

**UTTARAKHAND MOVEMENT
&
THE ISSUES OF MOBILIZATION**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirement for
the award of the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

ALOK A. DIMRI

**CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
INDIA
1997**



July 17, 1997

Certificate

Certified that the dissertation entitled "UTTARAKHAND MOVEMENT & THE ISSUES OF MOBILIZATION" submitted by Mr. ALOK A. DIMRI in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university. This is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Dr. NIRAJA GOPAL JAYAL

(Supervisor)

Prof. BALVEER ARORA

(Chairperson)

CHAIRPERSON
CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES,
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES-II,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY,
NEW DELHI-110067.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my deepest gratitude to my Supervisor Dr. Niraja Gopal Jayal, for her constant encouragement and guidance. I wish to thank my teachers at the Centre for Political Studies who have been a constant source of inspiration.

I take this opportunity to thank my friends, my typist Mr. Narender Sharma and all those who helped me in completing this task.

I also extend my word of thanks to Prof. A.K. Ray, Director, S.I.D.A. project, for extending financial help for my field trip.

At the end, I would like to express my love and affection towards my parents and all the family members.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alok A. Dimri', written over a horizontal line.

Alok A. Dimri

CONTENTS

	Page No.
INTRODUCTION	1-4
Chapter - I Social Mobilization, Collective Action & Social Movements: Theoretical Perspectives.	5-23
Chapter - II Issues of Mobilization and Uttarakhand : A Retrospective Overview.	24-40
Chapter - III Contextualizing the Mobilization for Statehood in Uttarakhand.	41-68
Chapter - IV The Uttarakhand Crisis and the Indian Politics: Few Concluding Inferences.	69-81
REFERENCE	82-88

INTRODUCTION

The northern hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, together known as Uttarakhand, have been known for mass movements on social and moral issues. Internationally recognised environment movements like Chipko and Anti-Dam Movement at Tehri, trace their geneses to this very region. Another mass movement witnessed in the Uttarakhand region was on the issue of liquor trade. But the most recent of the mobilizations in the Uttarakhand region differs from the earlier instances of mass mobilizations in its distinctly political demand for state - autonomy. The movement, which started as an anti-reservation agitation, was soon transformed into a demand for separate state. On the one hand, the statehood demand, which was as old as the age of Indian independence, did not evoke a favourable response from the people of this region in the past, the recent movement for state autonomy witnessed unprecedented mass mobilization. The socio-economic landscape of the Uttarakhand society is characterized by predominantly upper caste social composition with 80% of the population comprising of Brahmins & Thakurs and fewer levels of social stratification. The economy is mainly of subsistence grain production type in the agriculture sector with govt. employment proving to be the only available source of upward mobility

for the educated youth. May be this explains why the people reacted to the reservation issue so sensitively. Armed forces provide another important avenue to the hill youth towards their livelihood. The rural power structure in the Uttarakhand hill society is characterized by the absence of an affluent landlord class, which, in combination with subsistence agriculture, adversely affected the process of indigenous capital accumulation. This together with the governmental apathy on the developmental front has resulted in a distinct 'Money - Order Economy' characterized by the absence of region based productive units, lack of investment opportunities and consequent flight of human capital to metropolitan areas.

Spontaneous nature of the 'Uttarakhand mobilization and its unprecedented intensity in view of its fuzzy leadership profile makes it a researcher's delight. A history of social mobilizations in the Uttarakhand Hills and its characteristic socio-demographic profile makes it imperative to situate the Uttarakhand mobilization in a larger framework transcending the issues of development & economic backwardness. At the same time the overall political context and its various nuances for the purpose of analysing an identity based mobilization needs to be considered in right perspective.

The effort has been to develop a framework, for the understanding of a social phenomenon, which could provide explanations to its various subsidiary issues. Present study seeks to develop such as explanation by means of analysing various theoretical expositions on collective action and by situating such an understanding within the issues of interface between the social and the political. The effort has been to decipher the substantive basis of any mobilization / protest, for that matter, and that of Uttarakhand mobilization in particular. For the purpose the previous experiences of mobilization in the U.P. hills have been analysed and a continuity has been tried to be established in the matters of patterns of mobilization.

Theoretically, present study derives mainly from the Resource Mobilization Approach (R.M.A.) and the Identity Oriented Approach and treats the elements of Political Process Approach as constant for the purpose of present study in view of the fact that protests and demonstrations are accepted norms of Indian political culture. Briefly, the instances of earlier mobilization in the Uttarakhand region on the issues of forest rights, alcoholism and dam construction have resulted in community networks and informal organizational structures which have been instrumental in engendering a culture of protest in the Uttarakhand society. On

the other hand the combined existential experiences of the people, in the form of mobilizations, protests, out-migration, underdevelopment and politically marginal status alongwith the historically givens of the language, culture and geographic peculiarities, have given rise to an Uttarakhand identity, which, in turn, has been instrumental in resulting the latest movement on state autonomy.

Study makes an effort to highlight the role of the state and its policies in reinforcing the contours of an identity which is specifically region based, and in this light, seeks to trace the trajectory from social mobilization to a patently political demand for state autonomy in the Uttarakhand region.

**SOCIAL MOBILIZATION, COLLECTIVE ACTION & SOCIAL
MOVEMENTS: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

"A social movement is a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interests and, for at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity"

Alan Scott¹

Theoretical perspectives on social movements have approached the issue of social mobilization and collective action from different entry points. Plainly speaking there is no such body of literature on social movement, nevertheless, the various strands of thought related to social movements are to be found in the Neo-Marxist approach, Structural - Functional Approach, New Social movements, sociology of action, Political Process approach and Resource mobilization Approach under various conceptual categories such as 'Social mobilization', 'Collective Action', 'Community Solidarity', 'Identity', 'Collective behavior, etc. Notwithstanding the conceptual disagreements implicit in various approaches, there lies, at the bottom, a common thread running through these in terms of a commonly shared understanding of interests among the participants and the larger socio-economic forces operating at the macro level (mainly emphasized by

¹Scott Alan: Ideology and New Social Movements; London 1990, Unwin Hyman.

modernization theorists under the conceptual construct 'social change') which cultivate individual attitude conducive to 'mobilization' be it for conventional form of 'participation' or non-conventional. Among various theoretical perspectives there is a kind of consensus that social movements are manifestation of collective aspiration to social change.

There are disagreements as to how a social movement is best defined and what might distinguish it from a political party or pressure groups, whether it is to be seen in terms of an attempt to transform cultural patterns or merely as another actor in institutional politics. According to Alan Scott social movements are distinguished from other collective actors in that they have mass mobilization and collective action as prime sources of social sanction and power². That at the heart of collective mobilizations is the interests of social groups, which get mobilized, and their positions in the societal alliance influencing the authoritative allocation of values. In this perspective social movements can be seen as collective attempts to advance or defend common goals through collective action and mass mobilization. Most social theorists agree that the social movements, as a mode of collective action, involve a socially conflictual relationship which got

² Scott Alan: *ibid*

manifested in classical worker's movements, students and civil rights movements and, of late, in New Social Movements of post-industrial age³.

Theoretical paradigms on social movements exhibit as sharp division between, what can be termed as, the classical or Inferred Approach and lately more direct theorizations on social movements. Classical Neo-Marxist and sociological Structural Functional approaches merely visualized social mobilizations as a direct consequence of structural contradictions prevalent in the capitalist social order and rapid changes taking place in the wake of modernization process, respectively.

Neo - Marxist Literature considers the central structural contradiction between capital and labour in modern day societies as the main reason behind popular mobilizations demanding a qualitative shift from the present state of affairs. This tradition would seek to explain popular mobilizations for social change on the basis of class antagonism and the gap between the rates at which the forces of production and the relations of production grow⁴. For classical

³ Touraine A : An Analysis of Social Movements; Cambridge 1981

⁴ Kimmel M.S.: Revolution : A Sociological interpretation; Polity Press ; 1990

marxists, revolutionary method would be the only truly conscious means to effect social change and the rest as simply the manifestations of false - consciousness or what can be termed as the failure to understand the dynamics/structural logic of social change. This particular tradition links up all efforts towards social change to the changes in the productive foundations of the society, and the 'revolution' would be an extreme mode to bring in this change when⁴ the level of distortion between the 'Relations' and 'Forces' of production goes beyond adjustable limits. In this context the Neo-Marxist tradition sees social movements and the socio-political mobilizations as an effort to establish at the superstructural level what has already occurred within the economic base of society. This approach, however, has limited utility for the study of mobilization issues and the genesis of social movements due to its non-specific (vis-a-vis social movements), holistic and inflexible character. Certainly the issues at the societal level should be explained in a much wider framework and not merely on economic grounds alone.

Next relevant approach is the one given by structural functionalist which developed a causal view of social change as resulting from the disruptive character of the modernization process. Whereas the Neo-Marxist tradition characterizes the quest for social change, by means of collective action, as a

positive and unavoidable feature, the structural functional approach would consider any such collective mobilization as pathological, undesirable, disequilibrating and harmful for the societal well being. If the Marxist tradition aimed at superseding the existing social arrangement, the concern of the structural functionalist's approach was to maintain status - quo by means of preserving the "equilibrium" of existing arrangement of social organization. In a "functional social system" conflict and change are values no more desired and rather are deviants which need to be explained. Collective behavior, outside the domain of conventional modes of participation, thus came to be treated as a challenge to the established social order. Structural - Functional tradition sought to replace "conflict", as the essential feature of social life, with an alternative model based on "consensus".

Such an explanation to collective action and popular mobilization, based on "consensus" or "equilibrium" model for social organization, was extended by Johnson, Smelser, Eisenstadt Huntington, Kornhauser etc.⁵ All these theorists attributed the modern day "protest" & "mobilization" to the rapid social change that comes in the wake of modernization. Protest for these theorists is an

⁵ Kimmel M.S.: *ibid.*

indication of strains in the social system. This explanation is also "structural" to the extent that structural deficiencies of the social systems are held responsible for their functional incapacities.

Coming to their individual arguments, Kornhauser⁶ postulated a "mass society" comprising of "atomized individuals" consequent upon rapid social changes. Such an atomized individual in modern society, devoid of all primordial societal bonds, uprooted from the traditional social organization, is, according to Kornhauser, most prone to participate in current spate of protests and social mobilizations.

Johnson⁷ on the other hand had sought to explain revolutionary social movements on the basis of social dysfunctions which are set in motion by social changes. The breakdown of "Value Consensus", for him, would cause disequilibrium in the social systems which in turn would disrupt the traditional and legitimate patterns of institutional behaviors. According to him the disequilibrium of a social system causes personal tensions and individual alienations, ultimately culminating into a protest movement.

⁶ Kornhauser W: The Politics of Mass Society; Free Press, US (1959).

⁷ Johnson C: Revolutionary Change, London, Longman 1983.

For Smelser⁸ "All systems are governed by the principle of equilibrium. All social changes are set in motion by specific disequilibrating conditions". That people enter into episodes of such behavior because something is wrong in their social environment. The collective behavior, for him, would be the social manifestation of psychological status of unrest. Smelser⁹ counts six necessary conditions for the development of social movements, namely STRUCTURAL CONDUCTIVENESS, STRUCTURAL STRAINS, GROWTH OF A GENERALIZED BELIEF, PRECIPITATING EVENTS, MOBILIZATION OF PARTICIPANTS FOR ACTION & SOCIAL CONTROL MECHANISM. Social movements, for Smelser are reflective of a deep pessimism about the present. However he visualizes social movements as inherently irrational and weak rather than as articulating new vision for future.

