CHAPTER – 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MOVEMENT

The life of Uttarakhand movement can be divided into several phases to facilitate an understanding of the evolution of the movement. The different phases of the movement can be identified on the bases of two variables: one, number of participants; two, the social composition of participants. The first phase of the movement spans from the beginning in 1940s to the emergence of the Chipko movement in 1972. This is may be called pre-Chipko phase of the movement. This is followed by the Chipko phase. The third phase begins with the formation of the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD), a regional political party, in July 1979 and paved the way for the last and the most volatile phase of the movement which began in 1994. When the movement touched its high point. The last phase commenced with the protests against 27 per cent reservation for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the educational institutions and the Government services in Uttar Pradesh. The issue of reservation for OBCs acted as a precipitating factor and for the first time the movement for
statehood for Uttarakhand crystallized into a mass movement.

The First Phase of Uttarakhand Movement

Demand for a separate administrative setup for hill districts of Western Uttar Pradesh was raised for the first time in Garhwal session of Indian National Congress at Srinagar in 1938. This session presided over by Pratap Singh Negi and attended by Jawaharlal Nehru and Vijay Laxmi Pandit witnessed discussions on the backwardness of Uttarakhand region. The significance of it for the demand for separate Uttarakhand state lay in the statement made by Nehru that people of this region because of distinctive socio-economic conditions should have right to decide for themselves and enrich their culture. The following year (1939) Congress held a political conference at Pauri where the local the Congress Committee got split over the issue of separate administrative set-up. A section of delegates was disappointed at the lack of progress made on the issue in the previous year. Pratap Singh Negi and Uma Nand Bharthwal led the dissidents and formed a separate body called the Garhwal Jaagriti Sanstha.

From 1939 to 1946 there was no further development on the issue of separate administrative unit because of unfavourable political situation then prevailing in the country. Again, the
demand was taken up at Haldwani Session of the Congress in 1946. 'Kumaon Kesri' Badri Dutt Pandey moved a resolution on separate administrative unit which was adopted unanimously. The proposal was sent to G.B. Pant, then Premier of United Province, who turned it down. Later, B.D. Pandey sent the same proposal to the States Reorganization Commission. Again, it met the same fate. In 1950, migrant Uttarakhandis in Delhi came together to form the Parvatiya Jana Vikas Samiti. The Samiti worked for the formation of separate 'Great Himalayan state' with its territory from Pithoragarh in the East to Kangra in the West. That is it comprised hill district of western Uttar Pradesh and eastern Punjab (now Himachal Pradesh). The Samiti also started a daily called 'Parvatiya Times' under the editorship of D.P. Uniyal. Later, in 1958, its name changed to 'Himalayan Times' but because of financial constraints its publication had to be stopped soon after.

In 1952, the CPI raised the demand for a separate Uttarakhand state. It was the first political party to raise the demand for a full flagged separate state. The General Secretary of the CPI, P.C. Joshi submitted a memorandum to the government of India. The statement made by Jawaharlal Nehru at Karachi session of the Congress in 1931, provided the basis for the demand. Nehru had said that distinctive geography and language would be the
criteria for the recorganisation of states when the country achieves independence.

The government deferred the demand, without any comments, to the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) headed by Mr. Fazal Ali. But the demand could not find favor with the Commission. Although K.M. Panikkar one of the members of the commission, was in its favor. He appended a 'Note of Dissent' to the final report of the commission stating the reasons for his disagreement. The crux of his argument was that in big states there will be too much concentration of power. The developed regions dominate rest the regions who do not get enough chances to voice their opinions.

In 1955 the Parnatiya Jana Vikas Samiti voiced the demand for a 'Greater Himachal State' (Earlier the demand was for a 'Greater Himalayan State') thereby, seeking merger of Uttarakhand region with Himachal Pradesh. Again in 1966 the demand was reiterated in a public meeting at Ramnagar. Here, the formation of Uttarakhand state was sought on the lines of Himachal Pradesh. Later, a memorandum to this effect was presented to the Prime Minister of India by Manvendra Shah, former king of Tehri Princely state.
In 1967, at the annual session of the Congress at Ramnagar, presided over by Chandra Bhan Gupta, D.P. Uniyal put forward a proposal for the formation of a separate administrative unit for the region. The proposal was passed unanimously and a report was sent to the government of India but nothing positive came out.

In 1967, Manvendra Shah, former king of Tehri in a seminar on the development of Uttarakhand region lamented the neglect of this area and demanded a 'Union Territory status' for the region. He stressed the need for region specific economic planning for the hills and adoption of different parameters of development for the hills and the plains. In 1968, a new 'Hills Planning Department' was set up in the Planning Commission. In the same year a body called the Parvatiya Rajya Parishad was constituted at Ramnagar to pursue the interests of the region effectively. It requested the Chief Minister of UP to send a recommendation to the Centre for the formation of a separate Uttarakhand State.

