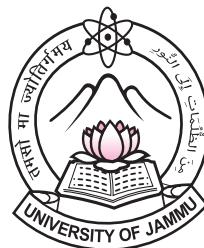


**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE & ONLINE EDUCATION  
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**SELF LEARNING MATERIAL  
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**SEMESTER -II**

**COURSE NO. POL-203**

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**STATE POLITICS IN INDIA**

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# STATE POLITICS IN INDIA

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COURSE NO. : POL-203

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## **3.1 STATE PARTY SYSTEM: ONE PARTY, BI PARTY AND MULTI PARTY SYSTEM**

**- Dr. Kamla**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **3.1.0 Objectives**

#### **3.1.1 Introduction**

#### **3.1.2 Party System**

#### **3.1.3 One Party System**

3.1.3.1 Features of a One-Party System

3.1.3.2 Merits of One Party System

3.1.3.3 Demerits of One Party System

#### **3.1.4 Bi Party System**

3.1.4.1 Merits of Bi Party System

3.1.4.2 Demerits Bi Party System

#### **3.1.5 Multi part System**

3.1.5.1 Merits of Multi-Party System

3.1.5.2 Demerits of Multi- Party System

#### **3.1.6 Let us Sum up**

#### **3.1.7 Exercises**

#### **3.1.8 Suggested Readings**

#### **3.1.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this lesson you will be able to –

- know about the party system in India
- understand the bi-party system and multi-party system.
- analyse the merit and demerits of party system.

#### **3.1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Political party forms an important component of a political system. A political party is an institution which consists of leaders, followers, policies and programmes. Its followers may have formal membership of the party or may support it without being formal members. There are different parties. Parties can be differentiated on the bases of leaders, policies and programmes, ideologies and internal functioning. The principal feature of a political party which distinguishes it from other organizations is that its main purpose is to capture power. Unlike a political party, a pressure group,

interest group or non-party civil society organization, generally do not seek power. However, sometimes such organizations also contest elections. Political parties are the important links between individuals, state and society. Political parties provide the crucial connection between social process and policy-makers, and influence debates and policies on issues affecting the interests of various social groups in a political system.

### **3.1.2 PARTY SYSTEM**

The meaning of party system is related to number of political parties in a country. Based on the numbers of parties present in political system, party systems generally can be categorized as one party system, two-party system or multiparty system. As their names suggest the one party, two-party and multiparty systems denote presence of one, two or several parties in a democracy. The most common way to identify party systems in India generally is the level of performance of parties in elections and their presence in the governments. Presence of more than one party is a feature of a democratic and plural society (<https://egyankosh.ac.in>)

### **3.1.3 ONE PARTY SYSTEM**

The one party system in which only one party rules and no opposition party is permitted. In other words, One-party system implies the existence of only one party in a country. The countries committed to certain ideologies such as Marxism or Fascism normally do not allow the existence of any opposition party. Parties other than the ruling party are either constitutionally debarred, or they are crushed by the rulers.

This system originated with the establishment of the rule of the Communist Party of the USSR after the Bolshevik Revolution. While the critics deplored the system as authoritarian rule of the Communist Party, the USSR claimed it to be the rule of the working classes. The Bolsheviks became the Communist Party that established a new kind of political order called 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The Stalin Constitution of 1936 frankly prohibited formation of any other political party. The one party system was set up in Italy after Mussolini came to power in 1922. After that only, the fascist party was allowed to function and the followers of the other parties were assaulted and murdered. It had its own form in Italy when Mussolini gradually finished all other parties by 1925 and then established the dictatorship of his Fascist Party. The one party system was set up in Germany by Hitler in 1933. The strength and fury of the Nazi (National Socialist Party) party led by Hitler was so great that all other political parties vanished from the political field. He finished all other parties and claimed that the political parties have now been fully abolished.

Several countries adopted a one-party rule after the Second World War. East European countries, such as Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary came under the rule of their communist parties. In China, Communist Party acquired complete power after the success of revolution in October 1949 (Mahajan, 1988). Later, a one party communist regime was set up in North Korea. This example was followed later by Vietnam and Cuba. But, certain other countries adopted non-communist one-party regimes. This was done in Tanzania, Chad, Ivory Coast, Niger and Liberia in Africa (<https://egyankosh.ac.in>).

