CHAPTER V

ORGANIZATION, ELITE PERCEPTION AND THE ATTITUDE OF STATE TOWARDS MAITHILI MOVEMENT
In any study of socio-cultural regionalism and subsequent movements, organization, elite perceptions of the movement and state's attitude towards movement are important units of analysis, especially for examining the success, failures, strengths and weaknesses of the movement.

Organization performs significant functions of: (a) articulating the political, economic and cultural interests of an ethnic group; (b) of recruiting the cadres and leaders for the movement; and (c) mobilizing and initiating people for mass action and protests movements launched by it from time to time.

On the other hand, elite provides leadership to the movement. They decide the aims, objectives strategy and the course of the movement. In this context, they define the secular and non-secular interests of a socio-cultural group and thereby their relative ordering is done.

Also it is the organization and the elite which transcribe the attitude of state towards the movement and its various demands by interpreting different state's policies in this regard. And on that basis, state - society relationship is defined and the nature and course of a movement is determined.

In the present work, organizations have been analyzed in terms of their aims, objective, and their membership pattern in order to assess their attitude and attachment
with the cause of Maithili regionalism. Elite perceptions and the role of state are analyzed in terms of their overall attitude towards Maithili movement and its various demands.

**Organizations**

Unlike other regional movements in India, the organizations exposing the cause of Mithila, is not political as such. They are basically the socio-cultural organizations dedicated to the cause of presenting, protecting and promoting the cultural identity of Mithila at certain phases of the movement. Only infrequently the political demand of a separate Mithila state is made.

So far the study of these organizations is concerned, emphasis in this study is placed on their aims, objectives and their leadership patterns. It may be pointed out that these organizations, on the basis of their location, can broadly be divided into two categories i.e. those based in the Mithila region and those which are located outside the present boundary of the state of Bihar. The latter is often called in the local dialect as the Pravasi Maithili Sangthan.

Also in the present study only those organizations have been selected for reference which are somehow active today.

In the special issue of *Mithila Mihir* (Mithilanka), 1936, Shri Devanaryan Choudhary has classified the Maithili
Organizations into two categories. In the first category, he had put those organizations which were dedicated to the promotion, growth and development of Maithili language, e.g. Maithili Sahitya Parishad and in the second category, he had clubbed those organizations which were serving the caste interests only. These caste-organizations on any analysis are also the cultural organizations aiming at the promotion and protection of the educational and cultural interests of particular social groups.

The basic objectives and activities are directed towards maintaining the ethnic purity of a particular caste intact. He has recorded in this category the following organizations: Maithili Mahasabha, Vysyasabha, Karna Kayastha Sabha, Yadava Sabha or Gopa Sabha, Bhumihar Brahmin Sabha, Rajputa Sabha, etc.

Almost every prominent caste in Mithila has its own caste-organizations whose functional activities are quite often cultural i.e., to glorify the historical-cultural heritage and achievements of the respective castes. However, these organizations assume political function such as determining the voting choice of caste-people and defining the inter-caste affiliation, cooperation and coordination according to the overall context of the state’s political process.
Whatever may be the basis for classifying the Maithili Organizations, it is worthwhile to take into account an analysis of their nature, aims, and objectives from the perspective of the formation of regional identity and its political assertion in the framework of the ideology and practice of regionalism. Here in the first instance, one can take into consideration the Mithila based (especially Darbhanga based) organizations.

Maithili Mahasabha

It was the collegiate initiative of Babu Tulapaty Singh, Pt. Vindhyanath Jha, Pt. Shri Kapileswar Mishra, Pt. Gananath Jha, Pt. Chetnath Jha, Pt. Suresh Jha, MM Pt. Parmeshwar Jha, Pt. Shri Kali Prasad Jha and Pt. Purandar Jha, that the Maithili Mahasabha was established in 1910 and its first session took place at Madhubani from 27 March to 29 March. However, the main inspiration behind the establishment of this organization was the then Mithilesh. Maharaja Dhiraj Rameswar Singh, who was also its life-long chairman.

According to the present Pradhan Mantri of this organization, Shri Purushottam Jha, "Maithili Mahasabha was mainly the organization of one House - the House of Maharaja of Darbhanga. Raj people held the leadership and anybody could be a secretary or any other office-bearer only when he was supported by the Raj. Membership to this organization
was confined to only two groups - Maithil Brahmanas and Karna Kayasthan."

