SOCIOLOGY OF THE JP MOVEMENT IN BIHAR

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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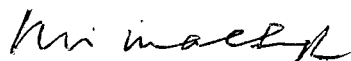
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CERTIFICATE

    This Dissertation entitled "Sociology of the
J.P. Movement in Bihar" by Shri Gulab Jha for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy has not been
previously submitted for any other Degree of
this or any other University. We recommend that
this Dissertation should be placed before the
examiners for their consideration for the award of
the Degree of Master of Philosophy.

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PREFACE

Social movement is relatively a new field of
study in sociology. Many more social movements have
still not attracted the attention of sociologists. Hence
this area of specialization is still in the formative
stages.

Movements are not static objects which may be
taken into a study in laboratory and placed side by side
for scrutiny. We must content ourselves largely with
abstraction of movements, presented in words. Description
again mostly in words, must precede analysis. But since
analysis can only reveal similarities which are present
in the descriptions, the descriptions themselves need not
be made according to some uniform plan. The analysis is
thus both facilitated and limited by the scheme of the
description. Now this uniform plan largely depend on
the subject of study. Since history denotes conditions
and sequence of events, historicity can not be ignored.
S.C. Dube rightly pointed out, " History may or may not
be future, but the past has an uncanny way of sneaking
into the present and present of seeping into and shaping
the future... The roots of the future lie in its past. "
Hence historical development of a movement should occupy

an important place in the study of social movements. The present dissertation is written in the light of these ideas.
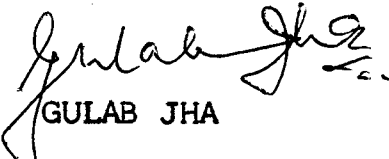
Attempt has been made to put J.P. movement in a proper theoretical framework of interpretation and explanation. It was not possible to incorporate each and every minute detail of the movement in an M.Phil dissertation, yet I have tried to adjust to the relevant materials to the extent it was possible. Most of the books on this subject are written in the form of report and are more descriptive than analytical. I had to solely depend on secondary sources i.e. newspapers and informations extracted from journals of general interest.

These days a number of questions on the economy and polity of Bihar are being asked. When Bihar is so rich in minerals why is it that Bihar is one of the most economically backward state in India? Why did promise and performance not match at all? Why in spite of all the avowed intentions and proclaimed efforts Bihar remained struck in the morass of poverty, under-development and backwardness? Why did J.P. movement start from Bihar? Did this movement bring about the desired changes? To find out the answers to these

questions it is necessary to analyse not only live aspects of political economy but also to systematically examine the recent political history of the state. This paper is an attempt in this direction.

I do not have any word to express my thanks to my supervisor Dr Nirmal Singh who taught and guided me. I am also grateful to my teacher Dr K.L. Sharma who spared enough time to discuss the problems. My heartfelt thanks go to Dr Rajvardhan Azad and all my friends who encouraged me. I cannot forget to mention the name of my wife Ginni whose constant help made the task easier. My special thanks are due to my friend who typed this dissertation, and the staff of J.N.U. Library and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Tinmurti who extended all possible help in providing material.

GULAB JHA

Chapter-I

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AS A FIELD OF SOCIOLOGY

The great changes in the social order of the world have largely, directly or indirectly, been the result of movements. In the cases when movements did not achieve all their goals, major parts of their programmes have been accepted and incorporated into the ever changing social order.

Social movements as objects of study are regarded as part of the subject matter of collective behaviour. The field of study concerned with collective behaviour, however, has been a neglected area in sociology and consequently we find very little systematic work on the sociology of movements before 1930.[1] In the study of social change also the study of social movements have received relatively little emphasis. Probably because of a positional bias men and groups have so often been regarded by most sociologists as the creatures rather than the creators of social change. By and large sociologists have looked at blind social forces in

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[1]Jerome Davis, Contemporary Social Movements (New York, 1930).

their search for the dynamics of change, not at the actions and interaction of willful goal seeking active men. This, in turn, has resulted from an implicit premise of vulgar determinism in sociology.

The term " movement " was first used in early nineteenth century. But during that period it was used in a specific sense, i.e. the movement of the new industrial working class. Later, in due course of time, the denotation expanded and the term took more general sense subsuming unrest, upsurge and disturbance aimed at full or partial change in the existing institutions involving small or big groups of people working towards a consciously desired commonly shared future.[2] A movement may be developed around either a detailed

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[2] "When the term first came into use, early in the nineteenth century, it had a more specific meaning: the social movement meant the movement of the industrial working class, with its socialistic, communistic and anarchistic tendencies..." This narrow definition of the concept is no longer possible in view of the peasant's and farmer's movements, of Fascism and National Socialism and of the independence movements in colonial countries to name only the most important instances." (Haberle, R., 1968, 'Social Movements,' in International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, D.L. Sills (ed.), The Macmillan and Co. and the Free Press, 14, P. 439.

rational plan for a new society - an utopia - or as in
the case of Marxism, a theory of history which predicts
the inevitable coming of a new society.

The main characteristic of some of these ideas
is their inherent logical consistency and their belief
in casual explanation of the problem. At the same time
their tendency to believe that changes in certain
social institutions will bring about final solutions
to the problems is no less important. It cannot be
said that social movements have received no attention of
social scientists. Traditionally historians and political
philosophers tried to study social movements. Hence
consciously arrived at as a professional collective
effort, sociological frame of reference in the analysis
of social movements has been missing. Thus Heberle
while talking about social movements noted that " These
were interpreted and analysed as if they were systems of
philosophy; they were submitted to critical evaluations
in terms of empirical truth, logical consistency and
ethical standards. Not much attention was paid to the
meaning of these groups, nor to other problems of
sociological relevance. " [3]

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[3] Rudolph Heberle, Social Movements (New York,
1951), Pp. 1-2.

The relationship of social movements with social and cultural changes is a complex one. A changing social order or changing values and norms in a society might result a diverse set of responses leading to shared orientations and coordinated action, often in conflict with each other. Alternatively collective-goal oriented concerted action may themselves be causing structural behavioural and cultural changes. In the words of Sherif and Sherif, " A social movement...is a formative stage of interaction in human relations. It expresses an ongoing process. "[4] Furthermore, " A social movement is always possessed by a sense of mission. "[5] No student of social and cultural change can neglect the study of social movements.

Hence, attention has to be focussed on the interaction of conscious, striving human beings as part of an emergent collectivity, that is, the social movement. This is to be distinguished from the study of stable groups or established institutions. Here we focus on groups and institutions in process of becoming. The

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[4]M. Sherif and C. Sherif, An Outline of Social Psychology (New York, 1956), P. 724.

[5]Ibid, P. 722.

changes which take place in the culture are important as end-products of past social movements and as features of the new milieu which gives rise to new movements. Change is the law of nature and a normal aspect of culture, and the social movement is one of the most important ways through which social change gets manifested as a process involving conscious striving human actors in unison and in opposition to such other actors.

Social movements defined

Lang and Lang take a social movement to mean " large scale, widespread, and continuing, elementary collective action in pursuit of an objective that affects and shapes the social order in some fundamental ways."[6] Whereas King proposes as his definition, " a group venture extending beyond a local community or a single event and involving a systematic effort to inaugurate changes in thought, behaviour, and social relationships."[7] Blumer defines the movement simply

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[6] K. Lang and G. Lang, Collective Dynamics (New York, 1961), P. 490.

[7] C.W. King, Social Movements in the United States (New York, 1956), P. 27.

as " a collective enterprise to establish a new order

of life. " [8] Heberle, in a similar vein, declares,

" The main criterion of a social movement...is that it

aims to bring about fundamental changes in the social

order. " He continues with the observation that a social

movement is " a collective attempt to reach a visualized

goal, especially a change in certain social institutions. "[9]

When we analyse definitions of social movements,

we find two features in common. The effort of men to

intervene in the process of social and cultural change

is the central theme. Most of the social scientists

emphasize the goal of bringing into being new social and

cultural forms. But in either case, men are viewed as

actors, not as passive responders to the flow of culture

or the homeostatic tendencies of the social system. Also

essential to these definitions is the notion that the

man's acts are collective which includes opposition to

other such collective actions seeking imcompatible

goals. This conceptualization of social movements

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[8]H. Blumer, 'Collective Behaviour,' in A.M. Lee (ed.) Principles of Sociology (New York, 1951), P. 199.

[9]R. Heberle, n.3, P. 6.

logically leads to a recognition of the following four
characteristics present in all social movements:

(a)   A sense of membership or participation – a
       " we-ness," a distinction between those who
       are for and those against.

(b)   The existence of shared values - a goal or an
       objective, sustained by an ideology.

(c)   Norms - shared understanding as to how the
       followers should act, definitions of outgroups
       and how to behave toward them.

(d)   A structure - a division of labour between
       leaders and followers and between different
       classes of each.

To understand a movement, it is often desirable
to classify its purposes relative to those of the rest
of society. Such a classification also provides an
initial thumb-nail description of the purposes. For
this classification, four familiar concepts - reactionary,
conservative, revisionary and revolutionary[10] - have been
advanced.

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[10] W.M. Bruce Cameron, *Modern Social Movements*
     (New York, 1966), P. 22.

Reactionary movements are those advancing aims which were once held by the general society but which have subsequently been laid aside. The members of the movement want to return to some part of the past. The point is not whether these purposes actually support the "good old days" or the "bad old days" but simply that society once held this position, or it assumed to have done so, does not now hold it, and the movement seeks to create it again.

Conservative movement seeks to maintain the status quo. However, societies and cultures are not static, they keep changing. Thus when we call a movement conservative, we mean that the purposes it holds have for some time been those of the society, but change is taking place, and the movement is organized to obstruct this change.

Revisionary movements accept some of the present purposes and methods of the existing order but wish to modify these. In such movements change is desired, but the existing structure as a whole is not threatened.

Revolutionary movements reject the existing social structure as inadequate, wishing to supplant it with one considered to be more suitable. This total change has

sometimes been called 'radical.' But one may be radically reactionary or radically revolutionary. The distinction between revisionary and revolutionary is a matter of scope or degree. A revolutionary movement wants to change much, perhaps most of the existing society. One could say that there are movements of change and resistance to change. The movements of change could be oriented towards a real or imagined past or towards a novel future. Moreover, the movement may work for a partial or piecemeal change.

Approaches to the Study of Social Movement

After a brief discussion on the very concept of 'social movement,' it is necessary to evaluate the theoretical perspectives applied in the various studies of social movements in order to understand their limitations and advantages. Broadly speaking, historians, psychologists and sociologists of different schools have theorised social movements in different ways but barring a few they have fallen victim to weakness inherent in their approach. Hence a brief account of such theories will not be considered out of place.

Sequential/Historical Approach

The most common and fairly large number of studies

of social movements have presented the details such
as dates and events in sequence. In sequential studies
the explanation of the causes and structure of social
movements has not been attempted. In such studies we
find free use of 'movement' without discussing its
problem and definition. It would be erroneous to say
that in this approach only a chronological description
of the emergence and growth of the movement is attempted.
Some vague conceptualization, eclectic theorization,
instead of psychological assumptions, implicit structural
and functional analysis and in most cases muted philosophy
of history are not ruled out. What earns the sequential/
historical approach is the absence of any articulated
conscious theorization.

No doubt before going into the sequential
presentation they give account of ideology, conducive
situations which help the formation and growth of
movement, and because of this reason such studies are
interesting as well as useful. But generally studies of
this kind centre round political or individual history
of the leaders of movements.[11] Historians study may be

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[11]E.G., W.V.D. Antonio and F.B. Pike, Religion,
Revolution and Reform (London, 1964), and
Geoffrey Pridham, Hitlar's Rise to Power:
The Nazi Movement in Bavaria (New York, 1973).

both synchronic and diachronic. Historians do study
the development of structural conditions leading to
a movement and contributing to its typicality. On the
other hand sociologists may deal with the problem in
more abstract and general terms taking into account
short-term historical changes in economic and social
structures before the formation of the movements.
Inherently there is nothing that separates historical
from sociological approach.[12] A thorough study of any
social movement should embrace ideally both history and
sociology.

Psychological Approach

In psychological studies of movements emphasis is
on personalities, psychological adjustments and
frustration of the individuals in the movement which are
largely personality disposition rather than sociological
dimension, such as social bases of the movement and
social mobilization. Hence the persons because of their
personality type join the movement. The movement as
such is depicted as a kind of sublimation in the Freudian

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[12]Ramkrishna Mukherjee, " The Social Background
of Bangladesh," in Kathleen Gough and Hari P.
Sharma (eds.) Imperialism and Revolution in
South Asia (New York and London, 1973),
Pp. 399-418.

sense, i.e. an individual is a victim of his unconscious desires.

