

Uttarakhand Movement: The perspective of Political Parties and from the Eye of Media

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Abstract

In the post-independent period of India, most of all the political parties have involved in some form to affect the claim of separate hill state Uttarakhand from the Uttar Pradesh because of its specific topographical circumstances, economic activities, the exceptional cultural uniqueness of region, existence, practices and many more. Subsequently understanding the many grounds which controlled to the Uttarakhand separate state movement, it is authoritative to recognize the contribution of political parties in the identical. Major focus of this paper is to analyse the role of several national/regional political parties in the Uttarakhand separate state movements which intended at the demanding of separate for this specific region.

In late decade of eighties, mass movement for state for hilly Uttarakhand selected up push and question of separate state again came into the priority position. In the year of 1994 when the Uttar Pradesh state government stated 27 percent reservation for the Other Back Classes in government jobs and education, there were youth agitation all over hills against the reservation. By way of the OBC represents only 2 to 3 percent of the hill region, the step to save 27 percent seats for OBC, was consideration baseless and unpractical. The matter of reservation for the OBCs converted in mobilizing youth to backing the call for a separate Uttarakhand state. The very first time in the demanding of the mass movement youths involved in such record numbers, till now they were perceptible by their absenteeism.

The demand to call back 27 percent reservation for the O.B.Cs quickly transformed into the reservation to whole of hilly region. Finally, all the issues remained into the background and the require of statehood ship came into front in the entire mass movement. Males were all the time involved in the movement but the questions which needed bigger demand for women were employment opportunities, choices for their children and the increasing usage of liquor by men in the hills. These were the issues which directly involve the happiness of their families.

Since 1952 three models of separate governmental setup for Uttarakhand have been suggested from time to time: first, a complete state comparable to other states in Indian Union; second, an autonomous Uttarakhand and; third, Union Territory type. The first form initiates support with the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal. The second was advocated by the C.P.I. and the Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini till 1989. The Indian Congress party had constantly favoured Union Territory category for Uttarakhand (Pathak 1989:40-47).

Keywords: Political parties, reservation, movement, OBC, Regional Parties, National Parties

Participation of Political Parties in Uttarakhand Movement-

After independence of India, P.C. Joshi, the then General Secretary, C.P.I. in 1952 for the first time raised up the question of a separate hill state in Uttar Pradesh. He submitted a memorandum to the Government of India. On 13 June 1955, P.C. Joshi addressed in a communist conference at Bageshwar, Almora and acknowledged that “Kumaun belongs to Kumaonis and for its kumaonis should come forward to launch a struggle” (Daundiya 1993.p10). P.C. Joshi again in 1965 organized an all-party Sangharsh Samiti to fight for an autonomous hill state. In 1966- 67 All India Communist Party campaigned to generate consciousness for this proposal (Daundiya 1993, p.11). Obviously, this demand of P.C. Joshi for the separate state became the eye opener for the people of the hill region to assemble and mobilise themselves on the several platforms and banners. Therefore, this expansion provided fruitful ground for the appearance of many political parties for the similar reason.

Role of Regional Parties-

Undeniably, the appearance of regional parties came into picture through several developments. On 24th and 25th July, 1979 at Mussoorie, Dwarika Prasad Uniyal, a renowned Journalist, assembled Parvatiya Jan Sammelan. Devi Dutt Pant, the then Vice-Chancellor of Kumaun University, Jagdish Kapari, Nityanand Bhatt, K.N. Uniyal, Lalit Kishore Pande, Birsingh Thakur and Hukum Singh took active part in meeting at Mussoorie. In this meeting, Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD) was formed to launch a mass movement for the creation of Uttarakhand hill state. Devi Dutt Pant was elected UKD's first President (Dhad 1994, p. 249).