The model of one-party system covered other countries of the world as well. Spain, Portugal,

Mexico and a large number of Central and East European states (like Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania etc.) had the same experiment. After the Second World War, it had its expression in China under the leadership of Mao. We may also consider the fact that military dictators followed the same pattern as Egypt under Arab Socialist Union of Col. Nasser, Burma under Socialist Party of Gen. Ne Win, Indonesia under Golkar Party of Gen. Suharto and Iraq under Baath Party of Saddam Hussain (Johari, 2006, p.86).

### **3.1.3.1 Features of a One-Party System**

The major features or characteristics of a one-party system are followings:

- (I) In a single-party state there is no official opposition.
- (ii) Power is concentrated in the hands of the party leader.
- (iii) There is only one ideology for the state.
- (iv) A one party system may be **de-facto**. This refers to a one-party system which has evolved by itself with the ruling party gaining a considerable following over time.
- (v) On the other hand it can be **de jure**. In this case, the party has been imposed by law and it is illegal to form, operate or join a different party in the state.
- (vi) It does not tolerate any element of opposition.
- (vii) All political rights and freedoms are denied.
- (viii) The one-party system often goes hand-in-hand with the political and economic ideologies of socialism and communism.

### **3.1.3.2 Merits of One Party System**

- (I) **Stability and National Unity:** It is urged that the one party system is the reflection of national unity. Democratic pluralism sacrifices the general interest of the nation for private and sectional interests in the cracked mirror of parties with the result that the country no longer recognizes its own image. The one party system preserves the unity of the nation and looks at all problems from the national point of view.
- (ii) **Stable Administration:** It helps in the establishment of stable administration which further helps in the progress of the country. The progress of the Soviet Union is a glaring example in this regard. The administration becomes efficient because all the powers are concentrated in the hands of one leader and there is favouritism, nepotism and black-marketing are banished altogether.
- (iii) In this system, formation and execution of long-term planning is possible.
- (iv) The country achieves remarkable economic progress as the Government ends the conflicts among all the classes and it devotes its entire energy, towards the increase of production in the country.
- (v) There is a unity and discipline in the country.
- (vi) Time is not wasted in unnecessary criticism and propaganda.

### **3.1.3.3 Demerits of One Party System**

- (I) Under the one party system, there is no alternative government and no genuine choice before the electors.
- (ii) Since there is only one party in this system, there is no freedom of expression.
- (iii) Democracy is eroded and dictatorship emerges.
- (iv) There is no regard for the views of different classes and interests.
- (v) The Government becomes absolute and the administration becomes irresponsible.
- (vi) The development of the personality is hindered because all social freedoms are crushed.
- (vii) In this system there is an overbearing influence of terrorism, and the opponents are crushed with a heavy hand.
- (viii) The dictators make enormous military preparations for maintaining their honour and position, and they adopt the policy of war and victory which is quite harmful for the country.
- (ix) There is no place for toleration, discussion or compromise. One has merely to carry out the order of the party or face the consequences. The people have no say in the choice of their rulers. The rule of the one party can be overthrown only by force.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What do you understand by political parties?

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2. What are the features of a One-party system?

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3. Discuss the merits and demerits of One-Party System.

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### **3.1.4 BI PARTY SYSTEM:**

In a state there may be one, two or more political parties. When the parties are only two in number, it is called the bi party system. It does not mean that a particular country has only two parties and there is no third party in its political system. But the power usually changes between two main parties. Several other parties may exist, contest elections and win a few seats in the national legislatures. But only the two main parties have a serious chance of winning the majority of seats to form a government. Such a party system is called a bi party system. The bi party systems prevail in

Britain, United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In the US, the Democratic and Republican parties are main parties, and in the UK, are the Labour Party and the Conservative Party are two main parties (Agarwal, 1994).

