that the functions of decision and policy making were in the hands of the Kolkata oriented babus. Haripada Roy writes, “We are helpless and directionless in the whirlwind of Calcutta based economic, industrial, educational politics, misleading politics, nepotism and corrupt policies of the one eyed partial leadership and administration” (Ror, Haripada, p, 124). Unfortunately, it is followed that there are few indigenous people who have become the district secretary or president of all political parties though they are ‘son of the soil’. Is it not surprising? Even it is unfortunate that there is no Vice Chancellor or Registrar or Controller belongs to indigenous people. All are placed from Kolkata oriented intellectuals. In such a way there are so many higher posts where indigenous people are not getting chance due to obscure reasons in spite of having their qualities and efficiencies. So, all these instances are giving birth lot of discontents and grievances among the indigenous intellectual classes.

Eighthly, The heavy influx of population in North Bengal in time to time, particularly since independence is one of the reasons of discontents and tensions of present North Bengal. It is well known to all that on the eve of the independence communal riots was started between Hindus and Muslims and we obtained our freedom on the 15th of August, 1947 by dividing the country in two parts namely, India and Pakistan on the basis of religion. Since independence devastating communal riots was started in all over the country, particularly the riots got its intensive character in Pakistan thousands of Hindu people left Pakistan losing their everything and came to India to save their lives. These migrated people were called ‘Refugee’; they kept shelter in different parts of North Bengal like other parts of the country. As a result of the migration the demographic pattern of North Bengal, nay West Bengal changed rapidly. This process of migration was going on since long time of the independence for communal torture of the Muslims of Pakistan on the Hindus. Naren Das pointed out, “As a result (of migration) the safety and security of indigenous people were at stake. Thousands of indigenous people left their mother land on constant torture of the government machinery and so called political and social leaders. (Das, p, 140) Not only the Bengali Hindus migrated from East Pakistan, many people came and settled in different parts of Jalpaighuri and Cooch Behar districts from Assam at the time of riots in 1960s and first half of the 1980s led by ASSU and the extremist movement for

their sovereignty led by ULFA. Other than these many people of different professions and classes namely Beharies, Marwaries, Nepalies came and settled in North Bengal for their livelihood in time to time. In this way due to heavy burden of population influx various types of socio- economic crises and problems have been created as a result discontents have been growing up among the indigenous people.

Ninthly, the difference between urban life and rural life is one of the causes of the discontents of the indigenous people. It is followed that the condition of the urban people is comparatively better than the rural people. Most of the rich and well established people including industrialists, trading communities, service men of higher income, elite and intellectual classes live in the urban areas; as such these people of urban areas obtain different types of facilities. It is also true that most of the elite people of urban areas belong to higher caste and higher classes. Few indigenous people belong to elite classes or economically solvent or established living in the town. So it can be said impartially that the society, economy, politics and culture are dominated by the people of higher caste and higher classes where no position is remained for the indigenous people. Not only that, sometimes village people are insulted and culturally neglected by the urban elites or Babus by throwing different derogatory comments to the village people. Such type of attitude of the urban people affected the minds of the village people as a result they bear a discontent and pain in their heart to the urban people.

Tenthly, poverty and depression of the indigenous people are one of the causes of discontents. In the previous chapter it is shown how the indigenous jotdars and zamindars lost their lands and became landless and helpless. The successors of the said jotdars and zamindars became very poor; many of them have become labour and works different sectors. They have no permanent job or service. Many of them stepped into separate state for their livelihood. In these circumstances these indigenous people, particularly the younger generations are becoming angry; considering and remembering their glorious past of their predecessors that once they were jotdars- zamindars and they had many things, did not know what poverty was, they are involving in the different sub- regional movements. Whether there are logics or not behind their grievances, it is their psychological discontents which cannot be denied.

Research Method:

As the present article is a historical study, the data have been collected and used both from the primary and secondary sources. Of the primary sources data have been collected from Government report including census report, District Gazetteer, archival sources, statistical hand book and documents of different organizations; presently as the oral source is one of the important parts of historical studies and research, so data have been collected through interviews with various dissident persons to realize the sentiment and root causes of the indigenous people of North Bengal. Among the secondary sources data have been collected from books, write-ups, articles published in different journals and periodicals relating to the present topic. Data collected from primary and secondary sources of dissident authors, political contentious leaders and intellectuals and the views of tangible and intangible persons and scholars have been shuffled and tried to delineate the real picture. As it is the study of micro-level or regional-level, so the present study has tried to explore the roots of the present socio-political tension which is going on emphasizing on the local sources and consulting with the views of the indigenous people rather not to going through high class theoretical discussions and sources.

