

## **CHAPTER -VII**

Emergence and Growth of Political Movement :

A Regional Polity and their Associations

## CHAPTER-VII

### EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT: A REGIONAL POLITY AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

The history of the post-colonial statehood in India shows that the states' relation to different ethnic and linguistic groups become the major issues in the body politics, as various sorts of conflicts and contradictions have not been resolved within the existing framework of the Indian democracy. In this context, ethnic mobilization has become one of the major instruments of grass root political activity, reallocation, and redistribution of resources and share in and access to political power. This tendency of different state indirectly provides to grow regionalism in the form of ethnic- problem, ethnicity, nationality question, and autonomy in Indian politics. In a multi-ethnic plural society of post-colonial India, several ethnic groups based on tribe, caste, language, religion even the region and the sense of otherness' cohesion by the question of 'existence' began to assert distinctiveness instead of assimilation with the dominant or mainstream culture.<sup>1</sup> Dipankar Gupta in his essay *Ethnicity and Politics* shows how different mode of identification communal, regional, linguistic and natives have significantly given rise to the separatist movements along these lines in different parts of India.<sup>2</sup> Unexceptionally, North Eastern part of Bengal being a polyphonic and plural cultural region is also witness of such phenomenon. New challenges emerged from the structural changes and power politics have strengthened on the issues of caste, regional, cultural, linguistic and 'son of the soils' during the post colonial period.

### **7.1.1: SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE RAJBANSHI PEOPLE IN NORTH EASTERN PART OF INDIA:**

In this chapter, it would be stressed on the genesis of socio-economic and cultural crisis of the Rajbanshi people, the predominant group of the North Eastern part of India, which led them regionalism in the form of separatist and autonomy particularly for recognition of a distinct cultural linguistic identity including regional development during post-colonial period. They founded socio-political organizations from time to time during the period under review like *Uttar Khanda Dal(UKD-1969)*, *Uttarbangla Tapasili Jati-upjati Adivasi Sangathan (UTJAS-1979)*, *Koch-Rajbnashi International(KRI-1984)*, *Bharatiya Kamta Rajya Parisad(BKRP-1986)*, *Kamatapuri Peoples Party(KPP-1987)*, *Uttarbangla Rajya Samgram Parisad(UBRSP-1996)* *Greater Cooch Behar Peoples Association(GCPA-1998)* to fulfill their ultimate goal of separate state and autonomy. In this Chapter, we have to discuss the socio-political movement of the Rajbanshis up to the UTJAS movement, as our area of study is limited from 1891 to 1979 A.D.

**Table 7. 1: Socio-political organizations of the Rajbanshis in North Bengal:**

Organizations/ Party	Nature	H.O.& foundation Year	Issues	Goal
UKD	Political	Krantivita, Darjeeling 1969	Economic exploitation, political subordination, cultural and linguistic identity.	Separate State
UTJAS	Social	Giyashil, Noth Dinajpur, 1979	Social, educational and economic development.	Social change
KRI	Social/ Political	Tezpur, Assam 1984	Socio-cultural identity and political and econo- mic development.	Separate State
BKRP	Political	Gauripur, Assam 1986	Economic, cultural-lingu- istic and political development.	Separate State
KPP	Political	Shivmandir, Siliguri, 1987	Economic development, political autonomy and cultural linguistic identity	Separate State
AKSU	Political	Shivmandir Siliguri, 1987	Social, economic and cultural identity	Separate State
UBRSP	Political	Raiganj, Uttar Dinajpur 1996	Historical, geographical cultural, political and economic issues.	Separate State
GCPA	Political	Vetaguri, Cooch Behar, 1998	Merger of Cooch Behar State, political, economic and cultural linguistic issues	Separate State

The socio-political organizations of the Rajbanshi have raised the questions of their cultural- linguistic identity, economic grievances, and political subordination in post-colonial India. Naturally a question has been raised- Why are there continuous agitation for the formation of separate state in North Bengal and Western Assam comprising the territories of former Koch- Kingdom? Generally, the socio-political organizations argue that the post- partitioned demographic changes, state policies, lop-sided economic development, and psychosocial differences contributed to the growth of regionalism in this region. Therefore, we must review the major causes, which have direct relationship with the ethno- cultural regionalism.

## II

### **7.2.1: CAUSES OF DISCONTEND AMONG THE INDEGENOUS PEOPLE:**

The Rajbanshis has been recognized as a major Scheduled Caste in West Bengal. As per 1971 census, about 76% of the Rajbanshis live in Northern part of West Bengal. It is believed that Northern part of West Bengal is the Homeland of the Rajbanshis where they have been dominating the ethnic situation of this claim.<sup>3</sup> By caste identity, about 14% people of North Bengal are Rajbanshis. Among the Scheduled Castes of North Bengal, numerically Rajbanshis is the dominant community. They constitute more than 50% of the total Scheduled Caste population of North Bengal. It had been discussed in detail in the Chapter No. IV. However, the Rajbanshis are lagging behind compared to the other caste people in respect of education, economic, work participation and other fields and this section of predominant groups is feeling alienation from the mainstream of the society.

After independence, the influx of East Pakistani (Now Bangladeshi) refugee's including Rajbanshis to India had radically changed the demographic pattern of present North Bengal. Though it is very difficult to enumerate the exact figure of the refugee who got shelter in North Bengal or West Bengal as a whole, we can get an idea about the migration of the East Bengalees to West Bengal and North Bengal from the population growth rates of certain communities and decadal growth

rates of population of North Bengal and West Bengal from census reports and districts gazetteers.

**Table 7.2: Comparative table of population growth rates of certain SC communities in West Bengal.**

Name	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91
West Bengal	+32.80%	+26.89%	+ 23.17%	+24.73%
SC	+46.38%	+70.80%	+36.12%	+33.39%
Rajbanshi	+61.80%	+12.66%	+66.83%	+25.70%
Namasudra	+124.47%	+34.49%	+72.58%	+52.55%
Bagdi	+21.14%	+17.17%	+41.85%	+285.55%
Jalia Kaibarta	+39.38%	+74.37%	+55.53%	+39.05%
Jhalo Malo	+47.08%	+30.77%	+71.88%	+42.54%
Gonrhi	+507.32%	-12.31%	+22.04%	+63.32
Tiyor	-5.59%	+101.31%	+2.88%	+94.27%
Patni	-90.98%	+103.265%	+75.7655	+31.58%

Source: Census Report of India.

**Table 7.3: Comparative table of population growth rates in West Bengal and North Bengal (in %)**

Census	West Bengal	North Bengal
1951-61	32.80%	40.49%
1961-71	26.87%	33.01%
1971-81	22.96%	27.63%
1981-91	24.55%	27.61%
1991-2001	17.84%	22.43%

Source: Census of West Bengal, 1951,1961,1971,1981,1991,and 2001

The Table No. 7:2 shows that there were tremendous decadal growth rates of certain communities like Rajbanshis, Namasudras, Jalia Kaibartyas and Jhala Malo castes in West Bengal. The Bangladesh Government has also officially recognized the fact of migration from East Pakistan (Now Banladesh). It is said “if there were no migration of the Hindus from East Pakistan and Bangladesh during 1961-91, there would have been 16.5 million Hindus in Bangladesh instead of 11.2 million in 1991 according to our (Bangladesh) calculation a total of 5.5 million i.e. average 2, 00000 persons have been missing during 1964-1991. <sup>4</sup> From the table7: 3 it appears that population growth rate in North Bengal was

always higher than that of West Bengal average in each decadal census which clearly indicates large cross border and inter –state migration in North Bengal. The flood of refugee engulfed the border district of West Bengal and Northeast India. The cross border immigrants (refugees) have gradually settled down in North Bengal with a strong attitude of resettlement in the new land. North Bengal also receiving refugees from Nepal, Bhutan and Northeast India due to out break of regular ethnic violence. The following two tables indicate the settlement of the immigrants in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts

Table 7. 4: Immigrants in Jalpaiguri District (1891 -1961) <sup>5</sup>

Year	No. of immigrants	Year	No. of immigrants
1891	98611	1931	158757
1901	95899	1941	156765
1911	152174	1951	278842
1921	163024	1961	454177

Source: West Bengal District Gazetteers, Jalpaiguri, Abani Mohan Kusari and etel, 1981, p73

Table 7.5: Immigration and emigration of Darjeeling District(1891-1961) <sup>6</sup>

Year	Actual population	Immigration	Emigration	Natural population
1891	223314	119670	962	104606
1901	249117	113588	802	136331
1911	265550	111269	6000	160281
1921	282784	101807	6000	186941
1931	319635	100700	3455	222390
1941	376369	95750	4120	284739
1951	445260	100311	6900	351849
1961	624640	169250	N.A.	455390

Source: West Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling, Amiya Kumar Banerjee and etel, 1980, p.276.

The demographic increase in post- colonial northern part of Bengal had altered the population composition. Even the percentage of the Rajbanshis in the total population is decreasing gradually.

Table 7.6: Distribution of of the Rajbnashi population in North Bengal by the Census years.

District	1951	%	1961	%	1971	%	1981	%	1991	%
Darjeeling	15894	3.00	31887	3.50	31505	3.06	62770	3.60	96745	7.44
Jalpaiguri	172710	32.68	316020	35.19	329191	32.03	514174	29.49	656073	23.42
Cooch Behar	252069	47.7	418839	46.63	481304	46.84	714221	40.96	865622	39.86
West Dinajpur	67489	12.78	93371	10.40	134976	13.13	369015	21.16	489642	15.65
Malda	20294	3.84	38443	4.28	50693	4.94	83463	4.79	114697	4.29

Source: Census of India, 1951,1961, 1971, 1981, 1991.

The table 7:6 shows that the population of Rajbanshis has been decreased from 47% in 1951 to 39.86 in 1991 in Cooch Behar district where the SCs have largest percentage even in 2001.<sup>7</sup> Condition of Jalpaiguri district is more critical where the percentage of the Rajbanshis has been decreased from 32.68% in 1951 to 23.42% in 1991. It is to be noted that Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri districts remained the epitome of regional agitation led by the Rajbanshis. In addition to it, after partitioned, with rapid industrialization and the mushrooming of the tea gardens in North Bengal there was a gradual growth of land *Mafia* in this region trying to monopolies the only large-scale Agro-based industry of this region.<sup>8</sup> Most of the land, which was earlier, dominated by the local Scheduled Castes communities of Koch and Rajbanshis were thus brought over by the affluent Hindu refugees from Bangladesh and Marwari's from Rajsthan. In Jalpaiguri district while the number of *Jotes* holds by Rajbanshis, those hold by the Marwaris, the upper caste Bengali middle class people, and other increased sharply.<sup>9</sup> An important aspect of land alienation was the rapid growth of an unprotected tenancy structure in the form of *adhiari* system. J.F.Gruning noted, "In some cases the sellers sinks to the position of *adhiars* and at the mercy of new *jotedars*, who can turn them at any time."<sup>10</sup> During the post partition period the whole

region became over populated with the influx of the immigrants from the then East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh). This huge number of influx of refugees (Bhatia) to North Eastern part of Bengal added to the trouble, as they became unequal competitors of local people in the matter of service, business, and other socio- economic pursuits. Because the local people being mostly illiterate or semi-literate and having practically no connection with the higher ups were not in a position to compete with the immigrants, (Bhatia) and the grievance of the indigenous people increased day by day. This has given rise to a tendency in this community to organize a sort of middle class nativity movement in opposition to migrants. <sup>11</sup>

Besides the demographic changes, after the introduction of land Acquisition Act (1953) , a large number of *Jotedars* of North Bengal lost their lands in excess to the limit of seventy- five bighas. *Khas* (vested) land had been distributed to the landless cultivators. Although the victim *zotedars* were mostly of the Rajbanshi but their caste fellows are not sole beneficiaries. Hence, there was a strong voice for the distribution of the vested land to the Rajbanshis only. Naturally, land alienation to the non-Rajbanshis began with the first phase of land reforms in West Bengal germinated the seeds of deprivation among the pre-settled communities of North Bengal. <sup>12</sup>

Second phase of land reform was undertaken in West Bengal with the coming of the United Front (UF) Government in 1967. During 1967-70, the United Front Government vested one million acre of land, which had broken the backbone of social dominance of the landed aristocracy (*zotedars*) of West Bengal. <sup>13</sup> The *zotedars* of North Bengal could not escape from it. However, third phase of land reforms called

“Operation Burga” under the present Left Front Government was successful in vesting family land and recording 1.2 million of sharecroppers within three years (1978-81).<sup>14</sup> According to the official records, 428179.95 hector-vested lands have been distributed among 2605432 beneficiaries. In North Bengal 170081.80 hector-vested lands were distributed among 671841 beneficiaries out of which 301498 are SCs and 144181 are STs<sup>15</sup>. The table 7:7 and 7:8 show the distribution of vested land in North Bengal.

