CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Comparison of Maithili and Bhojpuri movements with Uttarakhand movement reveals that in North India only those 'separatist' movements where a distinct spatial-cultural identity combines with the issue of underdevelopment (regional movements) are likely to succeed. This is for two reasons. One, in regional movements territory is the basis of identity formation. The emphasis on spatial identity helps the leadership to gloss over religious, linguistic and/or caste differences among the population in the region. Thus, mobilization of people into collective action becomes relatively easier. Two, the demands where secular identity combines with economic backwardness are more likely to find favour with the Indian State.

Notwithstanding the demonstration of strength by the movement and legitimacy of the demand, ultimate outcome of the movement is determined by the politics at the Centre. A movement may demonstrate its strength, and yet the demand may not be granted (for example,
Jharkhand and Uttarakhand movements were in existence for several decades but their demand was conceded only in November 2000. On the other hand a demand may be accepted even though the movement has not demonstrated its strength and in existence for a short duration as in the case of Chhattisgarh. The discussion that follows aims to elaborate these points.

Maithili movement to begin with was regional in nature. The issue of distinctiveness and backwardness of the region were among the main issues raised by the movement. Soon the issue of economic backwardness was abandoned and the issue of distinct linguistic identity occupied the centre-stage. Perhaps it was in anticipation of reorganisation of states on linguistic basis in 1956. In case of Bhojpuri movement distinct linguistic identity formed the basis for the demand of separate Bhojpuri province. Both Maithili and Bhojpuri movements had sent representations to the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) but these demands are not even mentioned in the Report of the Commission. Later on both Maithili and Bhojpuri movements evolved into linguistic-cultural movements. Bhojpuri movement also betrays signs of linguistic-
regionalism as some political associations within the movement keep raising the demand for a separate Bhojpuri state.

However, both Maithili and Bhojpuri movements failed to build a common linguistic identity in their respective regions. The main reasons for failure of these movements are: primacy given to symbols of 'national' identities over regional symbols by the leaders; elitist and exclusivist nature of the leadership; integration of political elites of the region (Bhojpur) into Bihar State politics on the basis of ideological and caste symbols rather than in terms of regional linguistic and cultural symbols; failure of the leadership to compete with the spread of Hindi which succeeded in absorbing socially mobilized Maithili and Bhojpuri-speaking populations; and relative absence of political organisations to champion the cause.

Like Maithili and Bhojpuri movements Uttarakhand movement also faced the problems of crystallization of identity and mobilization. One of the major problems had been socio-cultural divide between Garhwal, Kumaon, and Jaunsar-Bawar, the three sub-regions in Uttarakhand. Two different dialects, Garhwali and
Kumaoni belonging to 'central Pahari' group of Pahari language, are used in Garhwal and Kumaon respectively. Whereas in Jaunsar-Bawar a dialect of 'western Pahari' group of Pahari language is spoken. Historically Kumaon and Garhwal were ruled by two different dynasties of rulers for several centuries before coming under Gurkha occupation at the end of 17th Century. The Chands and the Panwars ruled Kumaon and Garhwal respectively. The history of the kings of Garhwal and Kumaon is the history of mutual warfare. These sub-regions were intermittently at war with each other. As a result there was very little interaction between the people of these regions.

The socio-cultural divide among the three sub-regions exists to the day. The first line of cleavage exists between the Jaunsar-Bawar and the rest of Uttrakhand (that is, Kumaon and Garhwal). The second line of cleavage exists between Garhwal and Kumaon. It is more pronounced in Garhwal than in Kumaon. Because, the former is relatively less developed than the latter. This divide has manifested itself at several occasions. When a University was to be established in Kumaon, there was agitation in early 1970s in Garhwal.
to have a separate university in the area. As a result, two universities had to be established. Again in 1994, when the movement touched its high point, UP government declared three per cent reservation in jobs in the region for hills people to pacify the agitationsists. Garhwal university teachers demanded the reservation to be made available for Garhwalis only. In 1994, the primary issue in Garhwal was statehood for Uttarakhand, whereas in Kumaon it was extension of OBC reservation to all the residents of Uttarakhand. Following Muzaffar Nagar incident which occurred in the early hours of October 2, 1994, there was a lull in the movement in Kumaon. But the movement gathered momentum in Garhwal because the agitationists which were fired upon and the women who were raped came from Garhwal sub-region.

