State and Development in the Garhwal Himalayas

It is hard to conceive of the state as being completely impervious to influence. Although a completely neutral state is often considered to be a strong state, historically, society (both local and global) serves to influence the state in many ways. Even marginal societies are not insulated from global markets as one would assume. The penetration of different social forces into the realm of the state are evident when one analyses the shifts in the policies of the state in the colonial period (where even elements of global politics were amply reflected) and those of the post-independent Indian state. The policies of the state have been constantly influenced by conditions and processes both within and beyond their territorial control. In addition, economic exigencies have demanded the continued exploitation of natural wealth to meet the goals of development. Indeed, these policies have on their part generated participation or in extreme conditions, even protest by the people they seek to benefit or influence. The present chapter attempts at studying these policies and their influence on the society and economy of Garhwal (and the subsequent decline of forests in the region).

Scholars have held two divergent views over the destruction of forests in the Himalayas. The first holds the colonial state responsible for the depletion of forests in the Himalayas while the other maintains that the people of the region have been highly irresponsible in looking after their wealth and have proceeded to exploit it mercilessly. This chapter seeks to understand the causes behind the destruction of forests in the Garhwal Himalayas. Divided into two sections, the first draws upon historical research conducted by scholars who have delved deep into the
question of how the forest wealth of the region was systematically destroyed. An enquiry into the history of decline of forests leading to the subsequent paralysis of the economy becomes essential in understanding the overall state of underdevelopment in the region. Starting from the time that Garhwal was ruled by kings and subsisted on agriculture and transit trade, the chapter examines the transition of the region from a relatively prosperous one to one bereft of any economic wealth. The arrival of the British East India Company led to several experiments being conducted in the region as a measure to increase profitability of the region. As a result of these experiments, forestry emerged as the only commercially beneficial activity.

To begin with, I shall briefly outline the policies of the colonial state and the events that led to the destruction of forests and the impoverishment of the self-sustaining semi-pastoral economy in the Garhwal Himalayas. I argue that the destruction of forests and subsequently, the economy of the Himalayas was directly responsible for the large-scale migration to the plains that followed. It was also responsible in a large part, to further exploitation of forests and by the people who were unfamiliar with any other form of livelihood. In addition, the introduction of begar by the British led to severe discontent among the people. They protested and a discussion of their grievances and their confrontation with the authorities is also outlined. This goes on to prove that even the most exploited and economically weak society does not lose its vitality and is quick to rise in rebellion against the state if provoked. In the second section, I examine the policies of the newly independent Indian state in the Himalayas in general and in Garhwal in particular. Following the pattern set in the first section; I argue that protest against state inertia towards addressing the needs of the people was manifested in the Chipko movement of the 70's and the growth of environmental awareness and demands for sustainability. In addition, the crystallisation of the demands of the people for a new state of Uttarakhand led to the growth of a political movement that gathered momentum largely on
a discourse provided by Chipko and the resultant economic backwardness of the region. The chapter provides the background for discussion in subsequent chapters that address the problems pertaining to the region in the spheres of economy and ecology (and the conflicts arising as a result of a negotiation between the two). Whereas the focus in the discussion to follow is limited to understanding the gradual marginalization of the economy of the region, that was largely due to a corresponding destruction of natural resources and the wresting of traditional rights of the peasants by the state; it is worth noting that this impingement resulted in the dependence of the indigenous population on the benevolence of the state and resultant encroachment into the space that was hitherto negotiated by social forces.

Destruction of forests under the British: A Historical Overview

To assert that all deforestation in the Garhwal Himalayas is an outcome of the British policy of exploitation of forest wealth to meet the demands of the growing industry and the expanding railway network in the plains would not be entirely true. Prior to 1815, the regional economy of Garhwal was sustained by three sectors: transit trade and related services, resource extraction and agriculture (Rangan, 2000: 70). Transit trade proved to be the item propelling the economy of the region to flourish, although resource extraction and agriculture remained important subsidiaries. However, the two were quite closely connected to transit trade for they flourished and declined as it grew and dwindled.1

1 For a more lucid discussion on the economy of Garhwal prior to 1815, see Of Myths and Movements: Rewriting Chipko in Himalayan History, Haripriya Rangan (London: Verso) 2000.
The period of prosperity in Garhwal was largely due to the method of cultivation and the rotation of crops that were reflective of the relation of the Garhwalis with their natural environment. Since their economy was geared to meet immediate needs for subsistence, they were able to meet them comfortably and also ensure surplus for trade with the Bhotiyas and Tibetans. With enough stock of grain at hand and a diet supplemented with sufficient quantities of cereal, fruit and fish, Henry Ramsay described the hill cultivators as 'better off than any peasantry in India' (Guha, 1994: 278). Rangan (2000: 70-72) has elucidated the sources of revenue in Garhwal:

Successive kings of Garhwal exercised the power of eminent domain over their territories. Nearly one half of the kingdom's total revenue was obtained from transit duties, customs and levies, which were fixed at the turn of the 19th Century as approximately 6% of the value of the merchandise carried by traders through mountain passes; the right to collect these duties was usually delegated to the king's courtiers or high-ranking military officers. He also derived revenue by controlling the exploitation of mineral resources such as gold, copper, iron and lead. Individuals engaged in panning gold from rivers paid a fixed amount every year to the king irrespective of the quantity collected. Lead mining was directly controlled by the king, who hired wage labourers for production and also granted them small plots of land for cultivation, free from taxation, to sustain themselves through the 4-6 months when mines were snow bound every year. Iron mines were freely open to extraction, while half of the copper ore mined was claimed by the king. Forest resources such as timber, bamboos and catechu were charged as a royalty, or proprietary duty, payable by exporters. Households owning cattle and livestock were also subjected to a grazing tax. All in all, the duties, taxes and direct income from mining and natural resource extraction comprised 15-20% of the total revenue. The king exercised nominal control over natural resources when commercial demand was low, or relatively stable; growth in commercial demand for particular commodities (such as lead and copper) led him to exercise more direct forms of control over production and trade of these natural resources. The ruler also levied taxes during the pilgrimage season (between May and October) on all non-religious service establishments and shops located along main routes; the pilgrim economy contributed an additional 10-15% of the ruler's revenues. The kings of Garhwal generally granted taxation, ownership and usufruct rights in three ways. Military deputies, courtiers and religious establishments were granted the right to
collect revenue from a group of villages. Important pilgrimage shrines such as Badrinath and Kedarnath were each endowed with a large number of villages which yielded revenues for the upkeep of shrines, pilgrim shelters (ashrams), and subsidiary establishments. Grants that conveyed property in soil were given as rewards for service in war or to compensate the heirs of those slain in battle, but on condition that thatvan (landlord) did not expel the cultivators already settled within the allocated lands. Khatriks (cultivators) were required to pay an annual tax for retaining their rights to cultivate lands and consume (or dispose of) its produce. If landlords cultivated their lands themselves, they were permitted to settle new families on their lands as tenants and also retain some households with the status of temporary or attached labour. Because of marked variations in the quality of soil and availability of irrigation, lands held by households were assessed on the basis of the quality of seed sown on plots and varied from one-half of the value of produce from fertile lands, to about a third of the produce from unirrigated and poorer lands. Soil or land taxes were paid partly in kind and partly in monies. Lighter assessments on agriculture were supplemented by a house-tax, taxes levied on households retaining low-caste families as attached labour, a tax on the number of looms maintained by households, a pasturage tax, and a tax on offerings made during annual festivals held in different parts of the ruler’s domain. In regions where cultivation was sparse, taxation rates were based on estimated profits from trade carried on by households and amounted to a sort of poll-tax. All in all, less than a third of the total revenue was obtained from agriculture and was mainly spent on the upkeep of the king’s armies.

The territory of Garhwal witnessed what has been described as a ‘brief reign of peace’ (Rangan, *ibid:* 72) during which time; the ruler received great respect from the Mughal emperor due to the large standing army and wealth commanded by him. However, by the end of the 18th century, the ambition of the Gurkhas to consolidate their position as the supreme power in the Himalayas became a potential threat leading to mass migration of Garhwalis to the plains. When the Gurkha attack did occur, the army numbered no more than 5000 men who were ‘swiftly defeated’ in armed combat (Rangan *ibid:* 73). At the time of the attack, the local population had already dwindled and the regional economy had suffered a setback. During the brief Gurkha rule between 1804 – 15, the Gurkhas imposed heavy taxes on the
people of Garhwal to recover the losses incurred during the war. Since both trade and agriculture were heavily taxed, most people were forced to desert their lands and the dwindling of trade in the region. Gurkha rule, Rangan observes was based on maximising revenue in as short a period as possible ‘even if it meant stripping the region of every asset that could be exploited’ (Rangan ibid.). Households that were unable to meet the heavy taxes levied on them were forced to sell themselves as slaves or bonded labours and it is estimated that more than 200,000 people were sold in order to meet the demands levied by the Gurkhas (Rangan ibid.). Therefore most villages remained barren and uncultivated when the British East India Company first brought the region under control in 1815.

Rangan notes two reasons for British interest in Garhwal. The East India Company which controlled the fortunes of the Empire at the time, was greatly allured by the prospect of entering the trans-Himalayan trade thereby gaining access to Central Asian trading outposts of Samarkand, Bukhara, Yarkand and Lhasa. In addition, the western Himalayas provided a strategic base for monitoring transactions between Imperial Russia, Tibet and the kingdom(s) lying in the Western reaches of the Chinese Empire (Rangan, ibid: 73-74). The British East India Company gained control over parts of Garhwal in 1815 and followed a policy of resettling agricultural farmers who had been displaced by the Gurkha invasion. They found, however, that the proceeds from taxing agricultural produce was not sufficient and that commercial farming was required to profit from the same. They therefore encouraged farmers to grow hemp as a commercial crop, which was in great demand for its fibre, resin, and soap both in the plains and in Central Asia. Further, for trade to be more self-sufficient, they obtained vast tracts of land for the cultivation of tea, which they hoped, would be in great demand in the northern India and Tibet. With the success of the company’s venture in
growing tea on a commercial scale in the Garhwal and Kumaun Himalayas, the East India Company launched a second project: that of encouraging its officers and European merchants to purchase land in the Dehra Dun valley for the cultivation of sugarcane, wheat, rice and opium. The dependence on rain for farming in the region hindered the success of this project. The Company thus indulged in a third project: the construction of the Ganges Canal which when complete, was the largest in the world. It is estimated that the construction of this canal resulted in extensive migration from the hills to the plains and, with its subsequent extension, further migration into the Gangetic heartland. Moreover, it is asserted that this project involved for the first time, large-scale felling of trees. The increase of trade in timber encouraged erstwhile traders to transfer their interests to the exploitation of forests for an ever-increasing market for firewood, charcoal and minor timber products. With the decline in tea cultivation and agricultural commodity production, timber remained the only profitable avenue for income. The economy of Garhwal received a further setback with the dwindling of trans-Himalayan trade. By the time the Company’s territories in India came under the Crown in 1858, forest based extraction had emerged as the dominant economic activity in the

2 For a more exhaustive discussion on British interests in the Garhwal region see Rangan, (Verso, 2000).

3 The fluctuating fortunes of the Company deserve an explanation: the Company was not an autonomous body, but was governed by a Charter and was accountable to its shareholders and to its Court of Directors. Further, formed under a decree of Parliament, and as a multinational trading Company, its fortunes oscillated with world politics. Its policies in India varied in consistency as a result. Rangan notes that the British East India Company (EIC) was formed in 1600 to serve the interests of the British merchants and the British state. With the expansion of the influence of the EIC in the Indian subcontinent however, its policies conflicted with those of the government and the dominant interests of the newly emerging bourgeoisie in Britain. In the two centuries that followed its creation, the EIC and the British Parliament sparred over attempts by the latter to control the former. Accordingly, the EIC had to continuously reformulate its policies to ensure that trade was profitable. This explains the constant tussle and the shifts in policies that led to the adoption of certain projects and their subsequent abandonment. The refusal of Parliament to renew the Company’s Charter in 1813 for instance, adversely affected East Indian trade and the protectionist policy had to be adopted by the EIC that ensured that profits incurred within the subcontinent would more than make up for its losses in the Far East. The EIC as Rangan puts it, ‘mutated from a merchantile, trade based institution into a powerful Anglo-Indian monarch ruling over most of the subcontinent’.
region. As a result, most economic and developmental policies of the government were directed towards the forest and forest based industries.

