

CHAPTER - IV

PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN INDIA : ISSUES, TYPE, LEADERSHIP AND IDEOLOGY

Issues :

One of the important legacies that India inherited from the past was the existing social order, the social structure and social conflicts which surrounded and influenced socio-political movements, ideas, and practices. In fact, India's linguistic, religious, ethnic, and cultural diversities are proverbial. So are the socio-political mobilizations, protests, violent conflicts and antagonisms which have arisen from time to time among and between persons from its distinctive cultural groups. But it is equally important to note that neither socio-political mobilizations and protests nor social, cultural and ethnic antagonisms flow naturally of India's diversities.¹

The 1971 Census of India enumerated thirty-three languages with speakers of more than one million, but only ~~three~~^{eighteen} of them have achieved any form of significant political recognition. Similarly, the 1981 Census enumerates a tribal population of more than fifty million people divided into hundreds of distinct groups. Many socio-political mobilizations have occurred among several of the tribal groups from the 19th century upto the present, of which a few have developed into bitter, violent, and secessionist movements directed against non-tribals, against particular state governments, or against the Government of India itself. On the other hand, many tribal groups have not mobilized and have not rebelled. Similarly, tribal mobilization have taken diverse forms. Some have focussed on economic grievances, have appeared to be class-based, and have drawn support from Marxist political organizations while others have focussed on political demands and have been organised and led by tribal leaders and exclusively tribal political organizations.

Again, the whole modern history of India has been deeply affected and badly scarred by conflict between separatist Muslim organizations and the Indian National Congress and by continuing Hindu-Muslim riots in some cities and towns. Even with respect to these conflicts, protests and associated violence, however, they must be

contrasted against periods of Hindu-Muslim cooperation. It should also be noted that such protests and resultant conflicts have occurred more intensely in some parts of the country and have been less intense or non-existent in others where Hindus and Muslims also live side by side.

In the 1980s and 1990s India has faced an extremely violent protest movement among militant Sikhs, some of whom have become secessionist. Punjab where most Sikhs live, has become an embattled ground in which a violent guerrilla war is being waged between Sikh militants and the Indian police. Yet Sikhs and Hindus have cooperated socially and politically in the past and were never before considered to be hostile communal groups.

India has also been generally characterized as a society divided by caste and caste antagonisms and thus, protest movements emanating from these caste considerations and caste antagonisms. Various Indian Census before the 1930s enumerated thousands of local castes and dozens of local caste clusters within each linguistic region. Caste mobilization and inter-caste conflict have occurred in India since the late nineteenth century among many such groups. Moreover, in the 70s and 80s, inter-caste conflicts between so-called backward and upper caste groups became intense in several states. One again, however, it needs to be stressed that such mobilizations and conflicts have occurred among specific groups in specific regions at particular times and not others.

Migration of persons from one linguistic region to another, particularly to the relatively less densely populated tribal regions of the country and to the north-eastern state of Assam and to the major metropolitan centres of Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi have also produced situations which have, sometimes, but not always, led to migrant nativist political conflicts. Similarly, women in India mobilize themselves and resort to protest movements against male chauvinism and other issues concerning them directly and some others relating to the politics, society and the environment. But these mobilizations too are not a regular pattern and the consequent protests, not frequent. The students community also mobilize them and protest against issues ranging from their direct concern to those relating to social, economic and political

change. But here also the mobilization and protests are not permanent and frequent.

It follows therefore that mobilizations, protests and conflicts in India are not natural flowing naturally. If it would have been natural it would have occurred frequently with regular pattern of its own. But there is no such regular pattern in the mobilizations and protest movements in India. However, the sources of the major linguistic, tribal, religious, caste, and migrant, non-migrant mobilizations, protests and conflicts may be identified and stressed.

In both the pre- and post-Independence periods, state recognition itself has been a critical factor in causing the rise of some ethnic and cultural movements rather than others.² The British extended official preference to the Bengali language in the east rather than to Assamese and Oriya and to Urdu in the North rather than Hindi. They provided separate electorates and other political concessions to Muslims and sikhs. They allowed migration of plains people into tribal areas in central India but forbade it in some parts of the north east. They patronized the non-Brahmin movement in South India when Brahmans were leading the Indian National congress there.