Rishi Bullabh Sundriyal, leader of Bhartiya Janasangh, with some organizations of migrant Uttarakhandis in Delhi, organised a rally at Delhi Boat Club in 1968. The rallyists courted arrest under the banner of the All India Jana Sangh.
In 1970, P.C. Joshi reiterated the demand for a separate Uttarakhand state and formed the Kumaon Rashtriya Morcha to achieve this end.

The pre-Chipko phase of the movement is characterised by limited participation of people in the mobilisation process. Though the demand was raised time and again by different political parties participation remained confined to the leaders and the rank and file of particular parties only. This phase is also marked by relative absence of students and women as participants in the movement. It was largely due to the failure of leadership to reach-out and motivate these sections to participate in the movement. Owing to inadequate communication, the youth in the region could hardly know of national and regional happenings. Moreover, due to absence of employment avenues the youth migrated to the cities in search of employment. The women in the region are busy 14-15 hours a day with house-hold work and cannot think of any thing that does not affect them directly. Under such conditions it was for the leadership to generate political awareness among these categories.

Geographically also, the first phase of the movement was confined to urban areas only. The political activists would
gather at seminars and conferences which occasionally culminated in rallies, sit-ins or demonstrations at Delhi Boat-Club. But precious little was done in rural areas to educate people about the movement. So, the movement remained confined only to a section of educated urban middle-class in Uttarakhand.

The Chipko Phase

In 1972 near Gopeshwar (Chamoli) the local co-operative had been denied permission to cut its usual small annual allotment of ash trees for use in construction and tools. But to the amazement of sarvodaya workers it was discovered that the very same trees had been sold by the Government to a sporting goods manufacturer in the plains, to be made into cricket bats and tennis rackets. The villagers and sarvodaya workers tried to convince the authorities but failed in pressing their case successfully. Ultimately they hit upon the idea of employing the Gandhian technique of non-violent resistance by embracing the trees with their bodies to stop the axemen. The method worked and the Government had to cancel the permit in early 1973. Thus the movement called after their technique Chipko (‘to stick’ or ‘hug the trees’) was born. This was followed by some 12 such major incidents in next
seven years where the villagers and sarvodaya workers confronted timber contractors, their employees, and the government's forestry personnel who awarded and oversaw the contract-felling of trees (Berreman 1987). The Chipko emerged as a protest against commercial logging (Guha: 1989).

The credit for the idea of Chipko goes to Chandi Prasad Bhatt, the Sarvodaya worker in Gopeshwar who organized a co-operative there. He led the movement in Chamoli and Pauri districts. Whereas another Sarvodaya worker, Sunderlal Bahuguna, led the movement in Tehri Garhwal and Uttarkashi.

Later the movement got split between the followers of C.P. Bhatt and Sunderlal Bahuguna. Bhatt's group pursues a strategy of pragmatic conservatism with emphasis on ecologically sound use of forests by local people to meet local needs. Their activities include small-scale, local saw mills and other forest industries as part of the programme of the local cooperatives. On the other hand Bahuguna's group advocates a policy that no trees shall be cut. The other point of disagreement has been that Bhatt's followers view the government at the highest level as primarily responsible for...
the destruction and the Forest Department simply as the instrument of these policies. Bahuguna’s followers view the Forest Department as primarily responsible in the matter as it sells the trees to the contractors who destroy the forests under their license. They view the Government at higher level as well intentioned but betrayed by the forest department (ibid.).

As a grass-root people’s movement Chipko endorsed the distinctiveness of the region and engender pride in the society and its culture. The movement acted as a uniting force in Uttarakhand. As Berreman (1987:293) observes:

Chipko has integrated regions within Uttarakhand as well as ethnic groups, for it has spread from easternmost to westernmost Uttarakhand, into areas whose people knew little of one another beyond casual (and often negative) stereotypes before its coming with its co-operative activities. Chipko workers and village and student participants have trekked from one end of the Indian Himalayas to the other as participants in Bahuguna’s Chipko Pilgrimages (Padyatras). People of the various regions of Uttarakhand have thus met one another on equal footing, working together in the common cause of the Himalayan conservation and survival.
The Chipko movement contributed significantly to the cause of separate state of Uttarakhand by generating awareness about regional interests and rights of its people. It helped forge a common 'Pahari' identity among the people of Uttarakhand region thereby widening the base of Uttarakhand movement.

On June 2, 1972 about 50 members of Uttarakhand Youth Congress, on the occasion of two day's session of the Congress party at New Delhi, organised a rally to draw the attention of their national leaders towards the issue of Uttarakhand. The rallyists staged a protest at the site of the meeting and raised the issues of poverty and unemployment in the region. They sought the formation of a separate state as a solution to these problems. In the same year 21 activists of the Uttarakhand Vidhan Parishad led by Rishi Ballabh Sundriyal courted arrest at Delhi boat club to press their demand.