Forest Management in Garhwal and Kumaun

To grapple with the task of profitably managing the growing timber industry in the Himalayas, the Imperial Forest Service (IFS) was established in 1862. Three years later, in 1865, the colonial government passed the Indian Forest Act. This act classified all land into various types in order to mediate competing claims of ownership and use among landlords, merchants, contractors, agriculturists and so on. The different forest types demarcated by the Act were: Reserved, Protected, Civil, Village, Private, Benap or unmeasured lands. The Forest Department controlled the Reserved forests through the newly formed IFS, the Revenue department controlled protected forests for the purpose of maintaining watersheds and preventing soil erosion and were not available for extraction or commercial use. Civil forests were under the direct control of the Revenue department but limited extraction of forest resources was permitted. The department also enjoyed the right to alter the use within a Civil forest but could only do so after ensuring that all prior rights enjoyed by local communities remained intact. Village forests were maintained by village institutions to serve the needs of the local community and commercial extraction within these forests could occur only upon prior permission of the IFS. Private forests were owned by landlords and were subject to taxation by the Revenue department. Finally, Benap or unmeasured lands referred to wastelands and came under the jurisdiction of the colonial government. This classification of forests represented not only the different views regarding the conservation and management of forests but also the relative power reflected and wielded by various government departments and the intense rivalry between them (Rangan, ibid: 115). Since the Forest Service controlled
the most extensive and valuable forests in the country, there was a struggle among departments for its control. Subsequent to its establishment, the Forest Service was placed under the control of the Secretary of Public Works in 1862, and the Department of Revenue and Agriculture in 1871. It was subsequently placed under the control of the Home Department in 1879 and the Agriculture department in 1886. Each department sought to use the service to meet its own avowed objectives (Rangan *ibid*). Solely responsible for protecting and managing forests the Forest Service was faced with the problem of making forestry lucrative without losing the productive base as it was expressly forbidden to convert forest types for other land uses. It was the flexibility accorded to the Revenue department to alter the usage of forests that subsequently enabled commercial felling of trees on an extensive scale.4

In addition, the Revenue Department was not legally entrusted with the task of managing and protecting forests. The department was therefore chiefly concerned with the profitable use of the land granted to it; and saw forests as a hindrance to the same. It therefore commissioned the clearing of these forests and for agricultural purposes, which were then distributed as freeholds to cultivators (Rangan, *ibid*: 116).

However, while the Forest Department was constrained in the profitable use of timber in the forest assigned to it, the Revenue Department, on the other hand, could convert forest types to suit its commercial requirement. While the Forest department organised production within Reserve forests by controlling resource extraction of specific commodities such as timber, resin, honey and so on (Rangan, *ibid*: 117), the Revenue department was free to organise its forests in a manner that they would be a constant source of profit. What followed therefore, was systematic felling of all indigenous broad-leaved species and their replacement with fast

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4 For a detailed discussion, see Rangan and Nanda.
growing chir. It has been argued that the British were aware of the importance of the Himalayan mixed forests in the lives of the people but saw profit as the overriding principle and chose to ignore matters of ecology and sustainability. The Raja of Tehri Garhwal, who had at his disposal, considerable tracts of forestland was greatly impressed by the systematic manner in which the British had organised their timber industry and proceeded to follow their method. He began by classifying forests on a similar pattern and followed by giving contracts and leases to individuals and timber merchants to exploit the same.

Neeru Nanda opines that the British chose to ignore the dependence of the villagers on broad-leaved mountain forests since they wanted to establish a profitable trade in timber. Broad-leaved forests maintained the water system of the Himalayas, which in turn supported agriculture ensuring good harvests, to which leave compost and cattle manure contributed significantly. These forests could also support large herds of cattle. Further, good yields of paddy, fodder and straw ensured that the economy of the Himalayas was sustained in a neat cyclical fashion. Although monoculture of chir has been criticised by many, Nanda, and Mira Behn before her point out the unsuitability of the pine species in the Himalayan ecology in great detail. Not only does it lead to massive soil erosion but it also results in desertification of the environment due to the inability of its needles to trap any rainwater. Further, it is susceptible to getting uprooted in the event of a thunderstorm since the roots of the pine form an acid sheath that weaken the root system. Broad-leaved mixed forests however, are better equipped to withstand stress since the litter from these forests encourages the growth of a fungus that feeds and supplements tiny roots of pine trees. Sundarlal Bahuguna goes on to add that people are often mistaken in believing that the main asset of the hills is timber. The main product of the hills is water... with monoculture, the purity of water is spoiled and it becomes acidic. The broad-leaved species of trees have roots that purify water. Ramachandra Guha is unequivocal in highlighting the merits of broad-leaved forests in the Himalayas: green and dry leaves served the cattle as litter; these were mixed with the excreta of the animals and fermented to give manure to the fields. Thus the forest augmented the nutritive value of the fields. Broad-leaved trees also provided the villagers with fuel and agricultural implements. He also points out that in the lower reaches, chir had its uses: the extensive chir forests served for pasture. Every year the dry grass and pine needle litter was burnt to make room for a fresh batch of luxuriant grass. Simultaneously, the needle-litter, whose soapy surface endangered the otherwise sure-footed cattle, was destroyed. Very resistant to fire, chir was used for building houses and as torchwood. In certain parts where fodder was scarce, trees were grown and preserved for fodder.

6 In 1897, the state secured the services of Pandit Keshava Nand from the British government and systematic forestry started (Rawat, 1993: 38). In 1908, Pandit Ram Dutt prepared a scheme by which forests were divided into three categories: First Class Reserve Forests, Second Class Protected Forests and Third Class Village Forests that comprised all waste land not under the Forest Department. In the First Class Reserve Forests, the use of all existing paths and canals was permitted while grazing, fuel, litter and free grant trees were allowed in special cases only. In the Second Class Protected Forests, almost all the forest requirements against insurance of injury to the crop e.g. grazing and grass cuttings were allowed in areas not under regeneration. Felling of green kukats, oaks and rueenas was permitted for huts and agricultural implements. Permits were required for deodar, thuner, firs, kail, chir, tun,
businessman, leased these forests in 1844 for a period of twenty years. The lease granted him the right to extract musk, rawhide, timber and similar forest products (Rangan, _ibid_: 121). Wilson is often held responsible for decimating the forests of Garhwal since he adopted the Swiss and German method of transporting timber by floating large logs of deodar through the tributaries of the Ganges. Upon the expiry of Wilson’s lease in 1864, the government of North West Provinces was given the same for a sum of Rs 10000 per annum. In 1885, forests were reverted to state control. In the same year, the state of Tehri Garhwal established its own Forest Department.

The Forest Act of 1865 was found wanting and a comprehensive all-India forest act was passed in 1878 by which the category of ‘reserved’ or closed forests continued, but the rights of user were no longer applicable. Further, the burden of proof of rights of user fell on the people and it was entirely up to the state to grant ‘non-established rights’ or ‘terminable concessions’ (Guha, 1994: 284). Forest management in British Garhwal continued with the demarcation of little plots of forestland that would provide permanent supplies of fuel and timber to British settlement towns in the hills. Following this, a survey was duly conducted to ‘report on the composition of hill forests’ particularly those within ‘reasonable distance’ of land and water and select sites for roads and saw mills (Guha, _ibid_). In 1893, all unmeasured

*shisham, sal, papri, asain, bakbli, haldu, khair, akbrot, darli* and oaks. Dry and fallen wood for fuel or building and litter could be removed if the forests were not directly harmed. Areas not close to the fire could be burnt annually in or before March with necessary precautions. Edible roots, fruits, medicinal roots, herbs and ringals could also be removed ad even sold, provided no contract for them had been given. For temporary and permanent cultivation, however, permission was necessary. Shooting was restricted.

The Third Class Village Forests were meant entirely for village use, but where they were dense enough and after meeting the requirements of there was a surplus of forest products, it could then be disposed off by the Durbar in any manner thought fit. In treeless areas cultivation could be extended; for other tracts permission was required. Trees could be felled without permit, except those along roads, in *Parooas* encampments or on stream banks up to 30m and also *chir, tun, shisham* and *deodar* which were
land in Kumaun (including British Garhwal, Almora and Naini Tal) was declared 'district protected forests' (DPF). The official interest on part of the British to restrict access to Himalayan forests were prompted by purely commercial concerns: it was discovered that the tapping of chir pine for oleo resin that had been undertaken on an experimental basis in the 1890's had by the early 20th century, evolved due to the methods of distillation. The resin thus produced could compete with French and American products in the market. Also, the growing railway network required sleepers that were long lasting and economical. Experiments conducted after chemical treatment on chir and blue pines revealed that the timber was both cost effective and sustainable.

A study of the history of Forest Management in Garhwal and Kumaun conducted by Ramachandra Guha reveals that the natural conservancy was not unusual to the villagers in Garhwal. The importance of forests in their life necessitated the demarcation of certain forests as sacred so as to regulate their exploitation. These forests were usually situated around temples and had myths and legends associated with them were often dedicated to local deities. There is evidence that growth of trees in these forests was not spontaneous, but were planted and preserved (Guha, 1994: 282). Exploitation of resources in these areas was based on common consent of the villagers. Lopping of branches, it is reported, was conducted only at specific times with the permission of the entire village community. The boundaries specified among villages were strictly adhered to and villagers enjoyed proprietary and other rights of user within them. In some cases, groups of villages enjoyed collective rights of user of grazing and fuel based on age-old practise of custom and usage.

required to be marked by state officials. Burning was permitted provided it did not endanger the neighbouring forests. These forests could also be annexed to demarcated forests if misused.
In 1893, all waste land not forming part of the measured area of villages or of forests earlier reserved were declared to be protected although the required enquiry was not made. Thus, according to Guha, Kumaun DPF now included ‘tree-covered lands, snow-clad peaks, ridges and cliffs, river-beds, lakes, buildings, temple-lands, camping and pasture grounds, and roads and shops’. This was followed in 1894 by the demarcation of certain species of timber as reserved. This included deodar, chir and sal. Rules were also established for ‘regulating the lopping of trees for fuel and fodder and claims for timber’. Commercial exploitation of forests was also prohibited. In April 1903, the Kumaun DPF was divided into two classes: closed civil forests which the state considered necessary for reproduction and protection and open civil forests where the villagers exercised their limited rights as prescribed in 1894.