Role of Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD)-

Uttarakhand Kranti Dal took active part in the elections of 1980s. Devi Dutt Pant contested for a seat of member of parliament and some others were candidates for Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly. On 1 May 1981, the UKD represented a communication to Indira Gandhi the then Prime Minister of India, in connection with formation of a separate hill Uttarakhand state. In the year of 1982, some representatives of UKD met Indira Gandhi when she was at Badrinath. In the elections of 1985, Kashi Singh Aery was elected as Member of Legislative Assembly (M.L.A). From Didihat on UKD's ticket. On 25th July 1986, on Ramnagar Conference, Aery was elected president of UKD. In order to make their demand heard 1987 UKD issued a pamphlet named “Uttarakhand Rajya or Uska Swarup” (Dhad 1994, p.250).

In the Assembly elections of 1989 Kashi Singh from Didihat and Jaswant Singh Bisht from Ranikhet were elected to UP Legislative Assembly on UKD's ticket. The UKD's parliamentary candidates from Tehri and Almora were defeated by a small margin. This indicated UKD's extent of support in the region. On 15 January, 1992 Kashi Singh Aery issued a manifesto for Uttarakhand state. The manifesto identified Chandra Nagar (Gairsain) as the state capital of Uttarakhand and the total 23 districts and four Commissionaires had been made part of this manifesto (Dhad 1994, pp.252-255).

In 1992, Gairsain Session was held from 24 to 25 July and foundation stone of Chandra Nagar proposed state capital of Uttarakhand was laid by Kashi Singh Aery (ibid, p.30). Uttarakhand Kranti Dal determined to continue the long-lasting struggle for Uttarakhand hill state till it is finally declared.

Uttarakhand Mukti Morcha-

Uttarakhand Mukti Morcha, a regional party came into presence in May 1991. The party comprised all members favour in Uttarakhand separate state movement and held its two-day conference on 16-17th

May 1992 at Uttarkashi. In conference, members of Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, Marxist Communist Party, Congress, Indian communist Party, Janta Dal, Indian people's Front etc. joined to support the Uttarakhand movement (Yugvani, 1992). The General Secretary of the Morcha declared that 95 percentage of Uttarakhand population was in favour of a separate hill state. Secretary General of the Morcha said that:

Youth of Uttarakhand is unemployed while outsiders are thriving in Uttarakhand. Property dealers have deprived poor hill people of their property and have become owners of hotels and houses in hills. Morcha includes Hardwar also in the proposed Uttarakhand state (Yug Vani 1992.pp 17-23).

Uttarakhand Party-

Uttarakhand Party came into existence on 19 July 1992 with the efforts of social workers, some Kranti Dal political workers, Uttarakhand Maha Sabha and some Congress party workers. Jagdish Kapri was its President. Kapri had been talented to assemble and activate students, women, and youths for Uttarakhand separate state movement but slowly the party had developed only "one man's show" (Dhad 1994.p.226).

Uttarakhand Samyukta Sangharsh Samiti-

This samiti was shaped afterward a resolution passed in Uttarakhand Kranti Dal's meetings held on 30 May 1994 and 9 August 1994 at Nainital. These meetings were joined by active representatives of several organizations of Kumaun and Garhwal. Indramani Badoni declared its Chief patron and Kashi Singh Aery was choose its convener. Aery proclaimed that from 1 September 1994, a non-cooperation movement shall be started under t

he banner of Uttarakhand Sangharsh Samiti in all the eight districts of Uttarakhand (Amar Ujala, 31 August, 1994).

Uttarakhand Jan Sangharsh Vahini-

Uttarakhand Jan Sangharsh Vahini was established in October 1988 at a meeting at Almora. Shamsheer Singh Bisht was the President of this dedicated regional party. Its units were in national capital Delhi and Mumbai. In 1989, Shamsheer Singh Bisht contested 1989 elections on Janata Dal ticket. By this step the image of the Vahini suffered as setback. (Dhad 1994, p.235).

On 31 August 1994 a protest was organized at Delhi fully supported by Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini, UKD, Uttarakhand Janmorcha and Uttarakhand Andolan Samiti presented a strong memorandum to the President and Prime Minister of India. At Haldwani on 31 August 1994 Police had to resort to firing to disperse the agitators (Amar Ujala, 1 September, 1994).