In 1973, the Parvatiya Rajya Parishad was reconstituted, renamed as the Uttarakhand Parvatiya Rajya Parishad. On the last day of the meeting a rally was organised at New Delhi. In this rally the call 'Delhi Chalo' (March to Delhi) was given. In 1974, in a meeting at Kotdwar Pratap Singh Negi,
then a member of the Parliament took a resolution to work for the formation of Uttarakhand state. Later, he raised the issue in the parliament.

Some activists of the Uttarakhand Yuva Morcha undertook a march from Badrinath to Delhi in 1978. They attempted to 'gherao' the Parliament House and observed a relay fast from December 1-8. Later, while going to present a memorandum to the President of India, 71 people including 19 women activists were arrested and sent to Delhi Central Jail. They remained in the prison for four days. On Jan 31, 1979 Trepan Singh Negi (Member of Parliament) of the Janta Party, then ruling at the Centre, organised a rally at Delhi Boat-club. The rally attended by more than fifteen thousand people was addressed by many leaders from Uttarakhand. But the political infighting among the leaders rendered it ineffective and nothing could be gained out of it.

The Third Phase of Uttarakhand Movement

On 24-25 July, 1979 a two day conference called the 'Parvatiya Jan Vikas Sammelan' was organised at Mussorie by Dwarika Prasad Uniyal, a journalist by profession. It was attended by writers, lawyers, journalists, academics and people from other walks of life. Many intellectuals who
earlier participated in the Chipko and anti-liquor movement took part in the discussions. After a long deliberation the participants came to the conclusion that unless people of Uttarakhand unite under one political party they can never have their demand met. The conference culminated in the formation of the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD). Devi Dutt Pant, former Vice-Chancellor of Kumaon University, was elected its first president. The sole aim of the UKD was to achieve a separate Uttarakhand state. Formation of UKD was a significant event as it was instrumental in bringing about both quantitative and qualitative changes in the movement.

The anti-people provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 strengthened the movement. The Act curtailed the people's rights in the forests. Their entry into the forests for fuel-wood and fodder was restricted. This became the source of discontent among the masses for it not only affected their rights in natural resources but also obstructed on-going developmental activities in the region such as construction of roads and bridges. Ultimately, the belief among the people that a separate state is the only solution to the problems of the hills got strengthened.
In 1984 Anti-alcohol movement originated in Almora district under the leadership of Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini (USV). Several mass organisations extended their support to the movement and it rapidly spread to other parts of Uttarakhand. Pathak (1985) observes that the social issues which were behind the genesis of Chipko movement later crystallized as anti-alcohol movement.

As for the objective of the movement Pathak (1985: 1364) writes that, “Although liquor remains the primary focus, the movement is cognizant of the social system in which intoxication operates. While alcoholism is the means by which state commercialization has sapped the vitality of the hill society it is only a symptom of a deeper malaise of predatory capitalist ‘development’ “.

The movement was revived in early 1990s and still goes on. The major demand of the movement has been employment in place of alcohol. It views prohibition as only the first step in a more fundamental restructuring of the society. It treats alcoholism as a social-political phenomenon and not exclusively as an ethical or moral issue. The movement does not intend to encroach on individual rights of the citizens as it does not dream of a society with total and successful
prohibition. In a region where basic needs of food, clothing and shelter are not met alcohol consumption cannot be viewed as a healthy practice (Pathak: 1985).

Anti-alcohol movement has been closely related to the Chipko and other environmental movements in the region such as the movements against mining and big dams. All these protests have been reactions to a set of conditions which obtain in Uttarkhand as a result of a particular type of development which has not benefited the region. Anti-alcohol movement was led by the same people who took part in Chipko Andolan. The USV represented the third stream within Chipko (The other two streams were represented by C P Bhatt, and Sundarlal Bahuguna respectively). Although, the work done by C P Bhatt and S Bahuguna got recognized and they were awarded Magsaysay and Padma Shri awards respectively, the third stream had been the target of state repression perhaps because it had consistently refused to divorce environmental degradation from the inequitous society on which it is premised (ibid.)

In Sept.–Oct.1984 some activists of All India Students Federation (AISF) undertook a long cycle-march covering 900 km within Uttarakhand region. The objective was to
generate political awareness among the masses. On the occasion of Rajiv Gandhi's (then Prime Minister) visit to Nainital in April, 1986 the UKD staged a protest and presented him a memorandum on the formation of a separate state.

The UKD organised a rally at Puri on March 9, 1987 and dispatched a memorandum to the President of India. In the same month the Uttarakhand Parvatiya Rajya Parishad was revived to generate political awareness about the issue of Uttarakhand among migrant Uttarakhandies. Later a meeting was convened at Swaraj Ashram (Rishikesh) and a month later another at Karan Prayag to reiterate the demand. On Nov. 23, 1987 the UKD held a rally at Delhi boat club and handed over a memorandum to the President of India. This memorandum was significant from the point of view of indicating the territory of the proposed state. This time the UKD had included the district of Haridwar in the proposed state of Uttarakhand.