EISENSTADT¹⁰, on the otherhand, tried explaining the phenomenon of social movement as a consequence of STRUCTURAL STRAINS in the social system brought about by the onset of modernization. For him modernization is

⁸ Kimmel M.S.: *ibid.*

⁹ Kimmel M.S.: *ibid.*

¹⁰ Encyclopedia of Social Sciences

both the cause and the consequence of social change. Huntington¹¹ also has taken somewhat similar line of explanation. In Huntington's models of social change modernization is taken as a disequilibrating process causing structural strains on existing political institutions. He terms such mobilizations as "political disorder". He, infact, has developed a political version of structural - functionalism which depends upon the capacity of political institutions to meet new demands for incorporation by groups mobilized during the process of modernization. According to him the modernization process undermines traditional sources of political authority and enormously complicates the problems of creating new bases of political association and new political institution combining legitimacy and effectiveness. Huntington visualizes a lag between the development of political institutions and the socio-economic changes which come in the wake of modernization. That the process of modernization creates a gap between the degree of mobilization and the capacity of political institutions to absorb the demands of newly mobilized groups. For him the crises point in the orderly social life comes with high levels of modernization and mobilization combined with a low level of political institutionalization.

¹¹ Huntington: Political order in Changing Societies, New Haven, Yale 1970.

Karl Deutsch¹² links up the phenomenon of social mobilization to the issues of political development. Like other modernization theorists he also visualizes 'social mobilization' as a process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken down and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior. His theorization also postulates the uprooting or breaking away of old settings, habits and commitments followed by the induction of mobilized persons into some relatively stable patterns of group membership, organizations and commitment. For him social mobilization, coming in the wake of modernization, would broaden the politically relevant strata of the population.

Social - psychological theorists, on the otherhand, have explained the revolutionary social mobilizations, not through the structural stresses and strains, but by means of a subjectively felt conditions of relative deprivation¹³ arising out of a distinct shortfall between the growing expectations of various social groups and its fulfillment. This approach, in a way, reversed the Marxian tradition that

¹² Deutsch K: Social Mobilization and political developement; American Political Science Review, LV, No.3, Sept. 1961.

¹³ Rao M.S.A.: Social Movements in India ; Manohar, 1984.

increasing misery and poverty will eventually create objective conditions for a revolutionary outburst. Socio-Psychological approach rather gave precedence to the subjective feelings and perceptions of the participating individuals over structural, objective and historical logic preferred by Marxian tradition. T Gurr¹⁴ claims that "Relative - Deprivation" is the basic conditions for civil strife of any kind. He operationalizes "Relative - Deprivation" as the "perceived discrepancy between men's value expectation and value capabilities". This approach considers 'Relative - Deprivation' as the causal factor behind various kinds of protests and mobilization with varying degrees of intensity ranging from small scale social mobilizations to revolutionary mode.

The decade of 60^s can be taken as a watershed in theorisations on social movements. In fact the large scale social mobilization during the decade, in the form of students movement, Black Civil Rights movement, Peace movement, Anti-war Demonstrations, came as a rude shock to social - science practitioners who found their conceptual tools as inadequate to deal with this transformed reality. 60^s was the decade when the western social scientists had predicted an end to ideological conflicts and a more pluralist and pragmatic consensus to

¹⁴ Kimmel. M.s.: op cit.

emerge. All hitherto theoretical reflections were not equipped enough to grapple with this newly found enthusiasm towards popular protest and mobilization. Neither Marxism, with its concern to define the preconditions of revolution by examining the structural contradictions of the capitalist system, nor the American structural - functionalism, with its focus on integrative mechanisms of institutionalized collective behavior, paid particular attention to mobilizations, protests and social movements.

The events of 60^s resulted in a more specific and direct theorisations which only can truly be called the literature on social movements as such. A more direct effort was made by the social science theorists to understand and explain this newly found social reality which was contrary to earlier efforts, which addressed the issue rather holistically, treating the social system as a single, unified, homogeneous and absolute whole.

Theoretical paradigms, which were developed in the wake of the developments of sixties, are known as RESOURCE MOBILIZATION APPROACH, POLITICAL PROCESS APPROACH AND IDENTITY

ORIENTED APPROACH¹⁵. Out of these, the Resource Mobilization Approach derives mainly from Rational Choice Theory and would treat every participating individual as a shrewd calculator of self interests. This approach assigns precedence to instrumental and mechanical aspects of social mobilization over emotional, primordial and psychological aspects of it. RMT approach on collective action goes into the organizational dynamics of social movements by focussing on various kinds of mobilizing structures, networks and organization through which groups seek to organize themselves into social movements. RMT approach sought to break grievance based conception of social movements and to focus instead on mobilization processes and on the formal organizational manifestation of these processes. So much so that for McCarthy & Zald (initial proponents of RMT)¹⁶ social movements, while not synonymous with formal organizations, became a force for social change primarily through SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANISATIONS. Thus social movements came to be characterized in terms of opportunities, strategies, modes of organization, sophisticated organizational forms and competition with groups and authorities

¹⁵ Tilly C.: *Citizenship, Identity & social History*; Ed., Cambridge, 1996.

¹⁶ *Comparative Perspectives on Social movements* Ed. by McAdam, McCarthy & Zald; Cambridge 1996.

having opposing interests¹⁷. Social mobilization phenomenon in RMT approach was seen as based on strategic instrumental reasoning, cost benefit calculation and rationally determined interests.

Another theoretical paradigm on social mobilization, which ascribes supreme importance to organizational dynamics of social movements is POLITICAL PROCESS APPROACH (PPA). PPA places the patterns of social mobilization within the larger political context of a society and seeks to explain the phenomenon of protest in a cross - cultural comparative perspective on the basis of the degree of acceptability, of the culture of protest, by the political regime of the day. Unlike modernization theorists, who portrayed the phenomenon of protest as an indirect consequence of social change, these scholars link it up to the changing face of power equation in the wake of modernization (or social change) process. Thus the argument of political process theorists (McAdam, Tilly & Tarrow)¹⁸ goes against the classical theories of collective behavior, such as theories of Mass Society and Relative Deprivation, which stress on a direct link between social change and protest.

¹⁷ Blackwell Dictionary of 20th Century Social Thought.

¹⁸ Comparative Perspectives on Social movements; Ed. by McAdam, McCarthy & Zald; Cambridge, 1996.

According to Tarrow¹⁹ POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE implies those signals to social and political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements. Thus the political process approach accords primacy to the degree of openness of a political system to challenges addressed to it by social movements. The idea implicit behind this theorization was to explain the variations in the degrees and patterns of social mobilization in different national political contexts. Though, according to Tarrow, the national political contexts are going to get less and less important for the explanation and interpretation of the mobilization of social movements in an era of globalization.

In a way the political process approach was also an effort to establish a causal link between the institutionalized politics and social movements. The importance of the broader political system in structuring the opportunities for collective action was stressed by the scholars of this tradition. Changes in the institutional structure or informal power relations of a given national political

¹⁹ New Social Movements in Western Europe: A comparative Analysis of Kriesi, Koopwans, Dyrendak & Giugui; UCL Press London, 1995.

system are treated as the most crucial factors influencing social mobilization²⁰. Underlying conviction of this approach is that social mobilization and collective behavior are shaped by the broader set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the national context in which they are embedded.

Next body of literature on social movements comes under the name of IDENTITY - ORIENTED THEORIES with focus on substantive objectives of social mobilization and not merely on organization and motivations²¹. Key question is how social movements produce new historical identities for society. This approach is also known as NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS.

What is important in the identity approach is its emphasis on the normative character of movements and their capacity to effect cultural change, e.g. the invention of new norms, institution and social practices in their struggle to redefine social identity. This concern with the norms and identity over organization and the pragmatic context led Touraine and his followers to ignore the elements of calculation and self-interest that are focus of RMT approach.

²⁰ Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements : op cit.

²¹ Allum, P. State & Society in western Europe, 1995, Polity Press.

Social movements for Touraine is organized collective behavior of a class actor against his class adversary for the social control of 'HISTORICITY' in a concrete community. Doing away with the teleological thinking, perceiving societal movement as directed towards predetermined ends, Touraine espouses the view that society produces itself and the goal of social action is social action only. That social movements are not generated spontaneously and rather are results of the structure in which group action moves, providing, at the same time, identity to the group. In this context, new social movements, are conceived as potential bearers of new social interests in a new historical era, termed "Post Industrial Society" by Touraine²² In NSM perspective, social movements are visualized as principal agents of societal transformation generating more cultural space and eventually political opportunity. Thus the agenda of social change seems to have shifted, from socio-economic level to the cultural level, in a post-industrial society, to be carried on by the social mobilizations known by the name 'New Social Movement', which in turn derives its form from the nature of conflicts and challenges in post-industrial society. In a way New social movements are a specific type of social mobilization in response to new types of challenges peculiar to modern day society.

²² Touraine A: An Analysis of Social Movements; Cambridge; 1981.

All these seemingly different approaches, ultimately, have addressed the same social phenomenon, collective action by means of social mobilization, and despite of variations in the analytic plane, in which these respective approaches have tried to examine one single social reality, there runs a unifying theme in all these theoretical traditions as these all presume "social mobilization" as a consequence as well as a cause to a social process namely "Social Change". Differing theoretical approaches have conceptualized this dynamic reality in different forms and as leading to mass mobilization, though again, through different mechanisms. Yet all these disparate views help rendering the phenomenon of social mobilization still clearer by highlighting the different facets of the same reality. If the Neo-Marxist tradition highlighted the superstructure-base relationship and the dynamic nature of the relationship between the relation and forces of production, bringing in its wake a "social change" which would define the mass mobilization for socialist revolution, then, on the other hand, structural functional tradition highlighted the societal change due to modernization process bringing certain structural deficiencies giving rise to mass mobilization and collective action. Modern approaches on the other hand illuminated different aspects of mass mobilization viz organizational, cultural, psychological and political aspects. If RMT approach confined itself to the issues of organization,

21

TH-6517

DISS
303.4840954051
D597 Ut



TH6517

recruitment, motivation and institutions i.e. the instrumental aspects of social mobilization, the political process approach, on the other, focussed on the political context of the social movements. Identity approach brought back the entire debate to the realm of perceptions, traditions and commonality of experience thus, kind of, mediating between the resource mobilization and political opportunity approaches, as the availability of community resources and political opportunity doesnot, in itself, get translated in to collective action. This missing link is sought to be provided by identity oriented approach²³ which goes into the cultural bedrock of collective behavior and brings to the fore the issues of "collective" i.e. group identity, without which no motivation or provocation can get transformed into mobilization. Thus identity as a perceived boundary of social categories viz, women, student, gender, minority, ethnic group etc., acts as a conduit for channelising motivational sentiments into a mobilizational fact. This holds true for the "Deprivation" thesis as well, as there also the link between the feeling of being deprived and its translation into social action is been missing.

In a way all these approaches, with their shortcomings as well as positive features, have tried to explain a phenomenon in totality and none can claim

²³ Tilly C.: *Citizenship, Identity & Social History*; Cambridge 1996.

absolute position in explaining it fully. At the same time these various approaches have brought out the importance of one component or the other of this totality. Singularly each of the above discussed approaches have been found inadequate in explaining the social reality of mobilization since it results from such diverse factors such as anomie (Durkhiem), stress, strain, deprivation, disequilibrium, exploitation, resource structure, political opportunity structure or collective identity, collective action and collective behavior, culminating finally into social movements.

**ISSUES OF MOBILIZATION AND UTTARAKHAND:
A RETROSPECTIVE OVERVIEW**

As a prelude to the understanding of the high degree of mass mobilization, witnessed in the Uttarakhand region on the issue of sub-regional autonomy, present chapter seeks to go into the instances of mobilization in the region, in a retrospective manner, to highlight the continuities and discontinuities, which could be discerned, through such an effort. The issue is whether to treat the recent mass upsurge as an isolated social and political phenomenon or to look at it in terms of legacies and inspiration that it could be deriving from previous experiences of mobilization.