In the month of August 1994 several centres experienced the dynamic place for the protest predominantly in Uttarakashi and Tehri districts which comprised Tehri, Devprayag, Jakholi, Chamba, Kirtinagar, Anjani-sain, Ghansali, Chamiala, Kandikhal, New Tehri and Hindolakhil. At these areas, Sangharsh Samiti's bonds were formed and agitation activities like marches, sit-ins, hunger strikers, Chakkajams and slogans were conducted.

National Political Parties towards the Uttarakhand separate state Movement-

Approach of Samajwadi Party (SP) towards Uttarakhand Movement-

1992, 20 August at Dehradun in a meeting Mulayam Singh Yadav supremo of S.P. stated its support to the creation of Uttarakhand state if the party comes to the power. When Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) aligned government came to power, Mulayam Singh, Chief Minister also got a resolution passed recommending formation of Uttarakhand state to the centre on 24 August, 1994 (Dhad 1994, P.256, Bahuguan, 1996).

Conferring to promise Mulayam Singh Yadav's government took up the matter in up-front manner. For this resolution, he took the subsequent steps:

He appointed a non-official committee recognized as 'Barthwal committee' to observe alteration features of the projected Uttarakhand state. Barthwal committee offered its report on 13 April 1994 to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav.

The Chief Minister established a Cabinet sub-Committee known as 'Kaushik committee' to scrutinize the question of Uttarakhand separate state. Rama Shankar Kaushik, the then Urban Development Minister led this committee comprising of five members of the U.P. cabinet with the Secretary of Hill-Development Department as its convener. The Chief Secretary of UP was to be the secretary of the committee. This committee submitted its report of 356 pages to the Chief Minister on 5 May 1994. On 10 August, 1994 the UP government accepted Kaushik Committee Report and recommendations for the creation of a new separate state Uttarakhand and the Chief Minister declared that the proposal would be forwarded to Delhi for the approval by the Central government.

A Senior Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer, Bishwa Nath Anand was appointed as Additional Secretary completely for Kumaun and Garhwal region with a interpretation to smooth and quick action on the issues correlated to the better progress and supervision of the remote hill region. (Hindustan 6 May 1994).

Mulayam Singh Yadav stated that it had been carried to his notice that execution of arrangements was late in the region due to delayed a monetary approval at the state head office. He declared the creation of a separate division in the Finance Department for Uttarakhand to overcome these difficulties. (The Times of India 6 May 1994).

Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP)-

Subsequently the two days conference from 30 to- 31 July 1988 at Almora Bhartiya Janata Party established Uttaranchal Uthan Parishad under the chairmanship of late Sohan Singh Jeena. Uttaranchal Uthan Parishad's goal was to found Uttaranchal separate state. In 1989, this Parishad issued a pamphlet named "Uttaranchal Pradesh Kyon" written by Bhagat Singh Koshyari (Daundiyaal 1993, p.19).

At the same time, in 1988 at Almora Uttaranchal Pradesh Sangharsh Samiti was also shaped by BJP. This Samiti planned a rally on 18th February 1989 at Almora which was joined by about 5000 people. The gathering was addressed by Lal Krishna Advani the then President of BJP who strongly declared his party's backing to the formation of a separate state of Uttaranchal (Daundiyaal 1993.pp 22-23, Bahuguan, (1996).

On 8 April 1989, BJP organized Uttaranchal Rajya conference at Almora. Murli Manohar Joshi President addressed a rally. On the same day, 86 M.P. of BJP presented the demand of Uttaranchal State in the Parliament (Dhad 1994, pp.256-259).

In the mid-term poll of 1st May, 1991, BJP not only overpowered the Congress, but also its claim for Uttaranchal verified strong enough to quash the impact of Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, which formed in 1979-80 with the single purpose of a separate hill state as stated previous (Bhatkoti & Semwal 2007, Bahuguan, (1996).