The activists of the UKD courted arrests all over Uttarakhand region on Feb 23, 1988. From June 19-21, 1988 the Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini held a convention at Almora. The Vahini decided to join in the movement for an
autonomous Uttarakhand state with the slogan "A new Uttarakhand state for a new India". Earlier the vahini associated itself with the Chipko and the anti-liquor movement.

The Vahini and the Uttarakhand Jana Parishad (a break away group of the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal) tried to obstruct the Himalayan car Rally at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium at New Delhi on Sept. 23, 1988. As soon as the rally was flagged off the activists who seated themselves on the chairs reserved for the press to escape being noticed by the police, got up and lay down on the road in-front of the cars participating in the rally. They argued that the money spent on the car rally could be used for the development of the Himalayan region. The rally also met with protest at several places in Uttarakhand. The activists who staged the protest were arrested and released only after a week. Later in November, the UKD undertook a long march starting from Narayan Ashram Tawaghat (Pithoragarh) to Dehradun travelling around 2000 kms, covering various parts of Uttarakhand. Simultaneous protests were organized at all the district headquarters in Uttarakhand on September 17, 1988.
On Feb 1, 1989 the UKD declared an open struggle against Forest (conservation) Act, 1986. The Dal gave a call to fell all the trees obstructing the implementation and completion of developmental projects and urged the people to undertake a compensatory afforestation on the barren land in the same areas. The call got responded to in one way or the other throughout Uttarakhand region. The administration took serious exception to it and arrests were made at several places.

The Uttarakhand Jana Parishad assembled for the first time on Feb 4-5, 1989 and issued a manifesto on an autonomous Uttarakhand state. The Uttarakhand Jana Parishad and the Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini coordinated their activities leading to interaction between their student wings resulting in the formation of the All Uttarakhand Students Federation.

On April 10, 1990 the activists of the BJP converged at Delhi boat club to participate in a rally in response to the call "March to Delhi" given by the Uttarakhand Sangharsh Samiti. In Dec. 1990, Kashi Singh Airee organised ‘Uttarakhand Kranti March’ undertaken by the UKD activists in Uttarakhand region. The purpose was to generate political awareness among the masses and create
public opinion in favor of separate Uttarakhand state. Airee and many others were arrested at Tehri.

The activists of Vahini formed the Uttarakhand Mahasabha in Delhi in 1991. The Mahasabha formed by the migrants staged a sit-in at Delhi Boat Club. The Akali leader Mahender Singh and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader Shailendra Mehto also participated to express their support to the movement.

The All India Ex-Servicemen Action Committee and the Uttarakhand Mukti Morcha staged a demonstration at Delhi Boat Club on February 20, 1992. They jointly presented a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India. The Committee of ex-servicemen declared its support to the movement through the memorandum.

In July 1992, the UKD held its fourteenth annual convention at Gairsain (Chamoli). Here, the Dal announced its decision to boycott all elections in Uttarakhand till it got statehood. The Dal also declared the formation of the Uttarakhand Students' Federation. On April 30, 1993 Uttaranchal Pradesh Sangharsh Samiti organized a rally at Jantar Mantar, Delhi. Meanwhile the BJP Parliamentary Party introduced a motion in the Parliament on a separate Uttarakhand state. However,
The rallyists were not permitted to reach the Parliament House.

The Uttarakhand Rajya Sanyukh Sangharsh Morcha formed by Bahadur Ram Tamta took out a rally in Delhi on April 24, 1994. The rally started from the Ram Lila ground and transformed into a public meeting at the Parliament Street police station. Some activists offered to court arrest but Tamta did not allow them to do so. Thus, disappointed, the activists shouted slogans against Mr. Tamta. Amidst confusion, Mr. Tamta proceeded to the Prime Minister's office to submit a memorandum without reading it out to the rallyists.

As we know from the foregoing discussion that the third phase of the movement began with the formation of the Uttarkhand Kranti Dal (UKD), an event considered a milestone in the history of the movement. The UKD organized its units at District, Tehsil, and Block levels to reach out to the masses. It actively participated in anti-liquor movement in 1984 and started a movement against Forest (Conservation) Act, 1986 which curtailed villagers' rights in the forests. It organised several rallies in Uttarakhand and at Boat-Club in Delhi. The Dal started non-cooperation movement to press
the demand for statehood to Uttarakhand. Its activists marched on foot from village to village in the region to generate political awareness among the villagers. The Dal raised both local and regional issues and succeeded in linking the day-to-day problems of the people, with the issue of statehood for Uttarakhand. The people began to think that the solution to all their problems lay in the formation of a separate state. Owing to the efforts of the Dal, the movement gained both in terms of number of participants and geographical spread of the movement. But later on in the absence of a clear-cut vision and an effective leadership the Dal lost its appeal among the masses. In 1989 UKD got divided. The break-away group formed the Uttarakhand Jana Parishad.