It is precisely because of this that Shri Devanarayan Choudhary has described it as *Jatiya Sansthan* (caste organization). It is also in this context that Pt. Ramanath Jha points out that the very word 'Maithil' restrictively connotes only two castes - Maithil Brahmanas and Karna Kayasthas. Therefore, it is too restricted to include other castes living in the Mithila. This is because its foundational objective is limited to serve the socio-cultural and educational interests of the said two castes only.

The main objectives of this organization are: (i) Preserving, protecting and promoting the best in the cultural tradition of Mithila (here read, the cultural traditions of Maithil Brahmins and Karna Kayasthas); (ii) Scientific codification of *Karma-Kanda* and *Panji-Prabanda* and its observance in the daily life; and (iii) Promoting the Maithili language and its script *Tirhuta*.

So far the achievement of this organization is concerned it has provided scholarships to the meritorious Maithil students. Being a social organization, it had fought against the social evils like child marriage etc. However, its single most achievement is underlined by the
fact that it has succeeded in forging unity (social and cultural) between Maithil Brahmins and Karna Kayasthas.

Maithili Sahitya Parishad

It was the combined effort of Kali Kumar Dutt, Nageswar Mishra, Bholalal Das and Dhanushdhari Das that this organization came into being in 1930.

It is a literary organization dedicated to the cause of development of Maithili language, its script, and the preservation of Maithili cultural identity. Its initial activities were directed towards preservation, compilation and publication of old and new Maithili works; establishment of Maithili libraries; and above all seeking official recognition for Maithili from the central and state governments. For the achievement of last objective, Parishad has laid stress on the organization of movement. Its notable achievement is the publication of Mithila Darshan. 

So far the membership is concerned, it is not restricted to any caste group. However, being a literary organization, it has become an ‘all elite affair’.

Mithilacharankana Samiti

As the name suggests, it is yet another Maithili literary organization which dedicates itself to the cause of development of Maithili script - Mithilachara (Trihuta).
This organization was established on June 3, 1925 and the main inspiring force was Pt. Jivanath Roy. Its other members were Raj Pandit Baldev Mishra, Babu Ram Lochan Sharan, Gangadhar Mishra, Advocate Harivansa Jha, Mukhtar Siddhnath Mishra and Uditnarayan Das.

Its achievements included publication of religious texts such as Durga-Saptasati, Satyanarayan Puja Padhati etc. in Mithilachara. Currently this organization is passive in its goal.

**Vaidehi Samiti**

Yet another Darbhanga based, literary Maithili Organization, is **Vaidehi Samiti**, which has significantly contributed to the growth and popularization of Maithili language and culture through its periodically published Maithili Journal **Vaidehi**. It has also taken up the works like the publication of who’s who of Maithili writers, Maithili bibliography, Tri-lingual Maithili dictionary and has undertaken the project like Maithili encyclopedia. It has also annually convened the Maithili Writers’ Conferences.

Vaidehi Samiti was established by Prof. Krishna Kant Mishra on July 28, 1949. Its first chairman was M.M. Umesh Mishra and secretaries were Prof. Bhaktinath Singh Thakur, Dr. Purnanand Das and Prof. Krishna Kant Mishra. Its
membership also included other eminent educated Maithili elite like Surendra Jha 'Suman', Sudhanshu Shekhar Choudhary, Chandranath Mishra 'Amar' and others. Its present executive members are Dr. Sri Krishna Mishra, Tilkeshwar Mishra and Krishna Kant Mishra (secretary). 8

**Mithilanchal Vikas Parishad**

Established on January 7, 1979, this is another important Maithili Social Organization which devotes itself to the all-round development of Mithila region. It takes up the different infrastructural - developmental issues like transport, communications, irrigation etc. Besides, it also stands for the development of Maithili language.

An interesting feature of this organization is that it has a wider membership across different castes, and religious groups living in Mithila. Its members belong to different professions. However, it has yet to have any mass following.

**Vidhyapati Sewa Sansthan**

Among all the Darbhanga (Mithila) based organizations, this is perhaps the most active Maithili organization, fighting for the cause of 'Mithila-Maithil-Maithili'. Though a cultural organization, it is political in its approach. It is also perhaps the first contemporary organization which stands for the formation of a separate
Mithila state. It has submitted 14 points demand to the central and state governments.

