

## Chapter-4

### Activities of the Uttarkhanda Dal and Its Organizational Response

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Uttarkhanda Dal

No. UKD69-70/2040

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

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

*Sadasyer Nam*..... *Abedan Karir Swakshar*

(Name of the Member) (Signature of the Applicant)

*Thikana*.....

(Address)

*Sangraha*..... Sri Kalindra Nath Barman

(Collector) *Swakshar* (Signature)

*Tang*..... *Sadharan Sampadak*

(Date) (General Secretary)

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

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

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

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

It is very pertinent to mention that West Bengal witnessed increasing violence and political chaos, a crisis of governability, heightened factionalism and splits in Congress Party which ruled the state directly or through President's rule from 1969-1972.<sup>36</sup> Besides, the chaotic political situation during the rule of United Front Govt. also invited the President's rule in West Bengal. However, the stand of the Uttarkhanda Dal in this regard was that it welcomed the President's rule when it was imposed on 16th March 1970. But at the same time the Dal demanded through its party resolution, the immediate declaration of election of the state legislature, of course, after bringing the then anarchical political situation under control.<sup>37</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to the above mentioned political alliance of U.K.D. with 'Gorkha League' it was found that a political relation was established with the Republican Party. It should be mentioned that the Republican party was organized by the backward class communities and its main support base in West Bengal was among the scheduled caste communities especially among the Matuas and Namasudras (Bengali sub castes). The Republican party believed in the ideology of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. However, later the U.K.D., Gorkha League and the Republican Party united together and a new front called 'Mukti Front' was formed. A joint public meeting of these new 'Front' was organized at the Chaterhat School ground on 12 November 1979.<sup>59</sup> Besides, it was found that Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of the U.K.D. contested the general election of 1980 as a candidate of the Mukti Front of three parties, mentioned above.<sup>60</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

Apart from this, if the election results of both Parliamentary and Assembly, so far as the U.K.D. had contested in 1971, 1972, 1977 and 1980<sup>66</sup> are also considered as a barometer

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

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

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

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

## Notes and References

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2. *The first Draft Constitution of the Uttarkhanda Dal*. (Collected, M. M. Mallick).
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6. *Foundation meeting of the Uttarkhanda Dal*, held at Thakurpat Rajamohan High School (now H.S.) P.S. Dhupguri, Dist. Jalpaiguri, 5<sup>th</sup> July 1969.
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8. *Ibid.*, (list of the Central Committee and their addresses show this figure.)
9. *Ibid.*, Resolution No. B.
10. *Proceedings of the Special Session of the Central Committee*, held at Jalpesh Temple , Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri, 5<sup>th</sup> November1971. (Collected, M. M. Mallick).
11. *Proceedings of the Special Session of the Central Committee*, held at Mandalghat, Jalpaiguri, 1st January1972, Resolution No.2. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).
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23. *A letter*, addressing the Prime Minister, Govt. of India, sent by the Uttarkhanda Yuba Chhatra Dal, n.d.
24. *A letter* with a charter of 10 point demands, submitted by the ‘ Uttarkhanda Krishok Samiti’ and ‘Agavir Nalkup Samiti’ jointly to the Chief Minister, Govt. of West Bengal, 22nd March.1978.(Letter was printed in a pamphlet).
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31. *Proceedings of the meeting of the Executive Committee*, held at Jalpesh Temple, 16 May 1971. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).
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44. *Ibid.*, p.2.
45. *Ibid.*, 12<sup>th</sup> March 1970.
46. *Yoga Yog* (in Bengali), the mouth piece of Uttarkhanda Dal, Bulletin no.I, 1st August 1970, President of Editorial Board, Sri Girija Shankar Roy, published by Bisheswar Chakraborty, Temple Street, Jalpaiguri.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*
49. Uttarbanga, *op.cit*. 17th February 1972.
50. *Yoga Yog, op. cit.*, dated 1st August 1970.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, 29th September 1970.
53. Tanka Bahadur Subba, *Ethnicity, State and Development, A Case Study of Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling*, Har Ananda publications, New Delhi, 1992, p.84.
54. *Proceedings, Executive Committee meeting*, Kebal Para, Jalpaiguri, 23<sup>rd</sup> November1969. (Collected, M.M.Mallick).

55. *Memorandum*, addressed by the 'Uttarkhanda Dal and All India Gorkha League United Front' to the Chief Minister, Govt. of West Bengal, (This memorandum was printed in Bengali for circulation, published by Sri Bhupendranath Roy, joint secretary U.K.D., printed at Rupasri press, Maynaguri), date-11-09-1977.

56. *Ibid.*

57. An interview with Sri Panchanan Mallick, the president of U.K.D. published in *Paribartan* (a Bengali Magazine), published from Calcutta, 6th August 1980, P-26; Also an interview with Sri Babunath Barma, Age-72, dated-16.11.2008., Salbari, Dhupguri, Jalpaiguri. Sri Barma is a founder member of the U.K.D.

58. *A leaflet*, published by Sri Sampad Roy, General Secretary, Uttarkhanda Dal, n.d.

59. *A Handbill*, jointly circulated by U.K.D., Republic Party and All India Gorkha League, published by Sri Sampad Roy, Safiuddin, Marian Tigga et al, dated- 1st November1979. (Collected from Sri Babunath Barma).

60. *An Election Handbill of the Uttarkhanda Dal*, in favour of its candidate Sri Panchanan Mallick, printed at Subrata Art press, Kadamtala, Jalpaiguri. (no date is mentioned). (Collected, M.M.Mallick).

61. Haripada Ray, *op. cit.*, pp.122,123.

62. Protinidhi Sammelan, *op.cit.* (list of members and other addresses show this figure.).

63. *Conference of the Central Committee and its activists*, Jalpesh Temple, Maynaguri, dated-1st January1971. Signature of the activists present shows this statistics.

64. Yoga Yog, *op. cit.*, Bulletin No. 3, November1970.

65. *Ibid.*, Bulletin No. 2, September.1970.

66. Dilip Banerjee, *Election Recorder*, Part-1, West Bengal, 1952-1987, Book Front publication Forum, First published, February, 1990, Calcutta, relevant portions.

67. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, 'The Uttarhkanda Kamatapur Movement: A Historical perspective' in the *proceedings of North East India History Association*, Tenth Session, Shilong, 1989, p. 407.

68. Haripada Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

69. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, *op. cit.*, p. 405.

70. *Proceedings, Central Committee meeting*, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1973. (The resignation letter of Sri Girija Shankar Roy and Rabindra Nath Sarkar were accepted by the said Committee ). [Collected, M.M.Mallick].

71. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

72. *Yugantar*, a Bengali daily, published from Calcutta, July 24, 1970. (National Library, Newspaper Section, Calcutta).