In the post-Independence period, the government of India and the state governments sought to change the balance of recognition among some groups. Hindi was adopted as the official language of the country and of the north Indian States, definitively displacing Urdu from its remaining bastions in Panjab and U.P. Assamese was adopted as the sole official language of Assam against the wishes of the large Bengali-speaking minority and many tribal groups. Separate electorates for Muslims and sikhs were done away with, but reservations of legislative seats and administrative and educational places for scheduled castes and Tribes were retained or introduced.

State - recognition sometime worked in contrary ways. On the one hand, it strengthened some of the groups so recognized and weakened others. On the other hand, in some cases, it contributed to the development of counter-movements by non-recognized groups. The best examples of this type are the numerous movements among unrecognized "backward castes" who have sought systems of reservations

non-recognized groups. The best examples of this type are the numerous movements among unrecognized "backward castes" who have sought systems of reservations equivalent to those granted to Scheduled Castes and Tribes.³

Another factor concerns the specific policies and political strategies pursued by the Central and State governments in relation to regional and sub-regional cultural entities. It is argued that Indian state policy towards minorities has differed in the Nehru and post-Nehru periods. Under Nehru, the Central government pursued pluralist policies in relation to major language and ethno-cultural movements, recognizing especially most of the large language groups among whom major mobilizations developed for the creation of separate linguistic states. At the same time, the Centre sought to avoid direct involvement in regional conflicts among different ethnic and linguistic groups.⁴

But in the post-Nehru period, the Central government has played a more interventionist role in regional conflicts between opposed ethnic, communal, and caste groups. The Central government tolerated the disruptive and allegedly murderous and terrorist activities of Bhindrawale in Punjab in order to embarrass its main political rival in the state, the Akali Dal. Similarly, it followed inconsistent policies in Kashmir, Assam, and other north-eastern States. Moreover, during the succession struggles after 1965 between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her rivals, the Central Congress leadership in several states moved to displace upper caste leaders from state-congress organizations and replace them with backward caste persons and to mobilize the votes of the latter castes to defeat its rivals in the state Congress and in the opposition. The consequences of these interventions, some of which may justly be perceived as socially progressive, have often had the consequences of intensifying inter-ethnic regional conflicts.⁵

Thirdly, the unevenness in rates of social change among different social groups leading in turn to imbalances in their relative access to jobs, educational advantages, and political power has influenced the mobilization of some groups and not others. Each region of India has a dominant language group and particular castes who have long held disproportionate shares of public employment, educational and political opportunities. Challenges to the preponderant shares of dominant groups in various

processes of social change have begun such as to make elites among them acutely conscious of the disparities between the life chances of persons from their own group and persons from the dominant groups.⁶

Fourthly, the extent to which persons from different ethnic and cultural groups actually find themselves in competition for the same riches in the division of labour in the society is another related factor responsible for different mobilizations and protests. It is often the case that educated persons from different religions, language, caste, and other categories compete for the most prestigious and secure jobs in public service and for the educational opportunities to gain access to them. Therefore, conflict between competing educated classes in search of scarce jobs has been among the most prevalent sources of ethnic conflict in India.⁷

Finally, another factor influencing the types of mobilization, conflict and protest which occur in India concerns levels of political action and levels of ethnic loyalties. Indian society contains both multiple levels of political arenas and hierarchies of loyalties to cultural categories. At the level of the village and its surroundings, "Jati", the local aspect of caste, may provide a basis for economic action, political organization, and social conflict. In a unit as large as a district, correspondingly larger units of political action or political coalitions across 'Jati' boundaries become necessary for effective political action. The unit of loyalty and political action may then become the caste category or caste cluster or a coalition of related castes. At the state level, only the largest caste categories with wide representation throughout large parts of a state may be able to act in solidary and politically effective ways. In many cases, such actions at the state level become impossible and other kinds of loyalties to faction and parts become predominant. At the national level, castes becomes virtually ineffective as a basis for sustained political mobilization for the available caste categories at this level lack appropriate social or economic content. Alternatives to caste as an organizing principle for political conflict also exist at every level in Indian politics, particularly from the district upwards. At those levels, categories such as Hindu and Muslim become more prominent, language loyalties become critical, one's status as a migrant or a "Son of the Soil" may be decisive, or factional, party, and ideological bases for political division may prevail.⁸

Types :

Given the social, economic, political religious, ethnic and cultural contradictions of the Indian society and the factors being contributory to the mobilizations, protests and conflicts as outlined above, protest movements in India assume different type, content, leadership and ideology. Therefore, some protest movements take the form merely seeking to reform the existing arrangements - religious, social, cultural, political and economic - while others go to the extent of threatening the system itself. In fine, an analyses of protest movements in India shows that they may take any form - from a slow and gradual reform movement to a radical and revolutionary one.