Broadly speaking, individual personality has been conceptualized as of two types, viz., political and social. The political type is related to power attainment and thereby gives inspiration of social movement.[13] Similarly Tucker is talking of the radical mind. He says that a radical mind possesses an intense element of negation and thus characterises a man who criticises and negates everything. A radical is also an activist as well as visionary.[14]

A fairly large number of psycho-analytical theories stress frustration and repression born out of failure to reach goals that lead to aggressiveness which finally may find release by participating in social movements. This kind of idea finds expression in Lasswell's study in which he discusses the motivations of individuals who are oriented politically and relates them directly to childhood repression and adolescent

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[13]Rudolph Heberle, n.3, Pp. 102-3.

[14]Robert C. Tucker, 'The Deradicalization of Marxist Movements,' in American Political Science Review, Vol. LXI, No.2, June 1967, Pp. 343-58.

paranoia.[15] Here the movement is not conceptualized in relation to societal arrangements and changes in them but as a solution to the personality problems of its constituents.

The serious shortcoming of this approach is that it does not explain the societal causes of social movements and movement's consequences for the society; rather attention is paid toward personality aspect of the revolutionaries. It asks essentially the question, " who are the revolutionaries?" [16] Mclaughlin opines that the main flaw of this form of study is that it " fails to provide the total explanation of the origin of such movement. " [17]

Another variant of the psychological approach to the study of social movements reduces the study to problems of techniques of propaganda, mobilization and ideological manipulation. Thus context and consequence of the movement are neglected to emphasize personality

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[15]H. Lasswell, Psychopathology and Politics (Chicago, 1960).

[16]C. Johnson, Revolution and the Social System (Standford, 1964), P. 23.

[17]McLaughlin (ed.) Studies in Social Movements (New York, 1969), P. 109.

and persuasive techniques as the sole constituents of social movements.

Functionalist Approach

Functionalist and Marxist frameworks have dissimilar world views and theoretical concerns. Because of this reason it is necessary to treat these two frameworks separately.

Functionalists are mainly concerned with the maintenance of the social structure. According to Parsons a social system is a system of action. It is made up of interactions of individuals. They are not chaotic but governed by norms which have a common standard what Parsons calls " standard of value orientation."[18] Further, according to Gouldner, " Basic to Parson's analysis of the social system is his focus on equilibrium and on the conditions from which this derives."[19]

Endogenous change comes about due to dysfunctions, tensions and deviance. They " tend to resolve themselves or to be institutionalised in the long run...through

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[18]Talcott Parsons, The Social System (New Delhi, 1972). See also, Kingsley Davis, Human Society (Delhi, 1981), Pp. 52-63.

[19]Alvin W. Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology (London-New Delhi), 1971), P. 231.

built-in mechanisms of adjustment and control. "[20]

Hence, change in the social system is seen as a departure from normalcy. If there is not consensual absorption of value patterns then instability in the social system arises. Manifested process of this type in a movement continues till consensus is reached.

There are some scholars who do not adhere to functionalist position specially with regard to change and conflict. Dahrendorf has criticised the idyllic stable portrait of a homeostatic society.[21] Students of sociology should see continuities between everyday behaviour and routine social process. The static functionalists have not realised that " the truly dynamic elements of conflict and collective behaviour occur due to the interaction between mobilization and control process. "[22]

[20]Pierre L. Van der Berghe, 'Dialectics and Functionalism' in Demerath III and Richard A. Peterson (eds.) Systems, Change and Conflict (New York, 1967), P. 295.

[21]R. Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (London, 1969), Pp. 120-23.

[22]Anthony Oberschall, Social Conflict and Social Movement (New Jersey, 1973), P. 23.

Crane Brinton recognises the possibility of conflict and finds it healthy and beneficial, but arrives at an erroneous conclusion by not believing that conflict, revolution or movement can change society. He says that it will remain basically the same.[23]

While discussing the causes of structural strain functionalists have talked about the rise of new power-class, structural weaknesses, disintegration and relative deprivation. According to Lipset, Fascist movements are caused by the threat of extinction which the middle class faces from big capitalist.[24]

In the same way the rise of a new power-class has also been discussed as a cause of structural strain. Bruce McCully illustrates in his essay, " English Education and Indian Nationalism" that the rise of English education, norms and values were the motor force behind Indian Independence.[25]

If attachments between persons are weakening then totalitarian movements arise. Such movements attract their leaders from among those who are not well

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[23]Crane Brinton, The Anatomy of Revolution (New York, 1965), Pp. 16-17.

[24]S.M. Lipset, 'Fascism - Left, Right and Centre' in G.R. Gusfield (ed.) Protest, Reform and Revolt (New York, 1970), P. 36.

[25]Ibid, Pp. 25-27.

integrated in the system. Kornhanser says that democratic societies are vulnerable to penetration and control by totalitarian movements when they lack strong secondary organizations or associational groups capable of mediating between elites and non-elites.[26] The functionalist approach with its emphasis on homeostatics, integration and normative consensus and continuity sweeps under the carpet, social change in general and self-conscious collective goal oriented transformative action in particular. The neglect of historical development is inherent in this approach. It does not posit active human subject and consequently 'social movements' become routine social process with no lasting consequences.

Marxist Approach

The basis of society for Marx was the mode of production and the production relations into which man entered and history was founded on the different stages of development of the modes of production. In the Preface of the critique of political economy Marx stated,

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[26]W. Kornhanser, The Politics of Mass Society (New York, 1968), P. 60.

" The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political super structure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. " [27]

Social change according to Marx occurs due to the irreconcilable forces in the material basis of the society "...at a certain stage of development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production... From forms of development of the forces of production, these relations turn into their fetters. There comes a period of social revolution. " [28] In this way it is vital to Marxism to grasp the class character of the movement.

At one level the class character of a movement is easily apparent in terms of the social and economic background of its adherents. But at another level, and this again signifies the break between Marxists and functionalists, the class character of a movement is understood on the basis of its approach towards the

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[27]Karl Marx, 'Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,' in Marx and Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1969), Vol.I, P. 503.

[28]Ibid, P. 504.

determinate contradictions of the economic structure of the society, i.e. of the mode of production.

This " forms of social consciousness" that Marx talks of is problematic in Marxist conceptualization of social movements at two levels. Firstly, there is no single form of consciousness that correspond to a mode of production and a number of modes may exist simultaneously. Secondly, the forms of consciousness also influence the modes of production. Hence the role of 'class consciousness' and 'ideology in social movements and in bringing about revolutions.' There is no simple relationship of 'ideology', 'class consciousness,' 'class struggle,' relations and forces of production etc. To study a social movement from a Marxist perspective is to work out the concrete relationship in its historical development. General Marxist formulae are no substitute for a concrete sociological analysis.

All the time economy alone is not a decisive factor; rather non-economic factors such as forces of culture, traditions and values also provide substantive bases of movement. Moreover, merely putting the participants of a movement in a fixed class framework may lead to erroneous conclusion.

Relative Deprivation

The concept of relative deprivation and its
application is a significant landmark in the study of
social movements. The account of the sociologists unlike
the psychologists with respect to relative deprivation,
as Merton illustrates, is on the word " relative" and
not on the word " Deprivation. "[29]

The basic notion of relative deprivation is that
" feelings of deprivation, of discontent over one's
situation, depend on what one wants to have, i.e.
deprivation occurs in relation to desired points of
reference, often " reference groups" rather than in
relation to how little one has. In turn, social movements
are thought to emerge and flourish when groups of persons
experience relative deprivation. "[30]

Marx also suggested that workers become restless
and eventually revolt after experiencing a similar
improvement in the material conditions of their lives.[31]
He suggested that workers develop the standards of their

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[29]Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social
Structure (New Delhi, 1968), Pp. 288-90.

[30]Denton E. Morrison, 'Some Notes toward
Theory on Relative Deprivation, Social
Movements and Social Change,' in Robert R.
Evans (ed.) Social Movements - A Reader and
Source Book (Chicago, 1973), P. 103.

[31]James C. Davies, 'Toward a Theory of
Revolution,' American Sociological Review
(New York), 27 Feb. 1962, P. 5.

desired and expected level of need satisfaction from
the level that they see prevailing throughout society.
Their desired level of need satisfaction rises at a pace
equivalent to the rate of improved living standard for
the rest of society so that, despite an improvement
objective level of need satisfactions, there is an
increasing gap between what the workers feel they should
get and what they actually receive. This gap grows until
the workers revolt. In this case, the level of expected
need satisfaction derives from perception of the level of
need satisfaction experienced by a reference group.
Thus, dissatisfaction results in and leads to protest
activities.

Tocqueville also demonstrated that people rise
up in revolt when rising standards of living result in
greater expectation than can be met.[32] Relative
deprivation therefore seeks to bridge the gap between
one's self and " the significant others. "

The Indian Situation

The socio-structural conditions of developed

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[32]Alexis de Tocqueville, The Old Regime
and the French Revolution (New York,
1955).

countries and the third world countries are different
and within that considerable differences there are
countries that have cherished distinct cultural
traditions. So the model to explain any social movement
at one particular time and space may not be universally
applicable. Moreover, the reasons for erruption of the
movements in the two parts of the cosmos greatly vary
from each other. That is to say that the historicity,
the elements of present social structure and the future
vision of the society in which movements originate and
operate should be taken into account in the framework for
the study of social movements.

Traditional India was characterised by " a
qualitative ascriptive" social system with caste, joint
family, panchayats and village democratic institutions as
the structural bases; second, the tool and handicraft
economy with relatively little monetization; third, the
active role of traditional sanctions for the individual's
action and motivation with a hierarchical conception of
human nature and personality system; fourth, the
dominance of the value system of a sacred society where
the assessment of needs occupations, interests, etc., was
largely oriented towards non-utilitarian non-pragmatic

standards of evaluation. " [33]

Religions have played an important part in shaping Indian tradition. Not only literature, philosophy, and art, but human relationships both social and economic, have been derived from the major part from certain religious ideas. To name a few, Bhakti, Karma, Dharma are typically Indian concepts which permeate every class and caste. They can be found in the so-called heretical religions of Buddhism and Jainism and even in Islam as it developed in the sub-continent.

For centuries this culture was both resilient and flexible, absorbing political shocks and conferring social stability and psychological security. In the Marxist view, this would be considered a classic case of religion revealing itself as the opiate of the people. In the Indian context, however, there is more to religion than what meets the Marxist eye. Religious authority could take subtle as well as gross forms, and it could not be contained within any one hierarchical organization. The state rarely succeed in manipulating it.

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[33]Yogendra Singh, Essays on Modernization in India (New Delhi, 1978), P. 165.

Independent India is characterised by " rapid industrialization, planned economic development, passing of a series of social legislations undermining several traditional values and extending protection to 'weaker sections,' commitment to 'socialism,' secularism and democracy, political pluralism as is reflected in a multi-party parliamentary democracy. " [34] On the other hand, the Western industrial society evolved on an altogether different basis of socio-cultural and philosophical development. At the root of it perhaps was " the optimistic ferment generated by the socio-religious beliefs of calvanism which led to the growth of Western capitalism, an institution which holds the key to modern industrialization. " [35]

History shows that each of these elements influenced the nature and types of various movements. Partha Nath Mukherji points out that Naxalbari struggle like the Tebhaga is the instance of the use of non-institutionalised

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[34] T.K. Oommen, 'Sociological Issues in the Analysis of Social Movements in Independent India,' Sociological Bulletin (New Delhi), 26(1), March 1977, P. 18.

[35] Yogendra Singh, n.33, P. 166.

means for securing intra-systematic change.[36] Rajendra

Singh describes the situation of " Peasant Movements in

Uttar Pradesh" with the aid of the notion of the culture

of inequality.[37] In Telengana, elite mobilized the

public including the peasants for the abolition of forced

labour, untouchability and other social evils and

demanded equal educational, economic opportunities and

political representation.[38] We have many instances of

social movements among Scheduled Castes and other

Backward Classes. They utilized both religious and

secular themes of ideology oriented towards reform,

emancipation and transformation of the established order

of social relationships and values.

Oommen says, " Most of the movements in India

were pre-political and religious in orientation

variously described as Millenerian, Chiliastic,

Revivalistic, Revitalization, Nativist, Messianic

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[36]Partha Nath Mukherji, 'Naxalbari Movement,'
in M.S.A. Rao (ed.) Social Movements in
India, Vol. I (New Delhi, 1979), P. 30.