Results and analysis:

On the eve of the independence while bargaining was going on among the different political leaders, English Government, amlas and intellectuals for the solution of giving independence by partitioning India through breaking up Bengal and Punjab, a demand for formation of a separate state called 'Rajasthan' was sounded by the leaders of the Rajbanshi Kashatriyas and Namasudras. During the period of discussing about giving independence and dividing Bengal Jogendra Nath Mandal, the leader of Tapashili Federation gave a proposal for the formation of Rajasthan, a separate state for scheduled caste people with the proposed areas of Siliguri Sub- division of Darjeeling district, Jalpaiguri district, undivided Dinajpur district, north-western part of Rangpur district and the Goalpara district. It is relevant to be mentioned here that Cooch Behar was not included with the proposed Rajasthan State as it was the princely state and any kind of movement in the state was strictly prohibited. In spite of that many leaders of 'Hitasadhani Sabha' supported this movement ethically. In view of attaining Rajasthan state different conventions were held in Kharibari on the 4th May, 1947, in Jalpaiguri town on the 6th May and 7th May, 1947 in Dinajpur in presence of Jogendra Nath Mandal. Roy Bahadur Anukul

Chandra Das, Nagendra Nath Roy, Minister of Bengal, Shyamaprosad Barman, Girija Kanta Roy and Kshetra Nath Singha actively involved in this movement.

We all know that during the time of attaining independence the formation of states or boundary of states had not been properly settled on the basis of linguistic or different languages of the people. So, after independence the demand for the reorganization of states was raised from different corners of the country. It should be mentioned here that even Gandhiji before few days of his sudden death realised the necessity of reorganisation of states to solve the linguistic problem and develop the same. (Chandra, p, 118)

The wave of the movements for separate states in different parts of India reached in North Bengal also which inspired the leaders of the indigenous people of North Bengal, particularly the Rajbanshis to form a separate state. The demand of the formation of the separate Kamtapur state was raised in 1955 from the Royal family of Gouripur of Assam. This demand was sent to the SRC through Santosh Barua accompanied with his brother Prokitesh Barua and Ajit Narayan. They bounded the areas of the proposed states by Goalpara district, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur districts. In the same time Kshatriya Samity of North Bengal demanded to be included Goalpara district and Purnia district of Bihar with West Bengal as once Goalpara was a part of greater North Bengal. But SRC refused both these demands.

Uttarkhand Movement:

After independence Uttarkhand Dal (Uttarkhand Party) was formed from the Kshatriya Samity because of the failure of the leaders of the Kshatriya Samity to run the movement actively for the separate state. In 1954 Kshatriya Samity was reorganized and accordingly its first conference was held in Dinhatra presided by Upendra Nath Barman, thereafter next conference was held in 1955 at Jateswar presided by Upendra Nath Barman also. The head office of the Kshatriya Samity was shifted from Dinhatra to Jalpaiguri in 1956.

In the reorganization of the Kshatriya Samity in the second phase the social entity was re-established instead of political activities. This type of agenda could not satisfy the leaders of the Kshatriya Samity. In the annual conference of the Kshatriya Samity held on the 31st May, 1969

at the Charerbari Village in Maynaguri, the youth members revolted against the decision and demand to reorganise the Kshatriya Samity as a social organization. They shouted giving slogans against Upendra Nath Barman, Jagadananda Roy and Jogweswar Roy. They also demanded to form a separate political party for the development of North Bengal.

In this session the demand of the rebellious members had been accepted, many senior members resigned from their posts and a new committee was formed. The new committee promised to form a new political party. In view of deciding their future plan for their movements a meeting of Kshatriya Samity was conveyed in the Rajmohan Junior High High School near Jolpesh Temple on the 5th July, 1969. Next day, a convention was held in the same place wherefrom it was decided to form a political party named 'Uttarkhanda Dal' and as such a temporary committee was formed. (Barma, p, 31)

The centre for activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal was in Jalpaiguri. Since 1971 candidates of the Uttarkhanda Dal were contested in Parliament and Assembly election in different phases, but no candidate could be won. The leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal criticised the activities of the state Government and the elite- based Bengali people and as such they raised the words of the deprivations of the people of North Bengal. According to them North Bengal was used by the South Bengal and Kolkata oriented people as their colony or empire. They never tried to develop North Bengal. Naturally, till 1977 they demanded for the development of North Bengal, not to separate state.

But since 1977 they turned their way to the movement calling for the formation of a separate state. President Panchanan Malick and secretary Sampad Roy carried on their propaganda and distributed handbill of their organization to the people of North Bengal mentioning the reasons behind the formation of separate state and as such they appealed to the people of North Bengal to come and extended their hands for co- operation to accelerate the movements against the Government and Kolkata oriented rule. They campaigned that in spite of being our country free we the people of North Bengal were being colonized by the Kolkata oriented elite people or Babus, we had been bounded to abide by the rules and regulations of the Kolkata oriented Government. They always neglected the voices and sentiment of the people of

North Bengal, the glorious past- culture and legacy of North Bengal. So, to abolish the domination of the rule of Kolkata a separate state should be necessary.