Table 7.7: SC and ST families of North Bengal benefited by the ‘Operation Burga’ (upto 31.12.85)

Dist./State	Total figure	SC	ST	% of the SC/ST
West Bengal	13456757	401627	162662	41.89
Darjeeling	12831	4139	3028	55.85
Jalpaiguri	55792	25769	12841	51.27
Cooch Behar	74420	44507	770	60.38
W.Dinajpur	96431	26534	28699	57.27
Malda	75453	19056	18993	49.10

Sources : Deptt. of SC/ ST Welfare, Government of West Bengal.

Table 7: 8: Distribution of vested land (till 30.09.95)

Descriptions	West Bengal	North Bengal
Distribution vested land	428179.95 ha	170081.80 ha
Beneficiaries	2605432	671841(SC-301491,ST-144184)
Bargadars	1498386	343817
Land cultivated by the Sharecroppers	448286.16 ha	142405.26 ha

Source: Deptt. of SC/ ST Welfare, Government of West Bengal, This statement was also framed by Dinesh Daku in *Kamatapuri Andolan Ekti Jana Bichhinna Andolon*, Calcutta, National Book Agency Pvt. Ltd., 2003, pp.-30-31.

Land reforms and distribution of vested lands to the landless agricultural labourers by the UF and LF Governments had direct impact on the ethnic movement of North Bengal. Since the employment, market is not growing as fast as the number of entrants; local middle class aspirants have started viewing migrants as block to their mobility and

development. Thus, an atmosphere of struggle for access to and control over new resources has emerged. The *jotedars* and being landlords lost majority of their land because of ceiling laws as mentioned earlier. They were now to sell part of their retained lands for their livelihood. The lands were incidentally purchased by the immigrants (*Bhatias*) who were being uprooted from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) ; came to this part of the country with better financial capacity, better education, better capabilities in all respects rather than the locals. The financial supports from the Government for the refugees also helped them setting on the lands earlier belonging to the landholders.<sup>16</sup> The new owners of the lands with more capital and skills and with their lands newly irrigated, earns a high income, while the former landowners have become landless farmers, rickshaw pullers or van pullers, weigh labourers. The prosperous farmers, owners of business firms and factories, administrative personal- all are the immigrants and hence some of the local people have become resentful at their subordinate economic role. They have developed a tendency to perceived immigrants as economic and political thread and also a thread on their cultural system Under this situation, the Rajbansis were forced to migrate into the nearby urban areas and to the other province only to be absorbed into the marginalize section workers, domestic servants whose survival depended upon the selling of labour power. Alienation from their ancestral land and the transformation of Rajbanshi from land owing peasants to wage labour proletariats had various social connotations too and tension has been grown in North Bengal from time to time in respect of separate state and autonomous power in North Bengal.<sup>17</sup>

It was the demand of the socio- political organization of the Rajbanshis that North Bengal is full or resources, but since independence no sufficient industrial development have been progressed

in this region . Because of which the people of this particular region are trailing behind either in the field of services or in any other independent professional line. In absence of any industrial development and their economical activities, agriculture has been the only sources of livelihood of the people of these regions but since century's past, there has been no irrigation system either for distribution of water for cultivation purpose or to control floods whatever, till date. Consequently, the people of this area have to be solely depended on nature.

The dominance of immigrants in the world of economic, social, and political fields had led the local youths to emulate their dress, their style of living, even their language. However, they have now grown with a feeling that the immigrant's have forced them to lose their own cultural identity. At the same time they have learnt the new phenomenon of territorial inclusiveness –the theory of “sons of the soil” being applied by the so-called indigenous people in the whole world. Keeping this view in mind, they assert that the indigenous people have a special claim to the region; firstly claim on employment, school, and even control over the political system. In addition, the new comers are entitled to their services and benefits only after they have been adequately distributed to the indigenous population. Thus, it is the issue of social mobility again which pushed a section of Rajbanshi community for the second phase of the movement which was directed at creating an “identity” based on “sons of the soil” concept emphasizing their differences with the mainstream society and claiming their share of economic and political power on the basis of this ‘identity question’. All these issues added to the discontent among the local people, have given rise to the politico- social movements in the form of *Uttar Khanda*, *UTJAS (Uttarbanga Tapasili Jati O Adivasi Sangathan)*, *KRI (Koch Rajbanshi International)* and *Kamatapur*

*movement* etc.<sup>18</sup> Let us focus the characteristic of the movements launched by the Rajbanshis of North Bengal from time to time based on socio-economic development.

### III

#### 7.3.1:SEPARATE STATEHOOD MOVEMENT AND HITASADHANI

##### SABHA:

Before going to the origin and development of socio-political movement in North- Eastern part of India we should aware of the fact that different groups or organizations have been pursued the idea of a separate state in different ways and manners in different period. Sometimes they included Purnea district of Bihar and Goalpara districts of Assam in their proposed Uttarkhand State in addition to the six districts of North Bengal viz. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda. On 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1949 the leaders of the parties of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri Sikkim and Darjeeling demand for the creation of separate province named Uttarkhand Pradesh.<sup>19</sup> But latter they give up the hill areas of Darjeeling from the 'Kamatapur'.

Historically, the first demand for the formation of a separate state for the Scheduled Caste people of Northern part of Bengal was made by Jogendra Nath Mandal, the leader of the East Bengal Scheduled Caste Community in public meeting at Kharibari in the Darjeeling district on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1947.<sup>20</sup> Mr. Mandal strongly denounced the proposed partition of Bengal and stated that if it is being implemented at all, then we demand a separate state viz "Rajasthan" in the name of Rajbanshi people. It will be

consisted of Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur districts, certain portions of Rangpur and Darjeeling districts as well as Purnea district of Bihar and Goalpara district of Assam.<sup>21</sup> The areas mentioned by Mr. Mandal were largely inhabited by the Rajbanshi people. However, what was interesting is that in the proposed province of Mr. Mandal, the native State of Cooch Behar was not included, though it was considered as the citadel of Rajbanshi community. In addition to this, the reaction of the Rajbanshi people is not known. It is necessary to mention here that Mr. Mandal was an outsider and belong to non- Rajbanshi Scheduled Caste Community of Eastern Bengal.

As because Cooch Behar was the citadel of Rajbanshi community, the demand for the first time for the formation of separate state came from a section of the Rajbanshi community of the Cooch Behar Native States. The demand was raised by the Cooch Behar *Hitasadhani Sabha*, a local group or party controlled organization and dominated by the Hindu and Muslim Rajbanshi *Jotedars*.

There is a debate on the foundation date of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* in Cooch Behar. Dr Charu Chandra Sanyal, an eminent political personality and the editor of the *Janamat Patrika* (a well-circulated Bengali weekly) of Jalpaiguri has mentioned in one issue of the *Patrika* that the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was founded on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1947. On the other hand, Shree Parbananda Das, a retired Headmaster and a member of the “*Hitasadhani Sabha*” has stated that the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was founded on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1946. The Statement of Parabananda Das was more authenticate one.<sup>22</sup> There are other evidents, which helped us to support that the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was founded in 1946. The first concrete historical evidence is the Election of 1946 and 1949 in Cooch Behar

State. The *Hitasadhani Sadha* participated in both the elections and got thumping majority in the Legislative Council of the Cooch Behar State. The Second Historical evidence is a song comprised by an anonymous Cooch Behari poet. It was distributed among the visitors and the pilgrims of the *Rash Mela* in 1946. The song was composed in the names of the leaders of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* and indicated the grievances of the Cooch Behari people against the outsiders i.e. *bhatias*. The song was as follows: <sup>23</sup>

*Othore Native Bhai, Jagore Native,  
Tarao Bhatia sab,  
Gorji uthilo Sarat Singha  
Tuli hunkar rab,  
Eso Despran Jaladhar eso,  
Satish Sange kari,  
Dharanir Sathe eso Ansar  
Kari Gala dharadhari,  
Kothay Majir Majila edese,  
Gelo bhatiar hate, Gelo kata Bir Purnendu Eso  
Khan Chowdhuri Sathe.*

[Free translation:-Native brothers, get up and drive out the *bhatias*. Satish Singha rises up finger with a great plea and please come patriot Jaladhar along with Satish Chandra Singha. Ansar come along with Dharani by shoulder to shoulder. The state handed over to the *bhatias*. Many warriors passed away and Purnendu come along Khan Chowdhury Amantullah Khan.]

From the above historical and oral evidences, it can be said that the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was founded on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1946. Prasenjit Barma, member of the Cooch Behar Association also says-“... At last on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1946 (4<sup>th</sup> *Jaistha*, 1353 BS) before a huge gathering of more than

sixty thousand people on the Rash *Mela Maidan* which was than wide open having no stadium and other construction there on the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was formed in great enthusiasm with the following persons; <sup>24</sup>

### **Formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha:**

President : Khan Chowdhury Amanatullya  
Khan

Vice- president : Satish Chandra Ray Singha  
Dharani Sankar Bhattacharya

Secretary : Jaladhar Saha

Assistant Secretary : Majiruddin Ahmed

Members : Moqbul Hossain & Jafaruddin Boxi (Dinhata), Bazle Rahaman(Cooch Behar), Satish Chandra Ray (Khagrabari) Satinath Ray (Bhetaguri), Aneswar Ray (Bhetaguri),Dr. Jogendra Nath Ray (Mekhliganj),Ekin Prodhan, Mossahar Hossain, Gajen Ray Bsunia, Jogendra Nath Mondal (Tufanganj), Dhira Ray Basunia, Jogen Ishore, Rajeswar Sarkar, Jotindra Nath Singha Sarkar (Tufanganj), Patal Chandra Barman (Natabari), Hefajuddin Mia (Premerdanga), Anchharuddin Ahmed (Cooch Behar Sadar), Kumar Purnendu Narayan,Kamini Kumar Barman, Kamaruddin Miah, Kumar Birendra Narayan, . In addition to these, there were many village people who were also included as the ordinary members of the *Sabha*. Famous singer Abbasuddin Ahmed, Suren Ray Basunia indirectly encouraged the *Sabha*. Bholanath Ray, Harish Chandra Ray Sarkar, Karimuddin Ahmed, Naren Singh, Mahesh Barma, Akshay Kumar Barma, Nirmal Ray, Purna Chandra Sarkar, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grand sons of Amanatullaya etc were in the youth section of the *sabha*.

It is alleged that the British Resident of Cooch Behar State and the private secretary of Maharani Indira Devi, Nawab Khasru Jung, and a scion of the Nazam of Hyderabad encouraged the formation of *Hitasadhani Sabha*.<sup>25</sup> However, the ethnological composition of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was peculiar in character. The Rajbanshi Hindus and Muslim, the Kamrupi Brahmins (Mithili and Sylhati) and some other lower caste people supported the formation of *Hitasadhani* that started movement against the outsiders i.e. Bhatia, particularly against the upper caste people of the Eastern and Southern Bengal who dominated the administrative and cultural scene of the urban areas of the Cooch Behar State.<sup>26</sup>

Since the marriage of Prince Jitendra Narayan with Indira Devi, the Princess of Gaikwar State, the administrative machinery had been changed gradually in Cooch Behar State. The Bengali dominance over the administration began reduce due to the attitude of Maharani Indira Devi. Her Highness was in favour of appointing the high officials of the State from the other parts of India. Therefore, the administrative structure of the state, which was headed by Dewan Kalika Das Dutta, I.C.S., was revised with consent of His Highness Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur. This reversal was revealed in the appointment of High officials earlier dominated by the Bengalese *bhadraloke* particularly the Brahma Bengalese *Bhadralok*. A list may be produced of the high officials of Cooch Behar State;

Dr. A.R. Secondy, Chief Medical Officer of the State.

Mr. M.L. God, Chief Engineer of the State.

Mr. I. Sekhar, Education Secretary, and Publicity Officer of the State.

Mr. Hanuman Sahi Routh, Revenue Secretary of the State.

Mr. P.K. Kaul, Commandant, Home Guard of the State.

Mr. G.C. Fookan, Police Commissioner of the State.

Captain K. Grey, Pilot of the State.

Mr. K.R. Singh, Minister-in- waiting of the State.

