CHAPTER 6

COMPARISON OF UTTARAKHAND MOVEMENT
WITH MAITHILI AND BHOJPURI MOVEMENTS

This chapter attempts a comparison of Uttarakhand movement with two movements in Hindi belt, namely, Mithila/Maithili movement and Bhojpur/Bhojpuri movement. Different aspects of the movements such as ideology, organization, leadership, process of identity formation, mobilization and communication have been compared. The effort has been made to understand how these aspects and issues focused on by a particular movement have promoted or retarded its chances of developing into a mass political movement.

Brass (1974) points out that the ideology of Mithila movement consists of three types of arguments: the artificiality of the existing administrative boundaries of the state of Bihar; the distinctive characteristics—which distinguish Mithila region from the rest of Bihar; and a charge of discriminatory allocation of political power and economic resources among the regions of Bihar. It is argued that the present boundaries of Bihar have been a result of annexation of territory westward from Bengal by the British in
nineteenth century. In the east and south, Bihar is separated from Bengal and Orissa on linguistic basis. The northern boundary divides Maithili-speaking tarai districts between Bihar and Nepal. On the west there is no natural or cultural distinctions between Bihar and UP as the western boundary divides the Bhojpuri – speaking people into two states. Further, it is argued that Mithila is a distinct region artificially bound to an artificial province. Moreover, Bihar is not homogenous internally. Mithila is a distinct plain region north of river Ganga which separates it from Maghi and Bhojpuri – speaking plains districts on the south. The rest of Bihar consists of tribal hill districts of Chhota Nagpur (now forms a separate Chhattisgarh state). Brass (1974) observes that the non-conformity of geographical and linguistic boundaries not withstanding, the claim that the people of north Bihar speak a separate language having a long and glorious literary tradition, has been a central element in the Mithila state demand. The third category of argument refers to the relation between Bihar and Mithila which is stated to be an exploitative one. It is complained that Bihar government spends much less on Mithila than it receives in taxes. The region is industrially backward. It has less irrigation facilities, fewer roads and educational facilities but higher unemployment. Further, it is alleged that the economic exploitation and neglect of north Bihar is no accident but a result of domination of politics of Bihar by Maghi and Bhojpuri – speaking people.
Like Mithila movement, the ideology of Bhojpur movement also focuses on issues such as artificiality of state boundaries; distinctiveness of Bhojpur region; backwardness of the region and need to carve out a separate Bhojpuri state (Neena 1989). Several demands relating to Bhojpuri language have also been a central issue in the movement. The resolution adopted at the first Akhil Bhojpuri Prantiya Sammelan held in March 1947 at Seewan reads:

The Sammelan believes that inhabitants of Bhojpuri region have had an old culture and style of its own. Due to their vested interests, Britishers divided Bhojpuri region into Bihar and United Province. This political arrangement is ridiculous. This is high time to bring the whole of Bhojpuri region into one province. This Sammelan appeals to Legislative Assembly to grant statehood to Bhojpuri region. The Sammelan also proposes to launch a movement to achieve this objective using peaceful and just means (as quoted in Neena 1989:150).

In the second sammelan held in December 1947, Rahul Sanskrityayan in his presidential address said, “It is ridiculous that we are divided between two provinces. We cannot tolerate this injustice for long” (as quoted in Neena 1989:151). Emphasizing the need for a separate state he said, “If we have a province of our own we can manage the things in whatever way we choose” (ibid.).
But in the 1970s many Bhojpuri organization declared that theirs was a purely cultural movement for the development of their mother tongue (Bhojpuri) and preservation of their culture. Many demands relating to Bhojpuri 'language' were made, such as: open Bhojpuri academies in Bihar and UP; recognition to Bhojpuri language by Sahitya Academy; inclusion of Bhojpuri in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution; introduction of Bhojpuri as a subject in state Civil Services examinations; open Bhojpuri departments in the Universities in UP and Bihar; open a new University at Arrah; make arrangements for primary education through Bhojpuri medium. Maithili movement also made similar demands for the development of Maithili language.

The arguments put forward by the spokesmen of Uttarakhand movement in its first phase were similar to the arguments found in Mithila and Bhojpur movements in the 1940s. It had been argued that Uttarakhand was a distinct socio-cultural region geographically different from the plains districts of UP. And that economic development in the region would be possible only when statehood was conferred on the region.

