INTRODUCTION
The present study seeks to analyse the phenomena of socio-cultural regionalism in the federal process of nation-state building. Maithili movement has been selected as a case for detailed examination of the process of regional identity formation and subsequent political movement (regional) for serving varied interests of Maithili identity. It is interesting to point out that though Mithila has a distinct socio-cultural and linguistic identity, it has yet to become politically salient in the state and national politics and in determining the inter-ethnic relations. This poses a theoretical challenge of formulation and generalization on the principles of nationality formation.

Previous two most important studies on Maithili movement are by Paul R. Brass¹ and A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Sciences, Patna.² The study of Paul R. Brass includes study of Maithili language, regional elite, objective bases of Maithili movements' demand and states attitude towards Maithili movement. But his main analytical concern is to explain why Maithili Movement has not been successful? In this regard, he places certain reasons for this: failure of the elite to communicate ethnic values to the people; ambiguities over priority of identity and movement; Pan-Indian character of the elite; slow pace of mobilization; failure to associate language with religion, lukewarm
attitude of state government towards demands etc. His study is based on the subjectivists-objectivists theory of nationality formation. However, his study does not take into account the existence of structural divisions and conflicts that exist in the socio-cultural structure of Mithila. It has some bearing on formation of identity and growth of movement.

The other study statistically examines Maithili organizations and its objectives, organizational elites, socio-economic backwardness of the region and people’s awareness of the movement. This study reinforces Brass thesis that there exists a gap between elite and mass. More or less, analysis of the role of elite constitutes axis of both these studies.

The present study has broadly two components – one, the constituents of Maithili identity, and secondly the analysis of Maithili movement. The three set of theories that have been critically examined are, theories of nationalism or nationality formation; theories of national integration and the theories of federal-nation building, or federalism. The first set of theories help in analyzing the objective bases of Maithili identity formation; the second helps in characterizing a socio-cultural regional movement and from the third set of theories state-society relations, with special reference to Maithili movement, have been
examined. The combination of three sets of theories also helps in understanding the process of nation-state building in a federal polity and plural society like India.

From the theoretical insights, the hypotheses proposed are:

(1) Socio-cultural regional movements are not necessarily secessionist.

(2) Nature, unit and bases of mobilization affect the intensity and extent of a socio-cultural regional movement. Thus, if politicization occurs along caste lines, it may promote structural conflict within a given socio-cultural region which may adversely affect the formation of a regional identity and the universalization of the movement. Also, it may diffuse the object and goals of the movement.

3. The degree of internal differentiation and accommodation in a culture and language relatively affect the degree of cultural and linguistic unity and consequent identity of the people.

4. The existence of cultural differences and differentiations among the people of the same linguistic region affect the process of mobilization as well as formation of group consciousness and group cohesion, based on language. In this respects, examination of social conflict, generated by other social movements in the same region, becomes significant.
5. Differentiation of one language from other language especially those of adjoining territories is an essential condition for creating group-consciousness. Thus, mere existence of a separate language does not succeed in creating separate linguistic identity. Thus, linguistic cleavages assumes salience for identity formation.

6. Factors of socio-cultural identity must be reinforced by the regional specificity of socio-economic development or underdevelopment in order to achieve the objective of a separate state. In other words, factors of socio-cultural development should be grounded in the socio-economic deprivation of a region.

7. Periodic concessions given selectively by the state to some demands of socio-cultural and linguistic movement further diffuse the cause of main-demand, i.e., state or sub-state formation. This may partly explain variation in the intensity of a movement.

8. Group cohesion is achieved in terms of the structural conflict generated by, and generated in, the structure and process of state-society relationship as well. Thus it becomes seminally significant how the leaders of movement interpret the state's policies with regard to identific requirements of a regional community.

Based on the above hypotheses, the present study addresses itself to examine the process of Maithili identity
formation; relative strength and weaknesses of different objective markers of Maithil identity; role of some select Maithili organizations; overall elite perception of Maithili movement and its various demands, state's attitude to Maithili movement etc. The present exercise may help in understanding the process of regional identity formation and nature of socio-cultural regional movements in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-regional federal polity and society like India.

Discussion on Maithili movement is based on the study and analysis of material which were collected mainly during extensive field study and participant observation. Field work was mainly concentrated in two representative districts of Maithili cultural identity and tradition - Madhubani and Darbhanga, and certain areas of adjoining districts such as Saharsa, Sitamarhi and Muzaffarpur. Most of the organizations, espousing the cause of Mithila and Maithili movement, are primarily located in Darbhanga and Madhubani towns. These two districts are also the centres of Maithili movement. On the other hand, these two districts have witnessed many agrarian tensions and conflicts, and other social movements, such as Goala movement etc. Frequent land disputes and mobilization along caste lines to organize conflict and protest in the socio-cultural, and economic structure have been other relevant features of two
districts.

Besides, close observation of Maithili culture, society and Maithili movement, other sources include the personal papers (published and unpublished) pamphlets, memoranda, etc. from the Maithili scholars and individuals, which serve as primary sources for this work. Further, unstructured interview with some of the protagonist of the Maithili movement and formal discussion with Maithili intellectuals and elite are yet another important sources.

Maithili journals and other local publications of books etc. are very useful in collecting and collating different information regarding Mithila and Maithili Movement.

Lastly, it may be pointed out that most of the publications are in Maithili language, therefore, we have translated them into English. Instead of presenting a literal translation, emphasis was placed on the translation of themes, facts and figures.

Chapter Plan

Besides introduction and conclusion, the present work has been divided into five main chapters. Chapter one has two sections. First section critically examines different theories of nationalism and nationality formation, theories of national integration or nation-building and theories of federalism. Section two takes into account the process of
regional identity formation and the emergence and growth of regionalism in a federal process of nation-state building. This section also attempts to define meaning of regionalism and socio-cultural regionalism. Further, different concepts of regionalism have also been analyzed.

Chapter two entitled "sub-regional identities in Bihar" examines linguistic and tribal identities, as also Jharkhand regionalism in Bihar. Since caste is still a primary unit of mobilization for political action, this chapter also briefly analyzes the operational dynamics of caste identities in Bihar.

Chapter three discusses two basis components of Maithili identity - cultural and linguistic.

Chapter four analyzes the origin and growth of Maithili movement and the last chapter critically examines the aims, objectives, activities and membership patterns of socio-cultural organizations espousing the cause of Mithila and Maithili. In this chapter, elite perceptions of Maithili movement and state's attitude towards Maithili movement and its various demands are also examined. Lastly, conclusion is a summary of discussions which follow from previous chapters.
References