The Bengalization process of the Cooch Behar State has been received a set back and this resulted in the birth of de- Bengalization process. In fact, the *Cooch Behari* did not welcome the Indianization process of the Cooch Behar State. It was also alleged that the British Resident at the *Durbar* (court) of Cooch Behar patronized the growth of *Hitasadhani Sabha* in the view of political objectives. Firstly, they wanted to free Cooch Behar from influence of the *Tebhaga* Movement of the neighboring districts of Bengal. The land Holders Association of Cooch Behar was the chief defender of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*. They became alarmed at the rapid growth of the *Tebhaga* Movement in the border area of Cooch Behar State. Secondly, in order to check communist infiltration in Cooch Behar State, the British Government also encouraged the foundation of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*. The role of Maharaja in the formation of the *Hitasadhani* is unknown although he was its patron. He addressed the meetings of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*.<sup>27</sup> A scion of the Royal family Kumar Indrajit Narayan also addressed the *Hitasadhani Sabha* meeting at Mekhliganj.<sup>28</sup> Abbas Uddin Ahmed, a member of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* and eminent international folk singer writes in his autobiography that Maharaja was sympathetic to the cause of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of *Hitasadhani Sabha* for separate state was very different from that of the UKD and others. In fact, the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was concerned only about Cooch Behar Native State. In the first stage, the *Hitasadhani Sabha* demanded a separate state. In the second stage,

they demanded Cooch Behar should be certainly administered territorially. In the third stage, they demanded that Cooch Behar should be merged with Assam and not with West Bengal.<sup>30</sup> In addition to these, it is to be mentioned here that the Pro -Muslim League sympathizers of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* (Amanatullya Khan Chowdhury, the revenue minister of Cooch Behar State, Hakim Ahmed Hossain, high Official of the State and SDO of Mathabhanga ) once wanted the merger of the Cooch Behar State with East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh).<sup>31</sup> Let us discussed the pro-Muslim league attitude of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* after post independence period.

We have already mentioned that the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was essentially an ethno- caste –linguistic Association of the Cooch Beharies irrespective of their religion. However, after the birth of Pakistan, the lion share of the Muslim members of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* deviated from the *Cooch Behari* identity, which was the cornerstone of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*. Instead of pleading Cooch Behari identify they have been including to the Muslim identity .This change of minds of the Major section of the Muslim members of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was very much distinct from their speech and action. Some of the nationalist leaders compared the activities of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* even with the *Rajakars* of Hyderabad State.<sup>32</sup>

The activities of the Muslim members of *Hitasadhani Sabha* were objectionable. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani's call for "Great Bengal" greatly influenced the minds of the Muslim member of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*. Khan Chowdhury the President of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* and the Revenue Minister of Cooch Behar State encouraged the Muslim immigrants of Rangpur and Mymensingh to settle

in the Cooch Behar State. Land Hungry Muslim peasants of the overpopulated East Pakistani's district of Rangpur and Mymensingh took this advantage and by marrying the girls of the Rajbanshi community and began to settle in Cooch Behar as native people. Apart from this, at the invitation of Khan Chowdhury Amanatullya, Majahad Four (Army of Liberation, Sirajganj, Pubna) leaders led by Assadullah Siraji came to Cooch Behar with his army. Professor A.G.Ghosh says, "By this way, the Muslims members of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* tried to materialize their dream known as "turn Cooch Behar into Pakistan".<sup>33</sup>

Though the *Hitasadhani Sabha* had successfully sold the Cooch Behari identity still there were many people in Cooch Behar who did not subscribe to their views. The Person who had strongly opposed the *Hitasadhani Sabha's* aims and actions was Umesh Chandra Mandal, a Gandhian Cooch Behari or Rajbanshi pleader of Dinhata Town. In order to resist the nefarious design of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*, Umesh Chandra Mandal had founded the "*Cooch Behar State Prajamandal*" in 1947 with the help of the progressive minded people. These people were mostly the followers of the Forward Block and the Communist Party has been working secretly in Cooch Behar since, 1940's.<sup>34</sup> In fact, barring the *Hitasadhani Sabha*, the different political parties have opened up their office in Cooch Behar State only after 1947. However, a problem had created in Cooch Behar among the different parties regarding the joining of Cooch Behar State with Indian Union.

The *Praja Mandal* leaders and followers actively supported the cause of joining with Indian Union. They also cautioned the people about the dangers communal politics of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* and tried to revenue Cooch Behari Non –Cooch Behari animosity. The

*Prajamandal* was very much aware of the anti- Indian activities of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*. In a memorandum dated July 20, 1948 addressed to Vallabhbhai Patel, the Vice-Premier of India, the *Praja Mandal* alleged that the Maharaja and his Pro-League Muslim Ministers as well as the Ministers who belonged to the SC were hobnobbing with Pakistan. <sup>35</sup> It has also been said that the Maharaja Himself met Suhrawardy, the Prime Minister of Bengal and invited his opinion about the question of merger referring to the fact that his State was surrounded on three sides by territories of Pakistan <sup>36</sup> Besides; the State authorities had forced the people to sign against merger with Indian Union. <sup>37</sup>

To draw the attention of the intelligentsias as well as the people of Calcutta and Government of West Bengal and India, workers of *Praja Mandal* formed a new Association in Calcutta known as the "*Cooch Behar People Association*". <sup>38</sup> This Association's spokesman Prof. Chunilal Mukherjee, Pulakesh Dey Sarkar, Tarapada Chakroborty and Sailen Ray prepared a memorandum for submission to the Prime Minister of India signed by Umesh Chandra Mandal, Prof. Chunilal Mukherjee, Ramesh Chandra Ray, Satish Chandra Paul, Prem Nihar Nandi, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Rajendra Chandra Chatterjee, Kalanath Ray Barman, and so others.

In order to create public opinion regarding the problems of Cooch Behar, the '*Cooch Behar Peoples' Association*' and the '*Praja Mandal*' jointly convened a public meeting in Calcutta. The intelligentsias, writers, political activist, journalists, social workers of Calcutta have published an appeal letter to the people and tried to draw the attention of the Government. The Government also aware of the fact of Cooch Behar State. In a letter to Sardar Patel, Dr. Bidhan Chandra

Ray, the Chief Ministers of West Bengal, wrote that the obnoxious developments in Cooch Behar state will not only affect the security of West Bengal but also of the Indian Union.<sup>39</sup> Sardar Patel himself informed Jawaharlal Nehru that the *Hitasadhani Sabha* had sympathy for Pakistan.<sup>40</sup>

In fact, the *Hitasadhani Sabha* was desperate for political power. It was reflected in a letter of Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar to the Joint Secretary, Government of India on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1949. Mr. Nanjappa wrote, it is interesting to note that the *Hitasadhani* Party willing to merge Cooch Behar with Gorkha district of Darjeeling or with Assam. Their real intention appears to be to try to maintain their political influence in this area. However, in order to create a separate state, the representatives of different parties of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Skkim and Darjeeling met at Darjeeling on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1949. They demanded the formation of a separate state comprising the above-mentioned areas and formed a committee viz. "Uttar Khanda Pradesh."

In addition to this, a new kind of political environment had been developed in the Duars area of the Jalpaiguri district. A section of the Rajbanshi people of both Hindu and Muslim community demanded the inclusion of the western Duars with the Cooch Behar State. They argued that before the conquest of Bhutan and the British Indian Government, the Western Duars was a part of the Cooch Behar State. It is also to be mentioned that the people of Western Duars ethnically and linguistically belonged to the same stock with the Cooch Beharies. So, the people of this area dreamt for the establishment of a state where their ethno- linguistic predominance will be preserved. It was a dream of the Duars people, not the Cooch Beharies or the *Hitasadhani Sabha*, as the

*Hitasadhani Sabha* was concerned only about the *Cooch Beharies* and the Cooch Behar State, not the Duars.

This topsy-turvy political development of Cooch Behar State led to alarm the Government of Cooch Behar State as well as the Government of India. Meanwhile the Government had solved the integration problem of the major states of western and southern India, and now turned their attention to this troubled state in the North Eastern part of India. After prolonged deliberation, the treaty of merger of Cooch Behar with India was finally signed on August 28, 1949.<sup>41</sup> Accordance to the treaty, between the Government of India and Jagadeependra Narayan, the king of Cooch Behar, the Government of India took over the administration of Cooch Behar on September 12, 1949 and placed it under a Chief Commissioner.<sup>42</sup>

Thus ended the rule of the historic Royal Dynasty of Cooch Behar, Sardar Patel highly appreciated the Maharaja's gesture and spirit and expressed his gratitude to him.<sup>43</sup> Cooch Behar was marched with the national stream of Indian Union and strengthen India's Northeast frontier. Whatever may be the objectives of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*, it had inspired the ethno-caste-linguistic groups of the Rajbanshis of the western Assam i.e. Goalpara and Kamrupa districts. The 70% people of these two districts belonged to the Rajbanshi community. The Assamese Rajbanshi leaders Sarat Chandra Singha (Later the Chief Minister of Assam) and Purnendu Narayan Singha wanted the merger of Cooch State with Assam. However, the Rajbanshi leader Upendra Nath Barman of Jalpaiguri (formerly Cooch Behari) and others did not support this. They fervently advocated the merger of the Cooch Behar State with West Bengal. In this way, the *Cooch Behari* identity question of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* had

encompassed all the Rajbanshis in one point. It was not the objective of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*; it was actually a by-product of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*'s movement. However, the Rajbanshi leaders could not understand the writings of the wall.

The immature political behaviour and the anti-Indian activities of the Muslims members of the *Hitasadhani Sabha* precipitated the merger of the Cooch Behar State with West Bengal. Nehru and Patel had a kind of sympathy to the demand of the *Cooch Behari* people. It was reflected in the announcement of Nehru in a public meeting at Calcutta in 1949, when he announced that plebiscite would be arranged to honour the opinion of the people of the State. The question of the merger of Cooch Behar would be decided according to the wish of the people.”<sup>44</sup> But the speeches, activities and the behaviour of the *Hitasadhani* people damaged their own cause. The central government was very much perturbed to see the development of Cooch Behar. Therefore, the Government was in a hurry to solve the problem of the Cooch Behar State. On 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1950, the Cooch Behar was merged into West Bengal by a notification issued by the Government of India on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1949 entitled the States Merger (West Bengal) Order, 1949. The Government of West Bengal appointed a Deputy Commissioner and administrator of Cooch Behar. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 1950 Cooch Behar became a district of West Bengal. <sup>45</sup> The *Hitasadhani Sabha* was disbanded and Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah, Anchhar Uddin Ahmed, Bazle Rahman, Moqbul Hussain were externed from Cooch Behar within 24 hours. Abbas Uddin departed to East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) of his own accord. However, Satish Chandra Singh joined Congress Party and later on, he was elected as an M.L.A to West Bengal Assembly and became the Deputy Minister for Transport and Communication. On the other hand, Umesh Chandra

Mandal the leader of the *Praja Mandal* was also inducted by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Ray in his Cabinet as a Minister.

Thus, the power struggle of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*, the Stormy- petrel of Cooch Behar politics on the eve of the merger was ended. The *Hitasadhani Cooch Behari* identity as well as power politics was ended. However, with the remnants of the *Hitasadhani Sabha*, a new wind of politics started, through in different way. The basic issue was revised and enlarged from the *Cooch Behari* identity to the Rajbanshi identity will be discussed later on.

## IV

### 7.4.1:UKD (UTTAR KHANDA DAL):

After the independence of India, there was consistent immigration to Northern part of West Bengal from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) and part of Assam. Consequently, significance changes have taken place in the population structure of this region. The Rajbanshis now feel that this large-scale immigration of refugees has resulted in their economic misery and hardship. Out of this feeling, the young belt of Rajbanshi *Kshatriya Samiti* of North Bengal desired to form a new political party for the people of North Bengal, which would deal with the development of North Bengal only.<sup>46</sup> However, accepting the proposal for the formation of a new political party, most of the old leaders retired from the Executive Committee of the *Kshatriya Samiti* and a new Committee was formed on 31. 05. 1969 with the following members.

President : Harimohan Barman, Rangali Bazna, Jalpaiguri  
Vice President : 1) Panchanan Mallik (since deceased) P.O. Bhangar  
hat, Dt. Jalpaiguri.  
2) Bhupendra Nath Ray (since deceased)  
P.O.Kharija Berubari, Dt.Jalpaiguri.  
General Secretary : Haripada Ray, Jayantipara, Dt. Jalpaiguri.  
Assistant Secretary : 1)Kalindra Nath Barman(since deceased),Panchanan  
Ashram, Rath Khola, Siliguri  
2)Pulin Behari Ray (since deceased), Millpara,  
Dhupguri,Jalpaiguri  
3)Sripada Sarkar, North Dinajpur.  
4)Digendra Lal Ray,(since ceased),P.O. Bhotpatty,  
Jalpaiguri.