Among them, and from the perspective of cultivating separate regional identity, the following demands are highly significant:
1. Seeking a place for Maithili in the eighth schedule of the Constitution.
2. Broadcasting of all the programmes in Maithili from the A.I.R. stations at Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur.
3. Linking Darbhanga directly with Saharasa and Muzaffarpur through rail to facilitate and strengthen the cultural bonds between the people of these districts. For achieving these objectives, it has, though infrequently, resorted to dharnas, bandhs and demonstrations.

So far its membership is concerned, it has tried to include within its fold influential persons from different castes and religions. However like other organizations, this organization also is an artefact of the Maithil Brahmins and Karna Kayasthas. This is very much evident from its membership pattern and organizational positions. The chairman is Shri Surendra Jha 'Suman' and working chairman is Shri Devanarayan Jha and secretary is Shri Baidyanath Choudhary 'Baiju' who was once an activist member of the Communist Party of India.
Regional Political Parties of Mithila

Practically, Mithila does not have any significant regional political parties, espousing the cause of Mithila region. However one finds references of two regional political parties - Mithila Congress Party and Mithila Dal. Reference of Mithila Congress Party is found in the Mithila Mihir where it is simply reported that elites of Darbhanga held meeting under the chairmanship of Yogendra Prasad (Advocate) and it was decided that a separate political organization named Mithila Congress Party should be formed to resurrect the golden past of Mithila and to get Mithila a fair deal in the political climate of India. However, no further information is available thereafter.

On the other hand, during field survey only the Manifesto of 'Mithila Dal' could be obtained. According to the manifesto it was founded by the eminent Maithili scholar Lakshman Jha in 1949. At present Pt.Lalit Mohan Jha is the convenor of Mithila Dal. This party is yet to be recognized by the Election Commission of India. The basic objective of 'Dal' is to seek a separate state for Mithila and to represent the causes of Mithila in the national political process. As the manifesto has mentioned, 'the membership will be open to every social segment living in Mithila'. In its introduction to Maithili society, it defines the term Maithil as Maithil-Brahman, Yadav, Musalman etc. Therefore,
besides maintaining their distinct caste and religious identities, these sociological groups together form a distinct regional community. The 'Dal' also believes in principles of Jai Jagat (internationalism), Jai Bharat (nationalism) and Jai Mithila (regionalism).

However, the above mentioned two political organizations are non-existent in the politics of Mithila. They do not have any organized party structure.

Pattern Discernible From Darbhanga Based Organizations

1. Range of activities are restricted to the Darbhanga locality and in certain cases to the adjoining Maithili districts such as Madhubani. Here it is interesting to point out that though the district of Madhubani serves as nuclear region of Mithila's linguistic and cultural identity, it does not have any prominent socio-cultural or political organizations, exclusively serving the interests of Mithila.

   Thus the appeal of the above mentioned organizations are restricted only to the certain pockets of Mithila. Also the organizations are urban centred. Cadre mobilization in rural areas is weak.

2. The functional priorities of these organizations are either limited or diffused to serve the purpose of cultivating any purposeful Maithili regional identity.
3. There does not exist any functional co-ordination between these organization. This further causes disordering of priorities.

4. Though claimed as socio-cultural organizations, these organizations have yet to broadly define and decide the contents of Maithili cultural identity. So far, they represent the cultural identity of select caste segments. This is one of the significant reasons that Maithili, even though being the popular language of Mithila, has not yet build up an ethnic block to have any political significance in the ethnic framework of Indian politics.

5. Politically these organizations seem to be neutral. None of these organizations have any clear linkage with any important political parties of India. During discussion with some of the members of these organizations, it was found that most of their members do not want the politicization of their respective organizations. Political choice is exercised by them independently of their affiliations with these organizations. Thus the members maintain dual loyalty. It is because of this that sometimes there exists a conflict of preference between cultural choice and political choice among some of the members of these Organizations. Often political preferences take precedence over cultural preferences.
6. It is also because of the apolitical nature of these organizations that exclusive regional identity has not been transformed into the ideology and practice of regionalism. In other words, politicization of cultural identity has not taken place.