### **3.1.4.1 Merits of Bi Party System:**

The followings are the merits of Bi Party System:

- 1. Stability in Government:** Bi party system brings about stability in government to a very large extent. Because, the party, which has a majority in the legislature forms the government and the other party acts as opposition. It ensures more permanent and stable cabinets than formed under multi-party system. All ministers are taken from the one single party which have majority in the lower house of the legislature. The political homogeneity makes them a well-organized and responsible team workers. They are also individually and collectively responsible for the policy which the cabinet initiates and carry out.
- 2. Securing Representative Government in real sense:** It secures a representative government in the real sense. It provides the only method by which the electors, at the time of election, directly choose the government. Both the parties have their well-defined programmes and a direct appeal is made to the electorate on the basis. The electors choose between the programmes and decide about the party which is come to power. Two parties, bring the electorate to a point where they are faced by a simple alternative. One of the two parties will win a majority and become responsible for the enactment of policies. The other will be the opposition.
- 3. Direct Election of the Government:** In bi party system, the government is elected by the people directly because the voters know the party in whose favour they are casting their votes. Thus, the people casting their votes that they wish to form a government.
- 4. Formation of Government is easier:** In this system, it becomes easy for the head of the state to decide which party should be invited to form the government. The head of the state invite the leader of the majority party to form the government. In the way the majority party form the government. If the ruling party loses the majority support in the legislature, the head of the state invites the opposition party to form the government.
- 5. Accountability and Transparency:** In a bi party system, there is always transparency and accountability in the government because, the people have the right and power to vote out any political party that does not represent their dreams and aspirations. Conversely, the people becomes Supreme. Also, the principle of checks and balances in a two party system also forces the government to be transparent because if it fails to be so, the opposition party will use it against the government.
- 6. Balancing in the Political System:** One party forms the government and another keeps and watchful eyes on it. That is why, the balance in the political system continuously maintains.
- 7. Encourage democracy:** Unlike a one-party state where only a single political party is legally allowed to exist in the country; bipartism encourages democracy because the people

can choose their leaders from any of the two major political parties. This is actually one of the major advantages of the system.

**8. It ensures a strong government and continuity of the policy:** Due to stability in government in the bi party system, the government is stronger. It can pursue a good policy continuously. The government can formulate long term plans for the welfare of the people. It can also ensure its goodwill to foreign countries.

#### **3.1.4.2 Demerits of Bi Party System**

- (1) Dictatorship of the Majority Party:** In bi party system, the dictatorship of the majority party is established. Because the party which has a majority in the legislature forms the government and the other party acts as opposition.
- (2) Limited choice before the voters:** When there are only two parties before the electorate, they have to elect one out of the two parties, even if they do not like both the parties. In this way, the electorate loses its freedom of choice. In case there are more than two parties, the choice of the voters becomes wide.
- (3) Dictatorship of the cabinet:** In the bi party system, majority party forms government. All the ministers are taken from the same party. In such a situation, the ruling party does not care much for the opposition. Cabinet establish its dictatorship.
- (4) It divides the country into two groups:** It is true that the division of the country into two groups will bring about a more stable government than a multi-party system. But it should also be noted that this can equally lead to a crisis or disintegration as there will be two different groups of people in the country with different political Ideology.
- (5) Bi party system may not totally represent the value of the people:** In a two party system, the people only have limited choice of political party. Thus, two political parties may not have the same dreams, aspirations and value as the people. Conversely, the people will have to compromise their choice and pick any of the political parties even if they are not entirely represented.
- (6)** It has destroyed the prestige of the legislature and has given rise to the dictatorship of the cabinet.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What are the merits of Bi-Party system?

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2. Discuss the demerits of Bi-Party system.

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### 3.1.5 MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM

Where there are more than two political parties, there is multi-party system. A multiparty system is a political system where multiple political parties across the political spectrum run for the national election and work in the political sphere. Multi-party system indicates existence of several parties in a political system. India and many European countries have a multi-party system. In a multi-party system, several parties come together to form a coalition government and adopt a common minimum programme for governance. The multi-party system is of two types: unstable and working. The unstable party system does not provide stability, and the best example of this system can be seen in India during 1996-98. The working multi-party system behaves like a two-party system and thereby tends to provide stability to the government, even though they have more than two major political parties. The multiparty system promotes the coalition government, and since the 1990s India has been governed by the coalition governments (<https://egyankosh.ac.in>)