There were also 10 members from Jalpaiguri district, one from West Dinajpur and one from Darjeeling. The newly formed committee of the *Kshatriya Samiti* assured that the steps would be initiated for the all round development in respect of language, culture of the Rajbanshis. The then General Secretary of the *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* of North Bengal, Haripada Ray called a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1969 at 2 P..M. at *Thakur Pat* Rajmohan Junior High School under Dhupguri Police Station as the venue for discussion on the various problems of the Rajbanshis. Fortunately, the Dhupguri branch of *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* and *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Yuba Samiti* convened another public meeting at the same venue on the next day under the president ship of Ramprasad Ray and Bijendra Nath Ray and Nirmalendu Ray as joint secretaries. In a public meeting, the leaders belonging to different political parties resigned from the respective political parties on the spot and formed a new political party with an ad-hoc committee and namely it as Uttar

Khanda Dal (UKD).<sup>47</sup> On the other hand we came to know from the constitution of *Uttar Khanda* Party and the memorandum of the Uttar Khanda Dal that the party formed on 5<sup>th</sup> July ,1969 at the historical Jalpesh Temple complex under the Maynaguri Police Station in Jalpaiguri district.<sup>48</sup> Whatever may be the date, the UKD came into existence in July 1969 on the pattern of Jharkhanda Dal and the DMK. It was initiated by the priest of the Jalpesh temple, Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya, a Kamrupi Brahmin. Though the official headquarter of the Uttar Khanda Dal was located at Kantivita of Darjeeling District, the centre of gravity of the movement was concentrated in the Jalpesh Temple complex.<sup>49</sup>

The office barer of the UKD were as follows:

- President :Panchanan Mallick (since deceased from PSP)
- Vice President : Harimohan Barman(from Congress)
- Soma Oraon (since deceased from TMU)
- Bali Chandra Karjee(from congress)
- Secretary : Kalindra Nath Barman(since deceased from KSP)
- Assistant Secretary: Pulin Behari Ray (since deceased from congress)
- Members : Haripada Ray, Wajuddin Ahmed, Girish Chandra Deb Singha, Sitanath Sarkar, Babunath Barman,Sashi Bhusan Adhikary, Banka Behari Barman (since deceased), Digendra Lal Roy(since deceased) Purna Chandra Ray, Gobindra Mohan Ray(since deceased), Gunadhar Barman and many others.

The main slogan of the Uttar Khanda Dal was “Bande Mataram” and “Jai Hok”. According to the version of the Uttar Khandis, the *Sannyasis* were the first to adopt this slogan in North Bengal in 1763 and as a successor of the *Sannyasis*; they took “Bande Mataram” as their catchword.<sup>50</sup> A

view in support of the Uttarkhandis for giving the name of “Uttar Khanda” to their movement was that a large number of labourers working in the tea gardens of Jalpaiguri Duars, Malda and West Dinajpur were sympathetic towards the Jharkhanda Movement. To acquire the support of the tea garden labourers, the Uttarkhandis preferred to take “Khanda” from Jharkhanda and gave the name of “Uttarkhanda” to their party.<sup>51</sup> The jurisdiction of the Uttar Khanda Dal comprising the five districts of North Bengal namely- Malda, West Dinajpur(North & South), Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar.

At the initial stage, the UKD, started its peaceful movement through public meetings covering almost all the villages of North Bengal comprising Mayanaguri, Dhupguri Sadar, Rajganj of Jalpaiguri district and also under Mekhliganj sub-division of Cooch Behar district. The demands of the Uttar Khanda Dal were as follows: <sup>52</sup>

1. Equalization of the value of the personal wealth in money's worth. A raiyat under W.B.E.A. Act was allowed to possess only 25 acres of agricultural lands, the valuation of which was at that time Rs. 75.000/-, whereas a landless businessman could own truck, bus, shop, factory, service without any ceiling. Why is such discrimination?
2. Rationalization of Govt. and Non- Govt. service i.e. ceiling of family service.
3. Reclassification of ration card. The landless people in business services etc. belonged to “A” category ration Cards, whereas an adhiar who cultivated only 2 to 4 acres of land was categorized as “C” class ration cardholder.

4. Implementation of slogan “Matri bhasa matri dugdha-sama” by introducing the medium of education in mother tongue like Rajbanshi/ Kamatapuri, Bodo, Santali, Mundari, Nepali, etc. along with Bengali in Primary Schools within the radius of two kilometers without any public contribution of the locality for the purpose of construction of school building with provision of drinking water and sanitation for girl students.
5. Renaming the North Bengal University as Thakur Panchanan Univeresity.
6. Establishment of High Schools within the radius of four Kilometres with the entire cost by Government for construction of school buildings with arrangements of light, drinking water and sanitation.
7. Introduction of attendance money in cash to the guardians of poorer section of the pupils in the primary schools.
8. Introduction of free education up to class XII.
9. Establishment of agro-based small and medium sized industries in villages like jute spinning, weaving, paper, tobacco and timber products.
10. Introduction of subsidy to the poor and marginal cultivators by way of free distribution of seeds, manure, bullocks, agricultural equipments and cash loan on easy term at minimum rate of interest.
11. Introduction of irrigation facility free of capital cost without any capital contribution by the cultivators.
12. Establishments of free coaching centres for IAS, IFS, WBCS and allied service courses for SC/ST candidates as in Kolkata.
13. Nationalization of Banks and other financial institutions and introduction of proportionate reservation of seats of SC/ST candidates in Government Services.

14. Establishment of High Court, Medical College, Agricultural College, and more Engineering Colleges, Law College and more Technical Educational Institutions in North Bengal.
15. Promotion, preservation, maintenance and development of the cultural heritage of North Bengal and promotion of knowledge on history, culture, language and anthropology of the people of North Bengal and Northern part of the country.
16. Introduction and maintenance of quota for students in Government and Non-Government schools.
17. Maintenance of quota in license and permits for business to the SC/ST candidates.
18. Development of Tourism.

Their main agitation was against mal –distribution of allocation of money in the annual budget. The North Bengal has an area of about 21,325 sq. Kilometers i.e. 25% of West Bengal, inhabited by 30% of SC and ST people. The Uttar Khanda Dal observed that there is vast number of resources in North Bengal, yet the development of North Bengal was in measurable condition particularly the economic condition of the indigenous people became measurable day by day due to leadership of Calcutta- based people. In this regard, a Rajbanshi leader of UKD remarked-“The unabated refugee influx from Bangladesh is making over lives impossible and the time has come for us to govern ourselves.”<sup>53</sup> Keeping this view in mind, the Uttat *Khanda Dal* intended to participate in the general election held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1971. At the initial stage, they contested Mayanaguri, Dhupguri, Falakata seats of Jalpaiguri district and Mekhliganj seat of Cooch Behar district and 1 Lok Sabha seat of Jalpaiguri. The results are given bellow. <sup>54</sup>

Table 7:9: Result of the general election of 1971 in North Bengal

Constituency	Candidates	Party	votes scored
Mayanaguri(SC)	Bijoy Krishna Mahanto	Cong.(R)	39,173
	Haripada Ray	UKD	6,075
Dhupguri(General)	Bhabani Pal	Cong(R)	11,471
	A. Guha Neogi	SSP	11,279
	Wajuddin Ahmed	UKD	5,321
	Suresh Ch. De	C.P.M.	7,054
Jalpaiguri Sadar(Genl)	Anupam Sen	Cong(R)	25,608
	Girish Deb Singha	UKD	1,928
	Renu Chakraborty	CPI	7,551
Falakata (SC)	J. Ray	Cong(R)	13,410
	Abhoy Barman	CPM	11,415
	Panhuman Mallik	UKD	4,302
Mekhliganj(SC)	Sitanat Ray Sarkar	UKD	1,627
	Mihir Kr. Ray	F.B.	19,880
	Manibhushan Ray	Cong(R)	15,982
	Kshir Prasad Barman	C.P.M.	3,996
	Tara Prasanna RayBasunia	Cong(O)	3,745
Jalpaiguri Lok Sabha (ST)	Tuna-Oraon	Cong(R)	1,03,104
	Birsen Kujur	C.P.M.	60,137
	Stephen Kujur	R.S.P.	40,443
	Soma Oraon	UKD	11,097.

No candidate from UKD could win in the general election of 1971. But no party received absolute majority, C.P.M. won 116 and Congress (R) 103 seats and Ajoy Mukherjee formed the Government with Congress (R) coalition. This Government lasted only three months and the Chief Minister voluntarily resigned on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1971 and thereafter on 29<sup>th</sup> June the President Rule was imposed which continued upto 10<sup>th</sup> March 1972. Haripada Ray, one of the candidates of UKD from Mayanaguri constituency has remarked that the main reason of failure of UKD candidate was the lack of funds that were necessary for contesting

the election. He also said that from the date of initiation of the party until the date of election the workers of the party worked hard with full devotion and defrayed the minimum expenditure from their pockets since the newly formed party had no fund of their own.<sup>55</sup>

However, the Uttar Khanda Dal prepared to participate in the general election of 1972. For the development of neglected and underdeveloped North Bengal the Uttar Khanda Dal published the election manifesto in 1972 contained the following points:-<sup>56</sup>

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

In the general election of 1972, the Uttar Khanda Dal had participated in 8 seats but without any success. In this election of March

1972, the congress( R) party regained their position and won 266 seats and under the leadership of Sri Siddhartha Sankar Ray formed the Government. The UKD continued their movement strongly for the next five years but got a set back due to promulgation of emergency through out India w.e.f. 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1975. At that of emergency, the Government of India imposed prohibitory rules and amended the "MISA". The Government banned many regional political parties and the movement of the UKD became very weak during this period. Many of the UKD leaders came back to Congress (R) . In spite of this condition, the UKD continued their activities and again participated in the general election of 1977.

Under the leadership of Sri Jyoti Basu, the Left Front Government comes into power in 1977. The Front Government led by C.P.I.(M.) took several measures for implementation of Ceiling Laws', 'Operation Burga' and 'Panchayati Raj' administration and so on. Under these circumstances, the local Rajbanshi people became the victims to the exploitation and oppression of caste Hindu leaders. The UKD had tried to convince the Government about the deplorable condition of the Northern Bengal; but in vain. Under these circumstances, the UKD called for a separate state for North Bengal- "Kamatapur" which was once the own territory of the Rajbanshis with glorious history and culture. The UKD gave wide publicity to this concept of separate state through leaflets, pamphlets, manifestos, and public meetings. The UKD appeals through their manifesto- "On behalf of the Uttar *Khanda Dal*, we appeal to the people irrespective to caste creed and religion that this party is not communal; it is a party not of Rajbanshis only, not of *bhatias*, but for all. Hindus, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Bengalee, Marwari, Punjabi, Bihari, Nepali, Tribals, Katham, Oraon, Munda and Rajbanshi

*Kshatriyas* all our brothers- we are Indian. We want our developments and rights. We want separate state “Kamatapur” in North Bengal. Don’t be misled by the selfish Kolkatan right-left politicians; rise to the call united for North Bengal.”<sup>57</sup>

The *Uttarkhandis* were then determined to transform North Bengal as “Kamatapur state” because they argued that there are some examples of union territories which had been created within Indian Federal structure depending on language and culture like Maharashtra and Gujrat were developed as separate states in 1960 by partitioning the Bombay Province, Nagaland came out as a separate state from Assam in 1962, Hariyana came out from Punjab in 1966, Maghalaya was given as a separate state in 1971, and Andhra was separated from Madras in 1953. In support of the nomenclature of their state, the *Uttarkhandis* argued that they adopted the name of “Kamatapur” because it had a long historical tradition. In ancient period North Bengal christened by the name of “Kamtapur”. Moreover, according to the *Uttarkhandis* the name of any part of India can be changed by the amendments of the constitution. Hence, their movement cannot be suppressed on this ground. Their proposed “Kamtapur State” would be wider area of 8384 sq. K.M., which would be much greater than many union territories of India from the point of view area, population, and natural resources. Therefore, according to the *Uttarkhandis* their demand of a separate ‘Kamatapur State’ would be legitimate from all respect.<sup>58</sup>

The *Uttar Khanda Dal* also contested in nine seats of general election in 1982. However, none of them has succeeded. In this respect it is to be mentioned here that in order to wise over the masses, the *Uttar Khanda Dal* had contested in the election of 1971, 1972, 1977, and 1982

but in each time, the candidates had lost their deposit. It is also to be mentioned here that they contested generally from the reserve constituency.<sup>59</sup> Though the UKD had contested from the reserve constituency, they did not score much support of their own community. The following table shows the support of UKD candidates in Assembly election of 1982.<sup>60</sup>