A memorandum was sent to Smt. Indira Gandhi, Honourable Prime Minister of India to form a separate Kamtapur state in 1980. The leaders of Uttarkhanda Dal raised some demands as a part of their movements, 1stly, they demanded to form a separate state with five districts of North Bengal; 2ndly, they demanded for recognition of the Kamtapur or Kamtabehari language as their mother tongue, they demanded to identify the illegal migrants who migrated after 1971 and take necessary action against the illegal migrants; 3rdly, they demanded not to cede Tinbigha to Bangladesh and exchange the enclaves between India and Bangladesh.

In spite of taking these demands the Uttarkhand movement could not be succeeded because of their weakness and limitations as their organization. They could not be popularising to the indigenous people of North Bengal, rather in 1977 the Left Front Government came to power in West Bengal with huge supports and consents of the common people. It cannot be denied that most of the common people of North Bengal, particularly the peasants, sharecroppers, labourers and the poor migrated people supported the Left Front Government as their friend.

Kamtapur Movement

Being dissatisfied with the activities of the leaders of the Uttarkhanda Dal Kamtapur Peoples Party was formed on the 7th January, 1996 at Daukamari near Dhupguri led by Atul Roy and Nikhil Roy. According to Atul Roy the compromiising mentality and standstill attitude to the movements for separate state led them to form a separate party called Kamtapur Peoples Party (KPP). Atul Roy also pointed out that the leaders of the Uttarkhand Dal played the role in favour of jotdars. They did not know to sacrifice, so, it is not possible for them to obtain a separate state (Lalit Ch. Barman, p, 20). It should be mentioned here that before formation of the KPP Kamtapur Juba Sangathan was formed in 1991 and Kamtapur Liberation Front in 1993/1994. However, KPP was formed with the combination of Cooch Behar Peoples Association of Cooch Behar, Kamtapur Mukti Mancha of Jaygaon, Malda Barindra Krishak Mukti Mancha of Malda.

Beside the formation of the KPP several organisations related to KPP were formed such as All Kamtapur Students Union (AKSU) in 1994 (it was formed before the formation of KPP), Kamtapur Bhasa Sahitya Parishad in 1997, Kamtapur Women's Forum in 1998. All these organisations started movements jointly or separately in accordance with their schedule of programmes. Many demands were raised subsequently, such as (1) formation of the separate state named Kamtapur, (2) Recognition of Kamtapuri language, (3) Recognition of culture and heritage of the Kamtapuri people with their prestige and dignity. For fulfil their demands they tried to reach with their movements in every corner of North Bengal taking various programmes of the movements. Another important issue of the Kamtapur movement including the movements held on previously, such as Uttarkhand movement, UTJAS movement etc. was the influx of population for migration which affected the demographic pattern of North Bengal. So, they raised the demand to solve the problem of population influx accordingly the demand of illegal migrants who migrated after 1971 and take necessary action. (Barma, p, 23) Thereafter KPP carried on their different programmes to acquire their demands through meetings, squads, convention, conference and spreading the slogans and demands to the people of every corner of North Bengal. It should be mentioned here that KPP contested in the election of different phases from 2001 onwards. But they could not be succeeded, not a single seat they could win. So, it can be said that in spite of their trying they could not reach to the indigenous people so called Kamtapuris at the grassroots level. It is their organisational limitations and weakness. Moreover for the inner clash among the leaders, KPP was divided into two separate groups led by Aul Roy and Nikhil Roy, the two founder members of KPP. As a result of the inner clash Atul Roy formed a new party in 2003 named Kamtapur Progressive Party. Thereafter, separate party carried on their programmes and activities till now separately for attain their demands.

The KLO Terror:

The Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), a terrorist and legally banned party believing in extremist and terrorist ideology had been carried on their activities to attain separate state and language beside the movement of KPP and Kamtapur Progressive Party with the help of ULFA from the underworld. It is debateable about the date of the formation of the KLO. It is assumed that the KLO was formed on the 28th December, 1994 at Kumargram in the Jalpaiguri district led by Jiban Singha, the KLO suprimo. Though it is alleged from different corner that

there is a relation between KPP and KLO in their way of reaching their goal, the leaders of the KPP denied it both from the groups of Atul Roy and Nikhil Roy. However, KLO believing in terrorist mentality taking their training in camp of Bhutan assisted by ULFA they started their operations of killing men; in this regard they targeted the leaders of the communist party, particularly the leaders of the CPIM and RSP. To run their activities they collected money from the businessmen and other economically solvent people by force. (Sutradhar, 2013, p, 166)