And lastly, because of the overwhelming domination of the certain castes (Brahmin and Karna Kayasthas), these organizations in general and their aims and objectives in particular have not yet received legitimacy from the other castes of Mithila. Thus the leadership patterns of the organizations partly explain the indifference of other castes of Mithila to the cause of 'Mithila-Maithili-Maithili'. Even among the above mentioned two castes, appeal is limited to the educated elites only.

**Patna-based Maithili Organizations**

Here specific mention can be made of two active and well known organizations - Chetna Samiti and Maithili Sahitya Sansthan. These two organizations are also socio-cultural and literary by nature. They have similar limitations as of the Darbhanga based organizations.

**Chetna Samiti**

The samiti was established in 1954 "with a view to raise the consciousness regarding Maithili language, literature, art, culture etc. among Maithils irrespective of
caste and creed. The Samiti is purely a literary and cultural unit of Maithili movement." Its other major activities include: (1) organizing Vidyapati Parva Samaroh and celebrating Dr. Amarnath Jha birth anniversary on large scales; (ii) felicitating the Maithili scholars; (iii) publication of books in Maithili; and (iv) delegating the interests of Maithils with the state authorities.

On the basis of data collected till 1970, a study,13 published by the A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Sciences, Patna, finds that 84.1 per cent of its members are Brahmans, followed by 7.9 per cent of Kayasthas. The presence of other castes is negligible. This fact has adversely affected the association of other caste-groups with this organization and its objectives. This is very much reflected from the remarks of founder of the Maithili Sahitya Sansthan, Rajeswara Jha, who has said: "Chetna Samiti... is the organization of high-ups in Patna, who have no sympathy for the cause of Maithili or Mithila."14

Maithili Sahitya Sansthan

Being a parallel organization to Chetna Samiti, its objectives are aimed at fostering the rich literary tradition of Maithili language by encouraging and felicitating the Maithili scholars; organizing and promoting the publication of books and journals in Maithili. Like
Chetna Samiti, its delegate activities include representation of the cause of Maithili before the state authorities.

On the basis of analysis of the caste background of the executive committee members for the years, 1970 and 1971, conducted by A.N.Sinha Institute, it is found that like other Maithili organizations, this organization is also an ethno-centric (caste) one.15

Maithili Organizations Outside Bihar

Maithils living outside Bihar have organized several socio-cultural organizations to uphold the cause of Maithili and Mithila. Pravasi Maithili Sanstha have also served as cultural units of the Maithili movement. Prominent among them are Akhil Bharatiya Maithil Sangha (Calcutta, 1923 registered on 1970), Akhil Bhartiya Mithila Sangha (Calcutta), Mithila Sanskritik Parishad (Calcutta), Mithila Prakashan Samiti (Calcutta), Maithili Yuvak Sangha, Mithila Research Society, Maithili Sahitya Sabha, Maithili Vivad-Samiti (Banaras and Darbhanga).16 Akhil Bhartiya Mithila Sangh (Delhi), Maithil Sangh (Kanpur), Maithili Sansad (Maithan, West Bengal), Maithil Sangh (Durgapur, West Bengal) and Mithila Mandal (Bombay).

So far the aims and activities of these organizations are concerned, they are directed towards propagating the distinct socio-cultural identity of Mithila. For this, they
generally emphasize the development of Maithili language and culture. And for the development of Maithili language, emphasis is also placed on the publication of books, papers and journals in Maithili. They also promote young Maithili scholars by granting them scholarships and fellowships. For the articulation of Maithili culture, they organize cultural programmes and shows both outside and inside Bihar. Their other activities include articulating the demands of Mithila before the central and state governments by meeting the officials or by submitting memoranda or petitions.

For getting the different socio-cultural and economic demands fulfilled by the central or state governments, they usually prefer democratic and constitutional courses for Maithili movement.

Organizations: A Summary

1. Activities of the organizations are directed mainly towards the promotion of Maithili language, culture and art. Even in this regard, priority is diffused. No attempt has been made to transform the distinct cultural linguistic identity into politically conscious and assertive ethnic category. As mentioned above, most of the organizations are politically neutral and insignificant.

2. Most of these organizations are ethno-centric, i.e., serving the interests of selected caste groups of Mithila. This adversely affects the cadre mobilization for the
organization and it also delegitimizes the cause of Maithili nationality formation.