Table 7.9 : Result of the general election of 1982 in North Bengal

Districts	Constituency	Candidate	Score
Jalpaiguri	Dhupguri (SC)	Panchanan Mallick	2150
Jalpaiguri	Mayanaguri(SC)	Panchanan Mallick	2959
Jalpaiguri	Jalpaiguri Sadar(Gen)	Rukmini Kanta Ray	999
Jalpaiguri	Rajganj(SC)	Harendra Nath Barman	1264
Jalpaiguri	Madari Hat(ST)	Julias Tapno	2265
Darjeeling	Fasideowa (ST)	Edward Tirke	3173
Cooch Behar	Cooch Behar West(Gen)	Janawuddin Bapari	227
Cooch Behar	Cooch Behar North (Gen)	Rabindra Nath Sarkar	766
Cooch Behar	Mekhliganj (SC)	Manindra Nath Ray	1118

The above table shows that though the UKD had an influence over Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Darjeeling plain, they had no influence over Malda and West Dinajpur. The UKD did not able to give any candidate in the district of Malda and West Dinajpur.<sup>61</sup> However, it is to be noted here that in the *Panchayet* election in some areas of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar, the UKD candidate had elected.<sup>62</sup>

#### 7.4.2: CHARTER OF DEMANDS OF THE UTTAR KHAND DAL:

The charter of demands as approved by the *Kendriya Parishad* of UKD on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1989 presided over by Prabhas Chandra

Singha Shastri, "Uttar Khanda Dal is the only political party which can fulfill the political, social and economic aspirations of the 'Sons of the Soil'. This party believes that the interests of the indigenous people can be safe guarded with the fulfillment of the following demands".<sup>63</sup>

1. Formation of Kamatapur state consisting of five districts of North Bengal.
2. Reservation of 80% of jobs Central Government, State Government, Semi Government and private sector for the sons of the soil.
3. Relaxation of existing rigidities in the educational institutions for the students belonging to Scheduled Castes , Scheduled Tribes and other backward communities like local Muslim, Khen, Kaibarta, Teli, Kamar, Kumar, etc.
4. Reintroduction of English from class III level and reintroduction of primary final examination.
5. Setting up of Navodaya School (Model School) in every district of North Bengal.
6. Introduction of *Kamatapuri* as the medium of education upto school level.
7. Broadcasting of news and other programmes relating to agriculture, music, drama and other cultural functions in *kamatapuri* language on all the radio stations of North Bengal.
8. Reservation of 80% of recruits from North Bengal in Military services for the sons of the soil, setting up of Recruitment Boards in each district and relaxation of age and height for Rajbanshis, Ravas, and Mech candidates.

9. Establishment of Jute, tobacco, and bamboo based industries and reservation of 80% of employment in such industries from amongst the indigenous people.
10. Following the Indira-Mujib agreement, 1971 should be the base year for citizenship.
11. Making the temporary employees permanent at Government approved wages without discrimination between male and female.
12. Arrangement of irrigation facilities for high yielding agriculture and subsidy to the farmers in periods of natural calamities like draught and flood.
13. Reservation of seats for the residents of North Bengal, Medical College, Jalpaiguri Engineering college and Cooch Behar Agriculture College.
14. No handing over of the Tin Bigha of Cooch Behar to Bangladesh.
15. Making non-formal teachers, teachers of adult educational institutes and anganwadi employees permanent.
16. Exchange of Chhit Mahals of India and Bangladesh.
17. Reservation of seats for the SC and ST in proportion of population in the Panchayat Elections.
18. Setting up of a High Court in North Bengal.
19. Extension of reservation for SC and ST upto 2000.
20. Employment of one person from each of their families of the land looser for Tista Barrage, Railways, Road, Industrial units, Schools and Colleges etc. according to qualifications.

*Uttar Khanda Dal* started a movement in 1980 A.D. called "Drive out the refugees" (*Bhatia Khedao Andolan*) from North Bengal. Needless to say, that the UKD had been inspired by the AASU (All Assam Students Union) in this regard. By the end of 1980, this movement

spread in the village level of Northern Bengal. The refugees, who came in North Bengal after independence were mainly the Namasudras. They were in fear that they might be the 'Second time Refugee'. Consequently, conflict came out in front between the Namasudras cultivator and the supporter of UKD. The main cause of the conflict was land. The refugee Namasudras bought land from the Rajbanshis and gradually they improve their poor economic condition and within a short time, they became well established. On the other hand, the former gradually increased in numbers as landless farmer.<sup>64</sup> This conflict between the Rajbanshis and Namasudras became more acute when the Uttar Khandā Dal called the latter as foreigner who had come in this place after 1971. The UTJAS, another ethno-based organization of the Rajbanshis also claimed this demands.<sup>65</sup> The Koch- Rajbanshi International also claimed such demands. Needless to mention here that after 1971 a huge number of refugees came from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) to this part of the country most of whom were SC Namasudras. Therefore, the Namasudras organized counter organization to resist such attitude of the Rajbanshis.<sup>66</sup>

Another remarkable instance of 1980's is that the UKD get an enthusiastic energy from ASSU. It was "Madhupur Dham" of Shankaracharya in Cooch Behar, a religious centre where the political leaders including the Chief Minister of Assam used to come on birth day celebration of Shnakaracharya. In 1983 Hiteswar Shaikiya, Kabir Ray Pradhani(Rajbanshi), Mukut Sharma had come at Madhupurdham. In 1986, Prafulla Mahanta, the Chief Minister of Assam had also come at Madhupur. From this availability of the Ministers and other political leaders of Assam at Madhupurdham, it was imagined that the UKD had direct relation with Assam Ganaparisad (AGP).<sup>67</sup> Frankly speaking; the UKD was more influenced by success of AASU. It was AASU that

inspired UKD to organize a movement called "Rail Roko Andolan" at Altagram Station in Jalpaiguri.<sup>68</sup> More than three thousand *Uttarkhandis* had participated in this movement. Four *Uttarkhandis* had died in the incident at the police firing on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1987. That is why the *Uttarkhandis* observe "Myrtre Day" on 25<sup>th</sup> June in every year.<sup>69</sup> It was the movement from where the *Uttar Khanda Dal* got set back and divided into *Uttar Khand Dal* and *Kamatapur Ganaparishad* and gradually the movement became weak.

If we carefully analyze the composition of UKD, we will find that the most of the leaders belong to Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. Mr. Panchanan Mallick, Rukmini Kanta Ray, Kalindranath Barman, Rabi Sarkar, Suma Oraon and all other senior members were belonged to Jalpaiguri. In Darjeeling, we find only one stalwart Mr. Sampad Ray, an ex-socialist cadre. We do not find any important leader in the UKD who held from Malda and West Dinajpur. Needless to say, that it was Sampad Ray who led a terrorist movement in Darjeeling Tarai region against the Naxalist terrorism who had come in North Bengal from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Nepal and occupied the land from the Rajbanshis. Sampad Ray's movement against the Naxalist terrorism gave impetus energy to the *Uttar Khanda Dal*. In an interview, Sri Sampad Ray says, "Most of the *Jotedars* who had died in the Naxal Terrorism in Darjeeling Tarai were Rajbanshi jotedars."<sup>70</sup> In spite of this enthusiastic leadership of Sampad Ray, the *Uttarkhanda* movement got set back gradually due to the lack of support of the masses. In this regard professor Ananda Gopal Ghosh says, "The *Uttar Khanda* movement is essentially a rural based and not an urban based. They failed to draw the attention of their educated middle class of the Rajbanshi community. It has been proved by their failure to file up any candidates in the election of the Municipalities."<sup>71</sup>

Gopa Kumar says, "The leaders, supporters and sympathizers of UKD mostly came from the landed class."<sup>72</sup> The Rajbanshi community is land-dependent people. Their only occupation is cultivation. Naturally, their livelihood is entirely depended upon on the land. They felt that the refugees of the erstwhile East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) had grabbed their land illegally. The *Uttarkhanda Dal* is agitating for the restoration of their land, which was occupied by the refugees. This programme of restoration of land of the UKD had attracted the large number of Rajbanshi landless labourers.<sup>73</sup>

Professor R.S. Mukhapadhyaya says that the Kamatapuri, Uttarkhanda movement was the result of clash of interest between the indigenous Rajbanshi and the non-Rajbanshis population over control of economic resources of the region. He shows that after Independence the relative proportion of the Rajbanshi to total population as well as to the SC and /non- SC population of North Bengal has decreased considerably. Due to the increases of non-Rajbanshis population, the Rajbanshi had limited chance to set absorb in the non-agricultural occupations in competition with the alien population.<sup>74</sup> It is to be noted that one of the demands for the *Uttarkhanda Dal* was reservation of jobs for the local people in state and semi-state government establishment private firms and tea gardens in the Rajbanshi tract.<sup>75</sup> In a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi in 1981, and the UKD categorically express that-

"Immediate effect of the partition, as now well known, was the huge influx of refugees from the then East Pakistan(Now Bangladesh). West Bengal had to throw its border open and its arms of welcome wide to receive the East Pakistan refugees(Now Banladeshi), as they were known as 'one nation', viz., the

Bengalese, during the pre-partitioned societies. Hence North Bengal which happened, because of a chance of historical circumstances, to be part of West Bengal could not also raise its voice of objection and had been forced by the command of history to fall in line with West Bengal in its endeavour to accommodate the refugees. As a result North Bengal had to live with a chunk of people alien to its customs language and culture.”<sup>76</sup>

The UKD had received a rude shock in 1987. The Dal was formally divided in that year and the *Kamatapur Gana Parishad* was formed in the pattern of the *Asom Gana Parishad*.<sup>77</sup> Professor A.G. Ghosh also says that in the presence of strong national party the regional parties can not get opportunities to be strong in this region. In addition to these, the neo- middle class of the Rajbanshi community is more interested to get reservation facilities than any direct confrontation with the Government.<sup>78</sup> Above all, the population of strength of the Rajbanshi is not favorable for the creation of a separate state at that time. According to the Census report 1971, the Rajbanshis are only 13.88% of the total population of North Bengal. Naturally, the demand for a separate State is not getting wide support from the different corners including the intellectuals.

## V

### **7.5.1: UTJAS (UTTARBANGA TAPASILI JATI O ADIVASI SANGATHAN):**

The *Uttarbanga Tapasili Jati O Adivasi Samgathan* – the UTJAS an organization moves on socio-economic, political, and cultural

discrimination in the area of North Bengal. It was one of the ethno- based organization of the Rajbanshi people of northern part of India particularly North Bengal of West Bengal. From 1979 – 1989 the UTJAS movement tried to establish their claim on the socio-economical development and autonomy in North Bengal to their level best. It was started under leadership of Mr. Naren Das (Now advocate in Jalpaiguri Bar Association) with the active support of the students of North Bengal University in 1976. The name of the organization was *Uttar Banga Viswavidyalaya Tapasili Jati O Adivasi Chhatra Sangathan* to deal with the acute problems of admission, stipend and also misbehaviour from the upper class students.<sup>79</sup> In that period, the SC/ST students were few in number in the University area and as such, the higher caste students insulted them now and then.<sup>80</sup> The other members of the *Sangathan* were – Amal Sarkar, Ranjit Adhikary, Satyendra Nath Barman, Ramesh Mandal, Biren Ray, Yugal Kishore Ray Bir, Krishna Kanta Ray etc. At initial phase of the movement, it encountered challenge to the Government and the government developmental programmes were held responsible for the marginalization of SC and ST students in the different sections of University's degree.<sup>81</sup> Incidentally on third or fourth day of the formation of *Chhatra Sangathan*, some of the students insulted on the members at the dining hall of Vevekananda Hostel in North Bengal University at the time of dinner. Receiving this information, all the members of the *Sangathan* reached the spot within a few minutes and the wrongdoers were bound to seek apology.<sup>82</sup> Under this circumstance, a good number of other caste students, especially Muslims extended support to the *Sangathan* and criticized the wrongdoers. However, the necessity of a broad based student's organization was felt very soon. Thus, a new alliance among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Class was formed as a new organization namely

*Uttarbanga Tapasili Jati O Adivasi Students Organization* in 1977. Bijoy Chandra Barman, Pradip Kumar Ray, and Naren Das were holding the post of secretaries from time to time. The organization-launched movement through out North Bengal in various institutions to implement the Government declared facilities for the SC/ST students and uplift the economic conditions of the downtrodden people.