The Last Phase of Uttarakhand Movement

On July 16, 1994 the students organised a meeting at the Campus of Government College Pouri to discuss the twin issues of delimitation of village Panchayats and extension of 27 per cent reservation to all inhabitants of Uttarakhand region. On July 18, the students staged a protest at Pithoragarh Degree college when the admission procedure started. The students were protesting against 27 per cent
reservation for the OBCs in educational institutions. Later, on July 23, ex-presidents of Kumaon University Students Union decided to launch a movement to press the demand for withdrawal of reservation for the OBCs. The students protested and disrupted vehicular traffic at Nainital, Ranikhet, Berinag and Haldwani on July 31, 1994.

The UKD started an indefinite fast at the Collectorate at Pauri Garhwal on August 2, 1994. Several prominent leaders including Ratnamani Bhatt and Indermani Badoni (1921-1999) participated in it. The state government forcibly evicted the leaders on August 7, consequently, next day there were incidents of damage to government property at Collectorate office and a total bandh was observed in Pithoragarh.

By the end of July the students agitation gathered momentum and became a mass movement under the leadership of the UKD. On August 15, 1994 Kashi Singh Airee and several others set on a fast- unto-death at Nainital. The UKD had put forward four demands: one, all the people of Uttarakhand region should be covered under 27 per cent reservation; two, a separate 'Hill cadre' in civil services; three, guarantee of employment to the youth of Uttarakhand;
and four, stop reorganisation of Panchayats and maintain status-quo in this regard.\(^2\)

It would be wrong to view the agitation as only a reaction against the OBC reservation. It was much more than that. Shekhar Pathak (1994) writes that when they, about a dozen of people, undertook a march from Askot to Arrakot in May-July 1994, they noted discontent among people all along the way from East to West across Uttarakhand region. The people pointed out a multiplicity of problems such as lack of drinking water, electricity, bridges over rivers; brewing of illicit liquor; shortage of fuel-wood and fodder owing to implementation of Forest Acts; delimitation of village Panchyats according to new criterion which reduced their number by almost 40 per cent, etc. These problems accounted for discontent among the people. The movement was a reaction against the destruction of self sufficiency of the region and exploitation of its natural resources by the State. It was a result of corrupt and apathetic bureaucracy in the region.

Similarly, P. C. Joshi (1995: 21) observes that,

> Only genuine mass movements have this tenacity and strength-- movements having their source in deep suffering and sense of helplessness/powerlessness
experienced by the people over a long time. Thwarted hopes and aspirations cherished over a long period of time, deep disillusionment and disappointment arising from shattered dreams and betrayal of trust and faith, deeply injured sense of dignity and self respect and serious dislocation of the very basis of secured livelihood and prosperous future—these lie at the very root of this social upheaval ....

Joshi (1995) identifies four basic factors responsible for the movement at the present juncture. First the political and the cultural mechanisms which formed a bridge between the local and the national concerns have broken down. As a result the two way communication between the people of the region and the national elite has stopped. The national elite as well as the regional political elite overlook the interests of the region. Thus, the desire to have centre of power shifted to the region so that the political elite can be made accountable to the people. Second, the disillusionment among people in the region about the role of local intelligentsia, or middle class non-resident Uttarakhandis co-opted by national elite in advancing the cause of the region.

Third, the relative isolation of the region has ended due to development of means of communication. This has disrupted traditional economy without replacing it with any viable
system of production. And the fourth reason behind the movement is failure of the Five Year Plans to produce desired results leading to erosion of faith in centralised planning and its promoters.

On the Independent day effigies of U.P. Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav were burnt every where in Kumaon. Meanwhile, Independence Day celebrations were boycotted in Garhwal. On Aug. 17 Mulayam Singh Yadav made the provocative statement that he does not depend on Uttarakhandis support to run his government and if he gives green signal to his men in the plains the retaliation against them would be serious. The pride of Uttarakhandis was hurt. The government employees in Nainital went on an indefinite strike and joined the movement. There were protests all over the region. Government property was damaged. At Ukhimath (Chamoli) Police had to resort to firing to disperse the agitationists.

As the agitation intensified, on August 22, Mulayam Singh Yadav stated in UP Legislative Assembly that solution to the problems in the hills lay not in altering the reservation policy but the formation of a separate state. On August 23 U.P Legislative Assembly passed a resolution recommending
statehood to Uttarakhand. Though many members belonging to the CPI(M) and the All India Congress opposed the Bill, the speaker declared it passed unanimously. While moving the resolution, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister Beni Prasad Verma informed the House that the proposal would be sent to the Centre at the earliest.