Looking into the historical past of the Uttarakhand region one finds that the history of this northern hill area of UP is replete with movements and protests ranging from the forest rights and anti begar movements (in the pre-independence period) to the movements against liquor trade, dams, mining, quarrying and of course the most celebrated one 'Chipko'. Guha¹ holds the unique social structure of the region, as shaped by its ecological environs and

¹ Guha Ramachandra (1991): The Unquiet Woods; Oxford, Delhi

peculiar cultural, historical and geographical factors, responsible for the tradition of protest, popularly termed 'DHANDAK'², existing there. Taking his argument further he says that an egalitarian social system characterized by an absence of the intermediary class in between the ruled and the rulers and more or less evenly divided land holdings led to a kind of 'community solidarity'³ marked by the absence of class and caste antagonisms, which facilitated mobilization of people on the issues of common concern. On the one hand the topographical features determined the subsistence type of grain production and on the other, the geographical location shaped the popular consciousness of the people as deeply informed by the delicate relationship between the human and the nature. A comparative reading of popular mobilizations in the region brings this consciousness to the fore. The social and cultural idiom of protest 'Dhandak' was a popular protest against commercialisation of forestry and forest resources and it sought to re-establish the forest rights of the people over what belonged to them naturally.

Guha cites numerous instances of popular protest by the village people against the forest policies of the colonial rule and of the princely state of Tehri. He attributes this tradition of protest to the distinctive agrarian structure of the

² *ibid* pp - 67

³ *ibid* pp.-21.

Uttarakhand society where its geographical, cultural & historical uniqueness resulted in a social order which exhibits an absence of sharp class divisions and less severe caste restriction. The virtual absence of a Zamindari class ensured a more egalitarian social order which had its own self-regulating mechanism in terms of an informal but consensual understanding with regard to the exploitation of natural resources. This deep ecological dimension shaped not only the social organisation of the society but was also reflected in its popular mode of protest which drew unanimous support from all section of society transcending caste and class categories. An absolute day to day dependence on the surrounding environs, from fuel, fodder, wood and water to other forest products, and a deep linkage between the agriculture and the forests, explains a series of mobilizations starting from the colonial period to this day.

Rawain & Patti Ramoli⁴ are such two major instance of organised resistance (Dhandak) in the erstwhile state of Tehri where people, under customary mode of protest, marched towards the state capital, eventually to face state repression in which 17 demonstrators died and many saved their lives by Jumping into the Yamuna river near Tilara. Khas Patti Dhandak and Kujni

⁴ ibid pp.-72.

Dhandak (1904)⁵ indicate that such mobilizations did occur in the Uttarkhand society almost a century ago. The traditional delicate balance between the people and their surroundings had began to crumble with the onset of the forces of modernization and social change, and with this the process of social transformation had started.

Another popular mobilization, on the issue of Coolie Begar⁶, a practice of unpaid labour, which took place in the beginning of 1920^s, was also fundamentally linked to the introduction of commercial forestry in the region and growing influence and presence of the outside elements such as forest officials and the colonial functionaries. With the growing realization of the worth of forest wealth of the region and the vital role it could play in the railway construction and wood works, the Uttarkhand region acquired a sudden importance in the colonial set up. In this context the village persons were required to perform various kinds of service, such as providing free labour and free rations, to visiting officials. A popular mobilization against the practice took place under the leadership of B.D. Pande in Almora district. The ecological dimension of such

⁵ ibid pp.-71.

⁶ ibid pp.-110.

a mobilization can not be denied as it was also based on a sense of alienation from what was once their due in terms of their traditional rights over forests, and now was denied to them. Sekhar Phatak⁷ has uncovered evidences of at least 146 anti-begar meetings in different villages of Garhwal & Kumaon between 1st Jan - 30 April 1921. After the success of the anti-begar movement, the focus was shifted to the forest rights movement. There were instances of deliberate forest burnings and people refusing to extend help in extinguishing fire. Retired soldiers and those on leave were active in this protest which was led by the "Kumaun Parishad".

The continuities as discerned in the pre-independence instances of mobilization in the Uttarakhand region are reflected in the fact that any infringement in the relationship between human and forest was resented but at the same time the protests were limited, in their content, to their immediate environs and were not directed against the state as such. Mobilizations remained unaffected by the happenings at the larger political levels. Absence of physical violence was another feature which characterized all such protests though, in the later part, some deliberate burning of forests was resorted to. The growing

⁷ ibid pp.-112.

intensity and frequency of such protests was reflective of the increased penetration of industrial and commercial interests in the Uttarakhand forests and a growing consciousness among hill dwellers about the growing distance between the habitat and its inhabitants. The community orientation of people's consciousness can be traced to the threat that the forces of modernization posed to the entire community as such and not to the specific castes or classes. As a result the nature of such mobilizations were unanimous cutting across and transcending existing social categories. These features of mobilization in pre-independence days certainly had its influence on the trajectory that the cultural and social idiom of protest took in the Uttarkhand society of the post independence period.

The entry of modernizing forces, first in the form of commercial exploitation of forest resources and later through road construction activities, necessitated by the needs to exploit forest resources and later due to strategic reasons, not only affected the agricultural practices of the region but also resulted in the breaking up of the traditional social order. These changes were reflected in the deficit grain production in the agriculture sector and later in the mass exodus of able bodied people to the plains in search of employment.

Such transformations in the social set up of the Uttarkhand society had to give a new shape and form to the mobilization patterns during the post independence period. This was amply evident in the movements against, liquor trade, dam construction, mining, quarrying and in the Chipko movement. These movements showed continuities as well as discontinuities with the earlier protest movements in the region. We may first focus on the continuities that these seemingly disparate movements exhibit.

All these movements exhibit an element of continuity not only in terms of their organizational aspects, their modes of protest and the social composition of those participating, but also in terms of the popular consciousness of the people of the imminent danger to their existence from continuing ecological ruin. Ecological devastation first affected the lives of the people not directly but rather by affecting the nature of subsistence agriculture and the practice of animal husbandry, which were practically dependent, in all senses, on the forests. But gradually the interrelationship between ecological degradation and social disintegration became too evident through rising out-migration and the consequent imbalances in the demographic profile of the region, as also through an increase in the incidences of landslides, mudslides, forest fires, drying up of natural sources

of water and the difficulties in getting daily supplies of fuel and fodder. A direct threat to the people's day to day existence sharpened the contours of an earlier consciousness and a sense of identity in the form of a common perception about matters as fundamental as existence and survival. An identity in terms of the people's understanding of who they are, the common existential circumstances of their lives, the similarity of their threat perceptions and the ecological embeddedness⁸ of their consciousness, took shape constituting the fundamental defining characteristics⁹ of their identity. Such a commonality of perceptions was to become later the very basis of protest in the hill society, thus kind of providing the missing explanatory link between the availability of community resources, organisations and networks and their translation into instances of popular mobilization.

Such a commonality of perception and interests pervades all protest movements in this Himalayan region. Chipko which started in the beginning of 1970^{s10}, and has been defined variously as a Feminist¹¹, Environmental and

⁸ Guha R. : bid.

⁹ Taylor C: The Politics of Recognition in Ed. Multiculturalism, 1994, Blackwell.

¹⁰ Dogra Bharat: Forests, Dams & Survival in Tehri Garhwal 1992, Delhi.

Ecological movement, had its roots in the underlying motion of 'Us' and 'They'¹² as discerned in the denial to DGSS (DASHAULI GRAM SWARAJYA SANGH) to cut five trees to make agricultural implements and at the same time sub-contracting of an entire forest belt to the sports goods company Symonds. The intensification of mobilization under Chipko at Reni village, solely under womens initiative, can be grasped only against the backdrop of devastating floods and subsequent landslides in the Alaknanda valley in the early 70^s. The link between deforestation, ecological devastation and the threat perceptions of the people regarding their existence needs no further elaboration.

Chipko which is commonly perceived as a singular movement, through mistakenly, is actually an expression of the consciousness of the hill people and their quest for survival, which later symbolized the Anti-Dam movement as well. Chipko's sub narratives in the form of innumerable instances of mobilization all across the Uttarkhand region in the villages of Advani, Reni, Badiyargarh, Henvaighati etc. were organized movements only in the localized sense. Thus

¹¹ Shiva Vandana: *Staying Alive : Women, Ecology & Survival in India*, Kali for Women, 1988, Delhi.

¹² Said Edward: *Orientalism*, Penguin, Delhi, 1995.

Chipko was not a spontaneous popular upsurge which soon gripped the entire region, it rather was a manifestation of the growing conflict between the industrial and the commercial interests, on the one hand and the people's traditional claims over their ecological endowments on the other. The intensification of this conflict took place with the growing pressure of industrial interests on the ecology and with the consequent increase in the occurrence of natural calamities.

Similarly the mobilization against the liquor trade is not a singular instance, both in terms of time and space, of popular protest but again is a part of hill people's consciousness to save their disintegrating social and cultural landscape. This movement, which like Chipko is spread over more than three decades, was started in 1962¹³ by Sarvodaya activists Sundarlal Bahuguna, Vimla Bahuguna, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Ghanshyam Sailani and Gandhian disciple Sarla Devi. As a result of which the region was declared dry in 1972. Sekhar Pathak links social evil of liquor consumption in the region to the disintegration of social life which came with the faulty mode of development. The practice of liquor consumption was introduced with the military tradition and rising unemployment caused it to

¹³ Pathak Shekher : Intoxication as a Social Evil; E.P.W., Vol.xx, No.32, Aug 10, 1985.

acquire menacing proportions.

The Tehri Dam has been another important issue which made people take to the path of protest. The mobilization against the construction of the Tehri Dam has revolved around the technical issues of 'Seismicity', 'Reservoir Induced Seismicity', 'Dam safety norms, and the cultural issues of 'Displacement' and 'Rehabilitation'¹⁴. The first few instances of opposition to the proposal for the dam go as far back as 1965 and 1970¹⁵. But the organised protest started only after the administrative approval of the project in 1976. Thereafter thirty five Gaon Shabhas in the Tehri district passed a joint resolution opposing the project. The Zilla Parishad called upon the govt. of drop the project. These efforts of the people were given an organizational shape in the form of the TEHRI BANDH VIRODHI SANGARSH SAMITI¹⁶ having the representation of all political parties and of local people in it. The Samiti is headed by a veteran freedom fighter Mr. V.D. Saklani. The mode of protest employed by the Samiti (TBVSS) included mass protest, Satyagrahas, Awareness Campaign, Signature Campaign,

¹⁴ Paranpype Vijay; Evaluating the Tehri Dam; 1988, Delhi, INTACH.

¹⁵ ibid pp.-24.

¹⁶ Page 3 in 'Ignoring Reason, Inviting Diaster' by Friends of Chipko.

Petitions (to parliament & supreme Court), and Representation to higher authorities. As a result the Govt. of India was pressurized to order various reviews of the proposal and constituted an expert group¹⁷ as well, whose fragmented recommendations added further fuel to the entire controversy. The recommendations by soviet expert Mr. Alexander Fink¹⁸ also suggested the redesigning of the dam project. A disastrous earthquake in the region in 1991 served to further confirm the apprehensions in the minds of the people and the opposition to the construction of the dam evoked a more hostile response.

A similar opposition to the Vishnuprayag Dam Project proposed in the Alaknanda valley led to the shelving of the project when social activists like Mr. C.P. Bhatt, Mahendra Kanwar, N Juyal¹⁹ brought the technical deficiencies of the project to the fore and drew the govt.'s attention towards the unstable hill slope at the project site exposing the entire area to the danger of landslides and avalanches.