#### 3.1.5.1 Merits of Multi-Party System:

**The followings are the merits of Multi-Party System:**

- (1) **More democratic system:** The great merit of the multi-party system is that it faithfully lives up to the democratic ideals and allows every opinion group freely to organise itself.
- (2) **More elastic system:** The multi-party system is based on rational principles. Individuals have diverse interests and it is difficult to divide them into two watertight compartments. There is always scope for the formation of new parties to safeguard certain interests. If there are only two parties, those interests are likely to be ignored. A multi-party system gives scope for the greater elasticity and mobility. Under this system, groups can be freely organised, can unite and separate with every change of the situation.
- (3) **Wide choice before the electorate:** Where there are many parties, there is wider choice before the electorate because they cast their votes in favour of only the like-minded parties.
- (4) **Chances of Cabinet dictatorship are minimised:** In a multiple party system, coalition government is formed. In coalition government, various political parties form government. So, there is no possibility of dictatorship of cabinet.
- (5) **Absence of the division of Nation into two camps:** Where there is multi-party system, there are many types of ideologies and there is no rigid discipline among the parties. If a member leaves one party, he can join another party which has views almost similar to his own views. Because of the freedom of the views, the nation is not divided into the rival groups.
- (6) **Choices of the Voters:** The probability of considering different viewpoints is relatively higher in a multiparty system. The Multi-party system affords citizens the opportunity to have as many choices as possible and also encourages their participation in election procedures.
- (7) The multi-party system provides a possible alternative government and gives the electorate a choice between them.

### 3.1.5.2 Demerits of Multi-Party System:

- (1) **Weak Government:** In most cases, a single party do not get power alone and leads to difficulty in the formation of the government. This situation leads to the formation of coalition government which is basically weak and dissolved soon.
- (2) **Hung Parliament:** In multi-party system, when no party is able to secure the majority in the election, it leads to the hung parliament. It creates a situation of political instability.
- (3) **Absence of strong ability in decision making process:** Some time multi-party system leads to the minority government. A minority government refers to the government which is formed even after having less than majority seats. When a coalition comes into power, it is due to the support of various parties who do not have majority seats. Such a scenario gives rise to difficulties in decision making. Although the coalition so formed becomes the government, still they are separate parties and this is evident in the decision-making process where coming to a consensus is tough. A minority government considers only the short term benefits of the nation and long term benefits of the party. Unsuccessful coalitions tend to satisfy the needs of its support groups and overlook the prosperity of the country. Hence, a minority government might prove to be detrimental to democracy as it lacks political management.
- (4) **Rival among the Political Parties:** When there are many parties vying for the ultimate goal of ruling the country, it can degenerate into an unhealthy rivalry among the various parties. This could eventually stifle development and progress.
- (5) **Factionalism in the Nation:** Another disadvantage of multi-party system is that it can lead to divisions in the nation. This is especially so in Africa where parties could be formed along tribal, religious or ethnic lines.
- (6) **National interests are harmed by the selfish propaganda of the parties:** In multi-party system, every party carries on vigorous propaganda in its favour and against the other parties. It poisons the political atmosphere of the country.
- (7) The drawback of this system is that the members of the Council of Ministers instead of working under the leadership of the Prime Minister seek guidance from their party heads, and even a single Member of Parliament tries to blackmail or manipulate government by threatening to withdraw its support. Government instability is a major problem in this kind of party system.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What do you understand by Multi-Party system?

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2. Discuss the merits and demerits of Multi-Party System?

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### 3.1.6 Let Us Sum up

There are certain advantages and disadvantages in one party, two party and multi- party system. From the point of views of functioning of the government, two party system is the best and democracy is protected in it. In single party system, there is stability in the government but there is no place of democratic values. In the multi part system, the nature of the political system is democratic, yet sometime the government is not stable. No particular system can be fixed for any country and it depends upon the circumstances of each country as to which party system should be adopted by it. What is crucial therefore is the political culture of a country that determines the suitability of a particular kind of party system for that country. While the party system has certain drawbacks, it is essential for the working of a democracy as parties stand between the electorate and the government.

### 3.1.7 EXERCISES

1. Discuss the features of One Party System.
2. Explain the merits and demerits of Multi-Party System.
3. Explain in detail the merits and demerits of Bi- Party System.

### 3.1.8 SUGGESTED READING

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- <https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/43956/1/Unit-23.pdf>

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## **3.2 Reservation and Political Mobilization: Maharashtra and Rajasthan**

**- Dr. Kamla**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **3.2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.2.1 Introduction**

#### **3.2.2 What is the Maratha reservation policy?**

#### **3.2.3 Demand of Maratha Reservation**

#### **3.2.4 Maratha Mobilisation**

#### **3.2.5 Reasons for demand : Maratha Reservation**

#### **3.2.6 Caste in Rajasthan**

#### **3.2.7 Let Us Sum up**

#### **3.2.8 Exercises**

#### **3.2.9 Suggested Readings**

#### **3.2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this lesson, you will be able to-

- understand the Maratha reservation issue.
- analyze the reason for the demand of reservations.

