Regional or ethnic movements are quite a common experience for the multi-ethnic Indian society. Economic deprivation, nativism, casteism or any other ethnic sentiment often gets politically mobilised to give rise to a movement, seeking to bring about certain changes in the existing socio-political structure. Thus, just on the eve of independence, the Dravidian nationalists protested against the dominant role of the Brahmins in administration, education and politics of Madras. It attacked the caste system, Hindu orthodoxy and what was termed 'Aryanism' and 'Brahminism'. Economic disparities between the Telanganites and the Andhraites and the relative backwardness of the former, resulted in a movement for a separate Telangana state soon after the creation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956. Similarly, in Bombay, nativist and anti-migrant sentiments got explicit political expression in the late sixties, under the banner of Shiv Sena, formed to safeguard the interests of the 'sons of the soil' in getting jobs and enjoying other economic benefits. In the sensitive border areas of the North-East, apart from the movements for a sovereign Nagaland, Mizoram or Manipur, we found the people of Assam gradually turning their 'anti-foreigner' agitation into a general campaign.
against the people of non-Assamese origin. In Tripura a section of the majority Bengalees advocated the formation of a sovereign 'Bangalistan' on the basis of linguistic identity of the people. Thus, occasional outbursts of ethnic sentiments have become a feature of Indian politics in recent years.

The Jharkhand movement in this context demands special attention not only for its being the oldest movement of its kind in India, raising the demand for a separate statehood as early as 1939, but the region can also boast of a glorious tradition of anti-colonial struggles during the past two centuries. The present day movement can very well be regarded as a continuation of the struggle for independence and economic rights of the freedom loving people of the region. Moreover, the Jharkhand region presents the unique case of a region richest in mineral resources but paradoxically, one of the most backward regions in the country as far as the living standards of the people in the region are concerned. The movement has further the unique distinction of liberalising itself in course of time. What started as a tribal movement has gradually secularised itself to become a movement of both the tribals and the non-tribals.

The aim of the present study is to analyse the Jharkhand movement, centring around the tribal belt of the Chotanagpur Plateau, with the hope of providing an insight into the causes of the present unrest and instability in this vast multi-ethnic
Indian society. It is always risk-prone to study an ongoing movement whose leaders and activists are not only alive but are still active. Naturally, any analysis of the nature and objective of the movement may not prove to be accurate in the long run. It is difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion, since the very subject matter of analysis is undergoing continuous changes. However, precisely because of this reason, it is also challenging to take up an area of study which is an unexplored one.

II

Quite a number of books and articles have been published over the last couple of decades dealing either directly or indirectly with the Jharkhand problem. As early as 1972 we came across K.S. Singh (ed.) *Tribal Situation in India* in which quite a number of articles were devoted to various aspects of tribal life in the central tribal belt of India. Sachchidananda in his article 'The Tribal Situation in Bihar' focussed on four basic 'maladies' ailing Chotanagpur viz. economic, administrative, socio-psychological and political and suggested some remedies to come out of these maladies. K.S. Singh himself in his 'Agrarian Issues in Chotanagpur' concentrated on the agrarian problems like land alienation,
indebtedness, slow growth of tribal economy and growing unemployment which are all manifestations of economic backwardness. L.K. Mahapatra in his article 'Social Movements Among Tribes in India' drew a brief outline of the social movements in India and has attempted a typology of social movements. Surajit Sinha's article entitled 'Tribal Solidarity Movements in India: A Review' dealt with tribal response to British administrative measures and showed how the European missionaries created a new tribal elite group sowing the seeds of division among the tribals. Philip Ekka mainly concentrated on the 'Revivalist Movements Among the Tribals of Chotanagpur' and showed how the 'Tana Bhagat millenarian cult' gained ground among the oppressed 'Uraons'. Jyoti Sen in her 'The Jharkhand Movement' briefly outlined the evolution of the movement during the present century and tried to find out the sources of discontent among the tribals with some suggestions to remove this discontent. L.P. Vidyarthi in his article 'An appraisal of the leadership pattern among the tribes of Bihar' mainly highlighted the changing pattern of tribal leadership in the state ever since the late eighteenth century.

Myron Weiner in his *Sons of the Soil* (1978) devoted a whole chapter on the tribals of Chotanagpur and their encounters with the migrants through ages. Outlining the history of the region briefly, Weiner tried to explain the processes of land alienation, emigration of tribals and the immigration of non-tribals in terms of the growing industrialisation of the Chotanagpur region.
account located a 'detribalization' process which explains why the movement in recent years has more or less become the exclusive concern of the educated, urban population among the tribals.

In M.S.A. Rao (ed.) Social Movements in India, Vol. II (1979). Joseph Troisi in his 'Social Movements among the Santals' briefly touched upon the Jharkhand problem. Troisi's analysis of the Santal Rebellion of 1855-57, the 'Kharwar' movement and the Jharkhand movement, however, is too sketchy. Moreover, as he has dealt with the Santals only, the role of the other Jharkhandi communities in the movement has totally been left out. However, after giving a brief account of the evolution of the Jharkhand movement in the twentieth century, he has tried to pinpoint the major factors behind this 'nativistic' movement and has concluded that the underlying forces behind the movement were more socio-economic and ethnic than political.