The period from 1976 to 1980 was the prime period for the student movement in North Bengal and the Government was compelled to implement the declared facilities in the educational institutions for their movement. The main issues of the student movement were as follows-<sup>83</sup>

1. Organize protest against the insult/ assault upon any member of down trodden people especially on the students by the upper caste students.
2. Keeping constant pressure on the heads of educational institutions and the administrative heads for regular payment of stipend, book grant and hostel grant.
3. Keeping close watch on the point that the students selected according to general merit shall not be included in reserved quota.
4. Allowing the students to appear in examination and to remain in hostel without payments of dues of the institution or hostel with the undertaking that they would pay the dues on receiving the payments of SC and ST stipend from the government authority.

It is for such agitations that the institutions were compelled to regularize the payments of stipends, book-grants, hostel grants and to allow the non-paying poor students to stay in hostel and to sit for examinations until the receipt of payments from the Government authority. It should be mentioned here that after that agitation the North Bengal University had

introduced reservation system in this University and in all colleges under its justification from the last part of 1977.

On May 1978, a *padayatra* was organized for a period of 28 days from Tufanganj, Cooch Behar to Shibmandir, Siliguri under the guidance of the students organization. The student leaders contacted with the downtrodden people of all the districts of North Bengal by that time. All the leaders agreed to open a new front to fight for reservation in employment and other problems of people in general. The *Sangathan* drew up economic and cultural awareness programmes to ST/ST people. In the meanwhile, the State Government established West Bengal SC and ST Development and Finance Corporation' with a view to develop the downtrodden people through economic programmes with considerable subsidy. Unfortunately, this fact was either being completely unclosed to people or the people were unaware of it. However, very soon it was come out to the people. Under this circumstance, the Organization called its meeting in Tufanganj town in Krishak Samiti's Office and decided to submit a memorandum to the Sub Divisional Officer, Tufanganj. According to the plan, the organization submitted the proposed Memorandum to the sub divisional officer, Tufanganj with the following demands.<sup>84</sup>

1. The members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be provided with loan facility for improving their financial conditions.
2. Vested land to be distributed as per provisions of west Bengal Land Reforms Act with priorities to scheduled tribes, Scheduled Castes, and general castes.

3. The students would be allowed to write/ declare, in any application in column of mother tongue, their own mother language i.e. Rabha, Oroan and Kamatapuri etc. in place of Bengali.

The concept of subsidy of 25% and 50% was unknown to the downtrodden people of North Bengal. Because of awareness, the people began to apply for the declared loan at direct supervision of the *Sangathan* and within a few weeks, few hundred applications were filed before the authority. However, the authority of West Bengal Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Development and Finance Corporation was not in a position to dispose of the applications for want of sufficient fund and proper machinery to handle such huge number of applications. Naturally, the administration took help of the local elected leaders and ruling political leaders who tried to restrain the people from filing application at their level best and refused to certify the eligibility of the applications.<sup>85</sup> On this issue of deprivation people organized themselves under the banner of *Uttar Banga Tapasili Jati O Adivasi Sangathan* (UTJAS) at Jamerdanga High School ground, Tufanganj in Cooch Behar district ignoring the threat of the ruling party leaders. Naren Das, Sachin Barman, Hiralal Layek, Sambar Hari Shankar, Subal Chandra Barman and Probhat Sen Ishore took the leading part of the *Sangathan*.<sup>86</sup> The first central conference of the UTJAS was held at Narasingha Vidyapith at Kadamtala (now Shibmandir), Darjeeling district in 1981A.D. The delegates from all districts of North Bengal had participated in this conference. Apart from the *Tapasili and Adivasi* delegates, Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh of History Department and Prof. Manas Das Gupta from economics Department of North Bengal University also took participate in the conference.<sup>87</sup> The significance of the foundation conference of the

UTJAS is very great and it is like lighting a little lamp to dispel that darkness which the constitution of the *Sangathan* drafted. <sup>88</sup>

1. To fight against the socio-economic discrimination among the members of weaker section of people particularly members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who are the largest number of citizen of North Bengal.
2. To uplift the socio-economic condition of the members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, who has been remaining neglected and backward following traditional mode of agriculture?
3. To undertake agitation for the redresses of grievance in any school of thoughts either in economic, cultural, historical or in trade and agriculture and for the extension, improvement, and protection of such matters as are incidental to the attainment of the objects.
4. To demand for 60% reservation in service and study centre both professional and sectarian or elementary for the inhabitants of North Bengal.
5. To stop the foreigners' infiltration that has threatened the existence of indigenous people in respect of their social, economical, cultural and political life and that has also threatened communal harmony.
6. To promote the interests of the people of North Bengal in matters relating to historical places and to maintain cultural affinity and to protect monuments of the erstwhile Cooch Behar.
7. To endeavour mobilization for the execution of the B.P. Mandal Commission's Recommendation.

8. To endeavour for the achievement of the political gain on the basis of alternative preventive measures to the burning problem of India ;and
9. To extend the co-operation among the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to increase the participation in agitation.

The main issues of the UTJAS movement in North Bengal were socio- economic backwardness, threat of refugee influx in North Bengal, drawback policies of the ruling Government, social injustice and insecurity and the measurable condition of the local people etc. The main grievance of the UTJAS was that, the huge areas of lands starting from Darjeeling hill to Malda plains in the south and in the Cooch Behar are well fertile with the flow of the river *Tistaa*, *Toorsa* and *Mahananda*, vast areas is covered with evergreen rich forest but to be hopelessly backward in every respect. There was no significant development concerning agriculture, industry, education etc. during the British rule in spite of increase possibilities for the same was there.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, growth of development in neither satisfactory nor spectacular. It is also lagging behind in infrastructure facilities like power, transport and communication, banking and health and education. The scope of education is still far behind in this region compared to the other parts of the country. As a result, of which the people of this particular region are trailing behind either in the field of services or any other independent professional line. In absence of any industrial development and their economical activities, agriculture has been the only living sources of the people of this region but the people of this region solely dependent only on nature for agriculture.<sup>90</sup> Consequently, production would not be sufficient according the need of the population. Since the time of the

British regime and even after the independence, huge amount of money has been earned from tea industry. Bulk of revenue income of the governments come from tea and forest property of North Bengal, but it is a matter of regret that even a small portion of which has not been spent for the development of all this area so far.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to these, after independence, the mushrooming of the tea garden in North Bengal there was a gradual growth of land *mafia* in this region trying to mobilize the only large- scale agro-based industry of the region. Most of the land, which was earlier, own by the local Scheduled Castes communities of Koch and Rajbanshis was thus brought over by the affluent Hindus refugees from Bangladesh and Marwaries from Rajasthan. The marginalization and pauperization of the indigenous Rajbanshis has given rise to a general feeling of alienation and unrest among them, which is further aggravated by the apathy shown by the mainstream society primarily composed of the upwardly mobile Bengali and Marwari community.<sup>92</sup> Alienated from their land and traditional occupation eroded of this cultural and linguistic identity they find themselves at the receiving end of a degrading eco-system and a alien social structure which is different to this traditional identity .This has led to a feeling of deprivation and disillusionment among the Rajbanshis who are now growing more and more identity conscious, in terms of history, language, traditional social structure, occupation and land rights.

One of the main issues of the UTJAS movement was the influx of refugee from erstwhile East Bengal (East Pakistan now Bangladesh). The UTJAS continuously propagated that the refugees those who entered into North Bengal of 1971 should not be given political rights and vested land must not be distributed to them.<sup>93</sup> The infiltration

of Bangladesh; Bhutanese, Nepalese emigrants have put this North Bengal in a quandary. Ever increasing population in North Bengal created so many socio-economic problems and the UTJAS movement was the consequent of this population.<sup>94</sup> The following table shows how the population of North Bengal gradually increased after 1961.<sup>95</sup>

Table 7:10 Population growth of North Bengal (1951-1981)

District/State	Area/ Sq. K.M.	1951	1961	1971	1981	% of Decadal growth (1971-1981)
Darjeeling	3386	469.6	624.6	781.8	1024.2	28.78
Cooch Behar	3075	668.1	1319.8	1414.2	1771.8	25.25
Jalpaiguri	6224	916.7	1369.3	1750.1	2217.8	26.11
W.Dinajpur	5206	976.9	1323.8	1857.9	1404.9	29.19
(North & South)						
Malda	3713	937.6	1221.9	1612.7	2631.8	26.19
West Bengal	21625	3959.7	5549.4	7418.7	9447.6	22.96

Source: Census Report of Indian, 1981 (population in lakhs)

The table 7.10 shows that after 1961 population of North Bengal was gradually being increased. The population growth rate was much more in Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Dinajpur. If we try to understand the causes of the growth of population, we will find that the Tibetans took shelter in the Duars in 1960, because of “Bangal Kheda Andolan” in Assam in 1960-61, a large number of refugees came in Uttar Banga, and thousand of Nepalese were driven away from Meghalaya or Bhutan who took shelter in North Bengal. Apart from these, after the war between India and Pakistan in 1965, huge number of refugees infiltrated in North Bengal.<sup>96</sup> Marcus Dam in his article “*Bhutanese Refugees and the Indian Game Politics*” says –“Indian authorities continue to thwart attempts by Bhutanese refugees settle in camps along Nepalese eastern border to

march back to their homeland. The problem of these displaced people is expected to snowball into a major geographical crisis in North Bengal specially Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri because they are sandwiched between Nepal and Bhutan.”<sup>97</sup> J.C. Samaddar wrote a letter to the editor of *The Statesman* on March 6, 1996 headed as “*Threat of Refugee Influx*”, that the political turmoil in Bangladesh is sure to hit its economy hard with loss of production following unending spells of agitation, the Government may have to go in for massive foreign aid. India is concern about influx of refugees, the infiltration across in order, now a trickle, may take a turn for the worse.”<sup>98</sup> The table 7.10 also shows that the decadal growth of population of all districts more higher than West Bengal in 1971-81. The tables 7.4 and 7.5 show that after 1971 immigration of refugees much more in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts because they are located in international border areas. If we follow the table 7.2, we will find that the comparative population growth rate of SC is rather high than Rajbanshis population in West Bengal according to the Census Reports from 1971-1991. The table 7.3 shows the population growth rates of West Bengal and North Bengal where comparative growth rate of population is higher than West Bengal from 1951-2001.

Under this circumstance, the UTJAS articulates infiltration immigrants have polluted the regional balance relating to socio-economic development of North Bengal. This imbalance socio-economic development lead identity challenge to the weaker section of the people.<sup>99</sup> In this respect, Sajal Basu says –“A particular group shifts its identity, its distinctness, otherness as an ethnic nation in course of age-long feeling of being discriminated, a sense of in security and aspiration for a larger share in power.”<sup>100</sup>

Like UKD the UTJAS, criticized the draw back policy of the Government regarding land reform. The UTJAS articulates the Left Front Government policy fails to bridge between the alternative process of culture and generation of mass concepts. Accordingly, the socio-economic development has not been achieved, yet in all means of production mainly due to drawbacks of land reforms.<sup>101</sup> The three phases of Land reforms programme of Left Front Government like –(i) *Operation Burga*, which implies recording the names of the *Bargadar* to ensure their right against forcible or motivated eviction; (ii) A 75 :25 share cropping ratio between the *bargadar* and the land owner where the cost of production is borne by the former and (iii) A minimum wage rate of Rs. 8.10 for the daily labourer , have not succeeded in many respect.<sup>102</sup> Table 7.7 and 7.8 show that refugee SC were benefited more than the Rajbanshis by the distribution of vested lands to the landless agricultural labourer by the United Front and Left Front Government. This had direct impact on the ethnic movement of North Bengal. The Rajbanshis were forced to migrate into the nearby urban areas and to the other province only to be absorbed into the marginalize section workers, domestic servants whose survival depended upon the selling of labour power. In this changed economic order, they became backward in politically, economically, and socially for generation after generation. Even they could not compete themselves with the migrated *Namasudras* to establish their right within SC status. Under this circumstance, tension has been grown in some section of the Rajbanshis in respect of separate state and autonomy in North Bengal. However, the UTJAS propagates that, "What ever we are doing, it is for the best interest of our country as a whole by trying to involve the majority of the population in the development work of the country. This is movement of all the *adivasis*, backward communities of entire North Bengal aiming at the achievement of rights,

as well as to render their best services in building up a new, powerful and prosperous India along with the privileged classes and castes” .<sup>103</sup>

### **7.5.2: CHARTER OF DEMANDS OF THE UTJAS:<sup>104</sup>**

1. The purpose of this movement is to find out the ways and means for the development of North Bengal and remain free from all political influence.
2. North Bengal should be declared as backward zone and an effective and scientific planning should be undertaken for its development.
3. For the cultural development of the North Bengal people, there should be a cultural department of Govt. for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.
4. A special provision should be made for business loan, employment etc. both in the Govt. and private services. At least 44% seats should be reserved in school service for backward communities. It is also demanded that the economically backward but not Scheduled; at 16% seats should be reserved for them in this regard. Strong penal measure should be taken against those persons who will violate the provision.
5. Primary education should be made compulsory and in *adivasi* dominated areas the medium of teaching should be in Hindi.
6. Scheduled Castes and Tribal candidates should be given preference in appointing the teachers and there should be reservation of seats for them at appreciating percent.
7. Uniform should be provided for the Scheduled Castes and *adivasi* students.
8. Book grant must be disbursed within February of every calendar year, and maintenance allowance should be paid in every three months.