[37]Rajendra Singh, 'Peasant Movements in Uttar
Pradesh,' in M.S.A. Rao (ed.) Ibid, P. 96.

[38]K. Ranga Rao, 'Peasant Movements in Telengana,'
in M.S.A. Rao (ed.) Ibid, P. 154.

etc. " [39] But we find that movements of this sorts
strengthened national movements. A.R. Desai writes,
" The militant nationalists drew inspiration from the
India's past, invoked the great episodes in the history
of Indian people, and tried to infuse national pride and
self respect among them. They criticised the idealizing
of the Western and specially British culture... The
militant nationalists asserted that this would only
endanger an inferiority complex among the Indians and
suppress their national pride and self-confidence so vital
to the struggle for freedom. " [40]

Hence, this kind of development in India, which
is a diverse country in all respects, forces the students
of social movements to view it in its historicity without
ignoring its contemporaneity to understand the reasons
for the eruption of various movements in this sub-
continent.

I for one find the relative deprivation theory
more suitable for explanation of the genesis of social

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[39] T.K. Oommen, n.34, P. 17.

[40] A.R. Desai, Social Background of Indian
Nationalism (Bombay, 1981), P. 328.

movements for it is pivoted around conflict and
cognitive change, motivating people and mobilizing
them around certain interests and issues. Secondly, it
offers the best explanation for the change-orientation
of movements rather than to looking at movements as
adaptive mechanisms restoring functional unity and
equilibrium.

Before I conclude this section on conceptual and
theoretical frame of reference for the study of social
movement, I must say that the notion that revolutions
need both a period of rising expectations and a
succeeding period in which they are frustrated qualifies
substantially the main Marxian notion that revolutions
follow after progressive degradation and the de-
Tocquevillean notion that they occur when conditions are
improving. By putting de-Tocqueiville before Marx but
without abandoning either theory, we are better able to
plot the antecedents of at least the J.P. movement.

Chapter-II

BIHAR: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Bihar came into existence in British India in 1936 when the old province of Bihar and Orissa (created in 1912, separating it from the Bengal Presidency) was divided into two separate provinces, Bihar and Orissa. Since then Bihar has remained one administrative and political unit except for some minor boundary adjustment after independence and when the Indian states were reorganized along linguistic lines in 1956.[1]

Area and Population

The state of Bihar covering an area of 173,876 km. lies between latitude $21^{o}58'$ and $27^{o}31'$ N and longitude $83^{o}20'$ and $88^{o}20'$ E. It is bounded on the east by the West Bengal and on the west by Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. To the south lies Orissa and to the north the independent Kingdom of Nepal. The state consists of two distinct physical units of roughly equal area, the Gangetic plain and Chhotanagpur plateau. The Ganga divides the plain into two rather unequal divisions, one north and the other south of its course. But

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[1] V.P. Menon, _The Story of the Integration of the Indian States_ (New York, 1956), P. 173.

topographically the state can be divided into three parts: North Bihar plain, South Bihar plain and Chhotanagpur plateau. in terms of inhabitants Bihar ranks second among the states of the Union. The population of Bihar is overwhelmingly rural. The North Bihar plain is the most heavily populated region with density of 1,058 persons per square mile followed by the South Bihar plain and the Chhotanagpur plateu (see Table 1).

Table 1

Regional Distribution of Population and Population Density.

Region	Percentage of total area	Percentage of total population	Percentage of density
North Bihar plain	30.5	46.5	1058
South Bihar plain	23.7	28.5	836
Chhotanagpur plateau	45.8	25.0	378
Bihar	100.0	100.0	694

Source: Census of India, Vol.IV, Bihar, Part IIA(2), General Report on the Census (Delhi: Manager of Publications, Government of India, 1977), Pp. 49-50.

Roughly high caste Hindus, backward castes, Harijan or Scheduled Castes, Muslims and Scheduled

Tribes constitute the demographic profile of Bihar.
Religionwise, Hindus form 80 percent, Muslims 13.48 and
Tribes 8.75 percent of the total population of the state.[2]

The Economy

The achievement of independence gave rise to a
" feeling of ardent hope and expectancy in the minds of
the people that social and economic conditions would
improve rapidly. "[3] One can't say categorically that such
expectations of the people remained at large unfulfilled.
Though the economy of Bihar has not remained stagnant
after independence, of course the benefit of development
has gone in selected pockets which has certainly widened
the gap between 'developing' and 'developed' families.

The policies that were initiated during 1947-51
for the amelioration of the condition of Scheduled Castes
and Scheduled Tribes continue even today. Despite all
these policies and measures, the condition of general
mass has not improved considerably. Those who were at
the upper rung are still occupying, by and large, the
same position. Under this circumstance it is important

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[2]Data extracted from Census of India, 1971,
   Series 4 (Bihar) Part II-A (Delhi, Manager
   of Publications), P. VIII.

[3]R.R. Diwakar, Bihar through the Ages (Calcutta:
   1958), P. 787.

to discuss the economy of Bihar at little length to understand the very structural constraints if at all any exists.

"Bihar is rich in minerals, producing 46 percent of the country's coal, 45 percent of bauxite, 82 percent of copper and 88 percent of Kyanite."[4] These are a few of the vast deposit of minerals in Bihar. Many big industries, viz., Iron and Steel, heavy engineering, fertilizer, oil refinery etc. are located in Bihar. Yet per capita income in the state in 1973-74 was estimated at Rs.225 leaving the lowest among all the states.

Leaving aside minerals and machines, Bihar is a predominantly agricultural state. However, even agriculture in Bihar is characterised by low productivity on account of the uneconomic size of average land holding (4.1 acres), inadequate irrigation facilities making much of agriculture dependent on vagaries of the monsoon and primitive methods of farming.[5] Hence agricultural labourers who run the agricultural operations in the state are, paradoxically, at the lowest rung of the ladder.

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[4]Ghanshyam Shah, 'Revolution, Reform or Protest?' Economic and Political Weekly, 9 April 1977, P. 606.

[5]See Kedarnath Prasad, The Economics of a Backward Region in a Backward Economy - A Case Study of Bihar in Relation to Other States of India (Calcutta, 1967), Pp. 146-216.

The root cause of the " present" lies in the
history of Bihar.   In terms of its land tenure system,
Bihar was a permanently settled Zamindari area.   Under
this system permanent settlement of land was made by the
British Government to Zamindars or barons who functioned
as intermediaries between the government and the tenant,
collecting the rent on behalf of the government.

Today " out of 82 percent working force engaged
in agriculture, 43 percent and 39 percent are respectively
cultivators and agricultural labourers.   Around 95 percent
land is owned by Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhumihars whereas
ironically 92 percent of the agricultural labourers come
from other castes. "[6]

To understand economy on the basis of caste alone
will not be of much help (See table II).   Because land
is concentrated in few hands rather than caste alone,
0.4 percent having more than 50 acres of land hold 9.5
percent of the total agricultural land.   Another 5.2
percent owning more than 15 but less than 50 acres of
land hold 17.14 percent of the total agricultural land.
Thus 5.6 percent of the agricultural families hold around

[6] " Rural manpower" and occupational
structure, " Agricultural Labour Enquiry,
Ministry of Labour, Government of India
(New Delhi: The Manager of Publications),
1954.

30 percent of the total agricultural land. Those among

them who have adopted modern methods of agriculture

Table II

Pattern of Land Ownership

Size of holdings (in acres)	Percentage of house-holds	Size of house-holds
Less than 1	21.5	4.7
1.0 - 2.4	26.7	5.1
2.5 - 4.9	23.4	5.8
5.0 - 7.4	12.2	6.6
7.5 - 9.9	5.1	7.3
10.0 - 12.0	3.7	7.1
12.5 - 14.9	1.8	8.3
15.0 - 29.9	4.2	8.9
30.0 - 49.9	1.0	9.5
50 and above	0.4	9.5
Total	100.0	

Source: S.R. Bose, 'The Structure of Bihar
Households,' Journal of Social and
Economic Studies, Vol. III, No.1,
1975.

using fertilizers, improved seeds, tractors and other

available irrigation facilities, have grown richer

after independence. In this way one could say that

caste and class co-exist in Bihar.

Thus general mass has got small size of land holdings. Lack of irrigation facilities on the one hand, and rising prices of fertilizers, seeds and other requirements on the other, compel them to sell their land. The result of this process is that the number of agricultural labourers increased from 23 percent in 1961 to 39 percent in 1971 and these agricultural labourers get meagre wages.

Like bonded labour, " Saunkia" system is existing in South Bihar which gives a pathetic account of exploitation. " In the Saunkia system...if a man takes a loan of any amount, he will have to work for the money-lender as and when required till the loan is paid back. He gets a morning breakfast, a mid-day meal and two 'Kachchi seers' of paddy, maize or dal. With this he will have to feed his family and pay back the loan. Salt, oil and other things are not considered. To further intimidate these poor people, if they absent themselves from work for any reason, be it sickness, marriage or visiting a relative, they incur a debt of Rs.2 per every day they are absent. They just can't fight back and so bow under the inevitable and keep working. The only respite they might get is when there is no work on contract labour, and even then, very often

a portion of their hard-won earnings are taken from them to pay back an ever-increasing loan over which they have no check."[7]

In some form or the other this system is existing in whole of Bihar. In this way exploitation is the common feature of agriculture in the state. On the basis of such exploitation one could characterize Bihar's agriculture as semi-feudal mode of production. Barik also subscribes this view.[8] The stranglehood of feudalism on Bihar's people is revealed also by the fact that even though 90 percent of them subsist on agriculture, Bihar is deficit in food grains.

In rural areas, concentration of land and thereby economic power in certain hands has given rise to 'rural elites.' Sachchidananda has given some common features of these rural elites. " People of the higher castes or with higher socio-economic status or larger land holdings have made the maximum use of improved practices. He says that caste norms have remained intact and people of lower castes are discriminated. The

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[7]Quoted in 'J.P.'s Real Mission,' Economic and Political Weekly, 22 March 1975.

[8]Radhakant Barik, Politics of the J.P. Movement (Delhi, 1977), P. 12.

condition of the tenants is worse than ever. "[9] But
outlook of people is changing and such changes at
ideational level can't come abruptly. Yet discrimination
is of local nature rather than a general feature of
society.

The government adopted two important land reform
measures after independence but unfortunately due to
structural constraints inherent in the system itself these
measures could not give desired result. In 1950 the Bihar
Land Reforms Act abolished the Zamindari system and in
1961 the Bihar Land Reforms (Ceiling) Act put a ceiling on
land holdings. But the Working Group on Land Reforms of
the National Commission on Agriculture after a visit to
Madhubani and Muzaffarpur districts concluded in 1973
that land reforms in the state was " sour joke." It
said, " Elsewhere in the country, the law evaders have a
sneeking respect for the law enforcement authority.
Their approach is furitive, their methods clandestine.
In Bihar the land owners do not care a tuppence for the
administration. Their approach is defiant -- their
'modus operandi' open and insolent. "[10]

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[9]Sachchidanand, 'Social Dimension of Agricultural
Development ' quoted by Barik, n.8, Pp. 20-21.

[10]Mohan Ram, 'The Sarvodaya Farce,' Economic and
Political Weekly, May 1975,

The Polity

Though the upper castes in Bihar are numerically
weak, this weakness is compensated to a large extent by
their higher ritual status, economic power and modern
skills. As I have said elsewhere, in Bihar the
ownership of land is, to a very great extent, concentrated
in the hands of upper castes. Since Bihar is a
predominantly rural and agrarian society, (Where) land is
the most important source of economic power. Resultantly
landed high caste people used to dominate the state
polity. Due to constitutional provisions they had to
provide berths to low caste, Harijans, Muslims and Tribes
also, there developed a class of political elites.
Except getting election favour of political exploitation
they were completely detached from their castes. In this
way upper caste dominance remained in the state polity.
Pradhan Prasad observes that " the policy of reservation...
in favour of the middle castes in Bihar, in the teeth
of opposition from the upper castes, only highlights
the political reality of the present dominant position of
these castes in the state. " [11] " After the 1967 Assembly
elections also when non-Congress parties came to power

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[11]Pradhan H. Prasad, 'Caste and Class in
Bihar,' Economic and Political Weekly,
Annual Number, February 1979, P. 481.

more than three-fourths of the total number of MLAs belonged to the landed class.[12]

Thus upper castes created a condition of cumulative inequality and seriously restricted the avenues of status mobility for other castes. It is true that with the onset of the social and political change under the impact of the British rule alternate avenues of status mobility were created. But even these new opportunities did not benefit all the segments evenly. Consequently the traditionally privileged upper castes had a better initial start in politically exploiting them.