In K.S. Singh (ed.) Tribal Movements in India, Vol. II (1982) quite a number of articles highlighting various aspects of the Jharkhand movement have been presented by some renowned scholars. K.S. Singh himself in his 'Tribal Autonomy Movements in Chotanagpur' has dealt with the historical development, goal, strategy, mobilisation as well as the ideology of the Jharkhand movement. However, his analysis of historical development does not go beyond the present century. He has dealt with the changing character of the movement in five different phases up to 1975 and has given a
detailed account of the incidents that took place thereafter highlighting the strategy adopted by the activists to achieve their goal of a separate Jharkhand state. J.C. Panchbhai in his 'The Jharkhand Movement Among the Santals' has discussed the role of the Santals in the movement; but protests by other tribal communities, their role in the movement have not found any place in his article. Panchbhai has made special reference to the emergence of various non-political socio-cultural organisations which played a significant role in strengthening the socio-cultural bases of the movement. P.C. Bhowmick has briefly outlined 'The Jharkhand Movement of West Bengal' with an account of the electoral performance of the Jharkhandi candidates in the state since the First General Elections of 1952. Similarly, L.K. Mahapatra has concentrated on 'The Jharkhand Party in Orissa' in which he has analysed the aims and objectives as well as the organisation of the Jharkhand Party. The article includes a brief account of the performance of the Jharkhandi candidates in Orissa upto 1974.

In Mirmal Sengupta (ed.) Fourth World Dynamics : Jharkhand (1982), the editor himself in his 'Background of the Jharkhand Question' has analysed the various currents within the Jharkhand movement. Apart from explaining the concepts of 'diku' and 'Jharkhandi', Sengupta has focussed on the issues involved in the movement and the political programmes undertaken by the Jharkhandi outfits. In the second section of the book three case studies regarding the industry, agriculture and social life in the region, have shown how the developmental programmes in the region have failed to bring about any significant improvement
in the lives of the tribals. In the next section all the three contributors — Basant Kumar Mehta in his 'Historical and Cultural Basis of Jharkhand Nationality', A.K. Jha in his 'Sadani — A Distinct Language?' and Arun Sinha in his 'Struggles against Bureaucratic Capitalism' have discussed the various bases of Jharkhandi nationality. While Mehta has tried to identify the historical and cultural foundations of the Jharkhandi nationality, Jha has tried to put forward the case for 'Sadani', which may serve as the Jharkhandi link language. Arun Sinha in his article has explored the possibility of forging political unity among the workers and peasants of the region.

The fourth section includes two articles. While B.P. Keshri in his 'Problems and Prospects of Jharkhandi Languages' has suggested ways to develop Jharkhandi languages and literature; Maharaj and Iyer in their joint paper 'Agrarian Movement in Dhanbad' have focussed mainly on the agrarian struggle under the initiative of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. In the concluding section of the book Radha Kumar, in her 'Will Feminist Standards Survive in Jharkhand?', Dilip Simeon in his 'Jharkhand: Community or Proletariat' and Anjan Ghosh and Nirmal Sengupta in their joint paper entitled 'The Nationality Question in Jharkhand' have evaluated the Jharkhand problem from three different angles. While Radha Kumar has seen the problem from a social angle, highlighting the problem of tribal women in Jharkhand; Dilip Simeon has tried
to trace the roots of the Jharkhand problem, analysing the factors responsible for the growth of such a movement. He has also drawn our attention to some of the problems which are likely to surface once a separate Jharkhand state is created. Ghosh and Sengupta have mainly concentrated on the question of Jharkhandi nationality and have tried to explain the class character of the movement. In their opinion the nationalist movement in the 'Fourth World' is an integral part of the class struggle that brings about working class solidarity.

In Ranajit Guha (ed.) Subaltern Studies, Volume IV (1985) Swapna Dasgupta in his 'Adivasi Politics in Midnapur, c.1760-1924' has focussed on the subaltern resistance to colonial oppression. Dasgupta has tried to portray a unique political tradition of Midnapur, especially the erstwhile Jungle Mahal region of the district, where the local tribals offered resistance to the colonial masters even during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Dasgupta has shown how the British - Zamindar - mahajan nexus changed the traditional agrarian relations completely, giving rise to growing indebtedness, land alienation and loss of tribals' rights over forests.

In Rakhahari Chatterji (ed.) Politics in West Bengal (1985) Satyabrata Chakraborty in his article entitled 'Jharkhand Movement in West Bengal— A Case Study of Sub-National Politics' has given an account of the movement during the present century. Though Chakraborty has discussed the main features of the movement in Bihar, his analysis has mainly concentrated on the movement in
the Midnapur and Purulia districts of West Bengal. He has also tried to explain the sudden rise in the activities of the Jharkhandis in West Bengal during the late '70s.