¹⁷ Paranjpe Vijay: *ibid* pp.-24.

¹⁸ *ibid* pp.-28.

¹⁹ *ibid* pp.-12.

Mining and Quarrying²⁰ of limestone on the hill slopes near and around the Doon Valley is yet another instance where the people of the Uttarakhand region were mobilized to preserve their environs from ecological destruction. Probably this was the first such protest which culminated in a successful environmental litigation.

The relevance of doing a simultaneous study of these instances of mobilization in the Uttarkhand region lies in the connections and disjunctions between not only these movements but also between the past and the future mobilizational experiences. There is a strict commonality in terms of the modes of protest employed in these movements. All these protests are marked by a flurry of awareness campaigns in the forms of padyatras, fastings, satyagrahas, songs in the vernacular, pamphlets, handbills etc. Physical violence is completely missing. Movement leaders (rather the social activists) have concentrated on democratic modes of protests such as picketing the liquor stills, preventing the forest and liquor auctions, petitions, representations, signature campaign etc. In a sense there exists a culture of protest in Uttarkhand society which has been adopted, more or less, by all protest movements in the region. Theoretically it

²⁰ Shiva Vandana : Ecofeminism, Kali, 1993, Delhi.

would imply the presence of community resources held to be so crucial for mobilization by the Resource Mobilization Approach²¹.

Social Activism is another such factor which pervades all post independence social movements in the Uttarkhand region. Sarvodaya activities have been in the lead of all of these. Names of Sunderlal Bahuguna, Vimal Bahuguna, C.P. Bhatt, Kunwanr Prasun Ghanshyam Sailani and Vijay Jardhanri have become synonymous with all kinds of social mobilizations be it Chipko, Anti Dam or Anti-Alcohol movements. The apolitical nature of all these mobilizations further testifies to their social activism aspect. Sarvodaya activists have been instrumental in taking the message of Chipko from one village to another and thus in consolidating the consciousness which had its origins in the pre-independence days.

A high degree of participation by women has been another feature which has characterized the mobilisational history of Uttarkhand, though this was not so in the case of pre-independence instances of mobilization. This can be explained

²¹ McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996, Ed. Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements, Cambridge.

not only on the basis of the social and cultural disintegration of Uttarkhand society evident in the form of out-migration of the men-folk resulting in an imbalanced demographic profile, but also on the basis of the increased burden which women of the region have had to bear in the context of changed inter-relationship between man and environment. That the women had a conscious viewpoint on these issues becomes evident in the incident at Dungari-Paintoli²², where the menfolk of the village wanted the nearby forest patch to be cleared for potato farming but the women of the village opposed such a proposal in view of the difficulties that such a development would entail in getting the household needs of fuel and fodder. This consciousness among the women about their placement in the structure of the entire discourse on 'nature - development and survival' explains why the name 'Mahila Mangal Dal'²³ has become synonymous with social mobilization there. Women in the region have moved on from an active role in agricultural activities to an empowered status in the social and political arena by means of gaining entry into 'Van Panchayats'²⁴ and finally into village Panchayats. This explains the high degree of women's participation in the social movements.

²² Guha Ramachandra - *ibid* pp.-164.

²³ Mukul : Villages of Chipko Movement; EPW, Apr 10, 1993.

²⁴ *ibid* pp.-619.

The mobilization in the region have not only used the primordial networks of community solidarity by drawing upon religious symbolism as well as the cultural idiom of protest, but in fact have resulted in a number of community networks (read resources: Resource Mobilization Approach) namely DGSS, USV, TBVSS, Mahila mangal Dals, Yuvak Dals²⁵ etc. which have facilitated the scale and the extent of mobilization witnessed in Uttarkhand society over a period of time. Such an organizational network, backed by a commonality of perceptions and experiences about one's life opportunities and its deep ecological embeddedness, explains the sustained, protracted and recurrent nature of mobilizations in the life of Uttarkhand people. How else does one explain the mobilization under Chipko, Anti-liquor and Anti Dam issues lasting for decades.

Recent mass mobilization on the issue of regional autonomy for Uttarkhand, though completely different from the earlier movements in terms of the political nature of its demand, can be better understood in the backdrop of the mobilizational history of the Uttarkhand region and the creation of the community and mobilizational networks. Crystallization of an identity as an ongoing process

²⁵ DGSS - Dashanli Gram Swarayya Sangh.
USV - Uttarakhand Sangarsh Vahini.
TBSS - Tehri Bandh Virodhi Sangarsh Samiti.

of development of a consciousness, and its placement in the historical, cultural, geographical and ecological boundaries, defines the geographical limits of such an identity and its culmination in various kinds of mobilizations by means of a dynamic between identity and community networks.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE MOBILIZATION FOR
STATEHOOD IN UTTARAKHAND

The second half of 1994 and very soon the entire Uttarakhand was to witness yet another instance of mobilization, though, most significant in view of the political nature of its demand and its consequent implications for the Indian Federal arrangement. The policy orientation of earlier mobilizations viz demands for suitable modifications in forest policy (Chipko) liquor policy (Anti-Liquor movement), dam project, etc, was superseded by the patently political demand for statehood. Though the demand for granting statehood to the Uttarakhand region was voiced first in 1938¹, its untimely and sudden translation into mass mobilization caught not only the social scientists unawares but also left the regional political elites gasping for breath. The large-scale mass mobilization, for a more than 60 year old demand, sparked off by the state-govt^s announcement to extend the 27% O.B.C. reservation quota to the educational institutions²,

¹ Joshi P.C.: Uttarakhand - Issues & Challenges, Har-Andnad, 1995, Delhi.

² Mathur M.L. in Social Change: Dec. 1995: Vol. 25 No.4. pp.-63.

belies all such simplistic explanation such as economic backwardness, developmental neglect, anti-reservationism or BJP's role in translating the electoral goodwill into a demand for Uttaranchal state.

The most popular explanation available, to understand the current mass mobilization, is the one of 'economic backwardness' and 'developmental neglect'. It sounds similar to the core-periphery model of development with the twin processes of integration, through the project of nation - building, and marginalisation, consequent upon the centralizing tendencies of the Indian state, operating side by side. Various theses namely 'inner-colonisation', 'peripherisation', 'marginalisation' etc have been extended to put across the point that the people can not be excluded from the process of development and that sooner or later the uneven economic development, typical of the developmental effort of the Indian state, would pose challenges to the existing federal arrangement through sub-state autonomy demands.

Scholars have extended the arguments that the rapid disintegration of the traditional social order³ in the wake of modernization impulse of the state, felt

³ Joshi P.C.: *ibid.*

in the region through large-scale road construction and opening up of communication channels with the outside world, and a virtual absence of an alternative developmental package resulted in 'Developmental Disasters'⁴, 'Ecological Destruction', 'Economic Insecurity' and 'Social Disruption'⁵. That the alienation of the natives from the process of development is eventually the cause and the explanation, both, for the demand for conferring statehood on Uttarakhand.

Scholars, who have posited access to the development as the sole criterion for 'participation' and 'mobilization' in a democratic social order, see instances of social mobilization as indicative of the desires and aspirations of the people to be a part of state's developmental efforts⁶. Thus the Uttarakhand Movement is an effort by the people to extricate the region from its economic backwardness and Chipko becomes a manifestation of local people's desire to gain access to the

⁴ Joshi P.C.: Uttarakhand and the Indian Renaissance; IASSI, Quarterly Vol 9, No. 3, 1991, page 196.

⁵ Joshi P.C.: *ibid.*

⁶ Rangan Haripriya: "From Chipko to Uttaraanchal" in *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development & Social movements*; Ed. by Peet & Watts; Routledge, London, N.Y., 1996.

development process of requisitioning the govt. to modify its policies and regulations so as to incorporate local sensitivities as well.

The genealogy of these explanations, viewing the sub-state autonomy demands as emanating from developmental neglect, starts from the entry of market and commercial interests and then traverses a more or less similar explanatory route, passing through the well charted course from rapid social change, disintegration of primordial social networks, mass out-migration, a money order economy to the development of underdevelopment.

The oversimplification in the 'Development Syndrome'⁷ explanations of the Uttarakhand mobilization becomes amply evident in its failures, which leaves many questions unattended. First of all, these fail to explain the timing of the eruption of the mass movement; and second the apparent causality between the demand for separate statehood and the protest against the reservation issue. On the face of it these explanations are to be found deficient in explaining that if the movement was a response to the developmental neglect of the region, then the

⁷ Kumar Pradeep : Uttarakhand - The Post Election Scenario; Mainstream, Jan 11, 1997.

protest against the Tehri-Dam Project should have been a more appropriate platform/issue to spark off a separate state movement and not the reservation issue. On the other hand none of the earlier mobilizations put forward the demand for separate statehood.

Economic explanations of Uttarakhand upsurge have put forth the argument that apart from the linguistic and religious minorities, India, with its characteristic pluralistic Economic Formations⁸, also has identities based on Economic & Social Neglect⁹. Accordingly, the Uttarakhand region, due to the lack of an autonomous political space, was degenerated into the 'Hinterland' of the national economy reflecting 'Backwash Effects'¹⁰, of capitalist development. It is in this context that the Uttarkhand mobilization is conceived as a protest against the National Model of Development.

Again, such explanations are fundamentally flawed when it comes to a comparative perspective of such mobilizations. Many sub-state autonomy

⁸ Joshi P.C. : ibid

⁹ Kumar Pradeep : "Geneses of Uttarakhand Crisis" Mainstream Oct. 14, 1995.

¹⁰ Gumar Myrdal as Quoted in P.C. Joshi : ibid pp: 55.

movements were not predicated upon the economic aspects e.g. the movements in the North-East arose mainly in the light of ethnic composition of North-East society¹¹. Internationally also, the Quebec demand for a separate political status did not arise out of the issues of economic backwardness; to the contrary infact, the Quebec province is economically one of the most advanced provinces of Canada. Back in India too, the parochialisation of social consciousness in case of Punjab, Tamil Nadu etc can not be explained on the basis of developmental and economic arguments¹². The need is to go beyond economic explanations to explain the instances of regional assertion¹³.

Clearly what is required is an explanation which can bring forth a much clearer picture of the Uttarkhand reality in terms of a better correlation between the instances of past mobilization and the genesis and the nature of the mobilization for separate statehood. But before taking on this agenda some more insights into the present discourse on Uttarakhand movement are required.

¹¹ Misra Tillottama & Uday in T.V. Satyamurthy; *Region, Religion - Caste, Gender & Culture in Contemporary India*; Oxford, Delhi 1996.

¹² Ahmed Ishtiaq : *State, National & Ethnicity in S. Asia*; Pinter, London - N.Y; 1996.

¹³ Kumar Pradeep : "Geneses of Uttarakhand Crisis" *Mainstream* Oct. 14, 1995.

Another effort towards the understanding of the Uttarakhand movement widely publicized it as an Anti-Reservation Movement, though not in the academic circles. This viewpoint, mainly held by SP-BSP combine, has gained wide currency in the Journalistic and, to some extent, among the popular perceptions as well. Such an understanding, that the mass upsurge in the Uttarakhand region was an upper-caste reaction to the govt. ordinance of implementing 27% OBC reservation quota in UP (including the hill regions as well), is devoid of the rigors of academic investigation and is influenced by the compulsions of electoral calculations. Ironically, it was the same S.P Govt., which had earlier passed a resolution, on the basis of Kaushik Committee recommendations¹⁴, supporting the creation of a separate hill state, that termed it as an Anti-Reservationist sentiment. CPI(M) on the otherhand also tried explaining the Uttarakhand mobilization on the basis of 'Mechanical Implementation of Mandal'¹⁵ in a region already steeped in economic backwardness, threatening whatever little job opportunities were available there.

