SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The hypotheses given in part I essentially aim at explaining the phenomenon of violent back-lash to the reservation scheme promulgated in U.P. and Bihar in 1977 and 1978, respectively. Various political sociological and political economy factors have been examined mainly in terms of the evolution of the balance of power among the caste groups. The following conclusions emerge:

1. In Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the reservation schemes have had a long history. In the beginning only the Brahmins were kept out. They were too weak to protest and slowly learnt to live with reservation schemes. They sought and obtained alternative avenues of employment. In 1950, substantial sections of the Vellalas, Naidus, Modaliars, Gounders, Chettiyars were kept out. But by then they had established their political ascendancy. They had sufficiently infiltrated into the power structure to do without the protection of the reservations. Moreover, only a few of the really backwards offered them any serious competition.

In U.P. and Bihar, the job and seat reservation schemes came as a bolt from the blue for the forward castes. Had they been covered by the reservation schemes earlier and slowly shunted off to the open competition pool, would have been a different matter. The historical circumstances did not necessitate this.

2. In Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the forward communities have been divided either by the classification schemes or politically, or both. As discussed in the Tamil Nadu part, the Vellilas, Chettiars, Naidus have all been divided into forward sub-castes and, backward sub-castes. They cannot make a common cause of the reservation issue. The possibility of any alliance among
them has been pre-empted or prevented. Similarly in Karnataka 70 per cent of the Lingayat castes find themselves forward and the rest backward. The 15 per cent reservation for the special weaker group irrespective of caste has also divided the Lingayat community. The forward Lingayats are the only group highly agitated over the issue. But, they cannot convert their disaffection into political clout. Also, the Karnataka G.O. has put all the Vokkaligas, another dominant landed gentry caste, into the backward list. Just until ten years ago both the castes had formed a duopoly and ruled the State. Now, no alliance can take place between them. All the political parties there have to reckon with this changed situation.

In Bihar, and U.P. the G.Os. have not divided the forward castes, despite a long history of feuds between Bhumihars and Rajputs, find themselves united on the issue of reservation. In U.P. where caste feuds were muted, the Yadav G.O. has united twenty per cent articulate, organised and powerful section of the population. The Rajputs are particularly upset. Only recently they had begun to make their entry into echelons of power and were suddenly thwarted.

The reservation of 3 per cent for the economically weaker section is just a drop in the ocean, for the Bihar forward castes. Had this share been larger, probably, the forward castes would have found themselves divided and too weak to resort to backlash.

3. Both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have witnessed cases of Harijan baiting and atrocities on them at the hands of the middle order castes. But such instances are few. In Tamil Nadu, the DK movement welded the non-Brahmin upper castes and the Harijans into one camp. In fact non-Sanskritic area, the ritual and cultural distances between these two groups was less than that between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins. In Karnataka, the Harijan and the OBCs find themselves in one camp due to their resentment of the Brahmins in the beginning, and Lingayats, later on.
In UP and Bihar the Harijans and other landless castes, on the one hand, and the landed backward castes on the other have never had mutuality of economic, social and political interests. If the forward castes fear rank disequilibrium at the hands of the upper peasant castes in the OBC category, the latter also feel threatened by the rising political consciousness on the part of the Harijans. The later are driven hard by their Kurmi, Koeri, Yadav employers. Atrocities on the Harijans have been committed by the members belonging to these peasant castes. Harijans have generally gone with Brahmins in voting for Congress. This fundamental cleavage between the upper peasant castes and the Harijans has rendered the backward class movement weak and hence has facilitated the forward castes backlash. As long as the OBC castes are in the grip of Sanskritization, they cannot lead the Harijans.

4. In Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the non-Brahmins made a solid, united and well organized entry into politics and the higher echelons of the Congress party. Their politicization began a long time ago. This has imparted considerable strength to the backward classes movement. In Karnataka particularly, Devaraj Urs went on encouraging the holding of the conferences of the minor weaker non-dominant castes, between 1972 and 1978. He had inducted their leaders into the corridors of power. After preparing, the political ground and organizing the weaker OBCs, he got his famous G.O. issued in 1978. The organisation and mobilization were sufficient to deter any potential backlash.

In U.P. and Bihar the ground had not been adequately prepared. In a sense, the Yadav and Thakur, G.Os. were planted from above, when the ground had not been cleared. In Bihar, the backward castes entered politics (and the Congress) divided. Their entry depended on the mercy of the forward caste leaders. They have not been held together as an autonomous coherent political force. Witness the contest for the Chief Ministership in 1963 between Bir Chadr Patel and K. B. Sahay. (Patel's abilities had attracted the attention of even Pandit Nehru). Both the backwards and Harijans deserted Patel. In U.P.
also the rise of the backward classes was belated. As said earlier, both Thakur and Yadav attempted to telescope the backward castes mobilization into a decade. Even today the backward castes are politically divided. The weakness of the backward castes is evident from the fact their share of cabinet posts and the assembly seats has been waxing and waning. The elections of 1967 and 1977 did not signify a permanent and abiding resurgence of the backward castes on the political scene of U.P. and Bihar. Karpoori Thakur and Ram Naresh Yadav definitely erred in thinking that they did.

5. There is no doubt that in Tamil Nadu, the Youth belonging to the non-Brahmin forward castes must be experiencing the crunch of the reservation scheme. But quite a few of them can take advantage of the vagueness and fluidity of the classification based on sub-castes. The seriousness of this rampant misuse has been statistically proved by the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes Commission Report. As long as such misuse is possible, the propensity for frustration and aggression is relatively reduced. In Karnataka too, this is happening, but not to the same extent. In this State, misuse of the provision for the special group whose income does not exceed Rs. 4,800 per annum has been reported.

The Bihar and U.P. classifications do not permit any falsification of castes, as the classification is based on the broad caste lines, and not on sub-caste lines. A Rajput cannot pass off as 4 Kurmi or Koeri and remain undetected for a long time.

6. A second stage of the resurgence of the weaker among the backward castes has been delayed in Tamil Nadu. The non-Brahmin forward castes dominate the services and professions, because of the earlier head start. Nine castes in the list of the OBCs have gained a lot from the operation of the reservation scheme. The situation, theoretically, is ideal for a second stage of the movement. If this develops, and if these OBC castes which have gained disproportionately are excluded from the list, we may expect a backlash. But the weaker backward castes have not ever protested against the inclusion of
the Sozhia Vallalal Gounders, etc., in the list in 1973. This absence of resentment and protest is in a large measure due to the Tamil revivalism and sub-nationalism.

In Karnataka, there has been no such revivalism movement to delay the upsurge of the weaker among the backward castes.

7. Owing to the classification in Tamil Nadu along the sub-caste lines, it is difficult to fix the percentage of the population which is classified as forward. In Karnataka, it is really the forward Lingayats, constituting about 10 to 12% of the population who are really adversely affected and feel agitated. In that State the Christians, Vaishyas and Brahmins have written off the government service.

In Uttar Pradesh the population classified as forward is considerable, i.e., around 20 per cent. In Bihar, the numerically small strength of the forward, i.e. around 20 per cent is more than made up by its control over the countryside. The legacy of semi-feudalism in these two states has enabled these forward castes to fight bitterly against the reservation scheme.

8. The economics of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have been expanding relatively faster. The private tertiary sector appears to be growing. It can shelter many forward caste Youths. Also, they are prepared to migrate outside the State.

The private tertiary sectors in Bihar and U.P. are stagnant. The forwarded caste youths in these two states have to depend heavily on government jobs. Driven to, desperation, they have reacted violently.