One of the weaknesses of Maithili movement has been the lack of a strong political organization. Brass (1974) observes that the movement has been dominated by voluntary associations, principally caste associations such as Mithila Mahasabha and literary-cultural associations such as the Maithil Sahitya Parishad. Their membership has come from a small elite group,
primarily Maithil Brahmins; their membership has been tiny; their activities minimal and their finances dismal" (ibid:424). Brass opines that a major reason for the failure of the Maithili movement has been the small scale and relative weakness and narrowness of the political organizations which speak in its name. The main political parties in Mithila region have not been oriented to the interests of Maithili movement. The politics in Mithila region has been dominated by leading political parties in Bihar. These parties interested in the politics of Bihar as a whole, have been willing to consider and support specific demands for the advancement of the Maithili–speaking region but none of them have been interested in accepting the Maithili cause as their own.

The case of Bhojpuri falls in between Maithili and Uttarakhand as far as the organization of the movement is concerned. In this movement literary and cultural as well as political associations have been active. Neena (1989) observes that till mid-seventies the efforts made by Bhojpuri litterateurs, scholars and supporters were sporadic and results of interests of individuals. These were not in the form of institutionalized programmes of some central organization. There were many associations devoted to Bhojpuri language and literature at different places but they lacked coordination among themselves. In 1975 Akhil Bharitya Bhojpuri Sahitya Sammelan (ABBSS) was formed at Patna to coordinate scattered efforts of a number of Bhojpuri associations. Another organization, the Bhojpuri Academy was established in 1976 to
promote and preserve Bhojpuri culture. Apart from these literary associations there are political associations such as the Bhojpur Desham and the Krantikari Bhojpuri Morcha which have raised the demand of a separate state for Bhojpuri–speakers.

Uttarakhand movement has been at an advantage in terms of organizational structure. Not only that there have been several regional political parties devoted to the cause of a separate state but many state level and national parties also supported the demand. Many non-political associations were formed in the region but the movement has been dominated by the political associations. Initially Uttarakhand movement too lacked coordination among the associations but in the later phases serious efforts were made in this direction.

One of the weaknesses of Maithili movement has been a lack of dynamic leadership. Brass (1974) observes that the leaders of Maithili movement failed to mobilize people rapidly enough to provide a constituency which could have supported them. The leaders of the movement, "The Maithili Brahman elite is a narrow, upper caste, socially exclusive, and culturally and linguistically distinctive group which has been unable to provide effective leadership to middle and lower castes in Mithila"(ibid:416). They could not even develop means to communicate with the urban, newspaper reading, Maithili speaking population. The Maithili leadership has not been able to compete successfully with the counter elites even in its cultural heartland in Darbhanga to make
Maithili a medium of communication among the literate Maithils who prefer to read Hindi, English and Urdu newspaper. Moreover, Maithil Brahman elite has lagged behind the counter elite, developed in the region along caste-lines which has been successful in achieving political power for themselves by participating in the arena of Bihar politics.

The activities of Bhojpuri movement, by and large, have been restricted to a small group of teachers, scholars, litteratures, linguists and students who have concentrated primarily on Bhojpuri language and literature. Neena (1989) points out that the Bhojpuri movement has been dominated by 'cultural entrepreneurs' and there is a virtual absence of 'political brokers' who could utilize the cultural capital to bargain with the government. Thus Bhojpuri movement like Maithili movement lacked a dynamic political leadership which could have mobilized people across social strata.

In terms of leadership Uttarakhand movement has been at an advantage in comparison to Maithili or Bhojpuri movement. The Brahmin-Rajput leadership of Uttarakhand movement comes from the castes which constitute about three-fourths of the total population of the region. The Maithili Brahmin–Kayasthas castes constitute a minority in Mithila region. Similarly leaders of Bhojpuri movement came only from a few social categories such as teachers, writers, scholars and students. Moreover, the leadership in case of Uttarakhand as been predominately
politically oriented. Some leaders have been associated with national and state level political parties, whereas others came from regional political parties. But Uttarakhand leadership also suffered from elite-mass gap which the leaders of the Chipko and the anti-liquor movement could bridge to some extent.

According to Brass (1974) there are four kinds of variables which affect the process of crystallization of identity and mobilization in a movement: one, the nature and variability of the objective distinguishing features of the group; two, the character of internal values and internal processes of change taking place within the group; three, the nature of group's relations with other groups; and four, the form of political organization of the group's members and its relationship to state policies toward the political rights of the group.