The projection of the Uttarkhand movement, as an anti-reservation

¹⁴ Bhatnagar Rakesh: T.O.I. 1995.

¹⁵ Surjeet H.S.: Hindu, Aug. 9, 1996, New Delhi.

mobilization, also fails to explain why this region, with its presumed antipathy towards reservation, did not witness a mass protest when Mandal Recommendations were first accepted by the govt. in 1991¹⁶ and later when these were accepted by the U.P. State govt. for the purposes of employment in the govt. Jobs.¹⁷ On the contrary, the movement began, with a protest by the mothers and the students, in the wake of the extension of 27% reservation quota to the educational institutions as well, in the month of July and August when local Uttarakhandis faced difficulties in securing admissions for their wards due to the newly implemented provisions for reservation, and on the other hand the seats were lying vacant due to the peculiar demographic profile of the region with OBCs constituting only 2-3% of the population, concentrated in few pockets in the Terai region¹⁸. A recent study has shown that the Uttarakhandis are not averse to reservation per-se as a tool for correcting social inequity, but what they want is a region specific reservation policy¹⁹.

¹⁶ B.K. Joshi as quoted in PIONEER, 11 Sept. 1994, 1994.

¹⁷ Joshi B.K. : *ibid*

¹⁸ Mawdsley Emma : "Uttarkhand Agitation & other Backward classes", E.P.W., Vol. xxxi, no.4, Jan. 27.

¹⁹ Mawdsley Emma : *ibid*

Ostensibly, such projections of Uttarkhand mobilization, as being anti-backward and anti-reservation are driven solely by political motives. Newspaper reports confirm that the issue was used to polarise caste-formations in the plains of U.P. with an eye to consolidating respective vote banks. The "Halla-Bol"²⁰ call given against two leading regional newspapers, a state sponsored bandh on 13th Sept 1994²¹ against the supposed anti-reservation upsurge in the U.P. hills and the storming of Allahabad H.C. premises²² by the S.P. activities in the mute presence of state police bear ample testimony to the fact that the Uttarkhand upsurge was utilized to sharpen the caste polarisation in the plains. The public pronouncement of the then C.M. Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav,²³ that he has nothing to lose in the Uttarakhand region²⁴, hints at the issues of political marginalisation of the Uttarakhand people. Hence the movement, which was more an expression of regional aspirations and cultural concerns was, projected as a

²⁰ Misra Amaresh : Reservation is not the Issue : E.P.W.; Sept. 17, 1994.

²¹ The Pioneer, 11 Sept, 1994, Delhi.

²² Misra Amaresh : *ibid.*

²³ Telegraph, 6 Sept. 94.

²⁴ *ibid.*

"Caste-Struggle"²⁵ whereas the participation profile of the movement points to the contrary with the "Unparalleled Intensity"²⁶ of the mobilization cutting across caste and class barriers. In the process the real issues viz regional aspiration, cultural unity, historical - geographical - economical specificity and the desire for greater devolution of political power in the context of an underdeveloped area, are relegated to a position of no significance.

Another such misconception, which has led to a distorted understanding of the Uttarkhand movement, pertains to the role of B.J.P vis-a-vis Uttarakhand mobilization. B.J.P. is perceived, though mistakenly, as having started the agitation and spearheading it now on the face of its sweeping electoral successes²⁷ in the last three assembly and parliament elections. To the contrary, some scholars have attributed BJP's success to the absence of an alternative choice²⁸. Lack of an organisational set up and internal divisions within Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, overall poor performance of congress all over India, Anti

²⁵ Mawdsley Emma : *ibid.*

²⁶ Chopra pran : *The Trail of Uttarkhand*, Hindu, Oct 9. 1996, Delhi

²⁷ Kumar Pradeep : *ibid.*

²⁸ Kumar Pradeep : *ibid.*

Mulayam-Mayawati sentiment in the region, a partially successful call for boycotting elections (by USSS) and a lop-sided demographic profile of the region should be seen as reasons for BJP's resounding success in the hills before concluding that the party has taken over the reins of the Uttarakhand movement.

All such rather naive formulations on the Uttarakhand movement abjectly fail to explain many fundamental questions such as the timing and the initiation of the movement, its mobilizational profile and composition, its apolitical character, its leaderless nature, the shift from an agitation on reservation issue to the demand for state autonomy, high degree of women's participation, poor showing by the UKD at the hustings and the transformation from 'Underdevelopment' consciousness to a purely political demand for an autonomous political space etc.

Academic explanations of the Uttarakhand movement must go beyond economic reasonings, political calculations and journalistic observations. Mobilization, as a theoretical concept, has been sought to be explained variously by different academic approaches starting from the Structural - Functional and Marxist to the Psychological (relative deprivation), Political (Political Process

App.) Instrumental (or organisational approach: RMT) and cultural (identity based) approaches²⁹. In the light of such a rich theoretical insight into the phenomenon of mass mobilization and protest it would be too simplistic to denominate the Uttarakhand movement as merely anti-reservationist or as a reaction against the prevalent model of development³⁰.

An explanation of current movement shall take into account, and emerge from the socio - cultural dynamics of Uttarakhand life, encompassing within its ambit factors ranging from historical, geographical, cultural, economical to developmental experiences, which would explain the character and the emergence of the Uttarakhand identity as it evolved, over a period of time, on the basis of shared understanding, experiences, threats and opportunities. Such a commonality of existence and perceptions gradually merged into a larger narrative defining and redefining the Uttarakhand identity which in turn explains the areal extent of the Uttarakhand mobilization and its claim over a territory for an autonomous political space.

²⁹ Refer to Ch. I.

³⁰ Joshi, P.C. : *ibid.*

The material basis of the Uttarakhand identity can be traced to primordial affinities of language, culture, customs, tradition and an exclusive historical past. In view of the multi-cultural picture of India, characterized by a number of cleavage-patterns³¹, it is not unusual to come across regional identities which are rooted in the culture and the tradition of the society instead of emanating from caste and class formations. In fact the twin character³² of Indian consciousness, in terms of a 'Pan-Indian' and a 'Regional' identity, has, indisputably, been accepted ever since the days of freedom struggle. But the issue at stake currently is the course that these identity formations took in the last couple of decades since independence and the role these are playing in the contemporary political discourse in terms of the increasing instances of regional assertion and the desire for an autonomous political space where the indigenous participants can extricate themselves from the status of political marginalisation.

The forces of modernisation in India were sought to be effected primarily through enhanced state intervention by means of 'Protective' and 'Affirmative' legislation. The conditionalities of a mixed economy, remodified and developed

³¹ Bhambri C.P.: Indian Politics since independence, Vikas, 1992, N. Delhi.

³² Vanaik Achin : The Painful Transition; Verso, 1990.

the given primordial identity markers by means of modern 'cognitive - apparatuses'³³ which, in turn, made the political potential of cultural traits too visible for not to be used within the domains of authoritative allocation of resources and values. In a way the dynamics of democracy and development placed the discourse of an Uttarakhand identity well within the boundaries of the polity, policy and the state. The 'differentiating role'³⁴ of the state and its policy instruments, as a distributor of privileges, and its impact on the process of identity evolution and its consequences for the issues of mobilization are well recognised by the scholars.

The forces of modernization and state intervention did make themselves visible in the Uttarakhand region but did not in too positive a sense. Blind implementation of plan projects³⁵ and policies reflected themselves, amply, in the imbalanced social profile there, in terms of great mis-matches between the levels of literacy and the degree of employment generation and the resources and

³³ Kaviraj Sudipta : in John Dunn Edition - CONTEMPORARY CRISIS OF NATION STATE : Blackwell; 1995.

³⁴ Brass, Paul (1986) Ed. Ethnic Groups and state. Billing & sons, U.K.

³⁵ The observer, 1 Sept. 94 reports govt. sanctions for installing pumpsets for irrigational purposes in Uttarakhand.

the indigenous production facilities. Uttarakhand diaspora in the name of development and modernization was a direct consequence of the policies of majoritarianism³⁶ where the interests and the specificities, the aspirations and the expectation, of the Uttarakhand people were marginalised in view of its relative insignificance in determining the character of governing alliance at the political and at the decisions making levels. Ironically, the region was quantitatively well represented at the political levels but qualitatively it meant hardly anything for the region as none of the political stalwarts from the region achieved it all by virtue of a mass following either in the Uttarakhand region or at the state and national levels. Ostensibly, as long as Indian politics was governed by the logic of Upper Caste - Dalit - Muslim alliance forged by the congress, the political bigwigs from Uttarakhand were there to stay, but with the shifts in the contemporary Indian political discourse with the Mandal & Masjid, these leaders found themselves on the political fringes of the U.P. & national politics. The point is that the region remained politically marginalised despite the high visibility of some leaders, hailing from the region, at the state and the national political levels. The reason was clear that a region, sending merely 19 representative in an assembly of 425

³⁶ *ibid*, read in the context of Mulayam Singh's threat that "his people" would come out on the street and take care of all those hillfolk working in the plains.

and 4 representatives in a house of close to 550 members, was/is a distinct political minority. The fears of its further marginalisation got enhanced with the changed political dynamics in view of the casteisation of Indian politics as such and the predominantly upper-caste social composition of the Uttarakhand society.

The politically insignificant status of the Uttarakhand people was manifest in a series of region insensitive policies aimed to exploit the resources of Uttarakhand region and not for the benefit of the local people. Locals were denied access to the forest and natural resources in the name of preservation but the green felling continued unabated for the outside interests and also with the help of mafia-bureaucracy - politics nexus. It is to be noted that the forest policy went ahead with its plans of changing the composition of forest species artificially by replacing original species (of Oak, Rhododendrons etc.) by pine for purely commercial reasons³⁷. It is well known that the pines have hastened the ecological ruin of the Uttarakhand forests since pine does not allow any other variety of plants to take roots and its acidic needles render the soil unfit for grass cultivation (of import from local animal husbandry point of view). Most hard hit were the local petty extractors and the local peasantry whereas the market

³⁷ Dogra, Bharat. Forest, Dams & Survival in Tehri Garhwal; 1992, Delhi.

commercial interests were, uninterruptedly, sub-contracted forest patches. Some scholars have opined that the Chipko was a reaction against this exclusionary model of development³⁸ and reflected the aspiration of the locals to gain a share for themselves in the entire process of development. The crux of the matter is that the forest policy of the govt. determining the scope and the extent of the exploitation of Uttarakhand forest resources, was solely governed by the interests not rooted in the region itself, and was oblivious to the sensitivities of the people whose very habitat were threatened due to mindless forest felling and its consequent ecological disasters. Lack of indigenous capital, to be able to exploit natural resources, and consequently of a pressure group influencing the policy formulating mechanism is to be held responsible for the circumvention of Uttarkhand interests in the matter of policy formulation.

The characteristic social profile of the Uttarakhand region with the absence of an intermediary Zamindar class³⁹ and non-surplus grain production hampered the process of indigenous capital accumulation. Consequently, non-indigenous capital gained entry to expropriate the natural resources of the region, which were

³⁸ Rangan, Haripriya, 1996, *ibid.*

³⁹ Guha, Ramachandra, 1991. *The Unquiet Woods*, O.U.P., N. Delhi.

to explain the marginalisation of local interests in policy matters be it the forest policy, liquor policy or development policy.

As a result no production facilities could develop in the region denying an investment opportunity to the locals. Capital, whatever little, earned through remittances and pensions (ex services personnel 4,00,000 in numbers + 300,000 serving⁴⁰) went to financing the liquor mafia.