This is ridiculous that the interest of small farmers and agricultural labourers are being advocated by those elites who have exploited them in the past and who are exploiting them even today. In fact these two contrary sections have got distinct class-interest. Precisely because of this reason politics has remained a game and nothing else in the hands of rich and resourceful people of any caste. Such elitist composition of state polity adopted delaying mechanism in the implementation of any ordinance that were vote-catching but against their class interest. Daniel Thorner writes,

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[12]Shashishekhar Jha, Political Elites in Bihar (Bombay, 1972), P. 55.

" ...Eight years after the Bihar legislature voted its acceptance of the principle of Zamindari abolition, the majority of the Zamindars of Bihar (having political power) were in legal possession of their lands. " [13]

By frequently changing political parties, sometimes bearing contrary goals and means, politicians in the state, as elsewhere in India, have provided that there is nothing as such political ethics, morality and political ideology. In other words, personalization of politics has ultimately led to emergence of a situation where ideology had become a very weak force. Shashishekhar Jha cites an interesting example of political wall-crossing. K.N. Singh of Hazaribagh organized a 'Janata Party' in 1949 " to drive out the Congress from Chhotanagpur and Santhal Parganas and cleanse Bihar politics of casteism, corruption and to restore the Zamindari rights. " [14] Jha further says that on account of difference with Swatantra leaders, whose party Singh joined earlier, he left the party and joined the Congress in 1964 but walked out in 1967, because he and his supporters failed to secure Congress tickets. This kind of shift still continues.

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[13]Quoted in length by Radhakant Barik, n.8, P. 28.

[14]Shashishekhar Jha, n.12, P. 47.

Today the situation is that landed class political elites dominate every political organization without any exception. To quote Romesh Thapar, " If people are sick of what goes on in the name of government, they are equally allergic to the bunch of " leaders" who have been with us for too long preaching status quoist theory. " [15] He further adds, " Unless our political parties begin to draw young men and women in their twneties and thirties, who can articulate the feelings of a subcontinent that is growing younger with the explosion of population, we will remain at the mercy of leaders who do not know what they are talking about. " [16]

To sum up, Bihar is rich but it is conceived as poor and backward state. Like many other Indian states, it is, moreover, marked by tremendous social, economic and regional diversities that more often than not superimpose upon each other. It is seen such a way that scarcity and diversity are the two principal environmental components of Bihar's political system, both of which could indicate a maximization of political conflict.

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[15]Romesh Thapar, _Economic and Political Weekly_, 20 April 1974.

[16]Ibid.

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The Education

Since J.P. first addressed the students at Patna
College in 1973, who were the main participants in his
movement in the initial stage, whom he wanted to
abandon classes for one year, a brief account of
education in the state will not be out of context.

Education as an investment in human resources
holds an important position among the factors contributing
to economic growth and social development. It secures
returns in the form of skilled man-power geared to attain-
ment of material objective of happy home and community.
On social front it creates right attitudes and congenial
atmosphere for planned social and economic activity.

Bihar has remained backward in respect of education.
In a traditional bound and primarily a village society,
one could say that due to prevailing norms and values of
remote areas there has been uneven development in the
field of education. But lack of subsistence economy
might have forced them not to pursue further study
resulting into low rate of literacy. " In general,
literacy rate per thousand of population is 19.9, but
among females it is only 8.7 in contrary to males 30.6.
Bihar has very slowly responded towards girls

education. " [17] Moreover, educational institutions were located mainly in urban areas where very few people could send their wards.

Bihar has probably given a record of experiments in the field of education, e.g. replacement of the two years degree course by three years and again its reversal, abolition of higher secondary schools, declaration of English as optional upto secondary standard, implementation of 10+2+3 formula and thereby introduction of inter colleges, constitution of inter university board etc. These experiments have contributed a lot to upset the academic environment in the state.

By and large people coming from upper rung of the society, both in the matter of economy and caste, have taken advantage of higher education. Ghanshyam Shah observes, " Most of them are sons and daughters of white-collar employees, businessmen and small and big land-holders. " [18] So state politics and politics on the university campus represent certain common features, e.g.

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[17] Vahid Ansari, The Changing Village India (New Delhi, 1980), P. 237.

[18] Ghanshyam Shah, Protest Movements in Two Indian States (New Delhi, 1977), P. 74.

role of caste in admission as well as election, large
scale use of money and muscle power in students' union
elections etc.

Thus, its achievements, both in absolute and
relative terms, are by no means inconsiderable. And yet
the failure of commission and omission are so great that
education in the state continues to be afflicted by many
of its old ills and with every passing year, it appears
to acquiring new maladies. It is still largely unrelated
to the needs and aspirations of people, inspite of all
the expansion achieved. Universal elementary education
for all children in the age groups six to fourteen years
is still a distinct dream. ⁄Educational standards are
unsatisfactory, each stage of education being bedevilled
with wastage, stagnation and general ineffectiveness,
and the system has become dysfunctional at all stages,
especially at the secondary and university levels and
is generating immense social stresses and strains by
creating rapidly increasing groups of educated unemployed.

The Tribal Community

The state of Bihar with 49.33 lakhs Scheduled
Tribes stands third in the country. General condition
of tribe is miserable and fruits of development programmes

have not reached them. On the basis of means of
livelihood they could be divided into four categories.[19]

(a)   Nomadic/semi-nomadic groups/food gatherers and
       hunters.

(b)   Primitive/shifting agriculturists.

(c)   Artisan groups.

(d)   Landless agricultural labourers.

(e)   Urban/industrial wage labourers.

(f)   Marginal and small farmers.

Due to new industries coming up and expansion of
mines, " the number of towns in Chhotanagpur-Santhal
Parganas region have increased from 13 in 1901 to 96 in
1971. "[20] This kind of development has caused competition
between tribals and outsiders. Following nationalization
of coal mines in 1971, nearly 50 thousand tribal mine
workers lost their jobs and were replaced by people from
outside.[21] On the other hand, certain families which

[19]K.B. Saxena, Tribal Development in Bihar:
   An Appraisal (Ranchi: Bihar Tribal Welfare
   Research Institute), P. 4.

[20]N. Sengupta, The Destitute and Development:
   A Study of Bauri Community in Bokaro Steel
   Region (Unpublished).

[21]N. Sengupta, 'Class Structure in Jharkhand,'
   National Labour Institute Bulletin, Vol.5,
   Nos. 7-8, July-August 1979, P. 222.

were exposed to modernization got coveted jobs in such
industries and remained tribes only in name. Whereas
majority of the tribes are slum-dwellers unskilled and
casual labourers in industrial complex. In 'Hatia
Industrial Complex of Ranchi' (alone), 57.8% tribal
industrial workers are slum-dwellers."[22]

" Kolhan region has roughly 250 mines most of which
are in the hands of private contractors who pay Rs.3.50
to unskilled tribal labourers per day. Barring few of the
mines, the minimum wage is either not fixed or not given
to the labourers."[23] The cumulative effect of such and
other types of exploitation by money-lenders, traders and
other non-tribals manifested in tribal unrest. Various
government reports have expressed concern at this
exploitation and have recommended a package of protective
and development measures to give social and economic
justice to the tribals. But in reality due to indifference
of officials and slackness in implementations, the major
part of such aids lapse. Hence, instead of benefitting

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[22]L.P. Vidyarthi, 'Aspects of Tribal Labour
Force in Chhotanagpur,' Tribe, Vol.VI,
No.3, December 1969, P. 54.

[23]Illegal Plunder of Mines and Tribals of
Kolhan,' Economic and Political Weekly,
Vol.14, No.38, 19 September 1981, P. 1525.

them, the increasing development of their areas is
accompanied by a marked deterioration in the condition
of the poorer tribals who are now fighting a grim battle
of survival. Hence industries and development measures
have added to relative deprivation. Some of the tribals
have settled in industrial cities who do not have to do
anything with tribal communities except receiving benefits
of positive discrimination while others are still
" primitive" in true sense of the term.

Unrests in Bihar

The above account gives a picture of Bihar in
which adequate reasons of unrest are there. We have
many cases of unrests and movements of various kinds in
Bihar. This is not to say that the movements of that type
did not occur in other parts of the country, but most of
the time Bihar was ahead, probably just after Bengal.
May be that Bihar has suffered from political instability.
But this was not the lone cause. A British military
officer with many years of experience of Indian affairs
remarked in 1857, " From the days of Mir Kasim Ally,
Patna had always been a rebellious city. "[24] There were

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[24]K. K. Datta, History of Freedom Movement in
Bihar (Patna, 1957), Vol.I, P.1, quoted by
Shaileshwar Nath in 'Terrorism in India
(New Delhi, 1980), P. 2.

also isolated cases of peasant uprisings in Bihar even earlier like the Santhal Insurrection of 1855-56, Munda Uprisings of 1899-1909, Indigo Riots of 1867, 1877 and 1907.[25]

So far student unrest is concerned, in United States and other advanced countries, it is related to cultural crisis. This crisis has "to do with the impact of general affluence and large-scale bureaucratic organization on allegiance to the 'protestant ethic,' on modes of child rearing, on sexual identity, on attitudes toward work, property, competition and self-expression. As the vitality of traditional values declines, young people experience cultural incoherence and chaos."[26]

Since social and cultural problems are of varied nature in the cosmos, here student unrest is related to certain basic problems which are necessarily different from those of advanced countries, e.g. corruption, exploitation and certain academic issues.

Student unrest in Bihar after independence could be traced from 1956 itself, when they clashed with the

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[25]Arvind Narayan Das, Does Bihar Show the Way? (Calcutta, 1979), P. 131.

[26]Milton Mankoff and Richard Flakes, 'The Changing Social Base of the American Student Movement' in R.R. Evans (ed.) Social Movements (Chicago, 1973), P. 479.

transport authority. Between 1965 and 1967 also
frequent clashes took place between the government and
students. The issues were, reduction of fees,
organization of the students' union and a judicial
inquiry into police excesses. " Such agitations often
coincided with the agitation of government employees,
teachers and political parties; they supported each
other..." [27] High prices and scarcity of essential
commodities widespread in the state caused many
demonstrations in 1965 by political parties, non-gazetted
officers as well as students.[28] In 1965 Bihar saw the
beginning of Sarvodaya movement possibly because Kisan
movement against the feudal landlords was most powerful
there.

Apart from these, there were spurts of other
movements which are still continuing, viz., Jharkhand
movement in South Bihar, Naxalbari movement in Bhojpur

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[27]Arvind Narayan Das, n.25, P. 75.

[28]See, T.J.S. George, Revolt in Bihar
(Delhi, 1965).

and Communist movement in North Bihar.[29]

It is in this broad context that the historic J.P. movement occurred that erupted, vanished and shook the entire political system of the nation in a very short span of time.

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[29]See T.K. Oommen, Charisma, Stability and Change: An Analysis of Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement in India (New Delhi, 1972); Kalyan Mukherjee, et.al., 'Bhojpur: Naxalism in the Plains of Bihar,' and K.L. Sharma, 'Jharkhand Movement in Bihar,' Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.II, Nos. 1-2, 10 January 1976.

Chapter-III

THE BIHAR MOVEMENT OF 1974-'77

In January-February 1974 Gujarat observed a
movement which was said to be unprecedented in the history
of post independence India. This movement ended on 15
March 1974 with the dissolution of the Assembly. In
March itself there started a movement in Bihar. This
movement gained momentum on 18 March 1974. Hence Bihar
movement followed the movement of Gujarat. J.P., who was
the leader of Bihar movement, had gone to Gujarat to
study the situation. Even though he was not the leader of
Gujarat movement, he tried to understand the reasons for
the eruption of the said movement. Owing to the
structural conditions and universal unrest among the
students, most analysts and commentators believe that the
two movements were interconnected. Moreover, a brief
account of the Gujarat movement may help us in better
understanding of the make-up of the J.P. movement in
Bihar.

The Gujarat Movement: A Brief Account

J.P. had nothing to do with Gujarat movement in
its initial phase. He came on the screen much later
and then followed Bihar movement which spread to the

whole of North India. In Gujarat, the food problem

was acute in December 1973. At the same time there were

certain academic issues on which the agitation had

started, but the issues on which a spontaneous movement

breaks out in the form of agitation need not be the sole

or even the mass propelling force. As Shah noted:

" In July 1973, on the eve of the change of the Chief

Minister from Ghanshyam Oza to Chiman Bhai Patel, the

teachers and students of Ahmedabad launched an agitation

against corrupt politics. The agitation turned into food

riots and then communal riots. " [1]

The Gujarat movement was a spontaneous movement.