In 1911, extensive reserves were carved out of the DPF. Forest settlements set up in the three districts between 1911 and 1917 resulted in the constitution of almost 3000 sq. miles of reserved forest in the Kumaun division (Guha, ibid: 285). This further led to the framing of elaborate rules as regard to the exercise of rights, specifying the number of cattle that could be grazed and the amount of timber that could be allotted to each right-holder. Villagers had to apply way in advance for permission to use timber to construct houses. It fell on the Divisional Forest Officer to allot the same from a notified list of species. The practise of burning forest floor annually was further banned within one mile of reserved forests; but since the hills were heavily forested, it was tantamount to the practice being abolished altogether. In addition, it has been argued that the classification of land into the fallow or barren category was a grave error on the part of the Forest Department. This ignored the time-honoured tradition of rotation and rest practised by the people that allowed lands to lie fallow over a period of time for the purpose of soil regeneration. The state was vested with the authority to
manage these lands thereby excluding the Garhwalis from using it once the land under
cultivation required rest.

These policies proved to benefit the resin and turpentine industries that produced far more
than the required demand, leading the government to seriously consider exporting the same.
The outbreak of the war also, resulted in forestry becoming a very lucrative industry since
untreated sleepers were in great demand in the rush to improve communication
infrastructures.

By controlling access of villagers to civil forests, the British not only hindered the
development of traditional occupations and crafts such as honey extraction, rope making and
other, but by barring the entry of cattle and restricting grazing, they also effectively
demolished the pastoral economy of the people. Scholars have noted how the migrant nature
of the pastoral economy received a setback when the British started to lease pastures in the
foothills that had traditionally belonged to the hill folk to professional herdsmen from the
plains. These pastures were used seasonally and the monsoons brought a fresh growth of
grass. However, with the entry of professional grazers, these pastures became barren due to
overgrazing.

7 Nanda notes that the Forest officers congratulated themselves at succeeding in having uprooted
traditional cattle stations from their natural habitat. She goes on to add that rather than the cattle, the
forest policies were a menace to the forests and sequentially to the cattle. She points out that animal
husbandry has been a major source of livelihood for highlanders all over the world and that it is
sustainable since the forest wealth in these areas is not demarcated for commercial purposes (Nanda,
2000: 51).

8 For a detailed discussion on the debate regarding grazing rights and the decline of the pastoral
economy of Garhwal, see Neeru Nanda (2000: 49-60).
The rights of user in Himalayan forests became a matter of great concern and contention so much so that at the opening of the Haldwani hospital on 17th April 1922, Sir John Hewitt, GCSI, thought it essential to outline the proprietary rights of the inhabitants (relating to the Kumaun forests). Given below is an extract from his speech:

"The proprietary right in all these forests, whether notified under the Indian Forest Act or not, lies in the State. In the interest of the community, generally, the Government has to intervene in order to preserve the timber and grass from destruction which must ensue were individuals free to cut wood and burn grass in the reckless and thoughtless manner that has so far been practised in the past. The State has to intervene to protect the forests not only in the interest of the inhabitants of Kumaun itself, but also and to a still greater degree in those of the residents of the plains."

He then went on to describe the divisions of forests into Grade A, B and C types:

"Grade A forests were intended principally for the production and protection of timber, to supply the timber needs of the people and for sale to the outside public. These are managed by the Forest Department. Class B forests are also managed by the Forest Department, but under less rigid control than Class A areas. These forests are reserves for fuel and fodder. The breaking up for cultivation of new land within them will be strictly regulated. No restriction on the right of the villagers reported at the settlement or recognised by existing custom in the matter of cutting grass, grazing cattle and the removal of minor produce or interference except in the case of specified areas notified, with the lopping of trees or fodder for manure, provided that the trees are of certain qualities and sizes that will be specified. Class C forests comprised residue of forest wasteland, abandoned to the care of people free from official control, but without the grant of proprietary rights."

The entry of the Forest Service into Garhwal resulted in the expansion of the scale of production and market-deepening in the forestry sector. As each commercially viable activity was now regulated by the imposition of taxes, levies, duties and so on, access to resource extraction in the forests became contingent upon access to capital (Rangan, op. cit.: 133). This

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9 From the Oriental and India Office Library, British Library, London.
resulted in the diversification of livelihood strategies of poorer households that eked out a living from the forestry sector. Rangan notes:

... As taxes, levies and auctions became mediating instruments for regulating the extraction of commercially valuable natural resources from Reserved Forests (such as medicinal plants and edible plants, fodder and resins), their access was limited to small-scale or petty commodity extraction of firewood from Civil forests and wastelands which they sold in regional towns, hill stations, and military cantonments. In cases where household earnings were used to obtain leases for extracting particular forest resources, male members were more likely to function as intermediaries for selling produce collected by women and children in regional market towns and cities; earning from such sales were generally controlled by male heads of households and reinvested in land or livestock holdings.

The livelihood strategies of households diversified in a number of ways, often in varying combinations of activities carried out by members: some worked seasonally as wage labourers for timber contractors and the Forest Department; some gained access to small plots of land within Reserved Forests through increased labour contributions to the Forest Department for cultivating potatoes (the only commodity crop permitted for cultivation within Reserved Forests by the agency); others invested in larger livestock holdings and gained access to increased grazing rights in Reserved forests in exchange for additional labour contributions. Colonial forest officers observed that ownership of livestock multiplied rapidly on "account of the security afforded under a settled Government, and in consequence of higher prices that would be realised for cattle," little realising that the regulatory activities of the Forest Service in the region had been far more significant in contributing to this shift.

Extremely poor households, women, children and the aged in particular, were however unable to adapt so readily within the region and were thus pressed further into poverty, 'reduced to depending on subsistence cultivation and compelled to extract only "free" resources - fuelwood and fodder - prescribed by forest laws'. Increasing impoverishment further compelled these households to migrate\(^{10}\) to the sub-Himalayan tracts (a move encouraged by

\(^{10}\) A feature noticed to this day, altering the demographic profile of the region considerably. The livelihood strategies of the people also bear striking similarities to those practised by marginal land holders, demonstrating that little has altered since independence.
the Revenue Department that was keen on clearing the terai-bhabhar lands for cultivation). Male members of these households also sought jobs as wage labourers in plantations, construction, and other service trades in towns and cities outside the region. With the establishment of the Garhwal Rifles in 1879, the military also provided an alluring occupation 'sought after by many young men'. Women, the elderly and children who stayed behind 'cultivated food crops in small tracts by themselves or with the help of sharecroppers, tending a few sheep and goats (either raised for sale, or maintained as insurance against inflation and for emergency cash requirements), but increasingly depending on cash remittances for their subsistence. By 1920, most Garhwali households depended on incomes earned from activities other than cultivation or sale of agricultural produce' (Rangan, ibid: 134).

A change in the sociological/ethnic profile was also brought about with a new class of immigrants from towns and villages in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). These people moved in to work in projects involving for the Forest and the PWD or as small-scale contractors. The region also attracted 'impoverished families from Nepal' who worked as sharecroppers cultivating subsistence crops for families whose male members had either migrated or were involved in non-agricultural or extractive activities, some worked in labour gangs organised by 'mates' who supervised the felling and floatation of timber down to wholesale merchants in the plains (Rangan, ibid). Interestingly, this ethnic profile exists even today and migrants from Nepal (since they cannot own property) are involved in hiring their labour to families without male members for small-scale cultivation and construction. The above-mentioned scenario contributed to the relegation of Garhwal to a backward or marginal economy. As scholars and commentators have remarked, the reorientation of trade and market-deepening in the forestry sector had combined to reshape the livelihood strategies of
the households which in turn, led to new forms of social and spatial differences within the region (Rangan, *ibid.* 135). Sustaining livelihoods therefore became an increasingly tenuous and elusive goal.

Needless to add, the marginalization of the peasantry and the delimitation of their rights to resources did not go totally uncontested. Perhaps the seeds of discontent were sown not when the rights to the forests were delimited and redefined by the British, but when the system of *begar* gained currency in Garhwal and Kumaun. *Begar* had several synonyms in the Indian Himalayas. Known variously as *cooline utar, bardaish, begar* and *godam*¹¹, the practise was a precedent set by 'petty hill chiefs' of Garhwal and Kumaun and involved supplying various services to the white officers as were applicable in the settlement of the landowners. The services rendered ranged from carrying heavy items loads and even assisting in the construction of *chappars* or rest houses to providing supplies of food, cooking utensils milk and so on. Often, the practise of providing labour was also extended for the construction of public works such as roads and bridges. Old men and widows were usually exempt from providing labour, but such remissions were difficult to obtain. It fell upon the village landowner to organise the same and although in theory, the whole village was reimbursed for the services rendered; in practice, they were usually gratis. Needless to say, the practice was greatly resented by all and very often, the village headman or *pradhan*, who was exempt, found he had no volunteers or was forced to conceal people from the authorities. The introduction of forest management further intensified the discontent among the hill dwellers who wished

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¹¹ *Coolie begar* referred to various kinds of compulsory labour and requisitioning of supplies for which no payment was made, while *cooline utar* implied compulsory labour for which there had to be some token payment (though there was seldom any payment). *Coolie bardaish* or *rasad* implied the requisitioning of supplies for civil and military officials, government departments and private European visitors and tourists (Farooqui, 1997: 77).
for the 'golden age' when forests were free and state interference minimal. Although a discussion on *begar* does not exclusively fall within the purview of this chapter, it provides an interesting dimension of how the hill dwellers saw their alienation from the forests in conjunction with losing their personal freedom.

Fearing that continued *begar* would result in discontentment and complete discontinuation of the system; the Commissioner of Kumaun, Percy Wyndham, thought it better to use pack ponies instead. In 1916, the Lt. Governor rejected the possibility of scrapping the practise on grounds of the hardship that it would cause the government (Guha, 1994: 290). Moves were initiated to ameliorate the deficiencies in the practise: coolie agencies were started in parts of Garhwal. This involved paying money into a common fund that would then provide for transport and supplies. It was not binding on the villagers to perform these tasks themselves. In other parts, registers were maintained to insure that the 'burden did not fall disproportionately on any individual or village'. Also, in many parts, limits were imposed on the weight that a person could bear and military persons were exempted on condition they provided a substitute. All these measures were initiated to ensure the perpetuation of the system rather than providing any real relief.