On the development policy front too, the projects of dam building, road construction and of building extensive communication network, none were inspired fundamentally to benefit the indigenous inhabitants of the Uttarakhand. If the aims of tapping hydroelectric potential of the region, on the one hand, were to provide electricity to the metropolitan centers and to make water available for drinking and irrigational purposes below in the plains, then the road and communication networks, on the other, were built keeping in mind the strategic importance of the region in military terms. While the water resources from the Uttarakhand region were to be utilized for the development of irrigation elsewhere nothing was done to improve the plight of the local agriculture which remains an

⁴⁰ Pioneer, 11 Sept 94, N. Delhi.

enterprise netting deficit grain production and employing archaic agricultural practices and implements.

Policy determining liquor trade in the region, also came in for sharp criticism by social activities, women and concerned citizenry. The malaise of alcohol consumption, seen as an indicator of moral and cultural degeneration⁴¹ of the inhabitants of the Uttarakhand region, must also be analysed in the context of overall political and policy marginalisation of the Uttarakhandi people which, in turn, accorded primacy of the outside commercial interests over what was desirable for the locals.

The grass-root mobilizations around the issues of dam, forest and alcohol were symptomatic of what Kothari⁴² calls the failure of the state to do what people expected it to do. What binds and synthesizes all erstwhile movements in the Uttarakhand region into one, is their policy opposition consequent upon the political minority status of the Uttarakhand region.

⁴¹ Pathak, Shekher, 1985: "Intoxication as a Social Evil: Anti-Alcohol Movement in Uttarakhand. E.P.W. vol. xx, no. 32, Aug 10, 1985.

⁴² Kothari, Rajni, Social - Action, vol 40, no. 3, July-Sept., 1990.

The latest in the series of events ignoring Uttarakhand interests in policy matters was the decision of the state govt. to enforce 27% OBC reservation quota in the educational institutions. The region, which remained relatively calm when the Anti-Mandal agitation was at its peak⁴³, reacted only when the practical implications of the reservation policy started becoming clearer to the people. This would explain why the movement did not start immediately after the promulgation of the ordinance to this effect in the month of Feb,⁴⁴ but only picked up in the months of July - Aug with the beginning of the new academic session. Studies⁴⁵ have shown that the people in the region are not averse to reservation per se but rather want a reservation policy which would incorporate the socio-economic and demographic peculiarities of the region.

The demand for separate statehood reflects the efforts on the part of the people to do away with its current politically marginalised status through the creation of an autonomous political space where the Uttarakhandi people can gain majority status. The efforts to redefine the boundaries of a sub-state political unit

⁴³ Pioneer, 11 Sept 94, N. Delhi.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Mawdsley, Emma & Misra Amaresh. *Ibid.* (separate articles in EPW).

signifies the aspirations of the Uttarakhand people to regain a foothold in the Indian federal arrangement so that the interests of the region can be suitably reflected in the processes of policy formulation and policy implementation.

In view of its inability to bring into effect a region sensitive and region specific policy package, and a continuous co-optation of regional political elites at the national level to the neglect of regional interests, people from Uttarakhand have, this time, directly demanded their due in the political power sharing arrangement instead of taking recourse to the electoral mode of participation for purposes of articulating their interests. In this context the apolitical nature⁴⁶ of the movement does become intelligible as people are not demanding representation but rather are demanding a region based decision making mechanism. The rationale is that the current mode of political / democratic representation has not been successful in fulfilling the expectations of the people as a result of which the people had to take recourse to the protest mode in the past to channelise their demands upto the decision making bodies. As a consequence, people have made

⁴⁶ Kasyap, Subhash C. : "Uttarakhand: Case for a separate state" T.O.I, Sept 19, 1995.

their choice for an alternative political arrangement amply clear. Kothari⁴⁷ characterizes such an effort as an attempt to open alternative political spaces outside the usual arenas of party and govt. though not outside the state. Search is for new institutions of political action. Accordingly , mobilizations at the grass-root level reflect the incapacity of the state to deliver the goods and its failure to implement the constitutional mandate of removing inequities.

It is true that the mobilizations, as witnessed in the Uttarakhand region, were, perforce, concomitants of the modernisation project of the Indian state in the post independence period. The preconditions of social and political mobilization, as essential components of political development, rendered social categories/identities based on caste, class, religion, region and culture as obvious choices for the purpose. The Uttarakhand identity is no exception. In the prevalent political culture these social categories became the rallying point for demanding and cornering the privileges extended by the state. The current mobilization in the U.P. hills is a similar exercise of raising a political demand for the benefit of a region specific community.

⁴⁷ Kothari, Rajani. "New Frontiers of Politics" Some long term considerations". Radical Humanist, Apr. 90, Page 12.

The contours of Uttarakhand identity were gradually sharpened by the subtle and not so subtle experiences in the light of a continuous political and policy neglect. The Uttarakhand diaspora, consequent upon lopsided developmental efforts, was an experience very much rooted within the geographical confines of the region. Development disaster, 'ecological ruin', 'economic dislocation' and 'Social disintegration' were the processes which were certainly region specific, which, in turn, engendered an awareness among the locals about the imminent socio-economic peril of the Uttarakhand life, transcending the barriers of caste and class. Destruction of traditional ways of living, displacement in the wake of development projects, recurring natural calamities at an increased frequency due to mindless tree felling and construction activities, disastrous earthquakes and innumerable number of landslides, forest fires etc. have provided an universe to the Uttarakhand life which has impacted the common consciousness of the Uttarakhandis. Cumulatively these factors did ascribe an internal coherence to the Uttarakhand identity which, in turn, explains the incidence of a series of mobilizations and the consequent legacy of social activism⁴⁸ in Uttarakhand, the latest in the series being the state autonomy

⁴⁸ Dixit, Kanak Mani , "Uttarakhand : Awaiting Passage to a New State". T.O.I, Sept. 9, 1996, New Delhi.

movement, which, in its own right, has been marked by a striking shift in terms of its polity orientation, contrary to the previous mobilizations which merely focused on policy modifications viz. ban on green felling upto 1000 mts. from mean sea level, declaring the entire region dry & reconsideration of the Tehri Dam project etc.⁴⁹

Only a common consciousness of this kind can explain the mass base which the state autonomy movement could generate there. It has been a commonly accepted fact there that the Uttarakhand region is a mere administrative appendage to the U.P. State where the people from state bureaucracy come only under punishment, promotion or probation⁵⁰. Newspapers report that in one instance in Pithoragarh out of 38 P.A.C. recruits as many as 36 were from the plains⁵¹. Similarly in a similar recruitment drive for conductors under the state transport corporation at Dehradun Depot none of the recruits were from the hill region⁵². There are many instances of new recruits immediately going on leave and later

⁴⁹ Dogra Bharat, *ibid* & Pararypye Vijay. "Evaluating Tehri Dam" Intach Series, 1988.

⁵⁰ A resident Uttarakhandi as quoted in T.O.I, 5 Sept. 94, N.Delhi.

⁵¹ Nautiyal, Shivanand, News Times. 7 Sept 94.

⁵² T.O.I Sept 5, 1994, N. Delhi.

seeking transfers to the plains. These could be isolated empirical events, nevertheless, their significance in understanding the nature of grievances and the identity profile of a common Uttarakhandi can not be under estimated.

Such an identity has facilitated many mobilisations⁵³ in the Uttarakhand region in past. These mobilizations, apart from further consolidating this identity, also created an extensive organizational support base by means of recruiting members and instilling a sense of purpose towards a common cause in them. Theoretically the coming of the forces of modernisation made the mobilizational potential of region based social identities only too evident and the organizational networks facilitated such mobilization. But, eventually, these mobilization could become a reality only when a community of people could identify themselves with each other and with a common cause.

In the Uttarakhand region the earlier instance/episode of mobilization resulted in a network of associations and organizations which explains the active role played by various social categories such as women, student, ex-servicemen, govt. employees etc in the movement for state autonomy but the geographical

⁵³ Refer to Chapter 2.

expanse and the scope of this mobilization can best be explained with the help of an Uttarakhand identity alone.

The current status of the political discourse on Uttarakhand is riven with multifarious views, ostensibly formulated keeping in mind the respective political constituencies of individual players. BJP has been supporting the statehood status, whereas cong. has consented to a U.T. status only. C.P.I. (M) opposes the demand in view of its vulnerable position vis-a-vis Gorkhaland issue S.P.-B.S.P. combine, on the other hand, project it as an upper caste reaction against the policy of reservation. Ex. P.M. Mr. Deve Gowda sprung a surprise by announcing the government's intention to grant statehood to the region, clearly with an eye on U.P. assembly elections, though later the issue got entangled into the internal controversies of United Front and its steering committee. The suspended animation status of U.P. state assembly proved to be the constitutional constraint⁵⁴ in introducing a bill to this effect.

On the other hand the debate has been hovering around the issues of

⁵⁴ Sahay, S. on Uttarakhand, "Promise and Performance". H.T., Sept. 5, 1996, N. Delhi.

economic viability of the proposed state, the specter of balkanisation⁵⁵ in view of similar demands coming up from other parts of the country and the much publicised, so called, opening up of 'Pandora's Box'⁵⁶ if such a divisive demand is entertained by the centre.

However, the aim of current study is to understand the unprecedented mobilization that took place in the Uttarakhand region and to go into the issues and factors that determined its present character.

Understandably the debate on the Uttarakhand movement needs to be located well within the domain of the polity and within the context of struggle for power. The role of the state, its policy instruments and its impact on the Uttarakhand identity, in view of its politically marginal status, is of crucial importance while analysing the Uttarakhand movement. The clues to understanding the nature of the movement are to be found in the policy neglect of the region. The political marginalisation seems to be complete with the

⁵⁵ Kaul, Sumer on Uttarakhand Agitation: "Case for small states", H.T., Dec 18, 1995, N. Delhi.

⁵⁶ Surjeet, H.S.: "The Uttarakhand Issue", Hindu, Aug 9, 1996.

pronouncements of an incumbent chief minister that he has no stakes to be lost in the Uttarakhand region⁵⁷.

Explanations based on economic backwardness, relative deprivation and anti-reservationism are grossly inadequate to explain many features of the current mobilization, which necessitates explanations that ^{would} posit the issue in a political and policy framework. Such an approach not only explains many characteristics of the state autonomy movement in the Uttarakhand region but also puts its relationship with earlier movements in the right perspective. Policy approach, on the one hand, explains the direction and the nature of the identity formation, it also clarifies on the other, the movement from a social activist phase to a political mobilization in Uttarakhand. The answers to the issues of economic backwardness, relative deprivation and the development of underdevelopment are to be found in the marginal status of Uttarakhand vis-a-vis the polity and policy.

⁵⁷ Mulayam Sing in Telegraph, 6 Sept 94.

**THE UTTARAKHAND CRISIS AND INDIAN POLITICS :
A FEW CONCLUDING INFERENCES**

The role of a social - scientist should not be confined to merely conducting a descriptive, observational study of a social phenomenon without situating the social reality within its larger framework. In this context it would be apt to say that the Uttarakhand crisis reflects the very elements which have come to characterize what social theorists and political analysts have termed the crisis of Indian state. The social scientist must therefore locate the connectivities between the micro-cosm and the macro-cosm.