In fact no political party had anticipated the

developments and as such none was ready to lead the

movement.[2] Partly because of being unprepared to

provide the leadership, no organized political party

succeeded in securing a firm grip on the movement.

Though fuzzy in its aims, it was a secular movement in

the sense that caste or religion did not play any

significant role in it. Barik observed, " The movement

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[1]Ghanshyam Shah, Protest Movements in Two
Indian States (Delhi, 1977), P. 32.

[2]Economic and Political Weekly, 2 February
1974, P. 129.

lacked clarity about basic issues."[3] Actually Gujarat

movement was not launched to secure any political goal,

rather the sole aim, self consciously declared in the

beginning, was to get certain specific demands met.

Anti-price rise agitation was spreading in urban

Gujarat whereas anti-levy Satyagraha was developing in

remote areas of South Gujarat. Thus the students'

agitation had developed in a climate of agitations by other

sections. Yuvak Lagni Samiti, a major student organization

which was composed of student representatives of various

colleges, such as Chhatra Yuba Sangharsha Vahini later

formed in Bihar, demanded reduction of mess bills and

redressal of certain educational grievances. These were:

1   mess bills of hostels should not exceed Rs.70
        per month, per student;

2   police atrocities should end;

3   the university should reduce term fees by Rs.10;

4   the conveners of the Youth Festivals must resign
        because they invited hoarders, businessmen and
        blackmarketeers instead of artists and
        educationists at the valedictory session;

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3   Radhakant Barik, Politics of the J.P.
        Movement (New Delhi, 1977), P. 47.

5   the Education Minister should resign as she did
     not carry out her duties;

6   police should not enter the university campus;

7   the university should stop compulsory collection
     of Rs.2 for mark-sheets; and

8   hoarders and profiteers should be arrested and
     quality food-grains should be distributed to the
     masses.[4]

It is easily discernable that these demands centre
round certain immediate economic demands by the students.
Their linkage with the police role in suppressing
agitations in favour of establishment, role of hoarders-
businessmen-black-marketeers as symbols of corrupt societal
organization and inept political management as epitomised
by Education Minister, keeps both the possibilities open
i.e. of the agitation being shortlived and isolated if
the sectional demands are met and the agitation joining
as a tributory to a wider, long-term and political
orientation.

The last demand is not directly related nor confined
to students alone. Perhaps this was added to secure public

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[4]Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, P. 37.

support. In general there was no central political

demand. But, of course, certain student wings of

political parties supported these demands and hence

involvement of political parties started. In a meeting

students " pledged that they should sacrifice studies to

procure essential commodities for the people. For the

first time, they openly linked student's problems with

those of the masses." [5] This underscores the open-endedness

of this agitation like most others in India. One finds

simultaneous presence and articulation of diverse aims,

contending directions and leadership structures and choices

for the adversaries of the movement to forge their strategies.

In short the individual instances lack in predeterminism,

predestination and conscious complete structuration. The

ambivalence and unpreparedness on the part of political

parties, leadership is made obvious when the agitation was

followed by violence, loot and arson on a large-scale,

indicating the volatile nature of the situation and the

misery of the people having reached in intolerable level.

The callousness of the politicians is brought out by

Barik: " The politicians tried to pacify the people by

using the cliche that people of Gujarat were well fed,

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[5]*Ibid*, P. 38.

which had been created by the business interests and
sustained by the business class and its allies. "[6]

Unlike Bihar, Gujarat was not the most backward state. But extreme inequality, which is the general feature of Indian society, was very much present there. Thus inequality and serious economic crisis gave rise to and provided momentum for the movement.\ About Gujarat politics, once Iqbal Narain observed, " Its predominant feature is modernisation, its key-note is secular character. It has been devoid of anti-Brahminism or rapid caste and communal rivalries. Its political development has been characterised by simultaneous patterns of change and continuity which has been informed by incremental and steady reforms, not convulsions. "[7] That the professor of political science was taken in by momentary appearances and logical consequences of social scientist's dominant ideology of trouble-free continuous modernization is too obvious. The failure of the politicians to anticipate is amply matched by the main line political science.

As I have said earlier, J.P. was not actively involved in the movement when it started in Gujarat.

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[6]Radhakant Barik, n.3, P. 48.

[7]Iqbal Narain, State Politics in India
(Meerut, 1976), P. 68.

But his understanding of actual discontent among the masses in general and students in particular provided an image of a leader who was needed that time. | This manifested clearly during the Bihar movement. When he appeared on the scene, he made an appeal to the students saying that student protests " have generally suffered from localism and narrow and immediate concerns. The issue to which I am drawing attention in this appeal is of a deeper and fundamental significance. It is the issue of democracy. The most serious danger to democracy, which is the very precondition of the people's civic life, comes from vitiation of the electoral process. Money, falsehood, corruption and physical force have combined to erode steadily the very meaning and substance of elections.

" Will our youth continue to look on idly at this strangulation of the democratic process? Surely, there cannot be a more important issue which should spur the youth to action. Time for action is 'here and now,' what form their action should take is for the youth themselves to decide. My only recommendation would be that in keeping with the spirit and substance of democracy, it must be scrupulously peaceful and non-partisan. " [8]

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[8]Vasant Nargolkar, J.P.'s Crusade for Revolution (New Delhi, 1975), P. 8.

When J.P. observed the situation in Gujarat and saw that Bihar was also on the verge of explosion, he took the lead in Bihar where the movement became completely political. It is reasonable to argue from an analysis of the Gujarat development that he did not create the situation of widespread relative deprivation prevalent then, did not spur the students to join other agitations by sections of the people, did not prevent the ruling party bosses from meeting the student's sectional demands and did not hinder organized opposition parties from leading the discontent into partisan pursuance of goals. J.P. attempted a historical understanding of the significance of the agitation beyond the immediate, local, narrow and obvious aims and gave it a self consciousness which was simultaneously political and non-partisan. He attempted to provide direction, make the goals broad and explicit and bring an awareness of the conditions under which short term and narrowly defined goals could be securely achieved. How far did he succeed? We turn to Bihar for the answer.

J.P.: The Leader of Bihar Movement

The movement in Bihar like Gujarat started on different issues and took a political turn. In this regard it is essential to discuss J.P.'s political

background. It was J.P. who provided philosophical content of the movement, formulated programmes for action and guided the struggle and under his leadership political parties, having contradictory political goals, adopted common means to politically exploit the situation. J.P.'s integrity was relatively less questioned. Evolution of his political ideas will help in understanding his role in the movement which was, of course, political. J.P.'s seemingly contradictory make-up is characteristically brought out by Ghanshyam Shah. He writes: " He is known among both critics and admirers as a moralist, a Marxist, a liberal, a democrat, a humanist, a politician, a saint, a dreamer and so on."[9] It is not possible here to discuss all the aspects of J.P.'s personality. What is attempted here is only a brief sketch bringing out those aspects of his make-up that are relevant to the movement.

Jayaprakash Narayan, a Kayastha by caste, was born in 1902 in an average middle class family. He was educated upto college level in Patna. After finishing college education, he joined Wisconsin University (U.S.A.), from where he did his M.A. in Sociology. In America he earned for his maintenance by working in

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[9]Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, P. 99.

various ways, including manual labour on farm, factory,
hotel and shop. It was at this stage that he came in
contact with some communist students, read the writings
of Marx and his followers and became an ardent Marxist.
He wrote, "...it was in the land of resilient and
successful capitalism, in the United States of America...
that I became a convert to Marxism, or more precisely,
to Soviet Communism as it was then. It was at Madison,
Wisconsin, the home of La-Follete progressivism then, that
in the company of Jewish and European-born fellow students
I drank deep at the fountain of Marxism. I think we
left nothing unread of Marxism that was available...
The pungent writings of M.N. Roy that found their way from
Europe into the communist cells, particularly of Asian
students, completed the conversion to Marxism. " [10]

After J.P.'s return to India in 1929, he found
Indian Communists, under the control of Comintern
(Communist International), which was not one with the
freedom movement under the Indian National Congress.
Around this time, for a while, J.P. was split within
himself on the issue of joining the Communist Party of

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[10] Bimala Prasad (ed.) A Revolutionary's Quest:
    Selected Writings of Jayaprakash Narayan
    (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980),
    P. 183.

India. But its " anti-nationalist" stand impelled him
to decide otherwise. He even thought in terms of
founding a separate Communist Party, and tried to
explore its possibilities. " The stand taken by
communists, not to support bourgeois-led freedom movement,
came as a rude shock to J.P. and appeared to be a
perverted application of the principles of Marxism to the
Indian situation. " [11]

As a Marxist J.P. did not believe in non-violence.
Yet he joined the freedom struggle under the leadership
of Mahatma Gandhi. In the early thirtees, when Gandhiji
launched his second non-cooperation movement (the Salt
Satyagraha) and all leaders went to prison, J.P. was made
the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress.
It was J.P.'s idea to form the Congress-Socialist Party,
which was formally launched in 1934. His major theme
at that stage was to explain Marxian Socialism to the
people and to refute the views of those who considered
socialism as an ideology, foreign and uncongenial for
India. Once he said, " I want to present to you two
theses. The first is that every honest Congressman...

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[11]Ibid, P. xiii.

who wants to bring about complete independence of India,
not merely in name, but complete independence for the
majority of the Indian people, i.e. for the worker, for
the peasant, for the poor of the country, must accept
socialism as his basic principle of thought and action.
The second thesis is this that if we want that our great
movement for national independence should go on, should
advance...then today we must accept this socialist
programme. " [12]

In 1947, the Congress Socialist Party dropped the
word Congress from its name. In 1948 the party severed
its connection with the Congress. The assassination of
Mahatma Gandhi shocked J.P. " Moral values in J.P.
overshadowed his materalistic outlook. " [13]

J.P.'s picture of socialism was the picture of
economic and political democracy. In this democracy,
he asserted, " Man will neither be slave to capitalism
nor to a party or the state. Man will be free. " [14]

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[12]Rai Akhileshwar Prasad, Socialist Thought
in Modern India (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan,
1974), P. 108.

[13]Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, P. 101.

[14]Bimal Prasad, n.10, P. xxix.

With regard to the individual's place in society, J.P. thought that the environment and society by themselves do fundamentally mould the individual as well as social institutions. He observed clearly that it is social environment which shapes human behaviour.[15]

In J.P. we find a peculiar combination of or vascillations between Gandhism and Marxism. The emphasis on Gandhian values and western democratic principles, without discarding the framework of Marxism, pervades several tracts which J.P. wrote during the years following the separation of the Socialist Party from Congress. Though he said: " My final break with Marxism, though not with politics, had come during the three week's fast at Poona. It was then that the long process of questioning, started by the Russian purges, came to an end, and it became clear that materialism as a philosophical outlook could not provide any basis for ethical conduct and any incentive for goodness. " [16] So J.P. had an unsteady relationship with Marxism, politics and ethical conduct. He never ceased to learn and change.

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[15]Ibid, Pp. 6-15.

[16]Quoted by Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, P. 101.

Later in 1952 J.P. joined Vinoba in his Bhoodan
mission. Before that he had asked the socialists to
make a careful study of Sarvodaya Plan for economic
development prepared by Gandhian workers. The " self-
purificatory" fast observed by J.P. at Poona had a
peculiarly Gandhian flavour and showed that he had moved
much closer to Gandhism than before.[17] After his
participation in Bhoodan and his declaration of " Jeevandan"
at a Sarvodaya conference held at Gaya we find J.P. absent
from political scene,[18] till his re-emergence as the
supreme leader of the movement under study. When India
had attained Independence Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the
first Prime Minister, had expressed his desire to induct
Jayaprakash Narayan into the Union Cabinet. The proposal
fell through as the quantum of presentation to the
socialists could not be agreed to by Nehru and J.P.
This is interpreted by political analysts by fitting
J.P. in contradictory categories of renunciator of power
and 'seeker of substantial power.' His attachment to
Vinoba's Bhoodan movement could also not last. As he
had accepted Marxism in U.S.A. to an end it to Congress

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[17]Bimal Prasad, n.10, Pp. 36-37.