3. Organizations do not have any popular mass-base and support. Rather, they are elite oriented and urban based. Therefore, there exists a rupture between elite and mass perceptions.

4. Organizations lack inter-organizational co-ordination.

Elite Perception of Maithili Movement

In the context of regional identity formation and subsequent movement, elite performs the multiple functions of selection and transmission of ethnic symbols among the wider section of people. As mentioned at the outset, elite plays the primary role of transforming objective bases of regional identity into the subjective consciousness of ethnicity. In the process, they provide leadership to the movement and help people in defining and determining the socio-cultural, political and economic goals of the people. This, in other words, means demand formulation and channelization. Given the functional relevance of elite in the cultivation of regional identity and its subsequent assertion in the form of regionalism, it is essential to take into account the role and perceptions of the Maithili elite.18

Elite of Mithila can broadly be divided into two categories - professional elite and political elite. In the
first category, the Maithili intellectuals and scholars such as teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers and others are placed. On the other hand, Political elite exclusively refers to the leaders of political parties.

Let us first examine the perception of professional elite, i.e., Maithili intellectuals. They lack any coherence. Political perceptions of the intellectuals differ widely over the nature, content and objective of the regional movement in India with special reference to Maithili movement. For some of them, it is opposed to the Indian nationalism and may cause fragmentation of Indian nation-state. But for select few, it is not anti-thetical to the federal process of nation-building. However, both these sections of the elite uphold the advancement of Maithili language. They want state-sponsored development of Maithili language. And the strategy they approve is the constitutional and democratic methods of pressure tactics, i.e., delegating the linguistic interests of the people of Mithila by writing in the newspapers, magazines and journals, and by petitioning before the state authorities. Here it is worthwhile to point out that there exists a wider perceptual difference among the Maithili intellectuals over the nature and characterization of Maithili movement. For most of them, Maithili movement is a linguistic movement and basic object is to seek functional elevation of Maithili
language by seeking official recognition for Maithili. They have failed to combine the linguistic identity of Mithila with its cultural identity. The reason for this situation is that "language is considered to be the most accepted objective basis of Maithili identity by the elites". Their only concern is the advancement of Maithili language. Therefore, they do not intend to cultivate any composite Maithili-cultural identity.

Also most of the elite do not approve the idea of a separate Maithili state. They hold the opinion that the interests of Maithili language can be served well by remaining within the state of Bihar. Bihar needs not to be fragmented into smaller units. Elite also fails to distinguish between the Maithili identity (i.e., linguistic identity) and Hindi identity. For them, Maithili identity is only complementary to broader Hindi identity - a sanskritized linguistic identity. Most of them see Hindi as the vehicle of national unity. Thus they are reluctant to underline any conflict potential of Maithili-linguistic identity with the Hindi (national) identity. Though it is true that the protagonists of the Maithili movement see Hindi as an important factor in the under-development of Maithili language, it is not true in case of the most of the educated professional elite of Mithila.
Political Elite

Given the social compositions of the organizational elite, it is Maithili Brahmins and Karna Kayasthas who overwhelmingly dominate the organizational structure of Maithili movement. But they have failed to transform the objective factors of Maithili identity into subjective consciousness of Maithili-nationality. Paul R. Brass provides the following reasons for this.

...First, their orientation towards the distinctiveness of Maithili culture has placed less emphasis on the separateness of Maithili culture from other cultures in India than on its distinctive purity and devotion to all India culture.... Second, the cultural gap between the two castes and rest of the population of Mithila has been very sharp.20

Organizational elite has also failed to combine the socio-economic under-development of the region with the cultural framework of Maithili regional identity. Their "concern with the socio-economic issues of Mithila is very weak."21 On the other hand, the other ethnicity-based regional movement, e.g., Gorkha land movement in West Bengal, has combined the factor of culture and language with the socio-economic under-development of the region. Most of the organizations discussed above are by nature socio-cultural only. On the other hand, in case of other regional movements in India the socio-cultural organizations have assumed the function of a defined political party. In the process, cultural factor has assumed salience in the
political process of that region. But this is not the case with the Maithili movement. It "has not gone beyond the stage of representation and interest group politics and the Maithili issue has never become politically salient."\textsuperscript{22}