Another factor that has adversely affected the formation of a common identity is the presence of 'migrant syndrome' in a substantial population in the region. It has been discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The 'migrant syndrome' combined with the 'ideal image' (already discussed in Chapter 3) of the hills people has been
responsible for lack of pride for hills culture among its inhabitants.

As in the case of Maithili and Bhojpuri the political elite in Uttarakhand also had been for long integrated in UP state politics and national politics. Moreover, national issues have always dominated the election campaigns in the region. Issues raised by the Chipko and anti-liquor movements could never find favour with the state level and national political parties. This region has been characterised by a high rate of out-migration. Thus, there has been a lack of socially mobilized population in the region which could have supported the movement. Another factor which has been an obstacle in the process of formation of a monolithic identity is the division of hill society atleast in three broad social groups: Thul-Jat, Khasi and Dom.

Now, we turn to the factors which have helped crystallization of Uttarakhand movement. The foregoing discussion makes it clear that there have been factors which made it difficult to build a common cultural identity in the region. But at the same time we see no such forces at work which could have aggravated the
divisions in the social structure. The section of political elite of the region which was integrated into UP state politics though derived benefits for themselves but could not bring any benefits to the people in the region. Therefore, they could not wean away socially mobilized or those with potential to be socially mobilized population from the 'separatist' regional politics. One advantage leadership of Uttarakhand movement enjoyed was that it did not have to compete with a counter elite. In the 1990s, with the Chipko movement a new kind of politics took roots in the region. It was mass politics at grass-roots level. It united people not on the basis of common identity (which of course followed automatically) but common interests of all the hill people. Here we see a new identity taking shape, that is, a geographical or spatial identity, the 'Pahari' identity.

An important factor which favoured crystallization of Uttarakhand movement is the issue raised by the movement. Its emphasis was on distinct geography and economy rather than on distinct culture or language. It helped crystallization of 'Pahari' identity. The issue of economic deprivation appealed to everybody in the
region across caste and linguistic division as there is no much difference in economic status of people belonging to different castes.

The forest, liquor, and reservation policies of the state have been boons in disguise for Uttarakhand movement. The policy of commercial exploitation of forests led to the emergence of the Chipko movement which became instrumental in building a ‘Pahari’ identity. Similarly, liquor policy generated resentment among people in the hills. The declaration of reservation for the OBCs facilitated mobilization for the movement for statehood. Mobilization of people into collective action is relatively easy if either a common identity is invoked or common interest are emphasized. The OBCs constitute only about 2-3 per cent of the population in Uttarakhand region. When 27 per cent seats were reserved for them in Government jobs and educational institutions the decision was perceived as unjustified and discriminatory against the hill people particularly the upper casets which constitute about three-fourths of the population of Uttarakhand. When these people, united on the basis of ‘Pahari’ identity, realised that the policy of reservation was against their common
interests, their mobilization into collective action soon followed.

The students started anti-OBC reservation movement in July 1994. Soon the issue changed from anti-reservation to the demand to declare Uttarakhand as a backward region. As the agitation was gathering momentum, UP Assembly passed a resolution for the creation of a separate state of Uttarakhand. Mulayam Sing's government in UP made it clear that it was not possible to have a different reservation policy for Uttarakhand region as long it formed a part of UP. Ultimately, the issue of statehood came to dominate the movement. An advantage with Uttarakhand movement was that there were regional political parties to champion the cause.