Having demonstrated how different facets of life in the Garhwal Himalayas were intermeshed with one another and how they were systematically destroyed, partly due to ignorance and partly due to the commercial requirements of the colonial state, it becomes necessary to discuss the reactions by the people towards this state of affairs.
Discontent and Protest

British interference in Garhwal was merely an extension of their commercial interests in the subcontinent. The manner in which commercial forestry emerged as the only profitable enterprise available to them led to the introduction of forest management. This implied that land would have to be acquired and delimited so that local hill dwellers would not ‘encroach’ on these lands thereby disturbing the regeneration of trees. The demarcation of land and its simultaneous limitation as far as use was concerned altered the notions of property that existed in the region. For, in less than three decades, the British had replaced the local notion of ‘communally-owned and managed woods and pasture land’ (Guha, ibid: 291) with their concept of ownership and private property. Also, by disregarding the role of local knowledge and their methods of forest conservation, they further succeeded in not only alienating the people from their own land, but also destroyed the Himalayan forests. Perhaps the biggest blow to the local economy was felt by the agriculturists and pastoralists who now found their lands circumscribed and inaccessible and were unfamiliar with any other mode of living.

Restrictions on the kind of wood that could be lopped for what purpose also brought state control within the private realm whereas the benefits from such control were not evident. Nanda notes that the greatest tragedy to occur in the hills was the use of commons. By allocating lands that were barren and ‘where hardly any forests remained’ as common land to be operated as village forests for the ‘benefit of the local people’ the problem was only compounded. Parcelling out barren land that was deficient in forest quality not only reduced the standard of living in the villages, but also resulted in lowering the productivity of agricultural land. Further, with increase in population and livestock, commons were gradually encroached for cultivation.
Guha notes the initial stirrings against the contravention of traditional rights even before the advent of forest management. The hill folk in Kumaun on one occasion refused to permit the cutting of wood for the purpose of producing charcoal that would be used for the smelting of iron ore without payment of *malikhana*. Following the constitution of the DPF, the DC of Kumaun observed that ‘forest administration consists for the most part in running a fight with the villagers’ (Guha, *ibid*). He also makes a study of the various ways in which discontent was demonstrated. Desertion was considered by a group of villagers who were unable to cope with the restrictions imposed on the use of forest resources that they preferred to migrate to another district. Similarly, non-compliance with the rules was another mode of registering protest. On one occasion, villagers gave incorrect information at the time of fixing rights (Guha, *ibid*: 292). Also, villagers protested against fire protection and their closure to grazing and other rights.

Since saplings required complete protection against fire and animals in protected forests, malicious fires in these forests was an effective way of registering discontent. Guha notes that in the year 1916, several such fires broke out, leading to large-scale destruction resulting in premature felling of *chir* pines. Also, this mode of protest was effective not only in bringing to light the unpopularity of forest management in the area as also the futility of the state machinery in apprehending the offenders. This form of protest was emulated in other districts.

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12 Attempts at Forest Management were resisted by people in the Tehri Garhwal state as well. In 1928-29, the Tehri Durbar solicited the services of Dr. F. Heske of Trandt, Germany as Forest Advisor. In his report, Dr. Heske (1931) held that against each attempt at regulation by the Forest Department, there is a tradition of hundred years of unrestricted use of the forest and a stiff resistance by the inhabitants to this region. The aim underlying Forest Management according to him was (a) to obtain a sustained yield from the part of the State forests which was of commercial value; (b) to prevent erosion and landslips; (c) to protect the water heads and thus safeguard the water supply through the streams and rivers that rise in the hills; and (d) to preserve the sources of supply of timber, fuel and fodder for the state subjects (c.f. Rawat, 1993: 40)
that were dissatisfied with forest management. It is worth noting that most of these fires took place in forests that had been demarcated for resin extraction and commercial felling.

Malicious fires bear a striking similarity to the traditional form of non-violent protest practised in Kumaun and Garhwal. Popularly known as *dhandhak*, this form of protest involved non-compliance with the rules imposed and the officials who imposed the same. When matters became more severe, villagers resorted to crossing the frontiers and escaping to areas that fell within the jurisdiction of the British. Often, they even caught hold of the official and after having shaved his hair, they would mount him on a donkey and parade him in the village!

Guha notes that the village level protests against the *begar* were matched at the organisational level by the Kumaun Parishad that consisted of members of the local press, lawyers and intellectuals (and was once chaired by Rai Bahadurs) and owed its allegiance to the British. However, with the establishment of Forest Management in the region, this Parishad underwent radical transformation. Since many leaders of the Parishad were members of the landed gentry and therefore not adequately aware of the plight of the peasants, Badridutt Pande, thought it necessary to use the Parishad publication *Shakti*, a weekly to voice the same. In 1920 *Shakti* reported a strike in a village in Kumaun where the people refused to pay the fine levied on them. In December 1920, at the annual session of the Parishad, there arose a conflict among villagers who hoped for a negotiation with the British (on the issue of fines) and those who pressed for direct action. Eventually, the reformists walked out and Badridutt Pande led the rest to the Uttaraini fair in January that attracted between 15-20000 pilgrims from the hills at Bageshwar, a temple town on the confluence of the Saryu and the Gomti rivers. Guha notes the transition from a regional movement that sought to end oppression by ending *utar* to one that would culminate in an agitation for the forests. At Bageshwar:
matters came to a head. In early January the Conservator of Forests was refused coolies at Dwarahat and Ganai, and anticipating a strike the District Administrator of Almora, WC Dible, urgently asked the government for a declaration of its future policy (a request summarily dismissed). At Bageshwar, a crowd of over ten thousand heard Badridutt pass on a message from Mahatma Gandhi that “he would come and save them from oppression as he did in Champaran”. When almost everyone responded to a call to raise their hands to show that they would refuse utar, Pande continued: “After abolishing coolie utar,” they would agitate for the forests. He would ask them not to extract resin, or saw sleepers, or forests. They should give up service as forest guard which involves insulting their sisters and snatching their sickles. Slogans in praise of Mahatma Gandhi and ‘Swatantra Bharat’ and cries that the government was anniyayi (unjust) rent the air. In a dramatic gesture, village headmen flung their coolie registers into the Saryu.’

In the aftermath of the fair at Uttaraini, Guha notes that only khushkharid (payment) coolies were available at exorbitant rates. The protest was so overwhelming that between January and April 1921, there were 146 anti-begar meetings in Garwhal and Kumaun. In a matter of weeks, ‘the state’s determination not to dispense with the system itself had broken down’ leading to its abolition... ‘in the following year, over 1.6 lakh rupees were spent by the exchequer on the transport and stores of touring officials in the hills...’

Inspired by the success of Uttaraini, Pande urged for direct action by the people to recover their rights over the forests. Dible was able to predict the next move of the peasantry after the utar strike. He said that they would now concentrate on agitating against the Forest Department. He proclaimed: ‘Agitators will make a dead set for resin coolies and contractor’s

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13 Pande, Guha reports alluded to Gandhi’s caste in inciting public reaction against the British. Criticising the government for selling forest produce, he said that it was God’s manner of punishing the Government that Gandhi had been sent in the form of a bania to conquer a bania government. The term bania was used to evoke images of power as well as deception: by indulging in commercial exploitation of forest produce, the government was gradually losing its legitimacy. Also, although the movement thus initiated cut across social and caste hierarchy, the use of Gandhi’s caste as an idiom was well in keeping with the popular social movements of the time.
coolies engaged in sleeper work, and try to drive them from this work. The people will be incited to commit forest offences and we shall have serious trouble with fires.' His prediction was fairly accurate since in the next few months, not only did breaches of forest laws increase (that included burning of forest grass and firing of trees), but also 'whole sale cutting of trees' (Guha, *ibid*: 298).

Guha also notes the increase of 'incendiari sm' a term coined by the state to identify a particular kind of social protest. This represented an assertion of traditionally exercised rights—the annual firing of the forest floor—circumscribed by the state in the interests of commercial forestry. It also signified a protest against *chirpine* areas that were being worked for both timber and resin. Wyndham remarked that this wholesale burning of trees marked a direct challenge to the Government to relax their control over the forests.

The forest movement of 1921 was marked by the participation of all social groups, but the involvement of soldiers 14 (as the participation of the village headman in the *utar* campaign), in Guha's view demonstrated the failure of the colonial government to assimilate them as 'part of the indigenous collaborating elite' (Guha, *ibid*: 300).

What was considered to be noteworthy about these forest movements was that as opposed to sporadic and spontaneous movements 15, these were cohesive and had distinct spirit

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14 For a detailed discussion on peasant discontent and protests in the Garhwal Himalayas and the consequent damage done on forest property as also details on the number of cases lodged in the office of the collector as breaches of forest law, see Guha (1998: 295-302).

15 Scholars claim that these movements were independent of the non-co-operation movement of 1919-1920. Yet, as to the spontaneity that characterised them there have been varying opinions: Pathak (1987) and Farooqui assert that the arrest of very few leaders of the movement proves the same. The forest agitation and the anti *begar* struggle gave an impetus to the anti-colonial struggle rather than the other way round. Even though the Congress in its session in 1893 had passed a resolution demanding the abolition of *begar* and *rasad* and had subsequently listed these as one of the unfulfilled objectives in 1918, there had been no suggestion (from within the party) to organise a struggle against the practice (Farooqui, 1997: 85).
characterising them. In addition, they represented ‘conflicting theories of social relationships that virtually amounted to two world-views’ as can be seen on the one hand, in the undermining of local tradition and custom of free use that was regulated by the community as a whole, by the establishment of state monopoly that justified exploitation of pine forests on grounds of strategic imperial purposes and commercial profit on the other. Guha notes that the legitimacy of the state floundered as the paternalistic state encroached increasingly into the daily lives of the peasants, necessitating collective action that the impoverished section was not thought capable of organising.

As a result of this agitation, a committee was appointed to investigate the grievances of the people vis-à-vis forest rights in the forests of the Kumaun Forest Circle (1939)\(^\text{16}\). These were:

1. Demarcation – forest boundary pillars often come too close to cultivation buildings.
2. Lopping restriction
3. Restrictions on grazing
4. Exclusion of sheep and goats from the reserves
5. Employment of forest guards to enforce numerous rules and regulations and their constant interference with women and children, who under the customs in vogue in Kumaun are the chief people to exercise on behalf of the villagers such rights as lopping, collection of minor produce, grazing
6. Large number of forest cases which have either to be compounded, or fought out in a criminal court
7. Unsatisfactory methods of dealing with indents for timber
8. Rules regarding forest protection
9. Strict restriction on the exercise of minor rights to those which are formally recorded in the rights list
10. Measured land taken up for reserves and inadequate compensation given
11. Prohibition of all extensions of cultivation within the reserves

Other grievances:
1. Ignorance as to financial position

\(^{16}\) Oriental and India Office Library, British Library, London.
2. Cultivation in kharaks – summer grazing stations to which low-level villagers drive their cattle in the hot weather and rains.