The state autonomy movement in the U.P. hills is arguably an exposition of the travails of the Indian state at the local level. There is complete unanimity on the point that India is a country characterized by diversities. This seems to be the starting point for many scholars, who have sought to evaluate the performance of the Indian state vis-a-vis nation-building and national integration. There have been question marks placed on the viability of India as a nation in the light of its so called multinational character¹. The point remains that the modernization

¹ Nag, Sajal: "Multiplication of Nations? Political Economy of sub-Nationalism in India". E.P.W. July 17-24, 1993.

project of the Indian state in the post independence period, seeking to create a single unified national identity, failed on two counts. Firstly it failed to fulfill the rising aspirations of the newly mobilized social categories², and secondly it failed to implement the constitutional mandate of an equitable social order³. In the process of implementing the modernization agenda the societal cleavages and identity markers got reinforced because of the state policy of distributing welfare measures on the lines of caste, region, ethnicity and gender, thus facilitating the process of social mobilization. Institutional approach, though not questioning the appropriateness of the modernization project of the Indian state per se, grounds its explanations in the argument of 'institutional overload'⁴ in terms of the rising expectations of such newly mobilized social categories and increasingly diminishing institutional capacity to fulfill these. In this context, the rising grass-root movements, such as the Uttarakhand movement, signify a growing mismatch between two integral components of the modernization project, namely the project of 'social mobilization'⁵ and that of 'institutional development'⁶.

² Deutsch, Karl: "Social Mobilization & Political Development", American Political Science Review, LV, No.3, Sept., 1961.

³ Kothari, Rajni, 1991, April, "The Crisis of Indian State", Radical Humanist.

⁴ Kohli, Atul. 1990. Democracy and Discontent, Cambridge.

⁵ Deutsch, Karl : ibid.

⁶ Huntington : Political Order in Changing Societies, New Haven, Yale, 1970.

Positing the issue of the Uttarakhand upsurge within the conceptual confines of the 'modernization project' of the Indian state, as the issue pertains to the Indian federal arrangement and does not question the project of nation - building per se, it would not be an exaggeration to say that a region based identity, like Uttarakhandi identity, has proved to be the fundamental cohesive force for mobilizational purposes.

Invariably, the mobilizations, in the Indian political context, have been on the basis of identities along the various lines of caste, religion, region, gender and ethnicity. The modernization project of the Indian state has been an important factor in consolidating such identities⁷ from what were once 'fuzzy'⁸ primordial social associations. The 'differentiating role'⁹ of the Indian state has been crucial in enhancing 'politically relevant strata'¹⁰ in the society by means of its policy of extending the privileges and the benefits of development on the basis of these very identities. Such a sharpening of sub-national identities through the processes of politicisation and mobilization¹¹ ascribed new meanings to the concepts of accountability, politics and legitimacy.

⁷ Puri, Balraj; 1991, "Popular Upsurge or Disintegration", Radical Humanist.

⁸ Kaviraj, Sudipta in "Contemporary crisis of the Nation State", Ed. John Dunn, 1995, Blackwell.

⁹ Brass, Paul; 1985. Ed. Ethnic Groups & State, Billing & Sons, U.K.

¹⁰ Deutsch, Karl : ibid.

¹¹ Puri, Balraj : ibid.

The crisis of the Indian state emanates directly from the inherent contradictions of the modernization project. The twin processes of universalization, in terms of a movement towards 'high culture', 'homogenized social order', and 'one market'¹², and localization, in terms of consolidation of the sub-national identities, speaks for the crisis that the Indian state is facing today. Brass¹³ prefers to call it 'systemic crisis' in view of the centralizing tendencies of the Indian state in a culturally diverse and socially fragmented agrarian society, which is reflected in growing conflict visible today in Indian society along religious, caste, regional, cultural & ethnic lines. The state itself is to be held responsible for extending 'differential advantages' to ethnic, regional and caste identities. The relative policy neglect of the Uttarakhand region and its consequent marginalisation from the development project of the Indian state explains a mass mobilization, built upon a regional identity and the demand for an autonomous political space. The crisis of Uttarakhand follows as a natural corollary to the crisis of effectiveness and legitimacy faced by the Indian state¹⁴. Kothari is emphatic that the Indian state has failed to integrate peripheries with the national mainstream¹⁵.

¹² Gellner, 1983. *National & Nationalism*, Blackwell.

¹³ Brass, Paul, 1994: *The Politics of India since Independence*, Cambridge Univ. Press.

¹⁴ Kothari, Rajni : *ibid.*

¹⁵ Kothari, Rajni : *ibid.*

Prof. Bhambri¹⁶ has sought to explain the kind of protest situations as witnessed in the Uttarakhand region, on the basis of the continental size of the federal polity, the uneven political development of the various regions of the country, the diverse historical experiences and exposures of the people, and the intermixture of various cultural streams in society. Morris - Jones¹⁷, on the other hand, has tried explaining protests and agitations in post-independence India in terms of the conflict between 'tradition' and 'modernity'. A similar argument for state failure has been extended by Saberwal¹⁸ who visualizes a lack of fit between the principles underlying our institutions of western origin and those which have informed traditional Indian institutions.

In view of the unfolding of new layers of consciousness, as a result of the impact of industrialization and the rapid expansion of mass social and political consciousness, a revamping of the Indian federal system has become imperative to fulfill the urge for the recognition of historically rooted regional identities. Against the backdrop of state failure to fulfil the rising expectations of newly mobilized social categories, these identities have increasingly acquired political

¹⁶ Bhambri, C.P., 1992. *Politics in India since Independence*, Vikas, N. Delhi.

¹⁷ Jones, Morris, W.H., 1971. *The Govt. & Politics of India*, B.I. Pub., Bombay.

¹⁸ Saberwal, Satish, 1996. *Roots of Crisis: Interpreting Contemporary Indian Society*, Sage, N. Delhi.

overtones and have become the basis of demand for various rights¹⁹. Due to the state failure in distributing the benefits of development equitably sub-national identities today are demanding a more decisive say in the affairs of governance, in the allocation of resources as well as a more autonomous political space.

The state has failed to integrate culturally diverse group into a single national identity, but has succeeded in mobilizing and politicizing these. The partial success of the modernization agenda has resulted in a 'Revolution of Rising Expectations'²⁰ reflected in the political demands of region based communities like Uttarakhand. The failure of the state, attributed variously to a lag between tradition and modernity, institutional breakdown or the inherent unsuitability of the modernization project due to its ethno-centric bias, has given rise to grass-roots activism.

The experience of the Uttarakhand mobilization, on the other hand, requires an explanation which would also take the compulsions of practical politics into account. The politics of vote banks and the imperative of gaining a

¹⁹ Khan, Rasheedudin, 1994. *Bewildered India: Identity, Pluralism, Discord* - Har Anand, N. Delhi.

²⁰ Kothari, Rajni : *ibid.*

majority made it expedient for the political class to nourish constituencies which would ensure maximum dividends in political terms. This explains why the leaders from the Uttarakhand hills could not do much to correct the politically minor status of the Uttarakhand hills. The logic of vote bank politics linked the distribution of developmental benefits with the size of the contingent of representatives in the political institutions. In this context it would be appropriate to say that present day mass movements are not merely the consequence of institutional failure in the Indian political context but have also been influenced by the manner in which the functioning of such institutions has come to be shaped by the compulsions of practical politics.

Of course the Uttarakhand identity, which provides the bedrock for the most recent mass mobilization in the region, is not a historically given category, but certainly derives its building material from the socio-cultural and historical experience of the people. Such experience involves not only instances of earlier mobilizations viz Chipko, Anti-Liquor, Anti-Dam and Dhandaks but also the impressions of mass-out migration of young people in search of employment, the daily trudge of womenfolk in search of fuel, fodder and water and the destruction of entire villages by landslides. The non-participative mode of development further helped crystallizing an identity where the people see the trails of tourist

cars and dam construction trucks as of no significance to them. A strong mass sentiment against the construction of an air-strip in Gauchar reflects such a consciousness where the people have shown preference for agricultural land over an air-strip. A common refrain among the Garhwalis has been that our water can produce so much of electricity and can irrigate so much land in the plains but when it comes to drinking water, there is none available for us.

The consciousness of a common Uttarakhand, which in turn has given rise to an identity, is a complex whole which can be only felt and distinguished from the rest but can not be dismantled into neat component categories. The Uttarakhand identity has been consolidated gradually with each mobilization and with each instance of developmental neglect. The reservation issue proved to be one more such experience in which the common man perceived a threat to his identity and life chances.

Such a perception explains the sudden mass upsurge on the issue of reservation and its transformation into a political demand. The logic of vote bank politics and the desire to constitute a political majority status is amply evident in such a demand, as the people from the hills now want to be a majority within the geographical limits of the Uttarakhand, where they would be the ones to

determine or at least influence a policy framework of their choice. To say that the Uttarakhand demand reflects the failure of institutional arrangements of the Indian polity or represents a dichotomy between tradition and modernity would be a hasty conclusion since the people have not demanded a change in the institutional framework itself. In fact the Uttarakhand mobilization manifests the desire of the people to bring these very institutions closer to their doorstep.

‘Developmental neglect’ is an important component of the popular consciousness of the people in the region but the trajectory of identity formation in the Uttarakhand region can not be posited on a single factor alone. Earlier instances of mobilization, whether in the pre-independence or the post independence period, developed a culture of protest which traces its history from the Dhandak tradition to the most recent of such mobilization, ‘The Anti-Air Strip Movement’ in Gaucher. On the other hand, the identity contours were also sharpened gradually with each mobilization. The process of identity formation in the region has passed through many subtle and not so subtle phases. From historical, cultural specificities and geographical contrast with neighbouring regions to the instances of mobilization and developmental neglect, the trajectory of Uttarakhand identity is necessarily a complex process. The interface of this trajectory with the politics of vote banks and power has made its political potential

clearer to the common people. Developmental neglect is a part of the larger consciousness which underlies the identity formation process. Such an identity of course, is a multi-dimensional construct and is employed to mobilize those who share these objective characteristics. Such a commonality of perception among the people of Uttarakhand became a rallying point to mobilize people around the issue of reservation. Typical to present day's politics, an identity which is based on regional sentiments becomes the criterion for demands from the government.

In the mobilizational history of Uttarakhand, the movements of Chipko, Anti-Dam, Anti-liquor, Anti-Air Strip (at Ganchar) and the movement for a separate university at Srinagar (in 1970's) must not be looked at as isolated instances of popular upsurge. They should rather be seen as sub-components of a larger process consolidating an Uttarakhand identity though individually each mobilization did put forth an issue specific demand and tried sensitizing the policy formulation process to the specificities of the region. In a way each such mobilization played an important role vis-a-vis interest articulation and feedback functions. Such an interface between an identity based mobilization and policy formulating mechanism explains how, from demanding a few modifications in the policy framework, the state autonomy mobilization has put forth a demand for the

policy formulating mechanism itself. The logic of the politics of vote and its consequent political minor status for the Uttarakhand people has rendered the political potential of a region based identity too clear to the common people. Such a development also explains the fact that the mobilizations in the region have registered a shift from social and moral issues viz Chipko, Environment Liquor etc. to a distinctly political demand for the state autonomy.