#### **3.2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Over the last few years, Maharashtra has seen several agitations demanding reservations for the Maratha community under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota. However, the demand for reservation has been categorically rejected by various commissions set up by both the state and central governments. This includes the Kalelkar Commission (1955), the Mandal Commission (1980) and the Central Backward Classes Commission (2004).<sup>1</sup> Several reports of the state backward classes commissions, including most recently that of the Bapat Commission, have also rejected the Maratha demand for reservation. Justice Bapat was of the opinion that including the Marathas under the OBC category would be against any semblance of social justice. Ignoring the repeated dismissal of this demand by various committees, the Maratha-elite-dominated Congress-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) government, with an eye on its electoral fortunes, went ahead and appointed yet another committee, led this time by Narayana Rame, to examine this matter.<sup>3</sup> The five-judge Constitution Bench order struck down the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, 2018, reserving the Maratha community in public education and employment, which has significant political and legal implications. The Supreme Court refused to

revisit the 1992 *Indra Sawhney* judgment, which had ruled that the quantum of reservation should not exceed 50 per cent, unless compelled by “extraordinary circumstances”. The Court has held that the 2018 Act violates the principle of equality and by exceeding the ceiling of 50 per cent, goes against Articles 14 and 15 (right to equality and protection against discrimination) of the Indian Constitution.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.2.2 WHAT IS THE MARATHA RESERVATION POLICY?**

Maharashtra government appointed a nine-member Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission headed by Justice M.G. Gaikwad. The commission recommended reservation for the Marathas in 2018.

In 2018 itself, the Maharashtra government enacted a law, it provides 16 percent reservation to the Maratha community in jobs and admissions. The law termed the Maratha community as a socially and educationally backward class (SEBC). However, the Maratha reservation violated the 50% ceiling mentioned as in the *Indra Sawhney* case.

The law was challenged in Bombay High Court. The Bombay High Court upheld the constitutional validity of the Act. But the Bombay High Court reduced the Maratha reservation to 12% in education and 13% in employment (Instead of 16%). However, an appeal was filed in the Supreme Court. In that case, the Supreme Court held that the reservation is unconstitutional.

### **3.2.3 DEMAND OF MARATHA RESERVATION**

Maharashtra's 2018 law was the outcome of a prolonged political campaign by the numerically significant and politically dominant Maratha community. The Marathas are a politically dominant community that makes up 32% of Maharashtra's population. They have historically been identified as a 'warrior' caste with large landholdings. Eleven of the state's 19 chief ministers so far have been Marathas. While the division of land and agrarian problems over the years have led to a decline in prosperity among middle- and lower-middle-class Marathas, the community still plays an important role in the rural economy. The discontent in the community spillover into protests and unrest until the quota was announced.

At least three national commissions and three state commissions have rejected its demand for reservation in the past. It has been revived as a political issue in recent years, with parties competing to promise quotas to the group, which continues to dominate in state politics, running of cooperatives and educational institutions and ownership of land. But reservation in Maharashtra had already reached the 50 per cent bar set by *Indra Sawhney*, and inclusion of the Marathas, estimated to be about 35 per cent of the state population, within the existing OBC quota was fraught with the risk of turning other beneficiary groups restive. Hence, a separate quota was constituted, with the Justice Gaikwad Commission advocating the Marathas' claim to social and educational backwardness. The apex court has now rejected the Commission's argument that extraordinary circumstances existed for a Maratha quota

— the Court said the data collected and presented by the (Justice Gaikwad) Commission “proves that the Marathas are not socially and educationally backward”. By all accounts, the

Commission's recommendations may have made a more persuasive case for proportional representation rather than social justice. Going ahead, the Maharashtra government should listen to the state's top bureaucrats who have reportedly advised the leadership to undertake a fresh study to support the Maratha claim for backward status and affirmative action, if it wishes to pursue quotas for the community.

The Maratha reservation issue has been a long drawn-out one in Maharashtra. It has also been attracting a lot of attention because of its possible effect on the upcoming 2019 elections (both Lok Sabha and State Assembly in Maharashtra). So how does this reservation issue affect the 2019 elections?