Protest movements may be classified on the basis of one or the other criterion.⁹ M.S. A Rao¹⁰ suggests the possibility of classifying movements on the basis of their consequences. Movements can be aimed at reform in one or another aspect of social life, or oriented at bringing about changes in superordinate and subordinate relationships, and finally, those oriented towards bringing about revolutionary change in every sphere of life and in basic values. These movements are referred to as reformative, transformative and revolutionary. Emphasizing on the means adopted by change oriented movements, reform movements are described as those movements that utilise legitimate means. In these movements, changes are sought to be brought about within the given framework of a society and the means adopted are consistent with the social norms and values of the society. Radical or revolutionary movements are characterized by the rejection of existing legitimate means and by the adoption of means that are considered improper by the establishment in their attempt to achieve change in all spheres of life, including basic values. These movements also vary in terms of conflicts embedded in them. Conflict is least in reform movements; it acquires a sharper focus in transformative movements, and in the case of revolutionary movements conflict is based on the Marxist ideology of class struggle.

However, there are a number of ambiguities in Rao's classification of social movements. Reform and revolutionary movements are distinguished in terms of the quantum of change - partial and total. Similarly, reform or transformative movements are distinguished in terms of where the change occurs; in the case of the former, change occurs in the value system and in the case of the latter, it takes place at the

middle level of the structure. The twin basic principles of any classification are exclusiveness and exhaustiveness and Rao violates the principle of exclusiveness by shifting the criteria of classification used in three types of movements.¹¹ This shift in criteria brings in several questions. For instance, which type of social movement persuades either partial middle-level structural change or total middle-level structural change? How do we classify a movement which aims at partial as against total change in the value system? What of a movement which pursues revolutionary changes through non-violent means? How do we account for frequent intensely violent conflicts which occur in the course of movements that have primordial collectivities rather than class as their locus? These and several other equally important issues cannot be classified within the classificatory scheme proposed by Rao.

Partha Mukherjee¹² classifies movements based on the quality of change - accumulative, alternative and transformative. While accumulative changes are intra-systemic, the latter two are systemic changes. Alternative change is geared to create new structures and by implication, to destroy the existing ones; transformative change aims at replacing the existing structure and substituting it by another. This characterization is also problematic in that unless one creates new structures one cannot replace and substitute the existing ones and, hence, the distinction between alternative and transformative change becomes pointless. Again, Mukherjee's analysis implies that revolutionary means suit only movements which pursue systemic change, and revolutionary movements should not only aim at far-reaching systemic changes but should necessarily pursue them through revolutionary means. Such a position is untenable because it cannot explain the lack of fit between means and ends in the case of several movements. For example, which type of movement it will be which has intra-systemic change as its goal but adopts revolutionary means to achieve it. Again, if a movement pursues systemic changes through institutionalized and even non-violent means how we will characterize it.

T.K.Oommen¹³ has suggested that a situation of strain in a society may be met through one or another of the following response patterns depending upon the system characteristics; (a) emergence of a charismatic leader who promises to mitigate the evils at hand and lead the people to a future utopia; (b) crystallization of a new

ideology which champions the cause of the deprived, and (c) establishment of a new organization to deal with the problem at hand. Each of these developments may give rise to the emergence of three distinct types of movements - charismatic, ideological and Organizational. The main focus of this typology is on the process of movement crystallization, the life-cycle and phases of the movements. Unlike other typologies it does not insist that movements are necessarily oriented to change; they may not only lead to system stability but may pursue it as a goal. However, one of the important limitations of this typology is that it is based on a componential analysis of movements, in that it gives primacy to one or another component of the movement - leadership, ideology, organization. This tends to blur the relevance of other components which are equally important for the sustenance of movements.