The establishment of a committee to look into the grievances of the people led to the creation of Van Panchayats in British Garhwal in the remote and inaccessible forest tracts stocked with broad-leaved species of no commercial value. Nanda notes that today these forests mark out as 'oases in the desert' and that as compared to the Reserves where forests have deteriorated, these have in fact been protected and preserved by the people. Nanda adds further, that since the entire land use system had been taken over and moulded according to the needs of the state distorting the indigenous mode of forest management, even the designated village commons (or the civil-soyam lands; the term soyam means semi-arid, cultivable-waste) were put under considerable pressure. This was largely due to the fact that these lands were scarce since they marked buffer zones between reserves and also consisted of unmeasured lands, fallows or wastelands. According to convention, a cultivator could extend his cultivation into common land adjoining his field and later apply for nityamatikaran or regularisation. Those whose fields did not adjoin the common land were permitted under the traditional system to move into remoter areas by crossing a gully or a ridge to open a new plot of land for cultivation (Nanda, op.cit: 96). This method did not lead to stress on the village common when the population was low. The British policy of encouraging agricultural expansion in this manner was followed by the Indian government and common lands were thereby appropriated in this fashion. Nanda notes that 'conflict now became a dominant feature of village life, quite overshadowing ancient traditions of conflict management and co-operation' (Nanda, ibid).
Development and Destruction by the Indian State

The newly independent Indian state vowed to grant to all its citizens equality, freedom and justice. With a view to ensuring equitable justice to the people, in particular to the deprived sections of society, land reforms were instituted in the country. These were aimed at reducing inequality, landlessness and at bringing about social change. The redistribution of agrarian land among peasants however was not uniformly undertaken since agriculture was a state subject. This meant that various state governments had a different approach towards land reform. In Uttar Pradesh, of which Garhwal was a part, the zamindars or the land owning lobby proved to be extremely strong, thereby reducing the impact of land reforms in the state. The state government reclassified forests controlled by the Revenue department as Civil-Soyam so that after these areas were cleared, they could be made available to peasants for cultivation. The UP Private Forests Act 1948 went a step further and compensated the owners of Private forests and transferred them to the Forest department for management as Vested forests. Haripriyaa Rangan sees these moves as being largely populist in nature in that they were effective in 'containing opposition and averting public criticism' (Rangan, 2000: 128). She adds however, that these moves were quite ineffective in bringing out any appreciable change in the state of the peasantry. In Garhwal and Kumaun, for instance, the extent of Private forests was quite limited and when they were made available to the peasants, they had been stripped of most of their wealth. Similarly, Civil forests and wastelands that had been the object of contention between the IFS, the local elite and the Revenue department, remained under the control of the Department and were considered more amenable to resource extraction and conversion to agriculture and other uses (Rangan ibid.). Thus after a century of forest
management, the Forest Service exercised control over 75% of state owned forests in the region, village forests approximated to 5% whereas the Revenue department controlled remaining areas that were unclassified or reclassified as civil-soyam. The National Policy on Forests proclaimed in 1952 took note of the critical role of forests in the environmentally sensitive catchment areas of the Himalayan reserves. It had long been realised that a dense forest cover, especially of broad leafed species, protects the earth from the full force of the monsoon rains, provides rich humus which greatly increases the water flow and holds the steep slopes in place. The forest policy took cognisance of these truisms. The document stressed that forests in these regions should be managed as 'protection forests'. ‘Protection forests' referred to forests in erodible localities, especially hill slopes. 'In such sites,' the policy states, 'the need for forest cover is dictated by purely protective physical considerations such as prevention of erosion, conservation of moisture and control of rushing torrents and floods' (Weber, 1987: 58).

The independent Indian state has often been likened to a monolith: as being no different from its colonial counterpart. Although it was clearly committed to the ideal of development, its
focus was a little slanted in favour of heavy industry and technological progress. The Himalayas, being inaccessible for the transport of machinery or the establishment of heavy industry were considered unsuitable for the large-scale development envisaged by Nehru. Reviewing the need for special provisions for backward areas as envisaged in the Five Year Plans, the National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas (NCDBA) in its report dated November 1981 held that the First Five Year Plan ‘did not talk explicitly about the problem of regional inequalities or of backward area development except in the context of regional location’ (para 3.8 of the Report on the Industrial Dispersal NCDBA). Thus the Plan states as follows:

Except in the smaller States, it is often desirable to prepare developmental programmes in terms of regions determined by physical, economic and administrative considerations. The need and priorities of different regions as well as their potential for short term and long term development should be taken into account in drawing up and continually review their development programmes.

The Second Five Year Plan dealt more explicitly with the needs of what it described as the 'less developed areas' the Plan stated that resource constraints would limit the extent to which this can be done but 'as development proceeds and large resources become available for investment, the stress on developmental programmes should be on extending the benefits of investments to the underdeveloped regions.' (Chapter II, para 28, Second Five Year Plan). The problem of balanced regional growth received much greater attention in the Third Plan, when for the first time a separate chapter was devoted to the subject. The Plan took a more positive view of the possibility of reaching regional balance and stated:

A large country with extensive natural resources viewing each phase of development in the perspective of a long term plan has the means not only to realise a high and sustained rate of growth, but also to enable its less developed regions to come up to the level of the rest (Chapter IX, para 1, Third Five Year Plan).
Although the Third Plan gave some consideration for Uttarakhand by providing a separate allocation of Rs 500 million, it was not until the Fourth Five Year Plan that developmental plans with special reference to the Himalayas were initiated. The Planning Commission undertook an elaborate statistical exercise which was published in the form of a report on “Regional Variations in the Social Development and Levels of Living – A Study of the Impact of Plan Programmes”. This Report analysed and described at some length inter-State and inter-regional variation in consumption, unemployment, land holding, rural investment and debt, agricultural development, educational and health facilities, roads etc. The Report also examined the impact of certain key rural development programmes like the adoption of improved agricultural practices, minor irrigation facilities, soil conservation, school facilities, drinking water supply and other village facilities. The survey was significant in that it illustrates a growing concern for the problem of regional disparities and is the first official document that supplies quantitative terms for the same. The Plan allocated an outlay of Rs 43.55 crores for special and backward areas. Special or Backward Areas are designed to have specific plans to deal with ‘special problems arising out of their distinct geo-physical structure and concomitant socio-economic development’\(^{18}\). Although planning and development of an area within a state is the responsibility of the concerned state government, the Central Government resolved to make certain allocations for the specific development of the areas concerned. Thus, Special Central Assistance was envisaged for backward and hill areas under programmes such as Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP), North Eastern Council (NEC), Border Area

\(^{18}\) The NCDBA has outlined the following characteristics for areas to qualify as backward: (a) they must have potential for development; (b) there must be some inhibiting factor which prevents this potential from being realised; and (c) there must be a need for special programmes to remove or mitigate the inhibiting factor and realise the full potential for development (Chapter 3, NCDBA, 1981).
Development Programme (BADP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP). Since special funds were allocated for the development of these areas, state plans were encouraged to take into consideration the basic needs of the people and environmental considerations while drawing up schemes. In the Fifth Plan, a major initiative was launched for the development of hill areas. Subsequently, the Sixth Plan prescribed as to what regions would constitute hill areas. It outlined two distinct categories of the same: those that are coextensive with boundaries of the State or the Union Territories and those that totally form part of a State. To this end, hill areas were treated as Special Category States and special funds were allocated to States that they constituted, as it was understood that investments in every sphere would be very heavy. The NCDBA outlined the major problems of hill areas vis-à-vis implementation of developmental programmes (with regard to the exclusively hill states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura and hill areas in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam) as follows:

(i) the terrain is usually rocky and undulating and land available for agricultural operation is limited
(ii) hills have problems arising from landslide and soil erosion
(iii) there is lack of adequate irrigation sources and what there is has a high cost of exploitation and maintenance
(iv) communications and transportation facilities in hills areas are often inadequate
(v) agro processing and storage facilities remain inadequate
(vi) there is a lack of suitable and adequate marketing facilities in hill areas particularly those located away from the hill stations and important towns
(vii) terms of trade are unfair. Producers get low prices for their produce and at the same time the people in hill areas have to pay exorbitant prices for what they require.

(viii) there is a general reluctance on part of officials and staff to take up assignments in these areas. Because of out migration of the educated and skilled adults local people remaining are not educated and advanced enough yet (sic.) to fill the gap.

(ix) records of rights in land are inadequate (chapter 5, para 30, NCDBA November 1981)

The NCDBA therefore commented that there was an urgent need to raise the productive capacity of the economy by encouraging income generating activities such as horticulture, animal husbandry, social forestry, tourism and so on. It added that this might result in a change in cultivation of a subsistence food crop to possible cash crops which may give more return. In order to arrest out migration, 'generation of gainful employment locally has to receive a high priority for improving the quality of life of the people... to reduce the drudgery of women folk... and also for providing them with subsidiary occupations to raise their standard of living, problems of supply of fuel, food and drinking water should be tackled on priority basis.'

There is evidence that the recommendations of the NCDBA were incorporated while framing the Seventh Five Year Plan that broadened the concept of hill regions. These were now extended to include the Western Ghats that were spread over 163 taluks in five states. Hill areas thus accounted for 21% of the country, containing 9% of the population. A need to
conserve the natural resources and environment, to prevent damage to the fragile and irreplaceable ecosystem was voiced in national policies and programmes. The Hill Areas Development Programme (HADP), operating since the Fifth Plan has been a major step in this regard. The guiding principle of the HADP is the promotion of a secure, basic life support system and judicious utilisation of land, mineral, water and biotic resources in a total perspective embracing the complimentarity of interests in both hills and plains. The strategy involves the active participation of the people especially women. It also entails the concept of 'voluntary fencing' implying an unrestrained and self-imposed discipline in managing resources at the local level. There was recognition of the fact that a better understanding was required of the resource base and that ecosystem should be an essential ingredient for development, planning and management. It became increasingly evident that development efforts tend to produce widespread effects as a result of strong interactive linkage effects between a growing population within a fixed or limited resource base and a fragile ecosystem. Plans in hill states/areas should take into account environmental considerations in addition to socio-economic and cultural indicators. It was important therefore to take into account eco-restoration, eco-preservation and eco-development. The plan further urged all hill states to critically review all their plans and projects. The Seventh Plan was also significant in that it outlined the major problems of the hill people as the need for alternative energy, fuel and fodder; drinking water; health and sanitation and education. It also stated that for the implementation of the plans, there was a need to view three distinct zones of operation: the high and inaccessible altitudes and sparsely populated areas where natural geophysical processes are taking place; the more populated lower altitudes where the population was growing, industrial projects and the building of roads was adding to ecological strain and deprivation. The effects of such ecological changes were perceptible in a third zone of
operation: the seemingly unconnected plains. In each of these areas, plans had to be formulated and co-ordinated in a manner such that the interests of the inhabitants did not lead to compromises in the environmental sphere. To achieve these ends, the plan recommended large-scale afforestation, scientific land use and to encourage communities involved in shifting agriculture to take to settled cultivation.