The KLO terrorists used fire- arms for their operation using centre forest and hill areas of Bhutan from Tista to Sankosh for their shelter before and after doing their operation. It should be mentioned here that for the terrorist activities the peace and integrity of North Bengal has been disturbed. People always are in tension and fear. They do not know what will happen tomorrow? The former Chief Minister gave the message to the leaders of the KLO to seat for discussions leaving their arms and come back their normal life. But they carried on their activities. Besides the killing of the CPIM leaders and RSP leaders they also kidnapped some businessmen. Dr. Sailen Debnath writes, “The kidnapping of Narayan Debnath and the senseless shooting on ordinary persons in the Nishiganj market of Cooch Behar and the kidnapping of few businessmen from Baxirhat in Tufanganj sub- division and one from Barovisha, indicated to the extortionist tendency of the KLO. Narayan Debnath was simply taken away for the purpose of collecting money as ransom. (Debnath, p, 59)

In these circumstances, realising the situation going beyond control police administration started action against the KLO terrorists. Sailen Debnath again writes, “The first success, most probably, to mention goes to Mathabhanga police who killed six terrorists while hiding in a place near Ghoksardanga, and as the bullet ridden bodies were brought to Mathabhanga, hundreds of people gathered there to have a sight of them though in the lap of Necros. (Debnath, 2007, p,59). As a result of the counter action of the police some KLO terrorists and linkmen were killed. Many KLO terrorists and linkmen had been arrested in different times including the top leaders like Harshabardhan Barman, Miltan Barman, Tom Adhikary etc.

In these circumstances, realising the situation with regard to the peace and integrity both from the central government and the state government created pressure on the Bhutan

government to flush out the terrorist camp from Bhutan. The king of Bhutan, Jigme Singhe Wanchuk taking no time started operation against terrorists named ‘Operation Bhutan Flush Out’ in 2003 and the Indian army extended their hands to the Bhutanese army as a result of which 44 KLO terrorists including Tom Adhikary, Milton Barman and Harshabardhan etc. were thrashed out of Bhutan and arrested. The top leaders Jiban Singha and his sister took shelter in Bangladesh, thereafter KLO became more or less weak, disorganised and scattered, but not abolished. It is assumed that they have again been trying to organise and increase their power in different ways. So, it cannot be said that there is no danger in North Bengal.

The Greater Cooch Behar Movement:

After attainment of independence, the problem of princely states or native states had not been solved in accordance with the Independence Act wherein it was referred that the princely states could be joined either India or Pakistan or they could remain independence. There were 563 princely states of which 554 joined to India in different phases and the rest 7 joined to Pakistan on the basis of religion.

Cooch Behar also a princely state or a native state situated in the undivided North Bengal. At the time of attaining independence many questions and debates were going on in the state of Cooch Behar whether Cooch Behar would join with India or Pakistan or would remain independence. Muslim Ministers of the state wanted that Cooch Behar would join with Pakistan, but the Hindu Ministers, particularly the upper class Hindus eagerly expected that Cooch Behar would join with India. The Hindu Rajbanshis who had traditional exclusiveness with the immigrant Hindus called “Bhatiyas” fell in a dilemma, though they opted for India but many of them succinctly expressed the opinion to see Cooch Behar either to become a Union territory with some special rights or its merger with Assam and not West Bengal.¹⁶ In this regard the consent of King Jagaddipendra Narayan is not clearly known though it can be said from the corresponding letters with Sardar Patel that the king was preferred India to be joined. In these circumstances Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan signed the merger agreement with India on 28th August, 1949 and Cooch Behar joined with India; on the 12th September in the same year by signing an another agreement Cooch Behar became the state under central Government ruled by chief

commissioner, but it was short spell, because after few months Cooch Behar had been Joined with West Bengal as a district on and since 1st January, 1950.

Being failure to attain a separate state of Cooch Behar like previously in North Bengal for which movements were held in different phases, another movement was started by 'Greater Cooch Behar People's Association' (GCPA) since 2004 led by Banshibadan Barman. It can be said that the GCPA took the inspiration for the formation of separate state from the Hitasadhani Sabha that organisation once carried on their movement for Cooch Behar becoming a separate state dividing 'Kochbehari' or 'Deshi' and migrated Bengali or 'Bhatiyas'. They claimed that the indigenous people of Cooch Behar called Koch Behari had been depriving and oppressing by the migrating people and indigenous people are being dominated by the elite class migrated people. It is a debateable issue. I am not going in details, but it can be said that this issue sprouted many discontents and it was extended by the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha as well as GCPA. Another cause which hiked the motion of the movement of separate state is the issue of merger of Cooch Behar State with West Bengal as a district. They claimed that Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan signed the merger agreement with India not to West Bengal getting the position of 'C' category state. So, they demanded to get back Cooch Behar as a separate state for which they carried on their movement.

In 2005 the situation in Cooch Behar became hot, law and order went beyond control for an incidents created by the GCPA in their way of movement. The leaders of the GCPA wanted to negotiate for discussion with central Government for their demands of obtaining Cooch Behar as a separate state and postponed the assembly election of West Bengal on Cooch Behar. But the Central Government refused the proposal sending their message through the Government of West Bengal that no discussion would be entertained on that time. In reaction of this, the leaders of the GCPA with thousands of supporters assembled in the premises of the D.M office, Cooch Behar on the 20th September, 2005 and started hunger strike. Incidentally the conference of the Chief Minister was scheduled to be held on the 24th September, 2005. So, a difficult **situation** was raised in front of the district administration for maintaining law and order. In these circumstances district administration imposed section 144 in the Cooch Behar town.