Thus, it is important to note that the characteristics of a society shape the ethos and styles of its movements. Further, every social structure creates its own style of protests and modes of expressing these protests.¹⁴ Therefore, an adequate framework for the study of social movements should take into account the historicity, the elements of social structure and the future vision of the society in which they originate and operate, and it is the dialectics between these which provides the focal points for the analysis of social movements in general, and protest movements in particular.¹⁵ Thus, what needs to be investigated is the nature and types of movements in a particular society and the characteristics they partake.

An inadequate perception of the importance of the historical context in shaping protest movements has also given birth to misconceptions about the nature of movements.¹⁶ The predominant orientation of protests, and social movements in ancient and even in medieval India was religious and this was for two reasons: the absence of a centralised political authority, and the nature of the authority challenged was invariably legitimized by religion.¹⁷ However, this does not suggest that the non-religious, that is, political or economic context was absent in these movements. Often religious symbols and styles of protest were invoked to achieve non-religious goals. However, K.P.Gupta¹⁸ is of the opinion that religious movements in India are essentially independent of political involvements and did not pursue any structural reforms or political changes, invoking the case of the Ramkrishna Mission. But the motivation involved in preventing conversion from Hinduism to other religions or the

political activities of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh do not support this position. Again, there are those, who proceed exclusively along 'class-conflicts' characterize all these mobilizations as predominantly economic in orientation.¹⁸

During the period of the national liberation movement in India most of the mobilizations were directly against the forces of imperialism and colonialism, irrespective of their categories, namely, students, peasants, tribes etc. or underlying motivations involved. But after independence, the absence of an over-arching enemy, and the differing perceptions about the 'enemy' to be attacked necessarily led to a) divergence in the targets of attack, that is, political authority, economic exploitation, cultural domination, and b) varying perceptions about the immediate targets of attack. This led to the diversification in the nature and proliferation of protest movements in India.¹⁹

Again, the change in the historical context also leads to changes in perspectives of analysing protest movements. What were earlier perceived to be religious or reform movements²⁰ later came to be viewed as socio-political in orientation.²¹ That is, the changing historical context shapes the attitude of the people towards protest movements. Movements are also labelled on the basis of a particular identity of participants even when the goals pursued are innate to the interests of the specific identity. The movements are named after primordial collectivities such as religions, caste, or linguistic groups, and civil collectivities such as peasants and students. Similarly, labelling of the movements is also done on the basis of the nature of collectivities against whom they are led - the anti-Brahmin movement, anti-leftist movement etc. This manner of labelling movements can be highly misleading for two reasons. First, the individuals and groups involved in these movements have several identities and the specific identity invoked may not have any relevance for the movement concerned. Moreover, a particular identity may be invoked by the enemies of the movement to discredit it. Second, several social categories may be participating simultaneously in a protest, and to designate it after one of the categories would be misleading even if that category constitutes the bulk of the participants who have initiated it.

Another frequent tendency is to name movements based on their territorial coverage, particularly the locality in which they originate and operate. Examples of these are the Bihar, Telengana, Assam, Vidharbha, Jharkhand, Naxalbari movements and the like. Such designation of movements does not reveal the nature of these movements at all - the background of the participants, the goals pursued, the means employed, the ideology followed etc. Further, if the movements subsequently spreads to a wider territorial area, the initial labelling becomes obsolete, as illustrated by the case of the Naxalbari movement. Movements are also named after the issues they pursue. Examples of these are the Tebhaga movement, and the anti-Hindi movement. The limitations of this designation is that since protest movements are likely to undergo goal transformations, the initial focuss of the movement may change, making the name redundant, and secondly, these issues may be too narrow in their orientation and may be but one of the several issues pursued by the movement - hence there is the possibility of mistaking the part for the whole. Movements are also named after their initial or top leadership. The Ramkrishna Mission movement, the Gandhian movement, the J.P.movement are examples of this. Given the possibility of movements transcending the biological life-span of specific individuals, this mode of naming movements is inappropriate. Secondly, the mode of labelling movements smacks of the personality - centeredness of movements as against the systemic orientation; it relegates the role of the collectivity, which is so critical in any movement, to the background.