Maithili language has been the most important objective distinguishing feature of the people of north Bihar. Grierson (1880) established the grammatical distinctiveness of Maithili from Hindi and Bengali. Maithili also has a distinctive literature. Geographically the people of Mithila are claimed to form a territorial community called Maithils. But Brass notes that this identification with the territory of Mithila is distinctive primarily to the Brahmans and Kayasthas in the region. Mithila has had a separate history from the rest of Bihar; a large part of Mithila either has been independent or a separate administrative unit in the past. But its historical boundaries has not always coincided
with its geographical and linguistic boundaries. The region has a separate calendar, some unique festivals and distinctive habits of diet and dress. It has been a land of orthodox Hinduism and centre of Sanskrit learning. Lastly, the region is also distinctive in terms of economic development, for it is the most backward region in Bihar.

Like Maithili-speaking people of north Bihar, Bhojpuri-speaking people also have some distinctive objective features. Bhojpur region has a distinct culture and history. Bhojpuri has been recognised as a distinct dialect with a distinct literature. Bhojpuri ‘language’ has been a central issue in Bhojpuri movement. But Bhojpuri leaders have not been unanimous about the exact boundaries of the territory in which Bhojpuri is spoken. The region has had a different historical-political tradition. It was the capital of Ujjain ruled by Rajput Kings, the descendents of the famous king Bhoj of Malwa. They invaded the area and after defeating the aboriginal ‘Chero’ tribe established a small kingdom called Bhojpur named after the King Bhoj (Neena 1989). Udai Narayan Tewary writes that the rulers of Bhojpur played an important role in the history of Western Bihar and their influence remained intact till 1857. Kunwar Singh, a descendent of Ujjain rulers revolted against the British in 1857, as a consequence Bhojpur was destroyed and it came to an end (Neena 1989).
Similarly, there is a rich and varied pool of symbols to draw upon from history, geography and culture of Uttarakhand region. Geographically the region presents a contrast to the plain areas of Uttar Pradesh. Uttarakhand, predominantly, consists of mountains and valleys criss-crossed by a network of swift rivers flowing in deep gorges. Along North-South axis the region covers parts of the Greater Himalayas, lower Himalayas, Shivalik Hills, Bhaber and Tarai. Historically, the region had never been a part of India till 1815. The British annexed it to Indian territory after they defeated the Gurkhas of Nepal in 1815 when the Sangroli agreement was signed. The region had been ruled by several dynasties such as the Katyuries, Chands, Panwars and the Gurkhas of Nepal. Uttarakhand is a distinct socio-cultural region (see Chapter 2). Though it is inhabited predominantly by Hindus its residents have never been orthodox Hindus. They observe many customs and practices which are considered 'unholy' by the orthodox Brahmins. They worship their own deities; observe distinctive birth and death rites; follow distinctive rules of marriage; have distinctive pattern of houses. Most importantly, the region has a unique caste system. Finally, the People in Uttarakhand speak dialects of Central Pahari a variety of Pahari language.
Brass (1974) identifies four pre-requisites for the crystallization of regional consciousness; one, a pool of symbols of distinctness to draw upon; two, an elite to select, transmit and standardize the symbols; three, presence of a socially mobilizing population to whom the elite will communicate symbols of group identity; and four, existence of at least one rival group from whom the group is to be differentiated.

Brass (1974) points out that the objective differences between people are themselves highly variable and do not automatically lead to the crystallization of identity. In traditional societies, Brass observes, in early stages of social mobilization, it is misleading to think of gross differences in the religious or linguistic composition of populations as 'givens'. One of the reasons for this in traditional societies is that the differences between elite and mass speakers of a particular language or practitioners of a particular religion may be greater than the differences between ordinary people who are supposed to speak different languages or practice different religions. The processes of social change may either bridge this elite-mass gap or widen it. In the Mithila region,...

...the distance between the language of Maithil Brahmin elite speakers of Maithili and non-elite Maithili-speakers has appeared to many of the latter to be greater than the
distance between spoken Maithili and spoken Hindi. Processes of social change have brought Maithili- and Hindi-speakers even closer, but have not reduced the elite-mass distance among the maithili-speakers (ibid:405).

In the early stages of development of a language, dialect variations are more likely to be on geographical basis than on class/caste basis. In such conditions the leaders of a movement face the problem of selection of one dialect as a standard for a language. Because, the choice of one dialect may alienate speakers of other dialects. In the case of Maithili language the dialect selected by Grierson as 'standard Maithili' was spoken primarily in only four districts situated north of the Ganga river. In the case of Maithili movement, the contradictions have been so great to begin with that they have contributed to the failure of the movement. Brass (1974 : 411) notes that,

The central problem of the movement has been the Maithili language. Its supporters, however, have faced critical problems of self-definition from the start. Is Maithili the language as spoken by the Maithili Brahmin elite of Darbhanga or is it the language as spoken by the mass of people in most of north Bihar? If the movement is to be based upon the pure Maithili of Darbhanga, its scope will be severely limited. If it is to be the spoken language of the mass of the people then how will the language be standardized in a form acceptable to as wide a group as
possible and usable as a medium of instruction and examinations in the schools?