9. 25% seats should be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes students for admission in North Bengal Medical College, Engineering College, University and other vocational institutions. Age bar required marks should be relaxed for their admission.
10. Duly elected representatives of Scheduled Castes and Tribes should be taken in the Governing Body and Senate of North Bengal University, North Bengal Medical College, Engineering College etc.
11. More Secondary, Higher Secondary Schools, Colleges should be established as per area wise requirements in North Bengal for further expansion of Education, and for the *adivasi* students, medium of education should be in Hindi.
12. Education grants for SC/ST students should be extended to the families who are under Rs.1000/-income callings, instead of three hundred rupees at present.
13. Transfer of lands of the SC/ST should be declared illegal and any complaint in this regard should be heard and disposed of within time limit.
14. Irrigation and flood control arrangement should be done on emergency basis for modern cultivation.
15. All the vested lands should be distributed amongst the SC and ST poor farmers.
16. Agricultural grants should be provided for the marginal and small farmers.
17. The price of agricultural goods and industrial goods should be so fixed so that the balance of income among all group of people are maintained.
18. Easy termed loan should be offered for reforming all the silted ponds or the same should be taken over by the Government. Intensify fisheries through Fishermen Corporative.

19. The food for work scheme should be continued for Rural Developmental Works and to solve rural unemployment problem partly.
20. Adequate arrangement of wholesome drinking water for every village people should be done within 5 years time.
21. At least one latrine for every household be provided by the Govt. in the interest of Public health.
22. The Tea and other big Industries should be nationalized immediately. As huge revenue is earned by both the State and Central Govt. from North Bengal Zone, it is therefore, demanded that the proportionate share of which should be invested in rural oriented industries at Bengal for the overall interest of the country.
23. For industrial development of this region, communication must be improved and arrangement should be made for generation of power and vocational training.
24. The conditions for building up cement and fertilizer factories, paper mills and wood craft etc. exist in this region which should be given shape without killing any further time.
25. The ratio of income or in independent profession and expenditure ceiling also to be fixed at par with average national income.
26. North Bengal should not be take any responsibility of the refugees coming from outside India particularly Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan. Homeland should be claimed from Bangladesh for rehabilitation for the refugees dropped out from Assam.
27. The name of the foreign citizens came in India after 1971, should be eradicated from voter list. They should be rehabilitated in National Level.
28. Women seats should be reserved in respect of education and service.

The UTJAS is organized by unfurling flag four in colours. It has composed of deep saffron, black and red half part and remaining part is white. In the white part of the flag, there is a green circle where is symbol of balance(*Naya Danda*) .The UTJAS strives to make it a flag of socialism, equality and social justice and of all the oppressed sections of the society.<sup>107</sup> The president of the UTJAS pledges –“ the principals and nobilities of the *Sangathan* that it hates the process of re-constructing of the States, it is expected to construct or re organize the state on the basis of following condition of administrative structure, geographical boundaries and socio-economical values but not the following of linguistic, cultural and basis of communalism.”<sup>108</sup>

### **7.5.3: AGITATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE UTJAS:**

From 1979 to 1986, the UTJAS spread out its activities through out North Bengal by its various organizations. It criticized the Left Front Government's policy of land reforms and organized mass rally, meetings and strikes.<sup>109</sup> Regarding that question of possession and distribution of *khas* land (vested land) several clashes broke out between the UTJAS supporters and the Left Party supporters on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1980 at Harihat in Tufanganj subdivision, Cooch Behar. The police arrested several members of UTJAS and when the delegates came to a deputation to meet the S.D.O. of Tufanganj, the police charged *lathis* and fired on the gathering. Two supporters namely, Naren Barman and Nimai Barman were injured and the former was died on 21<sup>st</sup> April in M.J.N. Hospital, Cooch Behar.<sup>110</sup> This incident was a landmark for the UTJAS movement. The UTJAS organized meeting, rally, mass hunger strikes from 1<sup>st</sup> March

to 8<sup>th</sup> July 1980 in every districts of North Bengal and pressure on the local Government. Under the leadership of Probhat Barman, secretary of UTJAS, a team of delegates comprising Probhat Sen Ishore, Manindra Nath Das, Karuna Kanta Das, Sachindra Nath Barman and Naren Das submitted a detailed memorandum to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi on August 21, 1980 with following points- <sup>111</sup>

1. Demand for judicial enquiry on the issue of Naren Barman who was died by the police firing at Tufanganj when UTJAS procession was marching towards town and articulating for granting financial aid to the families who were both wounded and assassinated and proceed the punishment to the police who were engage in operations.
2. Demand for introducing the industrialization in North Bengal on national products.
3. Demand for to open the IAS and WBCS examinations centre and Circuit Branch at Siliguri.
4. Filling of the service quota of Scheduled Castes and Tribes people as early as possible in proportion of population.
5. Development of North Bengal in all respects and protecting the scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people from eviction and also from the torture from government and other non-government organizations.

The secretary of UTJAS urged the Prime Minister of India to immediately invest an official emissary of the Central Government of India to Tufanganj for verifying the present issue and depriving condition of SC & ST peoples. <sup>112</sup> After discussion, the *Sangathan* was assured that she would send a team to enquire into the incident and also call for a

report the Home Minister of West Bengal. Within 15 days, a team consisting of two officials came to Tufanganj and enquired into all the incidents of the police firing and other incidents thereafter. During the visit to New Delhi, the delegation also met the central ministers viz Mr. Jogendra Makoan, Mr Pranab Mukherjee and the M.Ps viz Mr. Purna Narayan Sinha, Mr Amar Ray Prodhan, Mr. Piyus Tirkey, Mr. Ranendra Barman, Mr. Ladli Mohan Nigam, Mr. Hembati Nandan Bahuguna and others of different political groups. The team also met Bhola Pashowan Sastri, the then Chairman of National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission.

In the secretarial speeches at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Central Conference of the UTJAS which was held at Cooch Behar on 18-19 and 20 February, 1983, the following aim of actions were resolution during agitations of 1981 and 1982 as follows -<sup>113</sup>

1. To protest against the assault of Moral Ray, resident of Mathabhanga, Cooch Behar, 9 schools' students called froth 10 days *bandh*.
2. Over the demand for "6 points" on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1981, a 24 hours '*Bandh*' was called forth in front of administrative offices both Subdivision and district levels of North Bengal. The number of agitations was about 6700.
3. To protest against demolition the *Panchanan Samiti Bhawan* at Tufanganj, Cooch Behar on September 23, 1981, about 792 agitators were arrested.
4. Over the demands of several issues a number, of seven thousand women's' deputation was submitted to the District Magistrate of

Balurghat by leadership of Mrs. Ranjana Roy and Ms. Sunity Hassdar.

5. The leaders were attracted and wounded by cadres of CPI(M), when a procession of UTJAS was marching around the Tufanganj town.
6. To observe a "Black Flag Day" on December 6, 1981 during the visit of the Chief Minister of West Bengal at Tufanganj and Cooch Behar respectively in protest against alleged atrocities and discrimination perpetrated on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
7. To protest against illegal transfer of Professor of the Balurghat Junior B.T.College a mass petition was submitted to the District Magistrate by Mrs. Ranjana Ray participating with about six thousand agitators.
8. Through out North Bengal a demonstration movement was launched in protest against the alleged the "Fire on" the huts of the SC/ST people at Itahar.
9. To observe "Shahit Dibash" on April 21, 1982, "Civil Disobedience" was launched before the all sub-division offices of North Bengal.
10. On June 17-18, 1982 to launch 8 points of demand, a mass picketing was held at every sub-divisional officers of North Bengal.

The next step of the UTJAS agitation was a memorandum addressed to the President of India with copies to the Prime Minister of India, Home Minister of India and opposition leader of parliament of India in March 29, 1984 by the president of UTJAS. It was the memorandum where the UTJAS complained with the imaginary genocide

of SC/ST and apartheid by the West Bengal Government against SC/ST people in North Bengal and launched for the comprehension development of North Bengal articulating with 10 points charter demands.<sup>114</sup> As there was no result of memorandum, the UTJAS decided to spread their movement very widely.

The UTJAS alleges that they had submitted several memorandums to the Government relating for granting of facilities of SC/ST; stoppage false certificate and socio-economic development of North Bengal. In spite of this, they have been shuddering to be burning of houses of local people; denying work to local people, and snatching away the vast lands from the SC/ST people, which would be distributed in favour of the foreigners – among, have proved that North Bengal is passing through a critical phase.<sup>115</sup>

The State Government worried over the certain developments in North Bengal and counter acted that the UTJAS was responsible about the critical position in North Bengal.<sup>116</sup> Under this issue, a three-days demonstration from the September 24-26 1985 by members of *Uttarbanga Tapasili Jati O Adivasi Yuba Chhatra Sangathan* at Esplanade East in Calcutta and at outside various State Government offices in North Bengal. The demonstrations were protesting against the step motherly attitude of the Government towards SC/ ST of North Bengal. A memorandum, containing 15 points charter of demands handed over to Mr. Binay Chowdhury, the Minister of Land Reforms, Government of West Bengal.<sup>117</sup> There after the UTJAS demonstrated picketing, street corner meeting in different places and demanded that the reservation quota for the SC /ST people should be filled, implementation of the “Mandal Commissions Report”, hostel grants for the SC /ST

students increased and special attention given to the problems of the SC /ST in North Bengal. Civil Disobedience programmes, in support of their demands, were held during the day in all the district head quarters. <sup>118</sup>

On 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1986, the members of the UTJAS held a demonstration at Esplanade East Calcutta complaining “the state Government ‘Apathy’ towards North Bengal. Two memorandums addressed to the Chief Minister and the Governor, were submitted by the organization containing a 15 points charter of demands. Most of them were as follows- <sup>119</sup>

1. The main demand is 60% seat reservation for the students of North Bengal in the medical college, engineering college and other higher education institutions in North Bengal .
2. Demand to step for stopping the infiltration of foreigners into North Bengal.
3. They also demanded that the names of all foreigners who came into North Bengal after 1971, to be stricken from the electoral rolls, and
4. They called for the introduction of modern and scientific methods of agriculture and the setting up of more small industrial scale and medium scale.