The same day (Aug.22), Kumaon Commissionary was 'gheraoed' and the next day a historic bandh was observed in whole of Uttarakhand. Meanwhile K.S. Airee went to Lucknow and resigned from the U.P. Legislative Assembly.

On August 20, the Uttarakhand Sanyukt Sangharsh Samiti (USSS) called a meeting at Nainital to form a Central Action Committee to chalk-out future plans to intensify the movement. Other issues discussed at the meeting included an appeal to all the Gram Pradhans, members of Zila Parishads, MLAs and MPs from Uttarakhand region to submit their resignations to the authorities concerned. Mulayam Singh Yadav convened a meeting on Aug 31, to resolve the conflict. But the students from Uttarakhand boycotted the meeting.

The Uttarakhand Liberation Organisation took out a procession in New Delhi on August 30. The agitation started
from Jantar-Mantar and proceeded towards Prime Minister's residence to present a memorandum to him. Two demands had been made in the memorandum: Withdrawal of Mandal Commission recommendations; and statehood to Uttarakhand. The procession was stopped mid-way by the police. The agitationists hurled stones at the police, who in turn resorted to lathi-charge and used teargas shells and water cannons to disperse the people.

A procession was taken out in Khatima town (Nainital) under the leadership of Ex-soldiers on September 1. The police opened fire on the procession which left at least ten people dead. The official version of the incident is that the police first resorted to lathi-charge then burst tear-gas shells and finally had to open firing when a section of processionists started firing in the air and indulged in acts of arson and looting. Another version of the story is that the procession led by ex-soldiers having women, students and villagers as the participants started from Khatima-sitarganj road bus station. The processionists were unarmed but shouted slogans. On its way to the Tehsil the procession passed by the police station twice. First time it passed by peacefully. But second time when the first half of the procession had crossed the police station suddenly stones were pelted on
the processionists from inside the police station. Then police opened fire without any warning. People ran helter-skelter for their lives. The police kept firing intermittently for an hour and a half. This version has been supported by a fact-finding team of Nainital Bar Association. The team conducted an extensive survey in the Khatima town and concluded that the firing was one-sided and unprovoked. There was no violence from the side of the processionists. For several days after the incident the police kept picking up the people from their houses and tortured them in the lock-up. It was done to demoralise the agitationists. The team believed that at least twelve people died in the firing.

The next day on September 2, 1994 police fired at demonstrators in Mussoorie, four people died in the incident. The official version is that the trouble started in the morning when some people tried to force their way into the police station. In response, police opened fire, killing four people including two women. Police also reported that some firearms were stolen during the confrontation. Later, the Superintendent of Police accompanied a girl, injured in the firing, to the hospital. As soon as the girl was declared dead some people immediately attacked the police officer with a sharp-edged weapon killing him on the spot. It is said the
tension had been mounting since previous night when some jawans of the PAC forcibly removed some persons sitting on a relay fast at the Mall Road trolley stand. Later, the PAC set-up their own camp at the site. Next morning when the news of khatima firing reached here, the pent up feelings burst forth.

Another version of the story is that it was all premeditated and preplanned. On the night of September 30 the Supritandent of the Police at Mussoorie was suddenly transferred and replaced by someone who knew nothing about the local people. On the same night, the SDM was asked to stay out of the way, while and the DM from Dehradun took over in Mussoorie. Next morning police forcibly removed the agitationists from the site and occupied the place. Sometime later, the agitationists gathered again and the procession stopped at the door of the small room now occupied by the police. Some self appointed leaders asked the people not to force their entry. But then, two women were let in to talk to the police. Meanwhile, some students also rushed in through the narrow single door. Suddenly shots were fired, one woman died on the spot while another received the bullet in her eye. As the shots were fired inside the little room in absolute panic one police officer was
also hit. When the police left, people set ablaze the weapons and ammunition left behind. Ten minutes later the PAC returned to recapture the room firing at random at those standing outside the room.

The next day spontaneous bandh was observed in Uttarakhand. A large procession was taken out in Nainital defying curfew orders, to protest against police firing at Khatima and Mussoorie. On September 5 protests were staged at Almora, Ranikhet, Pithoragarh, Uttarkashi and Nainital. At Nainital a silent march was organized by the teachers. A memorandum was sent to the President of India through the Commissioner of Kumaon. The SP-BSP government in UP gave a call for UP bandh on September 13. But the people of Uttarakhand did not respond to the bandh. On Sep 17 Khaturwa was celebrated in Kumaon by burning effigies of Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav. The students held a meeting at Ram Nagar (Nainital) on September 18 and formed the Uttarakhand Chhatra–Yuva Sangharsh Samiti to work for the formation of a separate state of Uttarakhand. The Samiti called upon students to gherao the Parliament House on October 2.
On September 20, the Government employees went on a strike at Chamoli, Pouri, Dehradun, Tehri, Almora and Pithoragarh. The Government employees were already on strike at Nainital. On September 24, employees at Uttarkhashi also joined in. On September 29, a big rally was organised at Dehradun, approximately 70,000 people from all walks of life participated. One such rally was also held at Almora under the leadership of former Governor of Punjab and West Bengal, B. D. Pandey.