On and since 19th September, 2005 thousands of people from different parts of Cooch Behar district started to assemble in the town, but they had been prevented to enter in to the town by police force because of the section 144 was going. In these circumstances the activists started their movement on sitting in the gate way of Cooch Behar; in this situation tension was going up, particularly in the Khagrabari and Chakchaka law and order completely went beyond control. In Chakchaka rebellious people became excited and killed two police persons namely Jogesh Chandra Sarkar and Gour Chandra Dhar, on the other hand fighting started in Khagrabari between police and activists, getting no way police fired on the people, as a result two activists namely Chitta Roy and Bishadu Barman were killed. Additional police super Mustak Ahamed was seriously injured in Chakchaka by the activists and died on the way of Siliguri. In these circumstances situation became more deteriorated, the duration of emergency period was increased; four thousand Greater supporters were arrested. After discussion and getting some assurance the hunger strike had been withdrawn on the 3rd September, 2005. Later on, Banshi Badan Barman was also arrested.

Thereafter the movement of GCPA became weak because of the inner clash among the leaders and the lack of strong organisation. Moreover, the GCPA was divided and a new party was formed named 'Greater Cooch Behar Democratic Party (GCDP). In spite of that the leaders of the GCPA and GCDP carried on their movements. Recently another development took place in the movement for separate state. Atul Roy, the leader of the Kamtapur Progressive Party formed an alliance among the leaders of GCPA and GCPD namely 'Greater Kamta United Forum' taking the common agenda for attaining their demands. It has already been said that Atul Roy considers the Greater Cooch Behar Movement as an alternative mobilization with the reflection of most of the demands of the KPP. Thus it seems that the demands of the GCPA, GCDP and that of the KPP, in course of time, may coalesce together to the effect of giving birth to a more organised movement. (Debnath, p, 66)

Limitations of the Movement for Separate State in North Bengal

There were so many limitations and weakness in the movements took place in different phases for separate state. It cannot be denied that there were many reasons and justifications from historical, linguistic and cultural point of view to have a separate state in North Bengal. In spite

of that it could have not been possible till today. But Why? There are many questions though it is debateable. It can be said going over all the debates that the negligence and avoiding tendency both of the central government and the state government was one of the reasons for not getting a separate state in North Bengal. On the other hand the limitations, weakness, ideological conflicts, inner clash, organisational defects and failure of bringing mass people into a common platform etc. were the reasons behind the failure of the movements for getting separate state.

It should be pointed out that many new states were formed subsequently in different phases after independence where the number of population was lower than North Bengal, even there were some states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Sikkim etc of which number of population is lower than a single district of North Bengal. Apart from this the undivided North Bengal, prior to the partition of India, had a distinctive character in relation to the society, politics, religion and culture unlike other parts of Bengal (which is discussed earlier).

The following table shows the number of population, area and density of population of small states of which total number of population is lower than North Bengal and even a single district of North Bengal:- (Census, 1951)

Sl. No.	States	Total population	Areas	Density
1	Arunachal Pradesh	1,097,968	83,743	13
2	Goa	1,347,668	3,702	364
3	Manipur	2,293,896	22,327	111
4	Meghalaya	2,318,822	22,429	103
5	Mizoram	888,573	21,081	42
6	Nagaland	1,99,036	16,579	120
7	Sikkim	540,851	7,096	76
8	Tripura	3,199,203	10,4969	305

The population of above mentioned states is so many lowering than the present North Bengal, not only that it is lower than a single district of North Bengal, because presently the population of a single district of North Bengal is around 25 to 30 lacks. If we consider the total

population of undivided North Bengal means present North Bengal including Rangpur, East Dinagpur, Rajshahi, Bagura, Pabna of present Bangladesh and the contemporary Goalpara district of Assam the number will be approximately more than three crore. Beside the sufficient number of population there were favourable reasons and justifications including anthropological, linguistic, cultural and historical point of view to form a separate state. In spite of that the people of North Bengal had been deprived to have a separate state. So the reasons can be discussed in the following way:-