Another important feature of Maithili language which has affected its spread is use of different scripts by different classes for different forms of Maithili. Grierson found three scripts in use for Maithili: the Maithili Brahmins used Maithili or Tirhuti script; the educated classes in north India used Kaithi script; educated people in Bihar influenced by Hindi literary scholars of Banaras used Devnagari script. Now, Devnagari has completely replaced both Kaithi and Maithili scripts. The use of Devnagari script has helped Hindi movement in absorbing Maithili-speakers. At the same time it has made it difficult for Maithili-speakers to assert their claim of distinctiveness.

In the case of Bhojpuri, Neena (1989) points out that there are significant variations in the language. It is known by different names in different areas. Different varieties are named after the names of the areas where they are spoken, such as: Buxaries, Chaparaha, Banarasi and Kashika. There are four varities of Bhojpuri – Northern Bhojpuri; Western Bhojpuri; Southern Bhojpuri (or standard Bhojpuri); and Nagpuria. Neena elaborates:

Northern Bhojpuri is spoken in Gorakhpur, Deoria and Basti. Whereas Western Bhojpuri covers Varanasi,
Azamgarh, Western Ghazipur, Mirzapur and Jaunpur. Southern or standard Bhojpuri is used in Bhojpur, Rohtas, Saran and Ballia and Nagpuria is spoken in Palamau and Ranchi districts of Chhota Nagpur division. Bhojpuri spoken in the district of Champaran is known as ‘Madhesi’ due to its position between Gorakhpuri Bhojpuri in its west and Maithili in the East. In the lower region of the Himalayas from Jalpaiguri in the east to Kumaon in the West, lives ‘Tharoo’, a scheduled Tribe. These Tharoos of the adjoining areas of Champaran in Bihar and Bahraich in Uttar Pradesh, speak a kind of mixed Bhojpuri which is known as Tharoo (ibid: 100).

The leaders of Bhojpuri movement also face the problem of standardization of the language. The question is which dialect of the language should be taken as standard Bhojpuri? Some Bhojpuri writers speak of sanskritization of Bhojpuri, others argue for the ‘pure Bhojpuri’ spoken by the masses. The latter group feels that if Bhojpuri is sanskritized it will lose its ‘indigenous form’ and identity. They fear that the process will culminate in the formation of an artificial language divorced from the masses.

Mere presence of symbols of distinctness do not suffice for the crystallization of consciousness. It requires attachment of value to these symbols – the process of myth formation. This process first of all involves the attachment of value and pride to the objective
markers of the group's identity. This is followed by a search for new symbols of group identity from the past. And finally oppressors are identified who have held or do hold the advancement of the group in check (Brass 1974).

Brass (1974) notes that regional movements "select out of the past symbols which establish the continuity, distinctness, and grandeur of the historical-political traditions of the area". Maithili movement leadership projected the Rajas of Darbhanga as the rulers of Mithila and as a living embodiment of the independent history and culture of the region. The Rajas took keen interest in the development of Maithili language and revival of Maithili literature. They played an important role in the development of interest in the culture of Mithila. But at the same time Maharajas of Darbhanga supported orthodox Hindu practices relating to both castes and religion. They were committed to the sanskritic tradition. Both orthodox Hindu practices and sanskrit tradition "partly transcend and partly hinder the development of Maithili regional consciousness because of their all-India orientation and their elitist exclusivism" (ibid:59). The maharajas on the one hand supported the cause of Maithili, and on the other supported Hindi. They formed a close elite group and were not popular with the
people of Mithila. They had a greater devotion for all-India symbols than to the cultural symbols of Mithila region.

The leaders of Maithili movement also tried to create myths about Maithili language. They not only emphasized the grammatical distinctiveness of Maithili from both Hindi and Bengali, but also stressed that the language has a glorious literary heritage for centuries and that it has produced one of the world’s greatest poets and literary geniuses, Vidyapati Thakur. Moreover, the literary excellence of Maithili is such that it must be preserved and further encouraged to develop. Brass (1974) points out that the process of myth construction has not developed strongly in the Maithili movement.