The USSS had given a call for a rally at Delhi Boat Club on October 2. Thousands of activists from all parts of Uttarakhand left for Delhi in the evening of October 1. The activists from Kumaon region reached Delhi without being held up anywhere by the police. But the rallyists from Garhwal were stopped by the Provincial Armed Constabulary at Rampur bypass on Haridwar–Muzaffar Nagar road on the pretext of checking for arms.

The agitationists tried to break through the police cordon several times as they were being harassed unnecessarily by the police. The tussle lasted for several hours. The women rallyists were dragged out of the buses and beaten up with rifl'e butts. Several women were raped. On October 2 at 6
A.M. the police started firing without any warning. At least ten people died and hundreds were seriously injured.

On October 2 approximately 30,000 people attended the rally behind Red Fort in Delhi. The rallyists were shocked at the news of previous night’s firing incident at Muzaffar Nagar. They became violent and set afire a police camp stationed behind the Red Fort. Police vehicles were damaged. At the site of the rally various groups of agitationists clashed with each other in their effort to occupy the dais. Meanwhile, the crowd became restive and started throwing stones at the stage during which one of the leaders got injured. In the meantime the Uttarakhand Sanyukt Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti gave a call to march towards the Parliament to gherao it. The activists clashed with the police at several places. The police lobbed tear gas shells, resorted to lathicharge and finally managed to disperse the agitationists.

On October 3 processions were taken out in many parts of Uttarakhand to protest against Muzaffar Nagar firing incident. The police again resorted to firing at Nainital, Kotdwar and Dehrdun. Many areas of Uttarakhand came under curfew. As the situation deteriorated Punjab police was called in two assist Rapid Action Force, already deployed in the region. On
October 13 one more person died in police firing at Dehradun as the demonstrations continued.

Dusshera was celebrated in a novel way in Uttarakhand. Instead of Ravana's, effigies of UP Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav and the Prime Minister P. V. Narsimha Rao were burnt. As soon as the curfew was lifted protests were resumed at many places in Garhwal region. Now, Kumaon region was relatively calm. On October 15 a procession was taken out at Haldwani in which approximately 60,000 people participated. A protest was staged at Pithoragarh on October 18. On October 19, agitationists were lathi-charged at Pouri. And a Chakka jam was observed in Nainital.

On November 1, Government employees from Uttarakhand went to hold talks with the Minister of State for Home, Rajesh Pilot. As a part of the agreement reached between the employees and the Minister, the employees at Nainital and Pithoragarh called off the strike. They reported at the offices but started pen-down strike. But the employees at Almora and all the five districts in Garhwal continued to be on strike till December 12, 1994.

On November 2, a silent procession was taken out at Naintal to commemorate the martyrs of Muzaffar Nagar incident. On
November 15, a protest was staged by women activists at Nainital. They decided that in the following year (1995) the auction of liquor contracts would be opposed in Uttarakhand. Decision was also taken not to agree on anything short of a separate Uttarakhand state. Hundreds of activists of Uttarakhand Sanyukt Sangharsh Samiti (USSS) staged a demonstration at Patel Chowk in Delhi on April 24, 1995. They demanded dismissal of Mulyam Singh Yadav government in Uttar Pradesh and action against those responsible for firing on Uttarakhand agitators in Muzaffar Nagar on October 2, 1994.

After a two-day convention of like-minded organizations a parallel joint front, Uttarakhand Jan Sangharsh Morcha, was floated at Srinagar (Garhwal) on May 2, 1995 as an alternative to the UKD-led USSS. The initiative was taken by Delhi based Uttarakhand Andolan’s Central Advisory Council and the Sanchalan Samiti who believed USSS had begun to show signs of indecisiveness and capitulation to Congress – backed infiltrators within the agitation.

On May 4, 1995 the USSS decided to boycott Panchayat election in Uttarakhand. It gave a slogan "Uttarakhand nahin to Chunav nahin" (No Uttarakhand, No Polls). The USSS
requested the President of India, Shankar Dayal Sharma, demanding his intervention to resolve the issue of Uttarakhand. Same day, Union Minister of State, Rajesh Pilot held talks with some selected Congress leaders from Uttarakhand. Other political parties and groups termed the talks as 'state-managed'. On May 22, 1995 the newly formed Uttarakhand Jan Sangharsh Morcha and the USSS held parallel rallies in Dehradun, thereby, formalised the split between the two.