The Eighth Plan outlined the problems in the hill areas as those of deforestation, soil erosion leading to the drying up of water resources, flash floods, decline in the yield of crops, fodder, fuel and minor forest produce. Hence it noted that poverty was widespread especially in areas where under traditional water and land management system, the capacity of land to support the population has already been exceeded. In many areas, the problem was compounded by indiscriminate and excessive felling of trees for commercial purposes and prolonged grazing, development activities such as the construction of buildings, roads, dams, large and medium industries like mining had also worked to the detriment of the environment. The challenge therefore, was to devise suitable location-specific solutions, so as to reverse the process and ensure sustainable development of population and ecology. The HADP thus aimed at modernising agricultural practices and promoting small-scale industries at the household, cottage and village levels. It provided a holistic and extensive strategy to improve the quality of life among hill dwellers and checking what the Expert Group of the National Policy for Integrated Development in the Himalayas in April 1993 described as the main problems in the UP hills. These were: degradation of the environment and ecology; poverty; unemployment; migration of youth; inadequacy of essential infrastructure; high cost of developmental projects; long gestation period in the implementation of projects, as also low returns on investment in the hills and so on. The thrust in the Eighth Plan was towards the development
of cottage and small-scale industries along with lucrative projects that aimed at encouraging tourism, plantation of rubber and sericulture. Afforestation continued to occupy an important role in the developmental agenda since the demand for wood far exceeds supply; application of scientific inputs to agriculture to enhance productivity was prioritised and the importance of indigenous knowledge highlighted. Appropriate technologies could be used to upgrade traditional productive systems like agriculture, livestock, arts and crafts to 'reduce the drudgery of women in demanding domestic chores'. Weightage was quite clearly in the direction of income generation and subsequent prosperity in the hills. The shift of focus from a purely state guided development process also comes out clearly in the Eighth Plan where individuals and voluntary organisations are requested to come to the aid of the state in facilitating development. The move to encourage all sections to participate and the frequent allusion to sustainability demonstrates the preoccupation of the state with environmental issues and the understanding that constant review of plans and projects would help in rectifying mistakes made earlier.

The Ninth Plan identified the problems of hill areas much in the same vein as in the Eighth plan: 'deforestation, soil erosion which is leading to the drying up of water resources, flash floods and decline in the yield of food and cash crops, fodder, fuel and minor forest produce'. In addition, poverty in the area led to shortage of materials for basic subsistence. In addition, special note was taken of seemingly harmless activity such as grazing and an economically beneficial activity like mining as being detrimental to the environment. Construction of buildings, dams and industries were also responsible for endangering the fragile ecosystem of hill areas. All these factors contributed to the drying up of water resources. The challenge before the planners therefore was to 'devise suitable location-specific solutions so as to
reverse the process and ensure sustainable development of the growing population and ecology of the hill areas'. The pattern of funding for plans in hill areas was generous. As opposed to 30% grant and 70% loan in other states, Special Category States received an allocation of 90% as grant and 10% loan. Hill areas that formed part of states, received Special Central Assistance (SCA). This fund was given in addition to the funds allocated for state development and was not to be diverted for any other purpose apart from development in hill areas. Further, it was suggested that these states formulate a sub-plan for hill areas indicating the flow of funds from the State Plan and SCA.

The thrust in the Ninth Plan was on the development of infrastructure and on eco-preservation and eco-restoration. Harnessing traditional knowledge and the use of appropriate technology would ensure sustainable development. This combination of traditional practices with modern technology would ensure acceptance of developmental projects by the hill people. The Plan also envisaged an Integrated Watershed Approach. Explaining the term watershed to mean a geo-hydrological unit that has evolved through the interaction of rain water with topography, it noted that the dependence of a large number of people on agriculture and pastoral farming necessitated its regeneration and restoration. Under this programme, micro-watersheds with an area between 500-1000 hectares are developed by measures such as conserving rain water, through treatment of drainage lines in the micro-watersheds and promoting *in situ* moisture conservation by eco-friendly agricultural production systems on arable land. This includes a three tier appropriate vegetation consisting of grasses, shrubs and trees for fodder, fuel and timber and fruit in a topo-sequence which is in consonance with soil depth and moisture (Chapter 9, Ninth Plan Document). This programme has been adopted in the Western Ghats with beneficial results and its replication.
is therefore recommended. Like previous plans, the importance of women in the workforce and their contribution to the economy was recognised. It was understood that in the primary sector, the work performed by women was tremendous and their contribution in other sectors was also fairly considerable. It was important therefore to ensure that development in the hills reduced the 'drudgery of women'. The plan thus recommended the appointment of women functionaries and suggested that women should also carry out extension work. It noted that agricultural productivity and quality was hampered due to lack of consolidated holdings, transport and marketing facilities and unavailability of appropriate technology. To this end, it recommended the application of scientific inputs to agriculture and allied sectors, including the identification of crops suitable for the agro-climatic zones and multipurpose species of trees and bushes to meet the requirements of the people from a well-developed land area. It emphasised that the technologies used should be need based, more productive, efficient, low cost and ecologically sustainable. Focus was also laid on improvement of the quality of livestock and reducing their population. This would be tackled by initiating livestock management programmes and introducing extension services such as veterinary care. This would further entail improvement and regeneration of pastures and grazing areas. Sustainability was taken to be the key objective in the plan and any programme proposed was first considered with view to assessing its ecological viability. The Plan further recommended the development of horticulture, sericulture and plantation 'especially cash crops having low volume, light weight, high value and long shelf-life' as a means of generating employment opportunities, higher incomes and 'ecologically sound development in hilly areas'.

The role of large and medium industry in hill areas was viewed with some suspicion. In order that industrial development does not harm the fragile environment of the Himalayas, it was
recommended that small-scale cottage industries should be encouraged along with enterprises that require a pollution free environment. Agro-based industries deserve encouragement, the plan noted since they would enable the processing of local raw materials that have a ready local market. The Plan recommended that in view of higher transportation costs, industries that reduce weight and volume but add value and increase shelf life should be encouraged. On the point of mining, the Plan seemed a little undecided and mentioned its importance in a somewhat contradictory sentence: Mining can be carried out but with adequate ecological safeguards during and after the operation.

Though the term was not expressly stated, ecotourism was an intended objective of the Plan in form and spirit. The need for tourism to evolve as an organised industry was stressed with the emphasis that care should be taken to ‘avoid exploitative use of scarce local resources, especially water and fuel wood, so that ecology of the hills is preserved and benefits are reaped by the local population of the area’. Emphasis was also laid on the formulation of location-specific codes of conduct for tourists so that the environment would remain clean and disease free, local ecology protected and traditions, culture and heritage respected. The potential of harnessing hydroelectric power in the hills was also noted and the establishment of micro-hydel power projects recommended. In addition, establishing non-conventional sources of energy such as solar power, biogas, wind turbines and so on was suggested in order to minimise the dependence on firewood for cooking and heating.

With regard to the environment and forests, the Plan noted that hill areas were highly susceptible to seismic and tectonic activity. The Plan therefore recommended that the cause of such activities should be identified and minimised. To this end it suggested that construction
of buildings and of artificial large water bodies should be reduced. 'Large projects that might endanger the ecological balance and displace large numbers of people should be very carefully considered before investment decisions are taken'. It recommended further, adequate resettlement of agricultural families displaced by such activities by giving them sufficient productive assets. It suggested sustainable redevelopment of traditional agro-eco-systems of hill communities building upon traditional knowledge and technology. This required a departure from the conventional approach of the traditionally trained agricultural scientists. Also, an elaboration and refinement of Joint Forest Management Plan was recommended. These activities would not only ensure preservation of biodiversity, but also sustainable maintenance of soil fertility, water management and the socio-economic needs of the local communities. It suggested that the policy of declaring forests as reserved should also be reviewed since limited access in these areas has resulted in crowding in unreserved hill slopes leading to grave ecological imbalances.

As before, emphasis was laid on improving the health and living conditions of the hill folk. The need for trained medical staff was noted. Also, infrastructure needs such as roads, foot bridges and so on were to be constructed keeping in mind the nature of the hill areas minimising chances of landslides that results due to such activity.

Perhaps an important feature of the Ninth Plan was that it highlighted the need for hill dwellers to be trained about their environment so that they become aware of the threats and challenges of environmental degradation and how to tackle the same. Also, the Plan envisaged the participation of local people and NGOs in facilitating the developmental objectives enshrined therein. It suggested that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should co-operate with
village authorities, local organisations, clubs and so on in order to strengthen society through participation. Interestingly, not much was said on how the implementation of these objectives would be monitored and ensured. It simply stated that 'financial and physical monitoring of HADP by the state governments would help improve implementation of various programmes'.

In essence, there was little appreciable change in the Eighth and the Ninth Plan documents. Both continued to harp on eco-preservation and eco-restoration as ideals to be achieved and encouraged decentralisation and devolution of authority. The funds allocated for the development of hill areas increased substantially. The allocation of SCA funds for HADP areas is varies according to the population and area of the hill region. Equal weightage is given to both variables while apportioning these funds.

The repeated use of the term sustainability from the Seventh Plan onwards in the rhetoric of the state also marks a shift from the role of a monolithic leviathan that the state was envisaged to be. The environmental concerns of the state are a product of the new social movements that marked the decades of the 70's and the 80's. Although the share of forestry in contributing to the revenue of hill areas declined considerably, commercial felling continued in order to aid state initiated development and reached its height during these decades due to several reasons. Chiefly, construction of roads for strategic purposes enabled tourists to visit the lower Himalayas during the summer months. The proximity of the region to the urban market created pressures on the forests and many trees were axed as a result. A notable movement in the Garhwal Himalayas was the Chipko movement that succeeded in bringing to fore the grave ecological problems faced by the people in Garhwal. Not only did it challenge the right of the state to permit outside contractors to exploit the forests for timber; it also
exposed the poverty and deprivation of the people. At another level, the movement was a victory of the mode of passive resistance against the machinery of the state. In the long run, it resulted in the imposition of a ten-year ban on the felling of all green trees and the implementation of several greening programmes and afforestation schemes. On the social front, it was a victory for the poor, the landless and the marginalized who though intended beneficiaries of developmental schemes of the state, ironically had to fight for their rights.

However, despite exhaustive plans to improve living standards and sustain the environment in the Himalayas, the state has failed to keep its promise of development that envisaged employment and preservation of the environment. Development, when it occurs, has been uneven and irregular. A study on Development Experiences in Uttarakhand by GS Mehta in 1997, made a critical overview of the promises and projects of the state in the region. It concluded that the developmental process was far from satisfactory and made an assessment of the same in three major sectors. These sectors were to be considered in a wholistic fashion while initiating developmental projects. These were: agriculture, forests and animal husbandry. It noted that these three areas could be the chief livelihood providers in Uttarakhand and any ancillary occupations had to be integrated with these. Also, the absence of infrastructural facilities such as adequate road connections and consequently, inaccessibility to the markets also led to stagnation of the economy. To this end, it noted the importance of the state in initiating reforms. For instance, roads are more accessible in Nainital and Pauri whereas in over one-third of the villages in Uttarkashi, Pithoragarh and Tehri, people have to walk over five kilometres to reach a road (Mehta, 1996: 26). Similarly, communication and medical facilities have improved in areas that witness increased tourist traffic. The delayed response to crisis in these areas, especially with regard to the Himalayas, is due to the pressures created by global capital, by the expanding tourist industry that seeks to explore indigenous cultures and
the wilderness in its search for adventure. The state is thus compelled to invest in areas that are popular (among tourists) so that they continue to remain a source of income. In pursuing its agenda of development, the state is responding to a market rather than a crisis which in turn results in lop-sided development of infrastructure and human resources.