There has been no caste census in India since 1932 and the 2011 census only tried to estimate the OBC population in the country. Hence, there are no accurate figures of the Maratha population in Maharashtra who are fighting for reservation. Different reports quote their share of the population ranging from 32 per cent to 35 per cent. Nevertheless, this undetermined figure is enough to understand why the issue of Maratha reservation has the potential to be a game changer.

The Marathas were placed in the category of Forward Hindu Castes and Communities by the Mandal Commission Report as implemented in 1990. Of the three government reports in the past 2 decades, two reports the National Commission for Backward Classes Report, 2000 and the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission report, 2008, rejected the Maratha claim for OBC status. In 2014 however, a committee headed by the then Industry Minister of Maharashtra, Narayan Rane rejected the previous reports. Based on the committee's recommendations an ordinance was passed in June 2014 granting 16 per cent reservation for Marathas in government jobs and educational institutions. This was later shot down by the Bombay High Court two weeks after the BJP-led NDA government came into power in the state.

Taking into account the timing of such a move made by the Prithviraj Chavan government in 2014, it is safe to say that this was done to grab a few last-minute votes before the 2014 state assembly elections. Looking back at how the Congress- led UPA government fared in the targeted elections, it is clear that this move didn't have the desired effect among the Marathas.

### **3.2.4 MARATHA MOBILISATION**

The Maratha mobilisation in Maharashtra since the last few months, lakhs from this dominant caste, known for its clout in politics, agriculture, and the cooperative sector in the state, have been staging massive silent rallies or "muk morchas" in the strict after the district in a strong display of discontent. The trigger for this mobilisation was a horrific incident in July 2017 in Kopardi village in Ahmednagar district, in which a 15-year-old Class nine students from the Maratha community was gang raped and murdered.<sup>8</sup> The three accused in the case have been arrested are youths from the Dalit community. The Dalit Panthers created a mass of vocal Dalit youths who questioned the establishment. The renaming of the Marathwada University after Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar exposed the fissures between the two communities. Collective attacks on Dalits followed." Maratha rallies attended by two to five lakh people each were held in Aurangabad, Beed, Parbhani, Osmanabad and Jalgaon districts in the last few weeks. More are scheduled in Akola, Amravati, Buldhana, Nagpur,

Yavatmal, Wardha, Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri and other parts of Maharashtra. The two primary demands of the community are that Marathas be granted reservations and that the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act be repealed. There's also a contradictory demand by a section of the community seeking an "equal citizen law" to end quotas altogether. The demand for reservations is a long-standing one.

The fact that this jumbled set of political demands is detached from the crime in question indicates a lack of a clear political agenda even though reports say that the rallies were well organised, indicating the involvement of an organised body. What is clear, however, is that the roots of discontent among Marathas go a long way back. It is related to economic and social factors and the gradual decline of this community's political dominance over the past few years. Marathas – a highly-stratified community with small, landless farmers at one extreme and the political elite at the other – constitute roughly one-third of the state's population. Land reforms, political movements of the '60s and '70s, the agrarian crisis, poor prices for agricultural produce and the cornering of resources and schemes by a section of elite, politically-connected Marathas have, over time, fuelled frustrations among the poorer groups of the landed community.

Anand Teltumde, a veteran scholar has classified Marathas in the following three categories:-

- a) The uppermost class is the gadhivarcha Maratha which owns sugar factories, and educational institutions and controls big co-operatives and also has a major influence on politics.
- b) The second class is vadyavarcha Marathas, which owns large tracts of land, gas agencies, petrol pumps and small-scale co-operatives.
- c) The last one is the lower class known as wadivarcha Marathas who are largely small and marginal farmers. In addition, there are two more classes from the urban areas such as the lower middle class and the middle-class Marathas. The discontent among this dominant community is related to economic and social factors and the gradual decline of its political dominance.