Given the above discussion, it can be said that none of the attempts made so far to classify protest movements is comprehensive enough to encapsulate all varieties of movements found in India.²² For convenience, however, protest movements in India are classified on the basis of the socio-economic characteristics of the participants and the issues involved, such as, the peasant protests, tribal protests, backward caste and dalit protests, Women's protests, students' protests, middle class protests, industrial working class protests and the like.²³ It is true that there are limitations in viewing protest movements along this typology as outlined in the preceding pages but they are, nevertheless, useful as analytical tools to measure and evaluate their impact on the society, economy and the polity.

Leadership :

Leadership occupies an important place in the protest movements as the leaders are responsible for translating objective causes into subjective consciousness and mobilizing the participants. Hardly there can be any situation where the participants' by themselves can organize and lead a movement. However, the leadership pattern in different protest movements in India has been different.

As far as the peasant protests are concerned, peasant struggles can never assume a genuinely political character unless they are taken over by leaders belonging to social layers politically more advanced than the peasants themselves. The educated intelligentsia provided leadership to most of the peasant movements during the nationalist period. The 'Babas', 'Fakirs' and 'Sadhus' played the role of militant rural intelligentsia in peasant movements. They organised peasants against the British rulers. They were not revolutionaries of any accepted description belonging to any defined revolutionary social class; nor did they conform to the behaviour pattern or articulation style of the recognized leadership. They had mobility, were full-timers and unlike the urban leaders they did not indulge in sophisticated category or complicated double-faced political propaganda for the purpose of mobilization. Their exercise rested on a precise understanding of the situation and a detailed diagnosis of contemporary social ills.²⁴ Some of these movements have thus been called 'Sanyasi' rebellion.²⁵

The middle-class intelligentsia which had lost its ties of material interest with the land, provided the organized cadres of the new parties of mass mobilization. Their intervention provided a radical edge to the anti-landlord demands of the mass of the tenancy, but it has continued to display an ambivalent attitude towards the progressive historical potentiality of the new contradiction.²⁶ It has also been found that urban leadership really exploited peasant discontent to further its own political and party ends. The leadership of the Naxalite movement rested with the youths who belonged to the urban-educated middle class. In the land grab movement, the leadership came from the urban better-off section of the society.²⁷ It is also held that on the one hand was the urban-based leadership which cloaked in a more sophisticated ideology, claimed superior knowledge and status with regard to the

manner in which the movement should be conducted. They would insist that the others follow the direction they gave and assured that the predicted outcome would ensue.²⁸ Even the protest movements organized by the Kisan Sabha, the frontal organization of the Communist Party of India were dominated by the urban based middle class leadership. The lone exception to this contention is Mahendra Singh Tikayet, but he too comes from a rich upper class peasant. However, of late, with the revitalization of the Panchayati Raj in West Bengal after the Left Front came to power in 1977, the leadership in the peasant front has been decentralised and descended to the grassroot level.

So far as the tribal protests are concerned, the leadership of the Santhal, the kol, and the Munda rebellions came from religious leaders, or leaders who proclaimed themselves the incarnation of God. Birsu Munda is an example in this case.²⁹ A similar case is that of Sido and Kanhu, the leaders of the Santhal rebellion who claimed that they received messages from supernatural powers. These leaders had powerful command and influence over their followers. Their leadership capability gained further strength by taking resort to their being representatives of God. Given this background, "all leaders of the messianic movements in India have demanded great and often heroic sacrifices from their followers not only for admission into their movements but also as a condition for staying on in them."³⁰ On the socio-economic background of the tribal leadership, it has been observed that while the leadership of the first phase (1795-1860) emerged from the upper crust of tribal society, that of the second phase rose from the lowest rung of it. Sido and Kanu were the landless, Birsu Munda was a rayiat or a praja (Sharecropper) and Gobind Giri who led the Bhil movement in the Rajasthan-Gujarat border, was a 'hali' (bounded labour).³¹

The leadership of the tribal movements in the post-Independence era is found to come, in most cases, from the educated elite tribals. The tribal solidarity movements of the recent periods are primarily the product of the initiative and interest of a limited coterie of the educated tribal elite, and there is considerable communication gap between the interests and ideas of the elite leaders and the tribal masses.³² The leadership of some of the tribal peasant movements such as those of the Telengana, the Warli, the Sahada, the Bhumi Sena and the Naxalbari, was provided by non-tribals coming from different political groups.³³ At the same time, local leadership

among the common tribals has also emerged, Amarsingh in Dhuliya and Kalu Ram in Thana being the examples.³⁴

In the case of other ethno-cultural movements it is noticed that in most cases the leadership come from the educated upper and upper-middle class of the society. In the Assam movement, the Bodo movement, the Akali movement, the Gorkhaland movement, the movements in the North-East, the Jharkhand movement and the emerging Kamtapur movement in the northern part of West Bengal, the leadership is provided by the educated elite section of the society which perceives of deprivation from the share of power and privileges in the mainstream of the society.