The Hind Kisan Sangathan took out a rally on June 12, 1995 in Dehradun under the aegis of the USSS. Hundreds of farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan expressed their solidarity with the movement for separate Uttarakhand state.

On June 25, 1995 a delegation of the USSS led by its chief Indramani Badoni met the Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. Mr. Rao assured them that he would call an all party meeting to arrive at consensus on the issue of Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand Sanyukt Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti observed a five-day bandh, from August 23 to 27 in all the eight hill districts. The bandh was imposed upon all central and state government offices. Dharnas, forced closure of government
offices, protest marches and public meetings marked the bandh. On the last day of the bandh Uttarakhand Mahila Sanghash Morcha organized a Chakka-Jam at Dehradun railway station and disrupted the traffic.

Uttarakhand Samyakt Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti observed a two-day Chakka-Jam on Sept 1 and 2 to mark the first anniversary of the violent incidents at Khatima and Mussoorie in 1994. In Delhi, migrant Uttarakhandis held a demonstration at Jantar Mantar and submitted a memorandum to the President of India. On October 19, 1995 the activists held a protest meeting at the office of the district election officer of Dehradun. As the election process started the candidates were prevented from filling their nominations for the elections to the urban bodies. The activists also damaged vehicles and indulged in violence and arson.

On October 18,1995 some leaders of the UKD (D) , a break away group of UKD, sat on an indefinite fast in Srinagar (Garhwal). When the activists were forcibly removed by the police from the site, violence erupted in the town: In May, 1996 Parliamentary elections took place in the country. Uttarakhand Jana Sangharsh Vahini gave a call for bandh and chakka jam on the polling day ( May 2) . But the
campaign by national political parties succeeded in luring the voters to vote. As a result the poll boycott failed in Uttarakhand.

The last and the most volatile phase of Uttarakhand movement began with student mobilization in Uttarakhand against 27 per cent reservation for the OBCs in government jobs and education. This phase is marked by participation of people from all walks of life. University students took the initiative and teachers, lawyers, government employees, ex-serviceman, businessmen, house-wives, etc. joined in. Unlike earlier phases students and women participated in larger numbers this time. Initially the agitation was against 27 per cent reservation for the OBCs but later on, the reservation issue receded to the background and statehood for Uttarakhand became the primary concern. As for women participants reservation and separate state were not the only issues, what concerned them most was social evils such as liquor consumption and single digit lottery business in the hills. The movement was at the climax in the latter half of 1994. But because of state repression it fizzled out and by the end of 1995 the region fell silent. On November 11, 2000 the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance Government at the Center declared formation of a separate state of Uttarakhand.
For the first 30 years the movement was sporadic in nature. In this period the demand was raised time and again but failed to sustain itself for a considerable length of time. During 1970s the Chipko dominated the scene. Though it was not explicit in raising the demand for a separate state it nurtured the right to autonomy in a very subtle way. Since 1979, the UKD had been keeping the movement alive by organizing rallies, protest demonstrations, bandhs, chakka-jams, seminars and conferences. In late 1980s the movement got a boost from two new developments. One, the USV extended its support to the movement; and two, the BJP supported the demand for a separate state of Uttaranchal. The formation of the UMM and the Uttarakhand Party in early 1990s was another important development in the movement which touched its high point in 1994 with the issue of OBC reservation acting as a precipitating factor. Since 1952 till the end, the movement activities always showed a rise just prior to the election in the region. The regional politicians, irrespective of their political affiliations, had always been vocal and assertive at the time of elections.
Notes

1) In Indian Union, every state has a cadre of civil servants. Normally a civil servant after being assigned a particular cadre has to serve within that state only. A separate 'hill cadre' means that Uttarakhand will have its own cadre of civil servants who will not be transferred out side of Uttarakhand. The demand of 'hill cadre' has been raised because of a general perception about bureaucracy in Uttarakhand region that posting here is characterised by three P's: that is, probation, promotion and punishment (see chapter 3, for more details).

2) In 1994, the SP-BSP Governments' insistence on uniform criteria for delimitation of Panachayts in UP led to about 40 per cent decrease in the number of Gram Panchayats in Uttarakhand region. In response to the agitation Uttar Pradesh Panchayāti Raj (Amendment ) Act, 1994, was passed which provided for a separate criteria for hill district of UP.

3) Khaturwa is a Kumaoni festival that is celebrated in memory of mythical victory over Garhwal. It is celebrated every year on Ashwin Sankranti, the first day of the month of Ashwin (in 1995 it fell on September 17). On this day
Kumaonis burn effigies said to be of a Garhwal general named Khatur Singh. The legend holds that he was defeated on this day. Khaturwa Symbolizes traditional rivalry between Kunmaon and Garhwal. Till the end of 17th Century Kumaon and Garhwal had been two separate kingdoms ruled by the Chand and the Panwar dynasties respectively. The kings of Kumaon and Garhwal were intermittently at war with each other.