[18]Ajit Bhattacharjea, Jayaprakash Narayan:
A Political Biography (Delhi, 1975),
Pp. 123-124.

socialism in India in thirtees and renounce it philosophically in Independent India, he parted company with Lohia's militant socialism to join Gandhian Bhoodan movement and on realizing that this movement too did not achieve its declared objectives he quickly moved away from Vinoba's Gandhian movement in favour of 'Total Revolution.' His concept of 'man,' 'society' and 'morality' seem to defy all existing and propounded solutions. The dreamer in him, the saint in him, the humanist in him, the practical man in him, the democrat in him, could find no resting place.

Total Revolution

In 1969 J.P. organised a National Convention of Unity and Democracy. But nothing tangible was achieved. The seeds of the J.P. movement for " strengthening democracy" and ushering in " total revolution" were shown at this point which later became the ultimate objective of Bihar movement.[19] By "total revolution," " he meant all round revolution, that is, social, economic, political, moral and cultural revolution." "This struggle,"

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[19]Everyman's (A sister publication of press magnate Goenka's Indian Express, launched to bolster up J.P.'s ideas), 20 July 1974.

he said, " is not for any petty or small aim. It is a revolutionary movement. " He emphasised the " internal and external change, changing the entire social frame from within and also from outside; individuals as well as institutions. "[20]

During Bihar movement we find J.P. a confused-looking man, who in search for a viable alternative to the existing amoral reality, adopted certain contradictory means. Simultaneously there seemed to arise, according to some observers, a gap between what he said and what he did. The course of movement itself explains the whole contradictions contained in the movement. Ghanshyam Shah observed, "...Jayaprakash claims he does not believe in any ideology; he is for Gandhism, minimum government control, village economy, class collaboration etc. He propounds the Sarvodaya philosophy, and is opposed to communism. His non-ideological stance and moral approach, on the one hand, and the compulsion of political mechanism, on the other, led him to take contradictory or ambiguous stands during the course of this movement... He was against corruption, but at the same time he took support of publicly 'known' corrupt politicians and businessmen,

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[20]Everyman's, 22 December 1974.

ignoring the suggestion of a sympathiser that he should

evolve and announce a movement's own manner of collecting

funds. He declared that he was not against Mrs Gandhi,

but also said that as long as Indira Gandhi and the

Congress remained in power at the Centre, democracy was in

peril. In February 1974, he said in Gujarat that the

conservative parties like the Congress(O) and the Jana

Sangh were not different from the Congress, but readily

accepted their support barely two months later..."[21]

This apparent contradiction raises many questions which are

not easy to answer. Can an analysis or a programme for

eradication of corruption ignore the structural

differences between corruption of the groups and the people

in power and in control of centres of power and those

presently denied access to these positions? In case the

distinction is validly made, how to ensure that the change

brings in reduction or removal of corruption rather than

positional change for individuals and groups competing

for power? What is the link between the ideals of a

moral society situated in future and the practical

activities in the present at least partly motivated by

imperfect moral interests? Is there any relationship

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[21]Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, P. 103.

between utopia and the means to achieve it in practice?
The unresolved dilemmas posed by Marxism and Gandhism as
theories of social transformation present themselves as
concrete problems of the Bihar movement and as
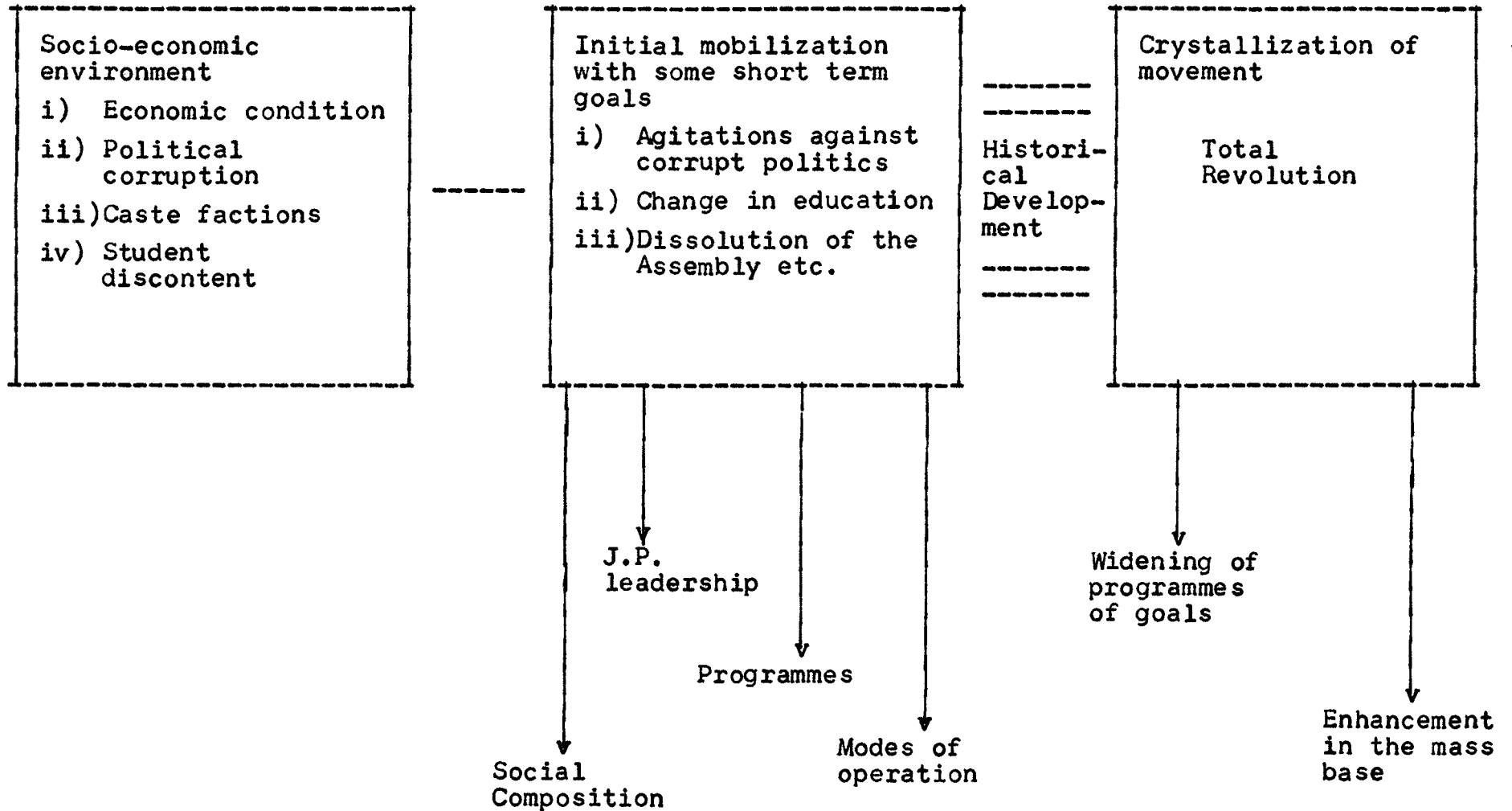contradictions of J.P.'s leadership.

At the later phase of the Bihar movement, like
other leaders, J.P. too concentrated the attention of his
revolution on transformation through capturing of political
power. Though he himself did not remain in the mainstream
of power-politics, he was the guiding force behind the
whole politics. " I am not interested in this or that
ministry being replaced or the Assembly being dissolved,"
he wrote. " These are partisan aims and their achievement
will make no difference. It will be like replacing
Tweedledum with Tweedledee. But I have decided to fight
corruption and mis-government and blackmarketing,
profiteering and hoarding, to fight for the overhaul of
the educational system, and for a real people's
democracy. "[22]

J.P.'s perhaps wavering and contradictory
decisions left deep imprint on the movement. In his
early career also, as previously noted, Sarvodaya

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[22]Ajit Bhattacharjea, Jayaprakash Narayan:
A Political Biography (New Delhi, 1975),
Pp. 143-44.

Movement's Initial Phase

| Socio-economic environment

i) Economic condition
ii) Political corruption
iii) Caste factions
iv) Student discontent | Initial mobilization with some short term goals

i) Agitations against corrupt politics
ii) Change in education
iii) Dissolution of the Assembly etc. | Histori-
cal
Develop-
ment | Crystallization of movement

Total
Revolution |

J.P.
leadership

Programmes

Social
Composition

Modes of
operation

Widening of
programmes
of goals

Enhancement
in the mass
base

movement too proved to be a failure. Pradhan H. Prasad once said that the Sarvodaya movement has turned out to be an instrument of " strengthening semi-feudal bondage. "[23] The composition of the movement bore evidence of the contradiction which J.P. was having and that contradiction deviated and distracted the movement from moving toward the ultimate goal. Hence the whole Bihar movement should be seen in the light of the role J.P. played.

The J.P. Movement in Bihar: Its Different Phases

J.P. movement as analysed here covered a period from 1974 to 1977. This is the period in which various issues of the movement crystallized into a " consolidated objective" i.e. total revolution and peculiar political phenomenon of coming together of almost all non-communist political parties took place. Though attempt at 'unifying' the opposition parties to fight elections against the Congress Party had been made many a time earlier since the attainment of independence of the country.[24] Certainly for a short span of time unity to an extent materialised only as a consequence of the J.P. movement. Due to such a development J.P. movement

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[23]Mohan Ram, 'Sarvodaya Farce,' Economic and and Political Weekly, 3 May 1975.

[24]C.P. Bhambhri, The Janata Party: A Profile (New Delhi, 1980), P. 4.

occupies the place of a political phenomenon in the history of Indian polity. This raises an important issue of methodological nature about the analysis of a social movement. A social movement definitionally is characterised by a flux in organization (leadership, membership and their relationships), a transformation in and arising of entirely new set of goals and alteration in the ascendency of contending components of heterogenous ideology with ill-defined boundaries. One could look at each phase of the Bihar movement as a success/failure as it passes to the next phase. When the students agitation around sectional demands gets broadened and crystallised by including and focussing on general societal demands regarding prices, corruption and police repression, the first movement is superceded. Similarly when replacement of Indira Gandhi's control of the state apparatus becomes the over-arching goal uniting all non-communist opposition forces and securing tacit support from a section of communists also, the movement against price rise, against all pervasive corruption or for participatory democracy gave in. This development though necessarily destined to develop that way, opened the possibility of eliminating in a positional change, without a structural change. In fact it can be reasonably argued that denial

of hegemonic role to the ideology of 'total revolution'
in favour of 'Indira Hatao' ended the movement. But
again it was not inevitable, the succeeding phase could
always be built round the core present in the earlier
phase of concrete interaction of a complex of subjective
and a set of objective forces.

It is a complex relationship between Gujarat and
Bihar movements. Bihar movement while in full swing, was
led by Jayaprakash Narayan and was supported by opposition
parties. Whereas the case with Gujarat movement was
somewhat different. One could find and locate similarities
in the causes of both the movements. The fact that the
Gujarat movement had in time-order occured earlier, one
could hypotheise that the lessons drawn from Gujarat
were made use of in mobilization and direction of the
movement in Bihar. That the students (the educated
youth) constituted the pioneering mass base of the
movement in Gujarat may have also been used in organizing
the Bihar movement and that anti-corruption slogans had
very wide appeal which takes on more and more a political
edge, directed against the ruling party, capable of
oppositional unity may have inspired confidence in the
Bihar movement, could not be easily dismissed. Yet, the
social structural and political cultural differences of

Gujarat and Bihar could not be glossed over. Ideally these two movements should be dealt with separately. Here we will concentrate on Bihar movement alone.

The conditions as well as the issues started paving the way for the movement in Bihar in 1974 when the student delegates from various colleges convened a meeting in which two organizations namely, Bihar Pradesh Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti and Bihar Pradesh Chhatra Navjawan Morcha were formed.[25] The organization of these two parallel bodies indicates the element of pre-existing party politics which was involved in the movement. It is sufficient here to mention that from the very beginning different political parties took interest in the movement. The student organizations which were formed in February 1974 were like student wings of various established political parties. Bihar Pradesh Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti was made up of those students who were owing allegiance to the Congress (O), Jana Sangh, the S.S.P., etc., whereas Bihar Pradesh Chhatra Navjawan Morcha represented the students of the Communist Party of India and other Leftist parties.[26]

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[25]Radhakant Barik, n.3, P. 52.

[26]Indradeep Sinha, Real Face of J.P.'s Total Revolution (New Delhi, 1975), P. 1.