In the Dalit protests, one finds the undisputed and the most important leader in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. By his inherent foresight, he integrated modernity with tradition in mobilizing the Dalits. Ambedkar planned his programme to bring the untouchables from a state of 'dehumanization' and 'slavery' into one of equality through the use of modern methods based on education and the exercise of legal and political rights. At the same time, Ambedkar's modernizing ideology was tempered in practice by a clear perception of the tenacity of caste and tradition. Thus, he advocated for a separatist policy accentuating caste distinctions as an initial stage in creating a society in which identities would be unimportant.³⁵ Besides Ambedkar, the dalits found a leader in Mangoo Ram who "was something of a broker, making religious symbols and ideas accessible to ordinary people."³⁶ But here too, the leadership of the political protests of the dalits has come from those 'jatis' of the 'dalit' who had improved their economic conditions.

○ Besides the dalit protests, there were a number of backward caste and/or class movements in India, like Ambedkar in the dalit movement, Jotirao Phule was the ideologue of the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra, phule rejected the Hindu scriptures and the caste system and believed that the Hindu religion, as interpreted by the Brahmins, was both the ideological means of suppression and the cause of poverty of the low castes.³⁷ However, Phule's theory of exploitation was focussed on cultural and ethnic factors rather than on economic and political ones.³⁸ Shahu Chhatrapati, the Maharaja of Kothapur, was an important leader of the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra. Ramaswami Naikar founded the Dravidian movement to

fight Aryan 'domination' which, to him, was synonymous with Brahmin domination and Brahminism.³⁹

In other secular political protest movements too, it is found that the leadership comes from the upper caste middle class section of the society. So far as Gujarats' Nav Nirman movement and Bihar's movement for total revolution are concerned, one will notice that at the initial stage the leadership came from the students and the students leaders belonged to the middle class section of the society. It has been observed that students who are protected by the wealth or influence of their families participate in agitation.⁴⁰ However, exception to this assertion is Laloo Prasad Yadav, the ex-Chief Minister of Bihar, who provided the leadership in the Bihar Movement for total revolution in 1974 as the President of the Students' Association of Patna University and he belonged to the backward caste and lower class. But these types of exceptions are bound to be exceptions only. Given the level of socio-economic development of the Indian society, leadership will continue to be poured in from the upper caste middle class and upper class of the society.

Ideology :

Ideology is considered to be a crucial aspect of any protest movement. It is ideology that legitimizes the goal of the protest and the means to be adopted to reach the goal so defined. Marx located ideology within the frame of class structure⁴¹ and Mannheim considered it a means of discrediting an adversary.⁴² Clifford Geertz, emphasizing its symbolic aspects, observes that ideology is not merely an occurrence in the head but an interworking of images to grasp reality in the actual behaviour and activities of people and thus ideology names the structure of situations in such a way that the attitude contained towards them is one of commitment. Its style is ornate, vivid, deliberately suggestive and it seeks to motivate action.⁴³ In this sense, ideology interprets the environment and projects self-images. It codifies and organizes beliefs, myths, outlook and values, defines aspirations and interests and directs responses to specific social situations. Thus, it is not only a 'framework of consciousness' but also a source of legitimizing action.⁴⁴

Hence, ideology has been an important component of all protest movements either in tacit or manifest form. Protest movements of all forms develop a protest ideology based on their conditions and perceptions of relative deprivation. However, there are variations in the themes of protest ideology that are formulated by the leaders of the protest movements to gain prestige, honour, self-respect and worth. To legitimize their acclaimed status and to work out a programme of action for collective mobilization, they use both religious and secular elements in building up the symbolic belief system. Protest ideology, based on relative deprivation, helps establish the identity and draw boundaries between the protesting and dominant groups. This means that the members of the concerned groups want to challenge and wrest away the monopoly of the dominant groups in the use of religious, economic, educational and political goods and services.