### **3.2.5 REASONS FOR DEMAND : MARATHA RESERVATION**

The participation of Marathas across classes in the rural and urban areas, seemingly spontaneous and without any one person or organisation assuming leadership, was the most striking feature of the Maratha Kranti Morcha. Scholars and commentators have argued that some of these factors may have played a role in unrest among the Marathas: first, the decline in the political dominance of Marathas in the rural and urban local bodies since the mid-1990s. This is primarily due to the implementation of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments that provided reservation to Dalits, Adivasis, women, and most importantly to the OBCs. Secondly, the Marathas allege that the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 has been misused against them despite the conviction rate being merely 5% in such cases. Thirdly, the agrarian crisis that began in the 1990s had a major impact on most small and marginal Maratha farmers. Finally, the neo-liberal model of development adopted by the Indian state has resulted in its withdrawal from the social sector expenditures. In addition, and perhaps, the most important aspect that has received very little attention is the way in which the economic transformation of Mumbai city over the last two decades has affected urban lower middle class and small and marginal Maratha farmers. Maratha labourers and Mumbai Since the late 1990s,

Mumbai city witnessed a large-scale closure of textile mills, along with chemical, engineering, and other manufacturing industries. These industries provided well-paid job opportunities for rural labour migrants with little or no education. Also, these jobs also provided health care benefits through the Employees State Insurance Corporation and protected its employees with several social security measures. As several studies have documented, the Marathas, as a caste group, not only dominated the industrial workforce but also, they had a major share in well-paid occupations. Marathas were the most affected by the closure of large-scale manufacturing industries in Mumbai. Their problems further got complicated by Mumbai's transformation into a service sector economy, which demanded a workforce with altogether different skills and knowledge than what was needed in the manufacturing industries. In the service sector economy, knowledge of English became a necessity, not just for mobility but also to obtain better-paid jobs at the lower level. As a result, even those individuals who would have obtained a slightly better education but in the vernacular medium found it difficult to obtain well-paid jobs. These developments clearly signalled the disappearance of better-paid job opportunities for individuals with little education or vernacular education. As a result, there was no option before the rural labour migrants with little formal education (especially of the English language) but to work in the informal sector. Such jobs, as is widely known, are marked by low wages, long and unpredictable working hours, lack of clear-cut conditions of work and a total absence of social security provisions. While these changes in the political economy affected individuals across castes, it had a major impact on the urban lower middle class and the lower Marathas who had earlier dominated well-paid blue-collar occupations.

The Maharashtra Government can undertake a fresh study to support the Maratha claim for backward status and affirmative action. However, a more prudent approach would be to solve supply-side issues in education and employment. This would curtail unnecessary demand for reservation.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What is the Maratha reservation policy?

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2. Discuss the reasons behind the demand of Maratha Reservation?

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3. Debate the politics of Maratha mobilization.

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### 3.2.6 Caste in Rajasthan

In the context of caste identity and caste-based politics, and mobilisation of collective identities- in the case of Rajasthan's Gujjar community and their agitation for Scheduled Tribe reservation. The contested reality of caste and reservation politics pits different groups against each other. Different caste groups strive for recognition in certain categories whereas other groups already included in those categories resist their claims for inclusion (eg. Meenas in the case of Gujjars agitation for ST reservation and Gujjars in the case of Jats inclusion into the OBCs category in Rajasthan). It is how these categories of identification become a matter of contestation. The caste-based identity politics and reservation politics are leading towards caste/community conflicts in the long run.

Gujjars are not a homogenous entity. They have different religious identities, they are also categorised as STs in some parts and OBCs in others. In Rajasthan, they are mainly rural residents and are engaged in agriculture and cattle rearing. As their traditional occupation has been of agro-pastoral nature, Gujjars could not excel in agriculture as other agricultural caste like Jats did. They constitute around 9 per cent of the state's population and were lately granted the Most Backward Class (MBC) status with four other communities in the state.