(1) The absence of the strong political organization and political movement is one of the vital reasons for having a separate state. It is true that the people of Rajbanshi community was the majority in the society of North Bengal in terms of social stratification based on caste and creed and they also organised and carried on movements since the independence. But there were many weakness and limitations among the leaders and their movements leading to a strong political organization and carried on movement jointly. It is found that the Assam province was formed in 1874 comprising with Goalpara district which was a part of Rangpur district, nay undivided North Bengal. There were many similarities in relation to history, culture, politics and economy between Goalpara of Assam and North Bengal; not only that these vast area from Brahmaputra to Kushi and From the boundary of Bhutan – Nepal to the holy River Ganga was ruled by several rulers by different names since the Pragjyotishpur to Cooch Behar covering different geographical locations and boundaries. It is also true that the Assam was situated in the eastern part of Brahmaputra namely Ahom kingdom locally known as upper Assam. So, it is unfortunate that no complain was raised from the Rajbanshis or any other community of indigenous people against the decision of inclusion of Goalpara with the Assam province. Dr. A. G Ghosh writes, “It was out of this historical connection of Goalpara with Assam, the colonial administrators had included Goalpara with the new province of Assam. What is interesting is that the contemporary Rajbanshi social leaders of the time protested against this decision of incorporating of Goalpara with Assam the course of history of the Rajbanshi community might have been different. Unfortunately the Rajbanshi leaders could not understand the writing of the wall. (Ghosh, in Debnath, 2007, p, 132)

(2) Since long before the independence the ideological difference between the Rajbanshis of Assam and the Rajbanshis of Bengal was followed. When Kshatriya Movement in North Bengal

was going on led by Thakur Panchanan Barma for their up gradation in society that was Kshatriya status differing the Rajbanshis from the Koches, the Rajbanshis of Assam did not support the Kshatriya movement. Dr. A. G. Ghosh writes, “The Rajbanshis of Bengal had been struggling for the Kshatriya status and also advocated that the Koches were different from the Rajbanshis. The Rajbanshis of Assam on the other hand, believed that the Koches and Rajbanshis were same. Apart from these, the Assamese Rajbanshis did not welcome the Rajbanshi Kshatriya movement of Rai Saheb Panchanan Barma.” (Ibid, p, 140)

(3) Linguistically there were no difference between the Rajbanshis of Assam and the Rajbanshis of Bengal. In spite of that they became failure to organise or carried on their movement jointly either to protect their language or to obtain their separate state, rather the Rajbanshis of Assam accepted the Assamese language as their medium of communication as well of education. Dr. Ghosh writes in this regard, “The Western educated Assamese intellectuals had exerted pressure for the introduction of the Assamese in the school teaching. The Rajbanshi community could not resist it. Even they could not understand the far- reaching consequences of the change. They accepted and embraced the Assamese language step by step.” (Ibid, p, 135)

(4) Rajbanshis of Assam and Bengal had blundered again just after the independence while the State Reorganisation Movement was going on in the different parts of the country and as such on the outcome of the movement many separate states were born. But unfortunately the Rajbanshis both of Assam and Bengal could not organise any movement jointly or separately to have a separate state for the people of North Bengal, rather the Rajbanshis of Assam preferred to remain in Assam.

(5) The Rajbanshi leaders became failure to organise any political movement at the time of independence while the work of demarcation was going on in accordance with the proposal of Sir Radcliff by which the Rajbanshi- dominated areas such as Rangpur, east Dinajpur and five police stations of Jalpaiguri districts namely Boda, Patgram, Pachagar, Debiganj and Tetuliya were ceded to Pakistan which was a death shell to the people and culture of North Bengal.

(6) A biased and orthodox mentality was followed among the leaders of the Rajbanshis. The movements were always dominated by the Rajbanshi elite groups such as jotdars, landlords and western educated elite. The movement did not reach to the mass people, particularly the peasants and workers. Dr. Sukhbilas Barma writes about the role of Kshatriya Samity, “Strangely it did

not have any programme for the poor peasants and adhiars (bargadars), who constituted the bulk of the Rajbanshi Hindu peasantry. The movement remained confined among the large landlords, Jotdars and better off peasants” (Barma, in Debnath, p, 81). This trend was continuing in the subsequent phases of the movements held later on. Other than the Rajbanshis there were so many indigenous people of different communities including tribes and depressed class people who were not included actively with their organisation, failing of which they could not reach to the mass people of North Bengal.

(7) The leaders of Kamtapur movement always demanded for the Kamtapuri or Kamtabehari language as their medium of communication and accordingly they demanded for the separate state. But there were many indigenous people of North Bengal whose mother tongue was not Kamtapuri. It is well known to all that so many tribal people of different communities such as Mech, Garo, Rabha, Toto, Druckpa, Jalda, Dobhasia, Tharu, Limbu, Rai, etc. have been living through the ages in the northern portion of North Bengal and use their mother language other than the Kamtapuri language. Beside this it is hard to prove that Kamtapuri or Kamtabehari language is separate from the Bengali language as it has no separate scripts, no grammar or literature.