The tribal, ethno-cultural, backward caste, women's protests and the like centre around the ideology that is characterised by protest against the participants' conditions of relative deprivation. The assertion of rights of equality of opportunities in the sphere of education, employment and politics formed part of the ideology of the protest movements. However, in these protest movements, ideology was not merely the rationalization of material interests only. Rather, the ideology of these movements included religious, economic, educational and political interests. In fact, the religious and secular interests are seen as parts of the protest ideology, to equalize, by attacking the monopoly of the dominant sections of the society.⁴⁵ Further, the ideology of these movements, far from being fixed, tends to be a flexible one, for it is amenable to diverse interpretations responding to the issues and interests that crop up from time to time. Thus, ideology is seen as a force that is continuously shaped and reshaped by the emerging interests, which are manifested in situational contexts. Ideology and interests thus interact with one another.

The primordial elements form an essential part of protest ideology except, of course, the peasant and industrial protests. This is so because the primordial components provide the chief mechanism to improve self-image and self-respect, and helps to establish an identity. Thus, the primordial aspect is as important as the economic, educational and political one. All these aspects form parts of the syndrome of protest ideology guiding most of the protest movements in India. It is this form of

ideology that provides the motive force in most of the protest movements in India and is transformed into actuality by collective mobilization through an organizational framework and leadership.

In all the ethno-sectarian protest movements in India like that of Panjab, Kashmir, Assam and other parts of North-East, Gorkhaland, Jharkhand, Kamtapur, as the preceding sections show, the ideological source is perceived to be rooted in the relative deprivation of the protesting group against the dominant group and/or the State machinery thought to be the protector and guarantor of the interests of the dominant group. However, it is also found that in many such protest movements, the leaders who are, for one reason or other, out of the helms of power but wants to be around the power centre articulate such deprivations which might have been under surface, and mobilize the innocent passive masses. The motive here is basically to come near to power. The Assam movement and the Assam Gana Parishad's coming to power, the Gorkhaland movement and the Gorkha National Liberation Front leadership's changing postures, the Jharkhand movement and the proliferation of organizations within the movement, and the recent episode of the leadership of Jharkhand Mukti Morchas'(Soren) involvement in bribery scandals explain this mode of looking at the ideological theoretical aspects of the protest movements in India. Even the politico-secular movements of 1974 in Gujarat and Bihar were finally grabbed by the frustrated leaders for their own parochial interests.

Besides, there are two other themes based on relative deprivation. They are the Marxian ideology of the class struggle, without an ethnic component and the Millenarian ideology. Many peasant protests such as the Tebhaga, Telangana, and Naxalite had class struggle as their ideology. However, within this, one can identify several variations ranging from radicalism to the extreme left position. Peasant movements, like trade union movements, tend to be affiliated to or involved in sharply defined political movements or parties, in most cases, left political parties. Similarly, the Millenarian ideology has been the dominant manifestation of relative deprivation among many tribal movements in India. Here the future state of affairs to come which will be the complete reverse of the present state of deprivation, acts as the motivating force to act in the present to prepare for the millenium. It is characteristic of colonial-like situations where the concerned sections or the deprived groups feel helpless

with regard to their perceived capabilities in altering the existing situation.⁴⁶

It is also to be noted in this connection that ideology which motivates action is, in most of the protest movements in India, formulated, shaped, and reshaped in accordance with the desires, and interests of the dominant leaders of the concerned protest movements. For the purpose, ideology is often adjusted and readjusted to the requirements of the leaders' interest. The ideology that was the foundation for the Assam movement launched by All Assam Students Union and the Assam Gana Parishad remained no longer the ideology once Assom Gana Parishad came to power even though the goal legitimized by the ideology has no longer been fulfilled.

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6. Verma, S.P. : "The crisis in South Asia : An overview" in Phadnis, Urmila, Muni, S.D. and Bahadur, Kalim (eds.) : *Domestic conflicts in South Asia*, vol. I, New Delhi : South Asian Publishers, 1986, pp. 9-10.
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