One important development in the last phase of the movement was discovery of an 'enemy group' to mobilize people against. This had been a lacuna in the earlier phases of Uttarakhand movement. The spokesmen of the movement all along held defective policies and bureaucracy responsible for the underdevelopment of the region. The reservation policy
led to discovery of Yadavs as an antagonistic group. Moreover, Mulayam Singh Yadav's statement that he did not depend on the support of the Paharis to run his government in UP and if he gave a green signal to his men in the plains they could take care of Paharis, established Yadavs as an 'enemy group'. This statement not only reinforced 'Pahari' identity but also led hill people to feel proud for their culture. This statement instigated the Government employees to go on an indefinite strike which ran almost for three months.

Most of the time when a political party decides to support or oppose the demand for creation of a new state in India, the decision is guided by electoral arithmetic. The timing of decision is determined by either hope for potential political gains or fear of potential losses. In 1987 the BJP decided to support the demand for creation of separate states of Uttaranchal (Uttarakhand), Vanachal (Jharkahand) and Chhattisgarh. Although, A. B. Vajpayee did not favour creation of smaller states L. K. Advani prevailed over others and got the resolution passed in the meeting of National Executive Committee of the BJP. It was the
time when the BJP was trying to explore all possible avenues to broaden its political base.

The BJP's policy towards creation of smaller states started bearing fruits sooner than later. In 1989 the BJP won only one Assembly seat in the region. In 1991 elections the BJP won 15 out of 19 Assembly seats and all the four Parliamentary seats from Uttarakhand region. Its percentage of votes increased from 4.95 in 1989 to 39.80 in 1991. An increase of 35 per cent in a time span of only two years. Though the BJP in its election campaign in the region, raised twin issues of a separate Uttarakhand state and construction of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya the latter issue dominated the campaign. Again in 1993 Assembly elections, the BJP could win 10 out of 19 seats from the region. In 1996 elections it cornered 17 assembly seats and three Parliamentary seats out of four in the region. A high concentration of upper castes in Uttarakhand accounts for the meteoric rise of BJP in the region. Similarly in Jharkhand the BJP emerged as the singly largest party in the last elections. The BJP won 32 assembly seats, whereas the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha a regional political party could win only 14 seat.
Most of the time when a political party decides to support or oppose the creation of a new state, the decision is guided by the electoral arithmetic. The BJP's support for the demand of Harit Pradesh in Western UP can also be understood in the context of forthcoming Assembly Elections in the state. Ajit Singh, a prominent leader of Jats in Western UP, has been made a Cabinet Minister on the understanding that his Rshtriya Lok Dal will have an alliance with the BJP in the coming elections. Ajit Singh has been raising the demand for a separate Harit Pradesh to be carved out of 17 districts of Western UP. He argues that a smaller state is essential for the purpose of efficient administration and optimum development of the region.

The decision of BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to create Uttarakhand, Jharkahnd and Chhattisgarh is a part of vote-bank politic. The political support of the party has reached a saturation level and the ideology of Hindutava is giving diminished returns. Now, if the party wishes to increase its number of seats in the Parliament, it has to spread its political base in new regions or regions which experience discontent. The BJP could make in-roads in Uttarakhand and
Jharkhand regions because these regions had a substantial socially mobilized population which welcomed the BJP's decision to support their cause. In case of Chhattisgarh the BJP could not achieve the desired results for the region lacked socially mobilized population on the issue of a separate state.

For the last few years the Hindutva forces in the BJP have been focussing their efforts on tribal areas. It could be for two reasons: one, to find new supporters for their ideology to broaden their political base; and two, to counter the proselytization activities of the Christian missionaries in these areas. Their new found love for 'Girijans' (forest-dwellers) is aimed to win these people's loyalty for Hindu religion. When the Bill for formation of Chhattisgarh was being passed in the Lok Sabha, Home Minister L. K. Advani said, 'we are not only creating a separate state but also paying attention to the large section of people who have been feeling ignored'. (HT, New Delhi, July31, 2000). So political expediency plays an important role in the creation of states in India rather than concern for development.