(8) The leaders of the said movements emphasised more on the sentimental and emotional issues than the logic, reality and history. Many times they spread the germ of communal violence dividing the people into ‘Deshi’ and ‘Bhatiya’ which was brought from the previous leaders of Hitasadhani Sabha who alleged completely to the Bhatiyas for their poverty and distress condition. Dr. Sukhbilas Barma writes, “Deshi jotdars and elite leaders contested the election primarily on the issue of awareness and rights of the Rajbanshis against the so called bhatias, who because of their education and economic strength were taking upper hands in all matters. The subjects were practically divided- deshies and bhatias. Deshi people were made to believe that it was because of the bhatias that they were impoverished and as such bhatias were their enemies and there was a call for driving away the bhatias from Koch Behar State”(Ibid, p, 90). It is fortunate that the common people of Rajbanshi community did not respond to their communal propaganda for which Cooch Behar, nay North Bengal was saved from devastating communal riots like the devastating riots held on at the time of partition of India between Hindus and Muslims. It is true that many Rajbanshi jotdars became poor after independence because of the land Reforms Programme, but it does not mean that only the Bhatias were responsible for their

impoverishment. There were so many reasons behind the impoverishment of the Rajbanshis. It is not that the land Reforms Programmes had been implemented in West Bengal only, rather it was affected whole over India and at present there is no jotdari or zamindari system or feudal system in West Bengal, nay India. As the Rajbanshi jotdars completely depended on lands and agricultural activities and almost all of them had no alternative sources of income, naturally for the land Reforms programmes and acquisition of ceiling surplus land by the Government many jotdars faced in crisis and became poor. As it was the policy both of the Central and State Government, so only the Bhatias were not responsible for their distress condition. Apart from this only the Bhatias were not immigrants, there were so many immigrated people other than the Bhatias namely Beharies, Marwaries, Nepalese, Oraons, Santals etc. who immigrated in different phases in North Bengal for their livelihood of whom Marwaries captured the economy and larger portion of the trade and commerce of North Bengal like other parts of India. But unfortunately, the Rajbanshi leaders of the separate state's movement alleged only the Bhatias illegally and illogically.

(9) The leaders of the movement treated the Bhatias as their enemies than the Muslims. It is well known to all that thousands of people migrated from East Pakistan at the time of partition to save their lives and prestige for the devastating communal riots from the vandalism of the Pakistani attack. All these incidents were taken place because of contemporary politics, blunder of the political leaders and ultimately the conspiracy of the English. The refugees did not immigrate here intentionally because most of them had huge property and wealth in East Pakistan. For the historical blunder of the contemporary politics thousands of Hindus so called Bhatias had to leave their motherland losing their everything and came to North Bengal, nay different parts of India. At the initial stage they had to tolerate intensive suffering, they had no shelter, no food, no job; many of them took shelter in refugee camp where they had nothing to survive. But the Muslims still remained in Cooch Behar maintaining their prestige and dignity. The Muslims got their separate state on the basis of religion where they only could live and Hindus were deprived. In spite of being 'son of the soil' or indigenous people in contemporary east Bengal lacks of Hindus had to leave their mother land. Many of the Hindus had to die by the Pakistani Jalhad, many women and lady had been raped and assaulted by the Pakistani goons; those who migrated to North Bengal were treated as refugees or Bhatias. What was the mistake or sin of these migrated people? One point should be mentioned here that many Rajbanshi people

migrated from Rangpur, East Dinajpur and other parts of contemporary East Pakistan during and after partition were not treated as Bhatias and surprisingly it is followed that many of the migrated Rajbanshis became the leaders of the separate movements who also alleged and propagated that only the Bhatias were responsible for impoverishment of the Rajbanshis. Is it not a tragedy for the migrated people so called Bhatias?

(10) The leaders of the separate movement carried on their movements in the name of Rajasthan state, Uttarkhanda, Kamtapur state, Greater Cooch Behar state etc. which were demanded emphasising on emotional issue rather than the logic because the areas of greater North Bengal was ruled by different rulers with various names and separate geographical locations and boundaries in different phases of history namely Pragjyotishpur, Kamrup-Kamtapur, Pundrabardhan, Gour etc.. So, it is not possible to go back in history for getting back the particular state with her specific boundary because it was changed in time to time and it is also a herculean task to get back Goalpara district of Assam; Rangpur, Dinajpur Rajshahi, Bogura, Pabna of present Bangladesh for the formation of Kamtapur state or greater Cooch Behar state on the basis that once these areas were the part of greater North Bengal. (Roy, Maneswar, 2006)