As mentioned above, political elite for this study refers to the Maithil representatives across the various political parties. Interestingly, in their individual capacity, most of Maithili representatives in various political organizations approve the demands of Maithili movement, but in their corporate capacity, their views toward the Maithili movement are shaped by the stand and policies of their respective political organizations. As a result, only lip service is made to the cause of Mithila and Maithili. Also none of the political parties have made any concrete effort to put forth the cause of Mithila. Maithili has never been a major issue in their agenda of action. However, it is also true that none of them have opposed the demand of the development of Maithili language and its recognition by the central and state governments. Their attitude to Maithili is governed by their overall policies towards language movement in India.

\textbf{State's Attitude Towards Maithili Movement and Its Demand}

The attitude of state towards Maithili movement can well be examined from its policies towards the different
fragments of the demands of the Maithili movements. Let us take the case of Maithili language itself. State government has always maintained a lukewarm attitude towards Maithili language. Based on the simplification of different censuses, the successive governments have considered Bihar primarily a Hindi state. It is because of this kind of perception that the state government has shown indifference to other Bihari dialects such as Maithili, Bhojpuri and Magahi. So far as the case of Maithili is concerned, in the initial period (i.e., during 1950s, and 1960s), state government was reluctant to functionally elevate the Maithili language as a medium of instructions in schools and colleges and as one of the preferred subjects for the state's civil service. However, it was by 1967 that the state government, following a central government directive, conceded the demand of instruction in Maithili at the secondary level and it was by July 1972 that Maithili was accepted as one of the subjects to be offered in the state's Public Service Commission examinations. Now Maithili is taught at an advanced level in the Universities of Bihar. But in 1992, Janta Dal government in Bihar, made an attempt to scrap Maithili from the Bihar Public Service Commission's examinations. The Cabinet memorandum of 27 February 1992, which excluded Maithili from the list of optional subjects, says that:
Since one Rakesh Kumar has filed a writ petition before the Patna High Court claiming that according to 1990-91 census Maithili speaking people constituted only 13.6 per cent of the state’s total population, while 21.33 per cent, 16.89 per cent and 14.31 per cent speak Bhojpuri, Magadhi and Adivasi languages respectively, it is not justified to allow Maithili to continue as an optional subject for the B.P.S.C. examination.24

Such an anti-Maithili move of the state government had caste-overtone. After condemnation by the various political parties and the people Mithila, the government restored the previous position of Maithili as one of the subjects to be offered in the Bihar Public Service Commission’s examination.

Maithili and the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution

The eighth schedule of the Constitution includes official languages of the Indian Union. By according the status of official language, protection and promotion are extended to that language. In other words, that particular language enjoys certain official privileges.

Time and again, the protagonists of Maithili movement have demanded the inclusion of Maithili in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution. Representatives from this region have also raised this issue both in the Parliament and in the state Assembly. In 1970, a parliamentary delegation comprising Yamuna Prasad Mandal, Shiv Chandra Jha, Tulmohan Ram, Gunanand Thakur and
Kameshwar Singh met the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi. She promised the delegates that the government would be introducing an official bill in the next session of the Parliament. However, for unknown reasons, she backed out from her promise.25

However, on the side of the State Government of Bihar, it was only at the end of 1977 that the then Chief Minister of Bihar, Karpoori Thakur wrote a letter on December 22, 1977, to the Central Government asking the government to include Maithili in the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution. In this letter, he highlighted the following facts about the Maithili: the Maithili is a written and spoken language and it has tremendous potentiality to develop in the future. It has its own grammar and script and on any linguistic criteria it can be concluded that it is fully developed language. (Originally in Hindi, translation mine).

Again in 1988, G.S.Rajhans, a Congress (I) representative from Bihar, on 2 March 1988 raised the issue of Maithili in the Lok Sabha and demanded for its inclusion in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution. Also when the constitution (Seventy-eighth Amendment) Bill, 1992 placing Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali in the eighth schedule was introduced in the Parliament, the representatives from Mithila region once again raised their voice for the
inclusion of Maithili in the eighth schedule. The demand is still standing there and Maithili has yet to take a place in the eighth schedule.