The demand for Uttaranchal was so actual that the BJP won all the four Member of Parliament (M.P) seats and 16 M.L.A. seats out of 19 in Kumaun and Garhwal region. After polling victory in Uttar Pradesh, BJP for the first time got a chance to make the government in UP. Later, as assured the BJP accomplished to get a resolution approved in UP Assembly in favour of the formation of Uttaranchal state on Monday 12th August, 1991. This resolution was proceeded to the centre government for required action. Kalraj Mishra, the then BJP president of UP stated that the resolution was a first step attaining the long-lasting goal of a separate hill state (Bhatkoti & Semwal 2007, p.145).). Virtually, through the determination by the state assembly, it was certain to encouragement the decision of the central government sooner or later.

Histrionically, later the destruction of Babari mosque at Ayodhya on 6 December 1991, BJP controlled government in UP was dismissed and the matter of Uttaranchal state could not be further followed by the BJP. Unfortunately, during Mulayam Singh Yadav's Chief Ministership the mass of Uttarakhand were being beaten, killed, and arrested. BJP in several protests raised the voice for the removal of Mulayam Singh led government and carried state government's tyrannical actions to the public. In May 1996, once BJP Government was formed at the centre, it comprised creation of Uttaranchal hill state in the Presidential speech in the Parliament.

Indian National Congress towards the Movement-

Normally, the Congress Party in belief has never been in favour of small states but after the strengthening rise of Uttarakhand separate state movement the Congress party led government at the Centre invited the leaders of the movement to New Delhi for discussions. Moti Lal Bora, ex- Governor of Uttar Pradesh and Harish Rawat, a congress leader of Kumaon, while politicking for the Congress candidates in the elections of U.P. Legislative Assembly in October 1996, everywhere in their meetings clarified that the Congress government at the centre had made up its mindset to allow Union-Territory status to Uttarakhand. But there was some inevitable delay in making the declaration for it.

Subsequently the declaration of the schedule of polling by the Election Commission, the Government of India could not do it but now because Indian Prime Minister Davgoda has declared Government's decision to formation of Uttarakhand state, the Congress Party would support it and will make pressure on the Central government to take necessary steps in this favour as early as conceivable (Dainik Jagran, 4 October 1996).

Narayan Dutt Tiwari, the then President of Congress (I's) (Chandra, 2000.p. 236, Bahuguan, 1996) and Arjun Singh both were in favour of the formation of Uttarkhand state. Tiwari was in touch with the Prime Minister of India and tried to take steps to create the state by March, 1997 (Dainik Jagran, 5 October, 1996).

Furthermore, in details reservation issue converted the mass agitation really into people's movement. In July 1994, Mulayam Singh Yadav, the then Chief Minister of U.P. announced that the Government's reservation policy would be applicable in colleges, as well as professional college. This led to college student's protest in hills which was later reinforced by the UKD. The incident of Pauriin August 1994 fuelled the anger and subsequently, after 2 August, 1994, the condition in Uttarakhand hills became very furious and tense. The Khatima incident (1 September 1994), Mussoorie firing (2 September, 1994) and Muzaffarnagar firing on 2nd October 1994 (Times of India, 2 July 2007) made whole of Uttarakhand united, violent, and uncontrollable. People spontaneously joined the mass movement.

Consequently, the awareness of a separate Uttarakhand state turned into a great people's movement which in course of time has compelled almost all the regional and national political parties to include the matter of forming a separate Uttarakhand state. In their election manifesto in the forthcoming UP Legislative Assembly elections held in the last week of September and first week of October 1996 (Bahuguan, 1996). H.D. Devgoda the then Prime Minister of India, Indrajit Gupta Home Minister of India, Lal Krishna Advani of Bhartiya Janata Party, Moti Lal Bora and Jitendra Prasad of Congress Party, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, President of Indira Congress visited Uttarakhand and numerous rallies, meetings were announced for political party's strong support to the creation of Uttarakhand state.

The then Prime Minister of India H.D. Devgoda, afterwards the consent of his cabinet had already proclaimed the creation of Uttarakhand state on 15 August, 1996 and in his speech at Dehradun declared that after the formation of U.P. Legislative Assembly in October 1996, the development of Uttarakhand state's dream would be true and the state will come into existence. (Dainik Jagran, 5 October, 1996).

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