In Ajeya Sarkar’s *Regionalism, State and the Emerging Political Pattern in India* (1990) the authoress in her article ‘Jharkhand Movement’ has mentioned the factors responsible for the misery of the tribals in the region. The article deals with the evolution of the movement in the present century and tries to analyse the post-independence developments in four different phases. It also tries to pinpoint the weaknesses of the movement. The article, however, is rather sketchy and does not go deep into the problem.

In Arun Ghosh and Radharaman Chakrabarti (eds.) *Ethnonationalism: Indian Experience* (1991) Rakha Krishna De in his ‘Tribal Revolts in Central India: A New Phase’, has drawn our attention to the difference in perception of the tribal revolts that took place in the colonial era and in the post-independence period. While the former are hailed as acts of glory, similar protests in the region in recent times are branded as separatist tendencies. De has analysed the evolution of the movement and shown how an ethnic movement has gradually transformed itself into a regional one out of electoral considerations. The article also focuses on some major factors responsible for the growth of the movement and points towards certain crisis areas that have rendered the movement weak. In his article entitled ‘The Jharkhand Movement: 1987 and After’, Arun Ghosh has mainly concentrated on the recent developments within the movement, especially after the formation of the Jharkhand
In Prabhat K. Datta's *Politics of Region and Religion in India* (1991), in an article entitled 'From Ethnicity to Regionalism: The Jharkhand Agitation', the author has outlined the history of the Jharkhand region since the middle ages and has shown how the Mughals and then the British became interested in the region. Following K.S. Singh, Datta has classified the movement in three different phases during the pre-independence days and has also discussed the various ups and downs in the movement during the post-independence period. In a separate section on 'Policy Responses', Datta has analysed the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation on tribal life. He, however, does not consider Jharkhand to be a classic case of 'internal colonialism' in India; he rather blames the big bourgeoisie - landlord nexus in the Indian State for the social, regional and economic unevenness— for the tribal - non-tribal, local - outsider divide, weakening the unity of the toiling masses.

Susana B.C. Devalle in her *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand* (1982) has traced the growth of an ethnic consciousness among the adivasis of Bihar's Jharkhand region during the colonial era. She has also given a detailed account of the
various types of indigenous protests faced by the colonisers of
the region through ages. The authoress has identified ethnicity as a
language for political protests and tried to focus on the cultural
dynamics behind such overt political actions.

Sajal Basu in his *Regional Movements: Politics of Language,
Ethnicity - Identity* (1992) has discussed various aspects of
the Jharkhand movement in course of comparing it with similar other
movements in India. In his search for the factors behind regional
movements in India, Basu has emphasised the role of socio-cultural
factors vis-a-vis the economic factors. He has analysed the role
of language as a source of ethnic identity and shown how language
can be a dividing as well as a unifying force. In this context
Basu has pointed towards the 'inherent language contradictions in
Jharkhand movement.' He has also cited ethnic division and weak
leadership as the factors responsible for the weakness of the
movement.

Victor Das in his *Jharkhand: Castle over the Graves* (1992)
has highlighted the grievances of the tribals of the region and
at the same time has thrown light on the pre-historical and
historical background of the people of Jharkhand. He has also
focussed on the role of the Christian missionaries in the region
and the problems faced by the tribal women in particular. Das has
raised a very pertinent question that if a Jharkhand state materia-
lists who will ultimately benefit from it: the downtrodden people
of Jharkhand or a handful of tribal leaders?
Most of these articles or books have, generally, looked at the Jharkhand problem in an anthropological, economic or historical perspective. While they focus on certain aspects of the movement, they leave behind many details which are necessary for a proper understanding of the movement as a whole. Some of these writings are either very sketchy or confined to a particular area or time period. One cannot get a comprehensive picture of the Jharkhand movement simply by focussing on the Chotanagpur tribal belt of Bihar or for that matter concentrating on West Bengal or even a particular district within West Bengal. One cannot explain either the problems faced by the tribals and other backward communities in the region by simply analysing the role of a particular tribe like the Santals or the Mundas. Moreover, many of these articles are based on secondary source material and naturally they run the risk of lacking in objectivity and authenticity.

The purpose of this study is to provide an exhaustive picture of the Jharkhand movement upto 1982, covering its background, evolution, issues involved, nature and objective, with special emphasis on implications of such movements for the Indian polity as a whole. Any attempt to generalise the causes of the various separatist movements that are threatening the unity and integrity of our country, may be an exercise in futility as
most of these movements differ in their nature, motivations, action pattern or prospects. But at the same time, one cannot ignore the fact that these are all manifestations of ethnic tension and conflict, aggravated by economic deprivation in general and are thus parts of an overall centrifugal trend currently prevalent in India. If the analysis of the Jharkhand movement, however, helps us in any way to understand the true nature of the problem of regionalism in a better way, suggesting appropriate measures to tackle the problem, this study will be deemed to have served its purpose.