Changes in the political power equations of Indian politics with the coming of Mandal and Masjid further reinforced the marginal status of Uttarakhand, due to its unique social composition where the Dalits and the minorities are present in insignificant proportions. Whatever possibilities, the region enjoyed, earlier, of gaining an entry into the governing alliance, disappeared with the changed face of the politics at the state level. Opposition to the Mandal Recommendations in the educational institutions was based on this very sentiment where the common man perceived such an act as being insensitive to the regional and demographic specificities of the region. The politics of reservation as perceived by the common Uttarakhandi, who saw himself as being excluded from this benefit explains the transformation of an anti-reservation agitation into a state autonomy movement. Clearly, the threat perception of the common man in this regard did

not reflect the societal cleavages of Uttarakhand society. In reality, of course, Uttarakhand society and its politics are also governed by the logic of the Brahmin-Jajman divide which became amply clear in the last parliamentary elections. In this regard, ascribing homogeneity to the Uttarakhand identity is also tantamount to a misreading of the affairs of this society, while in the matter of the state autonomy movement, a common hill identity has prevailed over the intra-regional and caste identities (e.g. the Garhwali and the Kumaoni divide or Brahman-Jajman cleavage), this can be explained on the basis of the fact that in all earlier mobilizations on issues ranging from Alcohol to Dam, Chipko and Anti- Air strip movement in Gauchar, people found themselves on the one side of the divide. Even the issues of developmental neglect and reservation affected the Uttarakhand community as a whole. A breach in the Uttarakhandi identity could have been expected if some communities from the region would had incorporated in the O.B.C. list but this was not, and could not be, so. This is why the demand for state autonomy witnessed mass support transcending all internal cleavage patterns present in Uttarakhand society. Combined together with the logic of Mandal and Masjid, with the reservation issue proving to be the precipitating event, the Uttarakhand identity was instrumental in snowballing an issue based agitation into a political demand for separate statehood.

State, through its policy instrument, played a crucial role in sharpening an Uttarakhand identity. State policies and projects on forest, hydro-electricity, liquor and reservation were opposed by the hill people. Mobilizations based on these issues not only reinforced and consolidated a common hill identity but also enhanced the growing interaction between the people and the state. Development of a common identity facilitated mobilization on a number of issues and determined the character of policy opposition by hill people who are now not opposing the policy orientation of the state anymore but are demanding a region based policy formulating framework.

At the same time the dominant role played by the hill identity in the state autonomy movement should not be construed to imply that region and caste based identities within the Uttarakhand region have ceased to exist. In fact these very identity markers would provide the base for future mobilizations, be it political or social, within the Uttarakhand state if ever it comes into existence.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, Ishtiaq, 1996. *State, Nation and Ethnicity in contemporary South Asia*, Pinter, London & New York.
- Allum, P. 1995. *State & Society in Western Europe*, Polity Press.
- Anderson, Benedict, 1994. *Imagined Communities*, Verso.
- Arora, Balveer & Douglas, V. Verney, 1995. Ed. *Multiple Identities in a Single State*, Konark, Delhi.
- Aziz & Arnold, 1996. *Decentralised Governance in Asian countries*, Sage, N. Delhi.
- Bahuguna, S. 1997. "Saving the Himalayas", *Hindustan Times*, Jan 30.
- Ballabh, Basant, "Caste Politics, Reservation and Uttarakhand", *Link*, 37(6), 18 Sept, pp. 27-30.
- Bombwall, K.R., ed. 1977. *National Power and State Autonomy*, Meanakshi Prakashan.
- Baxi & Parkeh, Ed. 1995. *Crisis & Change in Modern India*, Sage, N. Delhi.
- Bhambri, C.P., 1992. *Indian Politics, Since Independence*, Vikas, N. Delhi.
- Bhatnagar, Rakesh, 1995. *Uttarakhand : It was a long struggle*", *Times of India*.
- Blackwell Dictionary of 20th Century Thought.
- Brass, Paul, 1994. *The Politics of India since Independence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brass, Paul, ed. 1985. *Ethnic Groups and State*, Billing & Sons, U.K.
- Chandola, Harish, 1995. "Do Hill People Matter", *Mainstream Annual Issue*.

- Chandola, Harish, 1995. "What kind of Uttarakhand", *Mainstream*, 14th October.
- Chatterjee, Partha, 1994. *The Nation and its Fragments*. Oxford.
- Chatterjee, Partha, 1986. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World : A Derivative Discourse*, Oxford.
- Chopra, Pran, 1996. "People level politics", *Hindu*, Sept 27.
- Datta, Prabhat, 1993. *Regionalisation of Indian Politics*. Sterling
- Deutsch, Karl, 1961, "Social Mobilization and Political Development", *American Political Science Review*, LV, No.3, September.
- Dhavan, Rajeev, 1996. "Imaginary Discontents", *Hindu*, Aug 30.
- Dixit, K.M. 1996. "Uttarakhand : Awaiting Passage to a New State", *Times of India*, Sept. 9th.
- Dobhal, Harsh, 1992. "Chipko : Social Background of an Environment Movement:", *Mainstream*, 18 January.
- Dogra, Bharat, 1992. *Forests, Dams & Survival in Tehri Garhwal*, Delhi.
- Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*.
- Finkle & Gable, 1968. *Political Development & Social Change*, John Wiley & Sons.
- Gellner, Ernst, 1983. *Nation & Nationalism*, Blackwell.
- Guha, Ramachandra, 1991. *The Unquiet Woods*, Oxford, Delhi.
- Huntington, 1970. "Political Order in Changing Societies", New Haven, Yale.
- Johnson, C. 1983. *Revolutionary Change*, Longman, London.

- Jones, Morris. W.H., 1971. *The Govt. and Politics of India*, B.I., Publications, Bombay.
- Joshi, P.C. 1991. "Uttarakhand and the Indian Renaissance", *IASSI Quarterly*, vol.9, no.3.
- Joshi, P.C. 1995. *Uttarakhand: Issues & Challenges*. Har-Anand, N. Delhi.
- Joshi, B.K. "Case for Uttarakhand", *Seminar*, Aug. 1995.
- Kasyap, Subhash C. 1995. "Uttarakhand : Case for A Separate State", *Times of India*, Sept. 18th.
- Kaul, Sumer, 1995. "Case for small states", *Hindustan Times*, Dec. 18.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta, 1995. "Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State", in Ed. by John Dunn, Blackwell.
- Khan, Rasheedudin, 1994. *Bewildered India : Identity, Pluralism, Discord*, Har-Anand, N. Delhi.
- Khan, Rasheeduddin, 1995. "Towards Viable Regional Identities", *Mainstream - Annual*.
- Kimmel, M.S. 1990. *Revolution : A Sociological Interpretation*, Polity Press.
- Kohli, Atul, 1990. *Democracy & Discontent*, Cambridge University Press.
- Kornhauser, W., 1959. *The Politics of Mass Society*. Free Press, U.S.
- Kothari, Rajni, 1990. "New Frontiers of Politics", *Radical - Humanist*, April, pp. 7-14.
- Kothari, Rajani, 1991. "The Crisis of Indian State", *Radical Humanist*, April.
- Kothari, Rajni, 1982. *Politics in India*, Orient Longman.

- Kriesi, Koopmans, Dyvendak & Gingni, 1995. *New Social Movements in Europe : A Comparative Analysis*.
- Kumar, Pradeep, 1997. "Uttarakhand : The Post-Election Scenario", *Mainstream*. Jan 11. pp. 24-29.
- Kumar, Pradeep, 1995. "Genesis of Uttarakhand Crisis", *Mainstream*, Oct.-14.
- Kumar, Pradeep, 1995. "Demand for Uttarakhand : Wider Dimensions", *Mainstream*, 33(39), 19th Aug.
- Kumar, Pradeep, 1996. "Demand for a Hill State in U.P.: New Realities", *Mainstream*, June 29, pp. 21-30.
- Lal, Hardwari, 1997. "Politics is All", *Hindustan Times*, Jan - 4.
- Lal, Hardwari, 1995. "No Need for Radical Change", *Hindustan Times*, Sept. 16.
- Mathur, M.L. 1995. "Uttarakhand Movement : Political and Social Issues:", *Social Change*, vol.25, no.4, December.
- Mawdsley, Emma, 1996. "Uttarakhand Agitation and other Backward Classes", *E.P.W.* Jan-27.
- McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, Cambridge.
- Mishra, Amaresh, 1995. "Fresh Life for Uttarakhand Movement", *E.P.W.* Jan. 14.
- Mishra, Amaresh, 1994. "Reservation is Not the Issue", *E.P.W.*, Sept.-17.
- Misra, Amaresh, 1994. "New Forces in Uttarakhand", *E.P.W.* Nov. 19.
- Mukul, 1993. "Villages of Chipko Movement", *E.P.W.*, April-10.

Nag, Sajal, 1993. "Multiplication of Nation ? Political Economy of Sub. Nationalism in India", E.P.W. July 17-24.

Nautiyal, Annpurna, 1996. "Uttarakhand and Political Parties", Mainstream, Sept. 28.

Nautiyal, Suresh, ed. "Drive for Himalaya's Anthropometric Development (DHAD), vol.1, Dehra Dun 1994.

Nayar, Kuldeep, 1996. "Uttarakhand, New States and the Union", Mainstream, September-14.

Nettle, J.P., 1967. Political Mobilization : A Sociological Analysis of Methods & Concepts. Faber & Faber.

Note submitted to hill area advisory committee of planning commission on the occasion of discussion of 8th plan.

Oommen, T.K. 1988. Protest and Change : Studies in Social Movements. Sage, N. Delhi.

Pande, B.D., 1995. "Why Uttarakhand", Mainstream, 33(13), 18th Feb.

Paranjpye, Vijay, 1988. Evaluating the Tehri Dam, INTACH, N. Delhi.

Parsai, Gargi, 1996. "People's Participation best bet to save Garhwal", Hindu, Nov 13.

Pathak, Shekhar, 1985. "Intoxication as a social Evil" E.P.W., vol.xx no. 32, Aug-10.

Puri, Balraj, 1991, "Popular Upsurge or Disintegration", Radical Humanist, April.

Rangan, Haripriya on Chipko in ed. Peat & Watts. 1996. Liberation Ecologies, Environment, Development & Social Movements, Routledge, London.

- Rao, M.S.A. 1984. *Social Movements in India*, Manohar, N. Delhi.
- Rawat, V.B., 1995. "Vora Plays Mandal in U.P. Hills", *Times of India*, Nov. 27th.
- Rejuvenating Collective Action : From the Global to the Local. *The Political Quarterly* Ed. by Colin Gough & David Marquand, Blackwell, 1995.
- Saberwal, Satish, 1996. *Roots of Crisis : Interpreting Contemporary Indian Society*, Sage, N. Delhi.
- Sahay, S. 1996. "Promise & Performance", *Hindustan Times*, Sept 5.
- Said, Edward, 1995. *Orientalism*, Penguin, Delhi.
- Satyamurthy, T.V. 1996. *Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India*, Oxford, Delhi.
- Scott, Alan, 1990. *Ideology and the New Social Movements*, Unwin Hyman, London.
- Sengupta, Uttam, 1996. "Who is afraid of Smaller States", *Times of India* - Sept. 24th.
- Shah, Ghanshyam, 1974. "The Upsurge in Gujarat", *E.P.W.* vol. IX, no. 32-34.
- Shah, Ghanshyam, 1990. *Social Movements in India : A Review of the Literature*. N. Delhi. Sage.
- Sheth, D.L., 1992. "Movement, Intellectuals & the state", *E.P.W.*, Jan-22.
- Shiva, Vandana, 1988. *Staying Alive : Women, Ecology and Survival in India*, Kali for Women, Delhi.
- Shiva, Vandana, 1993. *Ecofeminism*, Kali, Delhi.
- Smith, A.D. 1981. *The Ethnic Revival*, Cambridge.

Surjeet, Harkishan Singh, 1996. "The Uttarakhand Issue", Hindu, Aug 9.

Taylor, C. 1994. "The Politics of Recognition" in Multiculturalism Ed. by Goldberg, David, T. Blackwell.

Tilly, C. ed. 1996. Citizenship, Identity & Social History Cambridge.

Touraine, A. 1981. Analysis of Social Movements, Cambridge.

U.N.I., Service Backgrounder vol. xx no. 3, Jan-19, 1995.

Vanaik, Achin, 1990. The Painful Transition, Verso.

Weiner, Myron, 1970. Sons of the Soil, Oxford.