Actually the Bihar movement was started by the students in general, but soon it acquired the direct attention of political leaders which resulted in a restricted participation by the students. Arvind Narayan Das goes to the extent of saying: " It was...not J.P. but the C.P.I. which fathered the Bihar agitation. "[27] Das contends this on the basis of 'Bihar Bandh' on January 21, 1974, which was called by C.P.I. but supported by almost all opposition parties. This may be because the sole aim of the opposition parties was progressively being reduced to remove Mrs Gandhi from the office of the Prime Minister. We have many instances when interest oriented common political goal has forced them to come together either by merging or by supporting the move without abandoning its own political identity. Hence on the basis of a bandh organized by any particular party, after which a bigger change in the social order takes place, that political party cannot justifiably be named the father of the Bihar agitation.

In the earlier phase of the movement we find it being shadowed by the discontent manifested in the forms

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[27]Arvind Narayan Das, Does Bihar Show the Way? (Calcutta, 1979), P. 69.

of protest. That is why the analysis of the Bihar movement by Ghanshyam Shah terms it as a protest movement. Are we justified in either raising a particular protest agitation to the pedestal of fatherhood or seeing the whole movement with its qualitatively new demands and widened reach only as a protest movement and not a transformative movement?

The movement gathered momentum only in March 1974 when the ruling party adopted repressive measures to frustrate the bandh and crush the protest. This sort of measures invited sharp reaction by the people because the issues involved therein were closely related to the everyday life but the enemy was increasingly identified in Repressive State Apparatus. Before we proceed further, it would be very much appropriate to discuss the issues which gave rise to the movement. Here we will discuss three major issues, viz. (a) economic issues, (b) academic issues and (c) political issues.

Economic Issues

Economic issues had triggered the Bihar movement. In 1973-74 there was an acute crisis of essential commodities. It was not in short supply and the situation was aggravated as blackmarketeers and hoarders had handicapped the distribution system. The real

sufferer was the urban middle class and the lower middle
classes and the poor. Ghanshyam Shah writes in his report
that people " demanded unearthing of hoarded commodities
and ensuring equitable distribution of essential
commodities at fixed prices. "[28]

Whether the movement succeeded in ameliorating the
economic condition or not is entirely a different question;
ever since the beginning, economic issues were involved
in the people positively responding to the call of
movement. Apart from urban middle class, students were
also organizing agitations against rising mess bill.

Generally people hold the businessmen and
bureaucrats responsible for economic offences but in
Bihar " J.P. held the government rather than the traders
and industrialists responsible for economic hardship of
the people. According to him businessmen were compelled
to sell things at higher prices because of the government's
rules and controls. "[29] This statement made by J.P.
indirectly invited the opposition to join hands in
eradicating this evil which was possible either by
adoption of corrective measures or by changing the
government. Opposition found the latter more glittering.

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[28]Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, P. 106.

[29]Ghanshyam Shah, Ibid, P. 106.

Thus the movement became completely political. The
argument could be extended further that the turn in the
movement earned the benevolence of the 'traders and
industrialists' who were absolved of the responsibility
for economic hardship of the people. Obscurity of the
class content of the movement is obvious.

Academic Issues

In 1973-74 Patna was the centre of protest
activities. When students at Patna started raising slogans
against the problems they were facing on the University
campus, the movement spread to other parts of the state.
Mainly two sorts of problems were involved in academic
issues, viz., demands related to student's future after
they had ceased to be students and demands related to the
existential conditions of the students during the said
period. The former was the culmination of longstanding
feelings which had developed in their minds as a result
of observing the difficult situation that their seniors
had faced while searching jobs. The hardships had proved
the irrelevance of certificates and degrees that they
obtained by spending vast amount of time and money.
J.P. observed, " Our universities are continuing to
follow the system introduced by the Britishers. Only a
few consequential changes have been made... Whosoever

comes out with a degree engages in a frantic search of a job..."[30] The latter were the result of lower number of scholarships, poor supply of books and rising mess bills. The price of food item was swelling like anything followed by scarcity of certain essential commodities which compelled the mess-contractors to take more charges from students. Other demands referred to students' participation in university decision making, increasing the number of admission in various courses and concession in cine, theatre etc.

Patna University is the only residential university in Bihar but in that university also only twenty percent students were provided with hostel accommodation. Since the university is considered to be the best one in the state, students from far-flung areas took admission there and they faced acute accommodation problems. Ghanshyam Shah reports, " They (the students)...demanded provision for proper hostel accommodation, representation of students in policy making bodies of the universities such as Senate, the Syndicate and the Academic Council, establishment of students' union in every college,

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[30]Vasant Nargolkar, J.P. Vindicated
(New Delhi, 1977), P. 34.

decentralization of examinations, removal of percentage restrictions for Inter Science students appearing in competitive examinations for admission to medical colleges, combining of marks in written papers and practicals etc. "[31] The interesting thing in the demands put forward by the students was for the concession in cinema tickets, but this has been traditionally provided for in the Hindi region.

Immediate solution of the above problems was not looked for by the leaders of the movement. J.P. might have thought of these problems to be peripherial as he rejected the entire existing system of education. He said, " Gandhiji...also desired a type of education that would make the students self-reliant... Degrees should be delinked from jobs... Let all those concerned...apply their minds to the ways and means of bringing about revolutionary changes in the educational system. "[32] This statement may not have attracted the attention of the number of students participated in the movement. Because in Bihar, caste and money play important role in getting admission in the university/colleges and jobs within the state which resourceful people get easily by manipulating the same factors. But because of the

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[31] Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, P. 106.

[32] Vasant Nargolkar, n.30, P. 34.

political element involved in the strategy, such students also participated in the movement. Moreover the big gap in the material conditions of various people was no less important.

The irony of the movement is that students who were so actively involved in the movement could not see that their sectional demands were being pushed into the background by political demands. Despite this students remained in the mainstream of the movement. When they understood the political character of the movement, they grew little bit indifferent. It would be erroneous to believe that only effective appeal to the students could be in terms of their narrow sectional demands concerning their campus issues or privileges as students. They are youthful section full of idealism and humanism capable of rising above narrow grooves or individual benefits./ So, soon this indifference was largely wiped out when they heard J.P. saying, " As for the students, it is a shame that any of them should sit in the examinations when their comrades are being killed and lathi-charged and jailed. Shame to their youth and courage. " [33] Hence J.P. helped mobilization process as well as crystallization of the

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[33]Quoted by Radhakant Barik, n.3,
Pp. 80-81.

movement. Thus the numerical participation of students
in the two phases may not differ but the changed character
of the movement brought differences in motivation for
students participation.

Political Issues

While numerically higher mobilization with some
short term goal e.g., solution of certain academic and
economic problems were going on, the element of politics
was not absent altogether. The movement was launched
against wide-spread corruption, but the ghost of corruption
was not visible whereas its consequence was felt in every
walk of life. The course of movement gradually
channellised toward concentration on political corruption
and consequently the movement increasingly brought forth
political issues. According to the leaders of the movement
the government was responsible for political corruption
which was the fountain-head of corruption in public life.
J.P. himself said, " If it (corruption) is not checked,
the whole country will be drowned in the bog of
corruption."[34] Highlighting the evil of corruption he
said, " It is not merely an ethical question though that
is important. No nation can exist very long without

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[34]Everyman's, 1 December 1974.

morality in its conduct, in its political and public life. It touches the very bread of the people. Crores and crores of rupees have gone down the drain in the sense that what is meant for development, the welfare of the people, have gone into the pockets of corrupt people."[35]

Hence one could find that the issue of corruption provided the backbone of the movement. Instead of evolving mechanism to catch hold of such " corrupt people," J.P. suggested dismissal of Bihar Ministry and dissolution of the Assembly. The suggestion of this sort was an invitation to a political game in which majority of the politicians, who had lost the hope of capturing power, wholeheartedly participated. Surprisingly J.P. who had so vehemently condemned corrupt people, accepted their support.

The erosion of morality among ministers and thereby a danger to democracy was foreseen which again culminated into political issues. J.P. felt that the weakening of democracy in the country had reached the point where the mechanism of self-correction had

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[35]N.S. Jagannathan, 'A Revolution in the Making,' The Hindustan Times, 26 August 1974.

completely broken down.[36] J.P. was very much concerned with the social composition of legislators and parliamentarians who largely represented upper castes. This provided a mobilizing boon to the movement.

The symptoms of the disease were well identified but a theoretical ideological analysis of the malady was lacking. Thus politicalization of the movement instead of providing a wider historical solution resulted in channelizing the movement into the narrow game of partisan politics of positional change, deprived of moral plane of the 'total revolution.' Its victory was its defeat. The victory was in appearance.

Historical Development

In 1974 students' discontentment turned into a movement that is got expressed in a continuous protest. J.P.'s leadership helped higher mobilisation. Perhaps because before seventees J.P. was not actively involved in Indian polity and he was never said to be a corrupt man in public life, and when the political system was at the collapsing verge J.P. was the person who could gather support from the people. Other political leaders,

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[36]Everyman's, 8 December 1974.

who participated in the movement, had failed to win the confidence of the voters because of their own shady past. Hence after the police firing on 18 March 1974 when the Chhatra Sangharsha Samiti had organised a gherao of Bihar Legislative Assembly J.P. declared that he would support the movement. And from 19 March 1974 onward J.P. became the unanimously acclaimed leader of the movement.

J.P. led the procession and gherao organized by Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti and Tarun Shanti Sena on 8 April, 5 june and 4 November 1974. The main demand became the dissolution of the Assembly.[37] The ruling party and the leftist parties condemned the turn given to the movement. On one occasion the Communist Party of India organized a demonstration against J.P. movement as a cover for rightist communalist take over. They showed slogans like " River of blood will flow if the Vidhan Sabha is dissolved," " J.P. quit India." They even accused J.P. of being a C.I.A. agent.[38] Thus the political divide was drawn. The movement being taking on a political colour became narrower.

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[37]Radhakant Barik, n.3, Pp.53-55.

[38]Ibid, P. 56.

Instead of the search for solution, the government applied repressive means to crush the movement which resulted into larger participation and enhancement in its mass base. History shows that this was a natural development, because in people's consciousness coercive and repressive measures are associated with morally unjust government from the British days. Moral sympathy lay with the weak, the repressed. The religious tradition also evokes strong support for the powerless. The inevitable result was the more active participation by opposition parties in the movement and their gathering active mass support. Relative deprivation on the economic, educational, caste-social and political planes provided appropriate context for the movement to gather momentum.

Ghanshyam Shah's report shows that political parties were in the forefront of the J.P. movements. "The Jana Sangh, Congress(O), Socialist Party, Samyukta Socialist Party, and their front organisation, the A.B.V.P., S.Y.S., T.S.S. and the Sarvodaya Mandal were the constituent partners of the movement. Some other organizations, such as the R.S.S. and Anand Marg, supported or worked for the movement without wearing their particular labels."[39] Hesitatingly the C.P.M.

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[39]Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, P. 129.

also supported the J.P. movement probably because it was opposed to the Congress Party. Regarding the political participants in the movement, J.P. said in an interview to the Hindustan Times, " Personally I am trying to put in as much socio-economic content into the movement as possible. So far they are accepting it..."

" Two of these parties are conservative (though the Jana Sangh resents the appelation of conservatism) and I do not know about the Congress(O) which claims it is socialist though I do not know how far they would go... But as time goes on and as the movement gets more and more radicalised...may be these parties themselves will be radicalised in the process. "[40] This faith of J.P. in spontaneous progressive radicalisation of the conservative elements seemed to be a fond hope. It underplayed the role of ideological struggle and social structural hurdles.

So far the social composition of the movement is concerned it was largely dominated by urban middle class and non-Brahmin upper caste Hindus. Adivasis, Harijans and Muslims had,by and large,remained indifferent to the movement. " Since the J.P. movement was basically a revolt of the urban middle class, the Jana Sangh cadre

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[40]The Hindustan Times, 26 August 1974.

which is concentrated in urban centres of India was very actively involved in the movement. "[41]

The effort to enhance the mass base was extremely poor. Despite J.P.'s talk that businessmen are not responsible for corruption, the movement failed to assure them fully of its friendship and could not mobilise their support. Perhaps they were frightened after a section of the participants went on rampage on Frazer Road, Patna in March 1974.) It was reported that large sums of donation was taken from them through the use of coercive means. Thus the contradiction of mass mobilization on democratic demands and sheltering corrupt sections not seated in the government could not be contained. Mainly students and youth were the most active participants in the movement.

(Many militant programmes viz. Satyagraha, Dharna, gherao of the government offices to paralise their working, organization of processions and demonstrations, rallies, meetings, distributing literature and undertaking fast were chalked out. " In order to paralise government, J.P. asked the people in July 1974 not to pay taxes. "[42]

[41]C.P. Bhambhri, n.24, P. 5.

[42]See Ghanshyam Shah, n.1, Pp. 117-119.