The forth-central conference of the UTJAS was held on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1987 at Alipurduar, in Jalpaiguri. More than 40 thousand delegates participated in the conference from different parts of North Bengal. <sup>120</sup> It was the manifesto of the 4<sup>th</sup> annual conference of UTJAS that the *Sangathan* appeals- “You may be member of any political party which is not hindrance, as a scheduled you have been exploited day by

day deprived of constitutional rights and privileges, discriminated in social justice... our endeavour for developing the socio-economic condition of the North Bengal..... it is warning that general development is basis end of UTJAS but not sectarian review.”<sup>121</sup> But it was a painful and undemocratic events to assert whom a public procession was marching towards conference, in the mean time a brutal attack came across in it by anti- social elements.<sup>122</sup> As a consequent, 100 of delegates were wounded and many maids were assaulted in different ways. Unfortunately, the Police was very weak to challenge the evil attack. As a result, the delegates had been threat from both administrative help and social kind perusal also.<sup>123</sup>

Regarding Alipurduar tragedy, the then irrigation Minister, Mr. Nani Bhattacharjee says at an interview of press on 17.01.87 at Mathabhanga, “He would produce a report to the Chief Minister Mr. Jyoti Basu about it.” He also says, “....in the procession of UTJAS, the members used perverse and exciting speech and slogans were result of occurrence and that was pretence of local congress leaders”.<sup>124</sup> On the other hand, Mr Biswaranjan Sarkar, the local congress leaders articulated that the CPI (M) and RSP played the occurrence. The then president of the *Prodesh Congress*, Mr. Priyaranjan Das Munshi asserted that the Alipurduar tragedy was proved that North Bengal has been suffering from all administrative proceedings and social injustice.<sup>125</sup> Under this circumstance of Alipurduar, the UTJAS decided to launch long and steady movement through out North Bengal. On February 9, 1987 A.D. the UTJAS , laid siege to all North Bengal’s National Highways for 12 hours from 6 am to 6 pm in protest against the State Government’s ‘apathy’ towards North Bengal. The UTJAS held a conference on January 10-11, 1987 A.D. at Alipurduar court premises. It also articulated for

judicial enquiry arrest to the criminals, grant in compensation to the wounded and judicial punishment to the criminals .<sup>126</sup>

The Fifth Central Conference of the UTJAS was held at Kiliaganj in Uttar Dinajpur District of North Bengal. To create a permanent third force or national political party, the UTJAS shall have to endeavour tenaciously bring all the parties namely *Karnataka Raja Raykot Sangha*, *Dalit Sangharsh Samity* (Karnataka) ,*Uttarkhanda Sangharsh Bahini* (UP), *Samata Sangathan* ,*Yuba Chhatra Bahini* and *Jana Mukti Sangharsh Bahini* professing equality together on the platform of Democratic Socialism called *Jana-Andolan Samanyaya Samiti*(J.S.S.). Building up of the third force is going to be a long-term process and it will occur in a phased manner starting with the programmatic alliance with a view to forming an ultimate unity based on definite ideology most suitable to Indian conditions.<sup>127</sup>

The Sixth Central Conference of UTJAS was held at Dinhat, Cooch Behar where in decided that *Kishan O Mazdoor Sangathan* would be politicized by fighting in election.<sup>128</sup> In 1994, *Mahila Uttarbanga Tapasili Jati O Adivasi Sangathan* and *Kishan O Mazdoor Sangathan* alienated at Jalpaiguri Central Conference.<sup>129</sup> It was 1995, the seventh Central Conference of UTJAS ,the movement started with a new venture with the formation of *Uttar Banga Swayatwa Shasan Mancha* which consisted of CPI(ML) (*Communist Party of India[Marxist Liberation]*), TASSO(*Transferred Area of Surjapur Organization*), UBJSS(*Uttar Banga Jana- Andalon Samannya Samiti*), Rana Group, Forward Block (Kamal Guha fraction), Rajbanshi Yuba Sangathan, UTJAS and KMS(*Kishan Majdoor Sangathan*). The new *Mancha* came out as “*Samajbadi Jana Parishad*”, the foundation conference of this *Mancha*

was on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1994 to 1<sup>st</sup> January 1995 at Thana, Maharashtra. <sup>130</sup>  
It is homage to appeal to all the political Organizations striving for equality to consider the concept of the third force based on socialist ideology instead of pursuing illusionary and temporary alliances. In this respect, Mrs. Ranjana Ray, president of the UTJAS says- "UTJAS not only move for North Bengal but also it transforms into national movement in character." <sup>131</sup>

Naturally, a question has been raised about the ideology of UTJAS. If we discuss it in historical perspective, it will be cleared that at the initial stage the UTJAS started its movement for socio-economic development of North Bengal but gradually bypassed its initial aims and finally it was turned into a third force political organization. The non-Rajbanshis or caste Hindu leaders did not support these issues of the UTJAS. Consequently, the organization lost its popularity itself. The ideology of autonomy and separatism issue of the UTJAS led to obscurity to fulfill the necessity of people. <sup>132</sup> As a result, the *Sangathan* lost its faith from the very public support. In addition to this, frequent attack on the supporters of the UTJAS and no satisfactory remedy that led the supporters in confusion about the future of the movement. Above all, the national parties are very strong in this region. So, it is very tough for the regional party to secure support from the masses. One of the main demand of the UTJAS was to drive out refugees particularly who came from Bangladesh after 1971. But apart from the Bangladeshis, there were so many other people came into this area. Was it possible to drive out them from North Bengal ? Regarding this question, there was a contradictory opinion between the UTJAS supporters and others. This was also the cause of unpopularity of the *Sangathan*. Above all, the emergence of KPP in the last decade of twentieth century, with demand

of separate state caused the set back of the movement.<sup>133</sup> Naren Das one of the secretary of the UTJAS remarks- “The *sangathan* lost its ground towards the end of 1990, when the leaders began to nourish the dream of being the national leader leaving the nucleus of home leadership and began to tie up with same, other organizations whose attitude was against the policy of reservation. The relation of the *Sangathan* with *Kishan* organization of Mr. Mahendra Singh Tikayat gave the final blow to the *Sangathan*”.<sup>134</sup> Now, the UTJAS continue its activities with the name of *Samajbadi Jana Parisad*, in North Bengal of present West Bengal like a subterranean river.

Though the *Sangathan* lost its popularity the dream of the *Sangathan* became fruitful in some cases when the ruling Government took same developmental measures in North Bengal –like the creation of *Uttar Banga Unnyayan Parisad* and their own men to speak in their own voice for the development of their culture, language, history and economy. It can therefore, be safely concluded that the mission of the of the UTJAS was not wrong; rather it was still in remains the final slogan needed for all round development of North Bengal and its people but it was not led in appropriate ideology.

## VI

Though the scope of discussion of our study is limited from 1891 to 1979, the Koch- Rajbanshi people of Assam and the Rajbanshi people of Northern Bengal had launched several political movements after 1979.

While the UKD and the UTJAS were engaged in mobilization of the SC / ST peoples of North Bengal, the Koch Rajbanshis established one socio-political organization namely the Bharatiya Koch Rajbanshi Kshatriya Mahashabha (BKRKM) in Assam in 1984. They demanded the formation of a separate state in North Bengal and over all development of the Koch Rajbanshi community under the leadership of Dr. Purna Narayan Singh (M.P. from Tezpur). In 1984, the first conference of BKRKM held at Dhubri district in Assam where the *Bangiyo Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti* and the leader of UKD, Sri Panchanan Mallick and large number of Rajbanshi delegates from Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura participated. In this conference, the BKRKM expresses that “the Rajbanshis are indigenous people of eastern and northeastern India, highly backward in social, political, educational, and economic affairs although they have Scheduled Caste status in West Bengal and Tripura. However, in other states they do not have Scheduled Caste status. So all Koch –Rajbanshi of India should stand united and make efforts to secure equal social, political and economic status as one class .<sup>135</sup> The second conference of the BKRKM was held at Burirhat, Dinhata subdivision of Cooch Behar district on 23-24 February in 1986 where the BKRKM was renamed as *Koch –Rajbanshi International* (KRI). The KRI had deep concern for the cultural linguistic identity of the Koch- Rajbanshis. It also demanded the reservation of 80% job for the Koch Rajbanshis in North Bengal, formation of a state in North Bengal and formation of military regiment in their name of Chilarai. The KRI was strongly supported by the UKD, *Kamata Rajya Parisad*, *Chila Rai Sangha*, *All Assam Koch Rajbanshi Kshatriya Sammelani* and the *Rajbanshi Bhasa Pracher Samity*.<sup>136</sup>

Like the KRI, another political organization operated from Lower Assam (Gouripur) called *Bharatiya Kamata Rajya Parisad* (BKRP) began to mobilized the linguistic and cultural feelings of the Koch Rajbanshis. It demanded a separate state (Kamatapur) for overall development for the Koch-Rajbanshis of North Bengal and Lower Assam . The KRI and the BKRP although adopted the policy of mobilizing the people of North Bengal on the ground of common caste origin but did not realize the need of bringing people of other castes into their agitation. There was no member in these organizations from non-Rajbanshi communities. Even the *Nasya Shaikhs* (local Muslim) who claim themselves, as Rajbanshi were not given proper treatment in the caste based KRI. Therefore, the KRI and the BKRP had no impact on the people of the North Bengal except the Koch – Rajbanshis.<sup>137</sup>

Although the ethnic movement for the formation of a separate state could not get success in the 1980s but it get another witness of organization with the formation of *Kamatapur Gana Parishad* in 1987. It was formed in the pattern of the *Assam Gana Parishad*.<sup>138</sup> The ambition of the *Kamatapur Gana Parishad* was to established separate state consisting six districts of North Bengal. The *Kamatapur Gana Parishad* formed the *All Kamatapur Students Union* (AKSU) in the pattern of the *All Koch –Rajbanshi Students Union* (AKRASU). In order to create literary consciousness among the Rajbanshi people, the *Kamatapur Sahitya Parishad* was formed .It published a news bulletin called *Ratna Pitha* after the historical name of this region.<sup>139</sup> In addition to this, a good number magazine have been published in *Kamatapuri* language such as *Northern Express*, *Jagaran Pubali*, and *Kamata Katha* etc. In the village level many *Yatra Parties* were formed and they staged the most popular was '*Yatra Maynar Chokher Jal*'

produced by Guneswar Adhikary in Kamatapuri language. It was highly appreciated among the Rajbanshi people. The *Kamatapur Gana Parishad* or KPP put a eleven-points charter of demands to the Prime of India (Sri Indra Kumar Gujral) in 1997 on 26th September, in order to implement their demands for the formation of state i.e. '*Kamatapuri* speaking people in the whole North Bengal along with adjoining *Kamatapuri* dominated areas in India.<sup>140</sup>

In the beginning of the present century, a section of Rajbanshi people started Greater Cooch Behar Peoples' Association movement in Cooch Behar (GCPA) in 1998 citing clause in the merger agreement on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1949 signed by the Government of India and the Maharaja Jagadeependra Narayan, the last independent king of Cooch Behar State. They demanded Union Territory status for Cooch Behar that will eventually pave the way for a 'C' category state.<sup>141</sup> Underdevelopment was also another issue of the GCPA. The movement though stirred through out Cooch Behar, it could not affect the mind of the people of whole North Bengal. Even Gayeetri Devi, who died on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2009 the successor of the Koch Royal family was not interested about the movement of the GCPA. She had expressed her view about the movement in a daily newspaper like, "I cannot understand why this movement has been raised in Cooch Behar. Cooch Behar has become too much dirty and the people have been changed too."<sup>142</sup> Even, she made it clear that she has no willingness to meet the leadership of the GCPA.<sup>143</sup>

## VII

It is a matter of fact that not only North Bengal, India is being faced in great troubles for several insurgencies and movements because of ever increases migration. The North Eastern India has over 500 ethnic groups owing to frequent immigrant's invasions, though all are neighbours played a major role in segregating the population in the main river valleys. Migration of population creating demographic changes is an issue of concern while figures quoted by authorities are suspect it is pertinent to note that in the 20th century under British rule, immigration and migration, particularly into Assam, North Bengal and Tripura, was probably to the extent of about 30% of the population, of which about two-third was from East Bengal (Bangladesh).<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately after independence this trend was allowed to continue, with the majority of the migrants, being from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh). In 1971 again was a major refugee exodus from East Pakistan,(Now Bangladesh) the majority of who never returned owing to the situation, which leads to the Indo- Pak war. In 1947, the population of North Bengal was 46 lakhs, but presently it stands more than one cores. Therefore, the average growth of population in a decade is likely more than 10 lakhs.

In North Bengal, the immigration problem corresponds to rise of various types of movements such as, GNLF, Uttarkhanda, UTJAS, Kamatapuri movement, and the GCPA movement. In Meghalaya, it gave birth to the Khasi movement and the anti-Khasi agitations. Other hill areas adopted harsh anti-immigrant policies while we may blame the British, the fact remains that the maximum number of immigrants came after independence. Both the Central and State Government failed to take suitable remedial action giving rise to insurgency, strife, discontent, and

unnecessary deployment of security forces resulting in wasteful expenditure. Regarding *Kamatapuri* movement in North Bengal Swaraj Basu says, "This movement could be seen as a protest against assimilation or integration of the local indigenous people by dominant socio-cultural groups of this region. However, while ethnicity can be used to fight social discrimination, there is always the possibility of subsequent use to achieve narrow reactionary objectives".<sup>145</sup> Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that statehood movements keep popping up in North Bengal from time to time. If it was the Uttarkhanda agitation in the late sixties, the *Kamatapuri* movement was in the nineties, and its Greater Cooch Behar is today.

From the above discussion, I would like to state that neither the formation of separate state nor regional autonomy could itself solve the basic problem like social oppression. Instead of separation, we need the balanced and speedy economic development, the removal of social disparities immediately in the right direction to achieve the goal. These steps would presuppose the broadest unity of the people for which our state government claims to have been working.<sup>146</sup> One must go into the roots of the problem to find out the proper solutions. Our ruling government, no doubt, attempt to find out the deep-seated reasons for poverty, hunger, illiteracy and many forms of social backwardness in its own ways. However, it is still far from capturing the imagination of the people at large who are struggling for their national emancipation. Unless by its action and practice, the Government is able to inspire the vast majority of the people, their battle for "National Unity" will remain problematic.

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