It has often been pointed out that developmental programmes fail to integrate aspects of environmental and economic development\(^19\), on the one hand, and development of infrastructure and economic activities among different activities on the other (Mehta, 1997: 3). PC Joshi (op.cit: 130) has summarised the drawbacks of the planning process vis-à-vis development in India succinctly:

Five Year Plans themselves with their emphasis on making higher and higher financial allocations itself as a major step towards improving the life of the people have reached a dead end. This is so because the money allocated for various schemes is grabbed by a class of parasitic middle men and intermediaries whose size has multiplied vastly and whose ingenuity in securing a larger share of these allocations has acquired a high degree of expertise and sophistication... As a result, planning and development which during the early years of independence had evoked great hope and excitement stand totally discredited in the eyes of the people.

Although the Government of Uttar Pradesh undertook several measures\(^20\) to ensure that developmental plans pertaining to the hill districts were implemented, Shastri (2001) argues

\(^{19}\) AS Rawat (1993) points out that in fulfilling developmental objectives, the Indian state inadvertently destroys natural resources. To illustrate this claim, he states that over 20000 ha of forest wealth has been submerged by reservoirs that purport to bring water to the tillers and electricity to small scale and heavy industry (in addition to the growing urban centres).

\(^{20}\) Among the measures adopted by the UP government to ensure balanced regional growth in the hill districts, the following deserve mention: (1) drawing a sub-plan for the region, thereby treating it as a separate entity; (2) creation of hill sub-cadres for 31 important departments for class II and subordinate services; (3) empowering Uttarakhand Vikas Vibhag with several administrative powers to control and supervise officers working in hill areas; (4) creation of independent heads of departments for horticulture, tourism and commissioner rural and small scale industries.
that the Government of India did not increase the Special Central Assistance for UP Uttarakhand (hill) sub plan. This has resulted in increasing the pressure on the state to develop a region that requires special assistance. Quite simply, considering that developmental costs in hill regions are higher than those in the plains, less work has been done at increasing costs. Shastri concludes that the UP state government was on the verge of economic collapse since it is unable to provide developmental assistance to the hill region. Additionally, 'keeping the hill region as an appendage, the state failed to lobby for special central assistance'. The investment pattern further lacked efficiency and failed to realise regional needs. Administrative apathy, absence of lobbies, poor infrastructure and connectivity, absence of resource planning and human resource development compounded problems of balanced regional development in the hill districts.

The constraints of the state have led the people of the hills to find alternate modes of employment that would enable them to achieve a decent standard of living a topic that will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. The challenges and constraints of the state in fulfilling its developmental ideal have also led to popular protests that have sought to reaffirm the traditional right of the hill-folk towards their own resources. At one level, these protests have concentrated on assertion of the traditional rights of the people. At a broader and more political level, these movements have challenged the legitimacy of the state, seeking to assume a greater role for themselves as can be seen in the Uttaranchal movement.

Discontent and Protest

Post-independent India has been marked by several movements by the marginalized demanding their legitimate share in the access to resources for the achievement of what they
regard their 'inalienable rights'. As mentioned before, discontent with state policies can manifest itself in two spheres: the socio-economic and the political. Both, needless to add are interlinked. The political takes the form of a social movement that can be reflective of the demands of a certain section transcend social classes and represent regional interests. One such movement was the Chipko movement, necessitated by the policies of the state that sought to undermine local needs. Locating the movement in the planning policies of the state and the increased marginalization of the peasants who had to diversify their livelihood strategies heightening their penury, Rangan offers a telling narrative of the episode. She observes that the first and second five year plans brought about few changes to the regional economy. The eastern districts of Garhwal and Kumaun benefited from community development projects that aimed at providing infrastructure and promoting village-based cooperatives for artisanal production; proposals for land reform also had minimal impact on the expansion of cultivation. Viewing the problem of marginalization of the peasantry from a broader angle, the Indo-China war too affected the region adversely since the Indo-Tibetan border trade became a national security issue as a consequence. The exigencies of defence and security necessitated the establishment of army bases and depots and the construction of new roads to the border; as also the transfer of nearly 10% of Reserved forests to the Department of Defence for these purposes, which effectively, meant the withdrawal of access to these areas for resource extraction. Local communities, depending on their geographic location in the region, were affected in various ways. Trans-Himalayan trade which provided most communities near the Indo-Tibetan boundary with a substantial proportion of their income, came to an abrupt halt with the closing of the border. Households that depended on this trade, found it difficult to expand cultivation of commodity crops such as ginger, turmeric, amaranth and opium, because cultivation of such crops largely depended on the extent to
which profits from trade and petty extraction of natural resources were reinvested in agricultural inputs. With few alternative opportunities for employment existing in their localities, most households without access to capital were reduced to subsistence and cultivation, augmenting their incomes with remittances from male household members who migrated to cities and towns in northern India in search of waged work (Rangan, ibid: 151).

Despite claims by agronomists and scientists that the Green Revolution techniques were scale-neutral, the manner in which the Fourth Five Year Plan was implemented, led to arguments that it was aimed mainly at the grain-producing areas of the country and, consequently, had little impact on cultivators in the region. For the Green Revolution to be successful in the region, access to both capital inputs (High Yielding Varieties of seeds and fertilizers) and irrigation was extremely crucial. Cultivators were therefore faced with enormous risks using capital-intensive inputs if steady and well-timed supply of irrigation was not assured. Adoption of Green Revolution techniques, therefore, required fairly specific and exacting conditions of production which were not available in the montane regions of Garhwal and Kumaun. Households that had been reduced to subsistence cultivation and remittances for survival were unable to raise the necessary capital or collateral for credit, to obtain chemical fertilisers, to invest in pumped irrigation and to purchase High Yielding Varieties of seeds (Rangan, ibid).

In addition, it has been argued that the emphasis on self-sufficiency in the Fourth Five Year Plan affected the region's forestry sector dramatically. The plan directed state forest departments all over the country to assume de facto control over all forested areas and wastelands within states for plantation of fast growing tree species for industrial uses. In response to this injunction, the UP Forest Department undertook implementation of the new
The forest strategy wherein it excluded all forms of petty extraction of resources from areas earmarked for afforestation (including lands previously controlled by the Revenue Department). Costs of competing in Forest Department auctions rose at the rate of 8% each year, paralleling the rising market demand for timber and other forest products. Small-scale farmers were consequently marginalized because they lacked access to areas that had previously been available for resource extraction, and because most of them did not have access to credit and market networks for competing against more prosperous timber merchants and traders. Local attempts to organise labour co-operatives for extracting forest resources failed as timber traders 'rationalised their expenditures' by recruiting migrant workers from other regions. The process of economic marginalization was compounded by a succession of natural disasters in the region: in 1971 and 1972, heavy monsoons resulted in flooding, landslides and extensive damage to terraced cultivation; financial aid and assistance from state and central governments barely trickled down to the affected populations (Rangan, ibid.). Village leaders assailed the UP state government for its negligence, demanding immediate compensation for flood victims and development funds for the region. The demands went largely unmet by a financially constrained and sluggish administration. Resentment against the state government escalated furthering 1973 when the Forest Department denied an artisanal co-operative in eastern Garhwal a concessional allotment of ash trees for making agricultural implements. Village leaders and co-operative members were incensed when they discovered that their request had been rejected in favour of a contract with a sporting-goods firm based in the Indo-Gangetic plains.

"The Forest Department's intransigence was seen by local leaders as confirmation of the state government's apathy towards the welfare and development of communities in its Himalayan
districts’ Rangan notes in her narrative on the birth of the Chipko movement. ‘They organised protests against the Department at its Divisional offices and auction sites, threatening to obstruct all extractive operations in Garhwal if their demands were not addressed. During the felling seasons between 1973 and 1975, village leaders urged their communities to prevent timber merchants and contractors from extracting trees in adjoining Reserved forests. A number of stand-offs proved successful. Men and women gathered around felling tracts hugging trees and urging migrant labours to return to their homes. Chipko was born.’ Krishna (1996) provides a somewhat different picture: faced with a situation where the cooperative was denied the ash trees, angry villagers gathered at Gopeshwar and considered ‘burning the trees down’. But they decided otherwise when it was suggested that ‘a mother saves her child from the wrath of the tiger by embracing the child to her breast to take upon herself the beast’s wrath’ (Krishna, ibid: 154).

*Chipko* was not entirely an environmental movement, Krishna asserts. It was, on the contrary, an assertion of economic rights of the people who wanted greater control of natural resources, the absence of which threatened their existence in the Himalayas. Further, it brought to fore women’s activism and at the same time, highlighted the differences in priorities among the men and women, redefining thereby notions of gender. Instances of women’s vigilance where they obstructed a truck carrying illegally felled timber abound. Bina Agarwal (1986) notes that in Gopeshwar town, ‘the Mahila Mandal is seeking to ensure that the forest around the town is protected. Watchwomen who receive a wage in kind keep guard and regulate the extraction of forest produce’. In 1980, in the Dungari-Paitoli oak forest, a government scheme to replace an oak forest with a potato seed farm was successfully resisted by the women. They raised the slogan ‘Planning without fodder, fuel and water is one-eyed planning’ (Agarwal, 1986: 122).
The difference in priorities among different genders was also reflected in the preference for fodder trees over fruit trees by women. The movement also spiralled to other issues: anti-alcoholism and a greater demand by women to participate in village decision making, especially on forestry issues. The attack on exploitation thus reached different levels: gender, nature and region. In 1973, the Chipko movement spelt out a six-point charter that was unanimously accepted by most groups working in the hills. Of these points, four were economic and political demands (Krishna, *ibid*):

(i) Abolition of the auction/contractor system and the formation of forest labour cooperatives

(ii) People's participation in forest management and protection to be institutionalised through the *gram sabha*, the *area samiti*, district councils and forest *panchayats*

(iii) Establishment of local, small-scale, forest-based industries to generate employment

(iv) A new forest settlement to determine the people's rights to forest produce, such as fuelwood and fodder

(v) Assistance to village efforts for afforestation

(vi) Ban on felling of green trees in areas critical for the protection of water sources and the prevention of landslides.

Krishna notes that in the aftermath of the movement, some of the demands were met by the state that banned the felling of green trees. However, the economic underpinning of the movement was completely hijacked by the environmental, making the movement an icon in present times as well as shifting the focus of development from economy to ecology. Perhaps,
it also reflects a hesitation on the part of the state to renegotiate economic cleavages and address environmental concerns instead. She argues that although in the Chamoli district, the birthplace of the movement, eco-development camps take place for 'wider interaction between villagers and outsiders' and women's groups initiating afforestation programmes have been highly successful, institutionalised people’s participation has not happened. In addition, the slow pace of establishment of forest-based industries has not affected male migration. In 1986, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, another leader of the movement restated the manifesto made in 1973 that clearly reflected this shift (Krishna, ibid: 155-6):

(i) To understand what the forest wants and to analyse the socio-economic conditions of the people in order to establish the type of forestry required
(ii) To identify and ‘reserve’ areas affected by landslides and erosion, or crucial for the conservation of water resources
(iii) To establish the minimum needs of the people living next to forests and an administration such that these rights may easily be exercised
(iv) Complete stoppage of the contractor system, and instead the people (should) be organised to undertake conservation, development and exploitation work in the forests
(v) Trees of use to villagers to be planted near the villages so that people do not have to enter the reserved forests
(vi) Village industries based on minor forest produce to be set up to prevent male migration.