As a part of the programme J.P. called upon the people to set up people's Assembly and parallel government. Hence J.P. gave the idea of the formation of Janata Sarkar which proved to be a failure. The parallel with the anti-British Gandhian movements specially of 1942 was too obvious. But the conditions were very different and complex.

Thus, the students, youth and urban middle class carried out the movement which was earlier triggered off by the students in Gujarat and Bihar. J.P. had observed the discontment among the people and found the situation ripe for a national movement. Accordingly it was launched but when the movement was spreading in Northern India, in the morning of 26 June 1975 the people of India were told that an 'Internal Emergency' had been proclaimed. This was followed by the arrest of almost all important leaders who were participating in the movement. But when the emergency was lifted the measure to quell the movement proved to be superficial and out of the womb of the movement there emerged a political party called Janata Party of which people thought an alternative to the ruling Congress. Soon those who had voted and supported the organization felt that they had committed a mistake because their all hopes and expectations remained

frustrated. And the movement ended in nothingness except that it displaced the government but the attempt to provide a strong alternative political party remained largely unfulfilled. It could be hypothesised that the movement from the very beginning suffered from (i) spontaneity, (ii) support base in urban middle class and transitory students population, (iii) identification of symptoms of the social malady lacking in social science analysis, (iv) negative unity against ruling party, (v) without a positive commonly agreed programme of social reconstruction, and (vi) lacking a philosophy of history and yet recognising its need.

Chapter-IV

CONCLUSION

In social movement we find the effort of men
to intervene in the process of social and cultural change.
Most of the social scientists emphasize the goal of
bringing into being new social and cultural forms
(Chapter I). But in either case, men are viewed as
actors, not as passive responders to the flow of culture
or the homeostatic tendencies of the social system.
Man's acts are collective which includes opposition to
other such collective actions seeking incompatible goals.
This conceptualization of social movements logically
leads to a recognition of membership, shared values,
norms and a structure which are present in all social
movements.

This study is an attempt to understand the nature
and causes of social movements in contemporary India.
Though the central focus is the study of J.P. movement
in Bihar, yet it can contribute to a better understanding
of conceptualization and theorization of social
movements. The conditions of extreme inequality in
which J.P. movement occured are very much present in
the social structure (Chapters II and III) which may

lead to other movements of this kind. Radhakant Barik's study centres round the political elements of the movement alone and the analysis of social aspects is missing. Ghanshyam Shah and Arvind Narayan Das are more interested in discription than analysis of the movement. The findings of this study are subject to verification of the imperial facts at the Ph.D level.

The theories, taken separately, which have been advanced for the study of social movements are weak and do not explain certain vital aspects of the movement. It is relative deprivation theory which contains the elements of psychological as well as Marxian approaches that help in better understanding of the movement under study. Though a number of questions regarding the class character of the participants, values, norms and local idioms remain unanswered.

In relative deprivation feeling of discontment depends on raised aspiration and blocked opportunity structure for the deprived to achieve in relation to " reference groups. " The level of expected need satisfaction derives from perception of the level of need satisfaction experienced by those who have already achieved membership of the reference group.

What has been found to be applicable in the case
of western Europe and that too in different historical
settings can not be automatically and without adjustments
be taken to be applicable in the case of new nations.
There are points of similarities and so also of
dissimilarities. Hence any theory developed in the
west has to be applied with due caution and the theory
of relative deprivation is not an exception. Moreover,
we find differences in the conditions and institutions of
traditional India and modern India. New institutions
which were non-existent in traditional India have emerged
today. A number of constitutional provisions have been
made to safeguard the interest and welfare of weaker
sections. In Indian constitution we find the provision
of "positive discrimination." But there is a gap between
promises and practice. The vast majority is living below
the poverty line. Despite scientific inventions and
technological innovations, fruits of development have
percolated according to the pre-existing hierarchical
structure and have not reached the rural people. Even
in urban areas wealth and prosperity is concentrated in
certain hands (Chapter II). Thus the extreme inequality
has become a general feature of Indian society. In
this circumstance relative deprivation theory has been

found to be more suitable to explain the genesis of social movements in India and particularly of J.P./ movement in Bihar.

Throughout the history, Bihar has been a sensitive state in the matter of revolutionary movements.[1] Kalikinkar Datta writes, "Bihar, the classic land of Indian civilization, where human genius unfolded itself in manifold petals age after age, has played a highly significant role in the successive phases of our national struggle..."[2] But the attainment of freedom was not the end of movements in Bihar.

Reasons for the eruption of movements lie in the historicity and existential conditions of the state. Bihar represents the famous proverbial contradiction i.e. poverty in the midst of plenty. Vast deposits of minerals, giant steel plants located in the state, to feed these factories, abundant raw materials available, yet per capita income desperately low! Large number of people are languishing in poverty.[3]

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[1]See Shaileshwar Nath, _Terrorism in India_ (New Delhi, 1980), chapters 3 and 6.

[2]K.K. Datta, _Freedom Movement in Bihar_ (Patna, 1957), Vol.I, P. iii.

[3]See Kedarnath Prasad, _The Economics of a Backward Region in a Backward Economy: A Case Study of Bihar in relation to Other States of India_ (Calcutta, 1967).

Bihar is predominantly an agricultural state, but even in that sector we find low productivity. This is not the end of the tragedy. Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhumihars own 95 percent land leaving barely 5 per cent for others, of which 5 percent must be owning 95 percent land. Hence we find a case of extreme inequality in the state. The existence of bonded labour in Bihar and Saunkia system in tribal areas highlight the fact of inequality as well as inhuman exploitation of human being. Amount and mode of payment to those workers who are the architect of agricultural operation in the state reveal the sad fact of exploitation in the agricultural sector.

In the given system economy, polity and society affect each other. When we examine class-character of the ministers we find that majority of them have come from upper rung of the society. Though this trend is changing, yet the inter-relationship of these exposes the hollowness of measures taken by the government. Thus the failure of Land Reform (Ceiling) Act should be deemed as a natural outcome.

Politicians of the state have proved that nothing is unfair in politics. Booth capturing and large scale violence are the main features of Bihar election.

Upper caste people have been dominating the state polity (Chapter II). During J.P. movement also we observed their greater participation. Though after 1967 the situation has changed, yet lower caste people are not duly represented in politics. On the basis of an extensive research project Ram Ahuja finds that " upper caste elites continue to dominate the Bihar politics." About the internal structure of the upper caste elite, he further says, " These people (upper caste elites) though have the higher social (ritual) status but economically, one-fourth happen to be well off and enjoy high economic status.'[4] But due to rampant corruption in politics and supremacy of elected leaders over bureaucrats, the avenues of status mobility remain hopefully open for them and, undoubtedly, quite a few of them take advantage of this situation.

Though upper castes created a condition of cumulative inequality and seriously restricted the avenues of status mobility for other castes, strong trend of political participation among other castes is developing after Independence, specially after the

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[4]Ram Ahuja, Political Elites and Modernization: The Bihar Politics (Meerut, 1975), P. 35.

institution of adult-franchise, Panchayati Raj, Land Reform Legislations, spread of education etc.

Political parties operating at the village level often lose their ideological content and change the direction of their interest to acquire local support base. The main reason for dilution of ideology is probably the consideration of electoral victory as the main goal or they conceive means as an end in itself. In this circumstance a party has to adopt methods contrary to its principles if it has to successfully function at that level, for example, matching caste against caste in elections. Consequently, a local leader does not usually have an ideological orientation and he seldom attaches any importance to ideological questions.

Existing social characteristics of political leadership in Bihar demonstrate that the leadership has become over-concerned with retaining power and is oblivious of correct relationship with the masses. They seldom bother for those who elect them. This is because they deviate from their ideology and concentrate on power politics.

In education also the condition is almost the similar. Economically well-off people have acquired

better education, on the other hand, we come across
the concrete reality of illiteracy in the state. Hence
in the field of education also extreme inequality is
observed. Caste and economy play an important role in
admission in various colleges and institutes. Hence
educational standards are unsatisfactory, each stage of
education being bedevilled with wastage, stagnation and
general ineffectiveness generating immense social stresses
and strains which have manifested in the forms of unrests,
agitations and protests by students. This is evident
particularly after 1965, though it could be traced from
1956 itself (Chapter II).[5]

The condition of tribal areas is far worse. Bihar
ranks third in terms of tribal population. Barring a few
families they are still conceived to be primitive. They
are the victims of inter-group and intra-group
exploitation. Their socio-economic backwardness results
into political indifference, the manifest consequence of
which is the indifference toward them among politicians.
The cause lies in lack of consciousness among tribes
themselves. Hence their subjective realisation of

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[5]See also, Ghanshyam Shah, Protest Movements
in Two Indian States (New Delhi, 1977).

objective conditions can compel the policy-makers
to give us this state of apathy.

It is in this broad context that the historic
J.P. movement occured, erupted and shook the entire
polity of India. The movement first started in Gujarat
in 1973, but J.P. was not related to this movement.
Though he claims that " he learnt the tactics of total
revolution from the Gujarat student movement. "[6] Gujarat
movement provided the background to Bihar movement. It
was a spontaneous movement and no political party
succeeded in securing a firm grip on the movement. Caste
and religion played no significant role in it. Though
it attempted to get the Education Minister removed from
her office, no political goal was set.

Students were spearheading the movements who
demanded reduction of mess bills and redressal of certain
educational grievances. Later other sections of society
got involved in it. These people were fighting against
hoarding and profiteering. People's resentment turned
into violence, loot and arson which marred the Gujarat
movement. When the movement was continuing in Gujarat,

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[6]Radhakant Barik, *Politics of J.P. Movement*
(New Delhi, 1977), P. 51.

Bihar observed manifestation of unrest and discontment in the forms of student agitation. They were fighting against certain academic issues. The two movements started with certain common issues viz., academic problems, poverty, hoarding, blackmarketing, price hike and non-availability of essential commodities etc. Despite these similarities they were different in many ways. Gujarat movement was a disorganized movement in which no political party was actively involved. The movement lacked leadership. On the other hand Bihar movement was an organized one and attempted overall change in the system. J.P. got interested in the movement and students wholeheartedly accepted his leadership. J.P. was enjoying a clean stature in social life. So his leadership was seen as a better sign.

J.P.'s picture of socialism was the picture of economic and political democracy. In him we find a peculiar combination of Gandhism and Marxism. His ideas contained Gandhian values and western democratic principles within the framework of Marxism. Logically these two principles do not stand together. In Gandhism means justify goals whereas in Marxism goals justify means. Hence non-violence and violence are the characteristic feature of the two respectively.

After Independence J.P. was not actively involved
in politics rather he joined Vinoba Bhave and participated
in Bhoodan mission. When he saw rampant corruption,
extreme inequality and discontent among students and
masses he almost suddenly appeared on the political scene
in 1973-74 and undertook the leadership of Bihar movement
(Chapter III). He gave the concept of total revolution,
by which he meant, change in all spheres of society, but
the modus operandi was not clear. Even if modes of
operation were not clear the very concept of total
revolution leads to sociological explanation as it
attempted to bring about changes in the social structure.

The Bihar movement, which is named after Jayaprakash
Narayan, started in 1974. This is the period in which
various issues viz., academic, economic and political,
crystallized into a consolidated objective. Initially
the movement was started by students. They were
agitating against academic problems what they were facing
on the campus. Due to non-availability of essential
commodities, hostel messes were disrupted. J.P. linked
their problems to the government and political corruption.
To fight against these evils he suggested students to
leave universities for a year. Power hungry opposition
who were in search of an opportunity fully exploited the

situation. J.P. himself was more inclined toward organizing occupational class categories. Thus the movement remained concentrated in urban areas and largely urban middle class participated in it.

When the demands like dissolution of the Assembly and fresh election were put forward, political parties started taking active interest in the movement. Unlike Gujarat movement, Bihar movement was an organized movement. Since the organization itself was a political one, academic demands were pushed into the background by political demands. Repressive measures adopted by the government enhanced the movement and the movement got more consolidated. Though internal emergency marred the movement, it could not bring it to an end and ultimately the movement succeeded in displacing the ruling Congress from the government.

The objective of the movement largely remained unfulfilled. All against which the movement was launched remained but the movement itself vanished. Overall changes were attempted but people only saw shift of power from ruling Congress Party to Janata Party. No change in academics was pursued nor any change in other spheres took place. The movement lacked involvement

of biological categories and mass mobilization was
based more on emotion rather than reality. The measures
taken afterwards were more of political in nature.
Moreover the movement itself was a political one.

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