The composition of elite determines the symbols used for myth construction. The very success of the movement as a whole depends upon the ability of an elite to communicate effectively with the potential followers and at the same time to prevent the growth of counter elites who pose a threat to wean away the followers. The Maithili Brahmin elite failed to mobilise the middle and lower caste groups in Maithili. Moreover, it could not check the growth of counter-elites who mobilised people on the basis of caste. These counter-elites realized that they could achieve
political power for themselves and economic advantages for their followers by participating in the arena of Bihar politics rather than indulging in separatist politics confined to the region.

Brass (1974:418)) maintains that '...a self-conscious nation does not come into being until there is a socially mobilized population to whom the myth of group solidarity can be communicated'. Elites may affect the process of social change and social mobilization taking place in a group in two ways. One, by developing means of communication with the already mobilized and newly mobilizing populations. Two, by competing with the counter-elites manipulating other symbols to win over newly mobilized and unmobilized groups.

The Maithili Brahmin leadership failed on both counts. Social change and social mobilization have been slower in north Bihar compared to rest of the regions in Bihar. In Maithili movement the leaders could not develop adequate means of communication with Maithili speakers even in urban areas. It failed to do so even in its cultural heartland of Darbhanga.

Like the leaders of Maithili movement Bhojpuri spokesmen also tried to attach value to the symbols of Bhojpuri distinctiveness.
D.P. Singh writes about the old grandeur and glory of Bhojpur kingdom:

It is said about this town that once upon a time this town Bhojpur covered an area of fourteen kosa and was very prosperous. According to one proverb the town had fifty three roads with market on both sides, had fifty two gullies .... If we assume that on an average each family had five members, then its population would be around two lakhs and eighty thousand. The old persons narrate the stories of temples, palaces, tanks, palace of Maharaj Vikramaditya, Singhasan-Battisi, the place where it was buried, the hall where 'navratans' of Vikramaditya used to assemble etc.. Even, today in Bhojpur one can see the signs of mounds, tanks, etc. (quoted in Neena 1989: 116-117).

Neena (1989) notes that Bhojpuri spokesmen have looked upon Veer Kunwar Singh as a rallying point to integrate Bhojpuri community Kunwar Singh is a hero of the revolt of 1857. He is called the 'father of Bhojpuris'. He is as popular with the masses as the Rani of Jhansi. He was loved by the people in the region between Calcutta and Lucknow and on either side of the Ganga. He was much dreaded by the British. In him the Bhojpuri leaders see the scope to establish the grandeur of the historical-political traditions of the region.
B S Upadhyaya glorifies the achievements of the region in the following words:

No Janpad in the history of India could gain such importance as that of Bhojpur which had Kashi within its boundaries. In ancient times Magadh and Bhojpuri were under one system of government. Chandra Gupta Maurya and great scholar Chanakya belonged to this region. It is a region of brave people. Shantan Shah had defeated 'chero' tribal chiefs and established the rule of Ujjain dynasty. The rulers of Bhojpur region kept struggling for their independence even during Mughal rule. Descendant of Parmar Kings, Kunwar Singh during 1857 at the ripe age of eighty gave a tough fight to British army. In the twentieth century Bhojpur Janpad played a glorious role in the political awakening of India. Gandhi, after returning from South Africa conducted his first experiment of Satyagrah in Champaran. In the Quit India movement this region played a glorious role. Jayaprakash Narayan played a very important part in 1942 movement, Bihar movement led by Jayaprash in 1974-75 has been a milestone in the political history of our country (quoted in Neena 1989:120).

Bhojpuri movement, however, suffers from a serious disadvantage. While, on the one hand the socio-cultural and political achievements which are invoked to glorify the region, provides a unity, on the other hand, Bhojpuri people share their history and culture with north Indian history and culture. This diffuses their distinct identity.
The political elite of the region have been oriented to Indian nation and national politics rather than regional politics. The political leaders such as Rajendra Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan and Jagjivan Ram despite their attachment to their mother tongue, championed the cause of Hindi as the 'national language' of India. Regional political leaders here, Pandey Kapil points out, unlike leaders from the other parts of the country never encouraged linguistic-regional chauvinism. The symbols of national identification have been given priority over regional symbols. Kapil underlines the tradition, deep rooted in the psyche of Bhojpurias, of sacrificing regional interests for the sake of country's larger interests (see, Neena 1989).