 Chipko thus lost its economic focus and became an environmental idiom of women hugging trees among the urban elite, the media and national and international NGOs. What escaped
was the initial basis on which the movement had emerged: the right to exercise autonomy
given the life choices and perceptions of the people, in their natural environment. This
demand indeed sought to reorganise the economic matrix of the people rather than affect
conservation and afforestation. Indeed, as a metaphor, the movement captured the
imagination of many and also inspired similar movements all over the world, Krishna feels
that the constant projection of women with their arms around trees reduced it to a mere
caricature of what Chipko stood for. Also, she argues, the state appropriated the movement as
being conservationist in nature by which it undermined the potential of the movement to
assert itself in the socio-economic sphere. The modes of such appropriation can be employed
in various ways: the first of these is defensive. The state in this case uses law and order
machinery (apparatus) to falsify the character of a movement. A second tactic is that of
cooptation. This is used as a safety valve by which linkages are established between the leaders
of the movement and the administration. A third method is the subtle tactic of smokescreen
which seeks to reshape a movement from within. All three modes have been adopted vis-à-vis
Chipko. Despite the modes of appropriation of the Chipko movement by the national
government and the international environmental groups, Rangan argues that the movement
succeeded in ‘creating a discursive space which endorsed the idea of intervening to restrict
access to regional ecological resources in the name of protecting nature’ (Rangan, op cit: 182).
Further, the relegation of the movement to the environmental sphere by the telling of
narratives reduced the movement to a myth that served to oversimplify the debate between
environment and development, necessarily pitting one against the other. Rangan argues that
this served to devalue concerns of sustainability and privilege instead a ‘fetishised notion of
the Himalayas as a globalised ‘eco-cultural’ commodity; in essence, the region as an objectified
sample of pristine nature, an ecological museum to be maintained for the pleasures of
contemplation and mystic exploration by well-fed elites' (Rangan, *ibid:* 183). However, the Chipko movement did succeed in instituting legislation that had far-reaching impact: the Forest Corporation Act of 1975 authorised the creation of a state-owned corporation which was to function independently of the state’s Forest Department for the ‘efficient production and stabilisation of market prices of timber and other forest labour co-operatives for carrying out its extractive operations’. In 1976, the UP Tree Protection Act was passed that prevented the felling of “protected” tree species (mainly those that were commercially valuable) on private lands. The Indian Parliament in 1976 also initiated a constitutional amendment by which the national government’s permission became essential before embarking on any developmental project that involved the large-scale conversion of forests to other land uses. Perhaps, the greatest victory of the movement was reflected in the creation of a Ministry of Environment and Forests in 1980 along with the passage of the Forest Conservation Act. This Act defined the required procedures and conditions for state governments wanting to obtain permission from the ministry to convert designated forests for non-forest uses. There followed, thereafter, a fifteen-year ban on the felling of green trees. In 1988, the Forest Conservation Act deemed it illegal for any individual or corporate institution to engage in afforestation projects without the prior permission of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The imposition of such restrictions and a virtual ban on the exploitation of timber for commercial projects retarded the pace of rural development and projects such as electrification in Garhwal and Kumaun since nearly two-thirds of the area was classified under some forest category. Such classification also hindered traditional exploitation of forest wealth for medicinal plants and other commercially valuable forest products. Moreover, the state was also criticised for ignoring small-scale development that did not have adequate political clout in favour of large-
scale developmental projects such as the constructions of dams and Hydro-electric Projects that were supported by powerful coalitions and lobbies (Rangan, *ibid* 166).

Whereas the *Chipko* movement was a manifestation of peasant discontent against the state government policies and to carve out a niche for the realisation of their rights within the socio-economic sphere, the political manifestation of this discontent can be seen upon an analysis of the growth of the Uttarakhand movement, a demand for a separate state that can be dated to the early post-independence era that was finally realised in 2000. In 1952, PC Joshi, a member of the CPI and a leading leader in Kumaun, presented a proposal to Nehru that sought to reconstitute the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh into a separate state. Nehru himself was not in favour of the proposal but forwarded the appeal to the States Reorganisation Commission which rejected it. Subsequently, administrative autonomy for the hill districts of the state was discussed in conferences in 1966 and 1967 and a public demonstration staged in New Delhi in 1968. The Uttarakhand Kranti Dal was formed in 1969 and its representatives met Mrs Indira Gandhi with a proposal to create a separate hill state of Uttarakhand. However, it is commonly argued that these proposals were not encouraged partly because of the Congress (I) rule in the centre and the state that was vehemently against losing the popular vote bank* in the state of UP by such division despite the fact that leaders

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21 Rangan (2000) notes that for most national parties, the attraction of ruling UP, one of the most populous states outweighs concerns of good governance and administration. Ruling political parties have played on the Uttarakhand sentiment during elections and ignored the issue soon after assuming office. Between 1985-97, almost all national political parties supported the idea of including the creation of Uttarakhand in their manifesto, but only two went as far as passing resolutions in its favour. The BJP also supported these demands during state elections in UP in 1991-93, but 'did little more than change the name of the Hill Development Department to the Uttaranchal Development Department when it assumed control over the state legislature'. In addition, the 'plains mentality' that inadequately comprehends the needs of the region on part the administration has been held responsible for the general backwardness of the region.
from Garhwal and Kumaun had served as Chief Ministers of the state. The only concession made in the 1980s was in the form of the creation of a new state agency called the Parvatiya Vikas Nigam (that functioned through two subsidiary agencies: the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam and the Kumaun Mandal Vikas Nigam). This Hill Development Agency was responsible for planning and providing financial assistance for regional development. The agency has been criticised for concentrating on promoting horticulture and tourism by way of granting subsidies, price supports and incentives rather than investing in infrastructural expansion or the creation of new institutional or marketing networks in the region. Due to inadequate investment in infrastructure, poorer households have been unable to benefit from the subsidies provided in horticulture. Also, the investment in tourism infrastructure has been limited to a few cities in the hills, largely those in the lower elevations and the subsidies offered for the promotion of tourism by the agency have been exploited by businessmen from the plains.

Despite the changing political stance towards the creation of a separate hill state, what probably triggered off the movement on a larger scale was the institution of the Mandal Commission Report that sought to create an added layer of beneficiaries in the government: the Other Backward Classes. The fact that 27% of the jobs available would be reserved for this category within the state of UP and that within the hill districts, these classes accounted for 2.5% heightened the movement for statehood as the people felt that this was a move by which they would be further denied jobs. Needless to say, the coalition government at the centre succeeded in alienating itself from the people by disregarding regional demands. The coalition government on its part suggested that the Uttarakhand movement as a reaction to the Mandal Commission Report was an upper caste movement that was determined to
prevent 'oppressed castes from achieving social equality in Indian society' through 'violence and other means' (Rangan, *ibid*: 170). Branding what could legitimately be called a popular regional movement in favour of administrative and political autonomy as 'upper caste', 'unsecular' and 'antinational' led other political parties to dissociate themselves from supporting the movement for fear of losing their vote banks.

Interestingly, when the BJP government at the centre that finally approved of the creation of three states: Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand in the year 2000, most political parties sought to congratulate themselves.

Both the *Chipko* and Uttarakhand movements highlighted inequalities in access to and the distribution, of resources. Ironically, these movements also illustrated that the state's methods of dispensation of rights might serve to undermine the interests of marginalized communities that need not necessarily be considered backward in the language of the constitution. Further, the relegation of the *Chipko* movement to the environmental sphere did not necessarily prevent the emergence of a stronger political movement for autonomy and a

22 The political divide that exists in the creation of the state can be seen in the opposition to the nomenclature of the state by people involved in the movement. They insist that their fight was for 'Uttarakhand' and that the name 'Uttaranchal' has in fact been 'forced' on them by the BJP. By naming the state Uttaranchal, the BJP they argue, has not only sought to undermine a people's movement, but also attempted at projecting the creation of the state as the initiative of the party rather than the people (information based on interviews with local farmers in Garhwal). Discontent has also been expressed over the choice of the new capital, Dehradun as its proximity with the plains might result in a continuing divide among the people of the hills and the plains and a consequent developmental bias towards the low-lying areas within the state. Among other reasons for opposing Dehradun as a state capital is the fact that it isn't easily accessible to people from Kumaun.

23 Dangwal (2003) notes that the demand for Uttaranchal had antecedents in the *Chipko* movement and in the historical importance of forestry that"... opened up a new chapter and created a great rupture in the history of the region... Forest resources were over exploited which destabilised ecology and undermined (the) economy. Revenue generated by forests was never (re)invested into the region... Since *Chipko* failed to solve the problem of backwardness of the region, the Uttarakhand movement took up the unfinished agenda.
separate state. Both movements can be seen as extensions of a larger movement challenging the developmental discourse. Whereas scholars have credited the Chipko movement for bringing the environmental problems in the Himalayas within the realm of a global move for ecological preservation and protection, the creation of Uttaranchal has on the other hand, shifted the responsibility of solving a developmental problem to an inexperienced and newly formed state. Thus, the problem faced by the new state is comparable with that faced by India upon independence: to right the wrong done by the British and to facilitate development that will include the deprived sections of society. In the present context, this development has to take cognisance of the additional environmental factor that demands that questions of sustainability be addressed. In performing this onerous task, the state is faced with reconciling issues of environment and employment that seem to contradict one another. Framing policies that serve to address these issues has been the concern of the state that needs to fulfil the aspirations of the people who felt that their problems would be solved overnight with the creation of Uttaranchal. Indeed, as the next chapter will reveal, attempts at ensuring welfare and employment to the people have been given pre-eminence and the need for development (translated as economic growth) is so great that some policies are aimed solely at income generation and a move away from traditional modes of employment such as agriculture.

From the state society perspective, the entire narrative of alleged exploitation of natural resources by the state and concomitant underdevelopment of the region resulting in discontent and protest can be examined at two levels. At the first instance, the conflict between state and society in UP can be seen at the ideological level. Herein, the entire dialogue of development adopts the plains vs. hills discourse and pits itself on the premise that hill regions are exploited for their natural wealth. There is no visible investment in the region (as explained, central assistance remains constant even at increasing prices). At the empirical level,
the conflict can be seen as one between planning and performance. Goals are set aside for the development of the hill districts yet results are unsatisfactory. Corruption abounds and funds are allegedly pilfered. Added to this is the politics at the plains (an extension of the hills vs. plains debate) where the need to consolidate vote banks by political leaders results in the reservation of government jobs for OBCs. Hill dwellers are thus excluded from the prospect of earning a decent livelihood even in their own region.

Viewed from yet another angle, the conflict between the regional and the central government becomes palpable. Unrest in the hill region is used by the central government to attack the policies of the regional government. The central government becomes the arbiter where the regional government is projected as the enemy in conflicts between the latter and society. Conflict resolution thus comes at the behest of the central government (as in the case of Chipko and more recently, Uttarakhand). The problem therefore becomes a federal one: how does one reconcile issues of difference and development in a plural society? Indeed, at the heart of the entire debate is the issue of administrative efficiency and good governance. Protest becomes a mode of expression of frustration over the policies of the state that are mere paper tigers. Protest also becomes a mode of seeking recognition and greater participation by social forces in planning and development of their region and hence their destiny.