(11) The leaders of the Greater Cooch Behar movement alleged that Cooch Behar was merged with West Bengal as a district illegally and forcefully because it was a 'C' category state at the time of merger of Cooch Behar with India. But this allegation is not completely true. In this regard Dr. Sukhabilas Barma writes, "The claim of Greater Cooch Behar movement leaders that Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy got the state merged with West Bengal by force is not warranted by facts. Well, Dr. Roy wanted Cooch Behar as a part of West Bengal for strategic reasons; the circumstances prevailing in the State also justified its merger with west Bengal. As required under the provision of clause (b) of section 290A (1) of the government of India Act, 1935, the Governor General ascertained the views of West Bengal Government and then, issued the order of merger. The leaders of the movement have somehow missed this politico – historical document and misled themselves (Barma, p, 96) Regarding 'C' category state Dr. Barma writes, "The other important demand of the movement leaders that the state of Cooch Behar was a 'C' category state is also not based on facts. Categorisation of states into A, B, C & D was a concept introduced in the Indian Constitution coming into force on 26th January, 1950, by which time Cooch Behar was already part of West Bengal and not a princely state. As such the question of

placing Cooch Behar in any category of States does not arise at all. Other points of arguments put forward by them are also not justified by facts and records (Ibid, pp, 96-97). Apart from this, Cooch Behar was not only the princely state which was merged with a state as a district; there were many small princely states which were merged their concerned states as a district because it is simply followed that before independence 563 princely states were in undivided India of which 554 were merged with dominion of India and the rest went to Pakistan after partition (Ghosh, p, 5). So, if every princely state got their statehood then the number of states in India would be near about 600 which caused many difficulty and complexity with regard to integrity, peace and administrative issue of India.

In conclusion it can be said that there were many reasons, logic, relevance and justification behind the formation of a separate state in undivided North Bengal in terms and conditions following of which many states had been formed during and after independence which is discussed earlier. But for the absence of strong political organisation by which an intensive movement could have been carried on, weakness and limitations of the leaders of the movements held on different phases since the independence, lack of unity and integrity of the people of North Bengal to the question of carrying on movement for separate state, political conspiracy and unjustified attitude of the contemporary political leaders, hurriedly taking decision to solve the boundary problem between India and Pakistan on the basis of Radcliff Award at the time of partition; on the other hand the negligence and depriving tendency to the people of North Bengal both of the central and state government a separate state could have not been formed. Rather North Bengal had been fragmented and included her many parts and portions to contemporary East Pakistan and Assam illegally and illogically losing her heritage, gravity and entity. So it is clear that no unity and fruitful plan and activities is followed among the leaders of the separate state movement for which they became failure to obtain the support and sympathy of the mass people of North Bengal to the question of the movement for separate state proving which the failure of getting a single seat either in the Parliament or Assembly election. So, whether a separate state will form or not time will consider it, but it can be said neutrally that the intention and method of the movements presently going on in North Bengal is not better for the coming days of North Bengal.

References:-

- 1) Ghosh, Ananda Gopal. Swadhinata Shat: Prosanga Chhere Aasa Mati, Sahitya Bhagirath Prokashani, 1416 B.S, Mathabhanga, Cooch Behar (In Bengali).
- 2) Chaterjee, Suniti Kumar. Kirata- Jana Kriti, The Indo-Mongoloids: Their Contribution to the History and Culture of India, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, First published in 1951, Reprinted in 1974.
- 3) Roy, Haripada, The Genesis of Uttar Khanda Movement, in Barma, Sukhlas, Socio-Political Movements in North Bengal, Vol-I, Global Vision Publishing House, New Delhi, 2007.
- 4) Barma, Sukhbilash, Social and Mpolitical Movements in North Bengal, Vol, I, Globan Vision Publishing House, New Delhi, 2007.
- 5) Roy, Girindra Narayan. Politics of Identity and Autonomy in North Bengal Perspectives, in Barma, Sukhbilas, op.cit.
- 6) Sutradhar, Kartik Chandra, Land and Livelyhood: A Study on the Agro-Political Movements of a Bengal District, Jalpaiguri (1869-2004), N.L.Publishers, Siliguri, 2013.
- 7) Das, Naren. Uttar Banga Tapasili Jati O Adibashi Sangathan (UTJAS): A Dalit Student Movement, in Barma Sukhbilas, op.cit.
- 8) Chandra, Bipan. et. al, Bharatbarsha, Swadhinatar Pore, 1947-2000, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2006, (In Bengali)
- 9) Barman, Lalit Chandra, Rajyer Dabite Uttarbange Andalan, Siliguri, 2008, (In Bengali)
- 10) Debnath, Sailen (Editor). Social and Political tensions in North Bengal (Since 1947), N.L.Publisher, Siliguri, 2007.
- 11) Census of India, 2001
- 12) Ghosh Ananda Gopal, The Administrative Reorganisation of Bengal and Assam in 1874 and its Impact upon the Rajbanshi Identity: Question of Northern Bengal and Western Assam, in Debnath, Sailen. Social and Political Tentions in North Bengal..
- 13) Barma, Sukhbilas, Social and Political Tention in North Bengal since 1947, in Debnath Sailen, op.cit,
- 14) Roy, Moneswar. Cooch Beharer Rajkahani O Rajya Hote Jela, 2006.
- 15) Ghosh, Ananda Gopal. Deshiya Rajya Cooch Beharer Bharatiya Unione Jogdan Ebong Paschimbanger Jelay Rupantarar Prekshapat, Uttar Prosanga,