The Bhojpuri movement has been dominated by cultural and literary elite. Culturally oriented leadership of Bhojpuri movement has failed to influence the process of social change and social mobilization among Bhojpuri-speaking population. Like the leaders of Maithili movement Bhojpuri spokesmen also could not compete with counter-elites using non-linguistic symbols for mobilizing the Bhojpuri-speaking population.

Like the Maithili and Bhojpuri cases the spokesmen of Uttarakhand movement idealized the region and its culture. The
region has been referred to as the land of Gods and Goddesses. The snow-clad mountains are said to be endowed with such holy and purifying qualities that the sins of the beholders are washed away. The holy shrines of Kedarnath and Badrinath, the two famous centres of pilgrimage for the Hindus adorn the region. The Ganga and the Yamuna have their origins in this region. It is said that Pandavas of the Mahabharata fame took refuge in the hills of Uttarakhand when they were banished from Hastinapur. The Shankaracharya visited the region in the beginning of 9th century AD and propagated Hinduism in this area. Haridwar, the gateway to the land of Gods, where Kumbh mela is organised every twelve years occupies a significant place in the Hindu religion.

Uttarakhand played an important role in India’s freedom struggle. At the time of Quit India movement in 1942 it was a hub of political activities. Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali, the hero of Peshawar revolt in 1930, earned a great respect for the region. He refused to follow the command of a British officer to shoot at unarmed Pathans protesting at Peshawar. Even today he is revered in Uttarakhand as a patriotic Indian. Mahatama Gandhi visited the region and he left an indelible mark on the psyche of Uttarakhandis.
The political elite of the region has always been integrated into Indian national politics. G B Pant, K C Pant, H N Bahuguna, N D Tiwari all preferred to engage in U P state politics rather than 'separatist' regional politics. No wonder the region so far has given four Chief Ministers to Uttar Pradesh.

In Uttarakhand movement the distinctive cultural symbols are not much emphasized. There has been no focus on the dialects spoken in the region. This strategy has worked out well for the region. Because the cultural symbols of the region unite it with north Indian Hindu culture more than they differentiate it from the latter. Similarly, there is so much variation in the Garhwali and Kumaoni dialects spoken in the region that speakers of these languages are not intelligible to each other and Hindi is used as a link language even within the region. Thought, Jaunsar-Bawar has a distinctive culture there was no movement in this sub-region(see, Chapter 2).

Brass (1974) observes that inter-group conflict arises when there is a perception of existence of unevenness in development between two or more groups. The relationship between Maithili and non-Maithli speakers in Bihar has been ambiguous. Maithili-speakers are a demographic minority in Bihar which is culturally
heterogeneous. Other linguistic groups are more advanced and identify themselves with Hindi. But in the Mithila region Maithili-speakers are a demographic majority in a situation were Hindi and Urdu speakers dominate the politics and economy of the region. And Hindi and Urdu are the chief media of education and communication. The slow pace of change in Mithila and slow pace of entry of Maithili-speakers into the modern sectors of the society makes it relatively easy for dominant Hindi-speaking people to absorb and assimilate socially mobilized Maithili-speakers.

The Maithili case shows that the existence of objective facts which contribute to imbalance between groups does not matter if the people themselves do not perceive it. The Maithili-speaking region is undoubtedly economically less developed than other parts of Bihar. It is often alleged that the region has been discriminated against as evidenced by the absence of a University and a Radio station. But this evidence of regional imbalance, somehow, has either not been perceived as significant by most Maithili-speakers. But other kinds of discriminations, say those based on caste, have been perceived as more important and have been more potent sources of political mobilization.
Both in Maithili and Bhojpuri cases their spokesmen have noted that Maithili-speaking and Bhojpuri-speaking people in cities like Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta have been more conscious of their identity compared to those in the regions. Inter-group relations, not only within the region but also outside it, affect the crystallization of identity. A spokesman of Bhojpuri movement in 1985 condemned Shiva sena's move to drive Bhojpuris out of Bombay. He argued that it was against the spirit of the Constitution of India which guarantees to its citizens the freedom to earn their livelihood and settle down anywhere in India. Narrating this incident he underlined the need to have a separate Bhojpuri state so that people of the region would not have to go out in search of livelihood (see, Neena, 1989).

This comparison reveals that the movements such as Bhojpuri and Maithili which emphasized only the linguistic-cultural dimension could not succeed because they did not focus on underdevelopment and spatial identity. On the other hand Uttarakhand movement which focused on economic backwardness of the region and geographical identity succeeded although the region consists of three distinct socio-cultural groups.