Demand for a Mithila University

This was another long due demand of the Maithili movement since 1945. The demand was raised by the various socio-cultural organizations of Mithila. In 1947, a Mithila University Committee was also formed. Justification for having a separate University for Mithila was based on two counts -

first, that there was no modern university in the entire Mithila region and that the people of South Bihar, therefore, had had greater educational opportunities than the people of north Bihar. The second justification was that a university was needed which would be named after and reflect the particular culture of the Maithili region. 26

It was only in 1967, "when during the first non-Congress Ministry in Bihar, it was rigorously pressed." 27 The then Education Minister accepted the demand in principle and "agreed to place the proposal before the University Grants Commission (U.G.C.). 28 The Chief Minister of Bihar, Kedar Pandey announced in 1972 in the Assembly that a separate Mithila University, located at Darbhanga would be opened. And in May-June 1972, an ordinance to this effect was brought out by the State Government. 29 In 1975 the University, named after Lalit Narayan Mishra was established
at Darbhanga. Interestingly, in 1977, prefix 'L.N.' was dropped from the name of the university by the Janata Party Government in Bihar.

Demand for a Radio-Station at Darbhanga

In the opinion of Paul R. Brass such a demand is linguistic rather than regional. However, such a demand is regional in the sense that it caters to the language, culture and communication needs of dominant language group in a given region.

The demand for a radio-station at Darbhanga was a response to the reluctance and refusal of A.I.R. Patna authorities for giving Maithili more importance on Radio. Several protest movements were launched during 1950s and 1960s to press upon the government to concede the demand. In 1964, a delegation including the members of Parliament Yogendra Jha (C.P.I.) and Yamuna Prasad Mandal (Congress) met the then Union Information and Broadcasting Minister, Indira Gandhi for a radio station at Darbhanga. However, it was on the initiative of Satyanarayan Sinha, Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, that the demand was acceded to in 1970.

During 1980s Vidyapati Seva Sansthan, Darbhanga and several other Maithili organizations launched agitations for transmission of all the programmes from Darbhanga and
Bhagalpur stations of A.I.R. in Maithili. This demand has not been accepted by the Central Government.

State's Response: A Summary

Attitude of Bihar Government and the Central Government towards Maithili movement and its various demands, has never been encouraging. It has followed a policy of giving periodic concessions and acceding to certain demands of Maithili movement. In fact, it has never paid any consideration to the demand of a Mithila state. This is perhaps because Mithila is considered by the government as a dialect unit of sanskritized Hindi. And there is deliberate move on the part of the government to promote Hindi at the cost of Maithili and for that matter any other dialect of Bihar. Thus, Mithila has also never been considered as a separate ethnic entity, rather it is always viewed as a part of broader Hindi identity. It is precisely because of this kind of perception that the government has never paid any serious attention to other demands such as making Maithili second official language of Bihar etc.
References


2. Bhimnath Jha, "Darbhanga me Maithili-Sanstha" (Dharbhanga Based Maithili Organizations), Ariapan (Darbhanga), fourth issue, 1987, p.65.


5. Bhimnath Jha, op.cit., p.67. For detailed description of its activities and programmes also see, Vaidehi (Darbhanga), February-March 1968.


8. Ibid.

9. Information regarding this organization is based on author’s discussion with some of its members and the files and papers shown to author by the office of Vidyati Seva Sansthan during field study. This organization was established on 7 October 1980.


11. This observation is based on author’s discussion with some of the members of Darbhanga based organizations.

12. Nation-building in a North Indian Region..., op.cit., p.58.

13. Ibid.


15. Ibid, Table 21.
16. For Pravasi Maithili Sanghthan and its activities, see Mithila Darpan (Calcutta), January 1972. There are many more Maithili organizations outside Bihar. Detailed information regarding them has not been collected. However for detailed discussion about the Calcuta based Organizations, see, Nation-building in a North Indian Region, op.cit., pp.36-55.

17. Nation building in a North Indian Region..., op.cit., p.81.

18. Observation regarding the elite perceptions of Maithili movement is largely based on author’s discussion with some of the Maithili intellectuals at Darbhanga and Madhubani.

19. Nation building in a North Indian region..., op.cit., p.34.


23. For a detailed examination of state’s attitude towards Maithili language, see Ibid., pp.107-11.


28. Ibid, p.183. Also see Indian Nation (Patna), 9, 16 April and 1 June 1967.