The Gujjar demand for ST reservation was raised before the reforms of 1990s. They organised for the first time in May, 1976 at Dholpur, Rajasthan. This conference was held under the leadership of K.L. Verma, where two chief ministers of the state of Madhya Pradesh S.C. Shukla, P.C. Sethi, and the Chief Minister of Rajasthan Haridev Joshi. Joshi was also accompanied by two senior cabinet ministers namely; Jagannath Pahadia and Shiv Charan Mathur. They presented to Brahman and Reddy the Union of India Home Minister the Memo demanding their inclusion in the ST list. In 1981, Gujjars, along with various other groups, gave their recommendations to be included in the ST list to the S.C. Mathur, the then CM of Rajasthan. However, they were found unfit to be included in the list by the Social Welfare Department. Hence, were not included in the CMs recommendations to the Government of India. They were, however, brought into the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the state in 1993 and in the Central OBC list in 1994. It was in 2003 when during one of the election rallies Vasundhara Raje committed to the community to give them ST reservation if brought to power. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in the same year, committed to the Jat Mahasabha for their inclusion in the OBC list. And before the Parliamentary elections in 2004 they were notified in the list of OBCs. The Gujjars did not oppose this. The Jats, however, put a condition of not dividing the OBC quota. Further, having high cultural and political capital Jats could do well in terms of consolidation of their collective identity and their socio-economic conditions as a whole. Given the early social reforms within the community and active political mobilisation under the leadership of top Jat leaders like Sir Chhotu Ram and Baldev Ram Mirdha, the Jat community could excel in the realm of Rajasthan's politics in post-independence period. The Jat reservation created new imbalance in the state, for other competitive exams the better educated and prosperous Jats cornered two third of all the seats, general and OBC. And they began cornering a major chunk of jobs meant for the OBC communities, the Gujjars, hence, got angry. They feared that Jats inclusion into the OBC category would cut on their share in the category.

This is how the Gujjars demand for the ST reservation was raised. They demanded reservation in a separate category of STs through which they would have reservation benefits without compromising on their claim of having a Kshatriya lineage. However, when the Gujjars demanded for ST reservation, the Meenas, the largest tribal community in Rajasthan, also saw it as a threat to their share in the category. They were given the ST reservation early after independence. It was due to the efforts of the Meena Mahapanchayat and the visit of Backward Caste Commission's member to the Meena community, the Meenas were included in the list of STs in 1954. Their far sightedness paid them well as they are well represented in the state and central bureaucracy, other civil jobs with now accumulating their political capital. The Gujjar agitation in 2007 was also turned into an inter-community conflict when Meenas opposed their demands vehemently. It is, therefore a cycle where one's claim threatens the position of the other collective. And in an unequal competing society with changing socio-economic conditions this process will become perpetual because the collective identification and awareness of that collective self will keep emerging.

The Gujjar protests were although about entitlements in educational institutions and employment, they were, however, incited by the feeling of relative backwardness of Gujjars vis-a-vis Meenas. Meenas have become well represented in the state, schedule tribe reservation has helped them attain good representation in the state service jobs while Gujjars could only manage to get jobs into mining and construction or at best minor clerical positions. The Gujjars in Rajasthan would recall how „a clear case of comparison with Meenas would be made by community people to measure and understand their backwardness. According to them, it was important to see the situation in relation to the Meenas as both the communities had begun from the same level of development and were having similar ways of life. The relations between Gujjars and Meenas have always been cordial and intimate. And it was this intimacy of their cross-caste relations that led to Gujjars asking questions about their own backwardness in contrast to the extraordinary upward mobility of the Minas in the last half century. The Meenas are the largest community amongst the 13.4 percent Tribal population of Rajasthan. They are also among the politically most influential tribes in the state, with 18 Mina MLA's in the 200-member Rajasthan state assembly. The agitation of the Gujjars was another major event which not only witnessed identity assertion by the Gujjars but also by the Meenas. Their agitation for reservation irked the Minas in Rajasthan and brought them together as they saw the Gujjar protest as a threat to their share in the ST quota. As per Meenas, if Gujjars wanted to come into the ST quota they should bring their OBC share with them. In this sense, they had no issues with Gujjars being categorised as ST.

The case of the Gujjars of Rajasthan demonstrates a multilayered narrative of their concerns in the form of their agitation following 2007, where they wish to leverage a certain kind of collective identity to have access to state reservation benefits. They see the Jats as political competitors, who through strong political and social leadership could excel in the domain of politics. And now after attaining the OBC reservation, they have become strong competition in the spheres of education and employment as well. The Meenas, on the other side, according to the Gujjars, already dominate these two domains because of their ST reservation. Further, politics plays a significant role in the creation, maintenance, and the reinforcement of identities. The political process in the country determines the

distribution of education, wealth and employment. And it is only by increasing the share in political power an ethnic group can best improve its share of education and employment. As K.S. Sangwan asserts, strengthening one's group identity and improving their socio-economic status are two main objectives of all ethnic groups, and the route to achieve these twin goals is through politics.

### **Status of Scheduled Castes and Schedules Tribes in Rajasthan**

According to the Census 2011, the total population of the state is about 68548437. In this population, about 12221593 people constitutes Scheduled Castes population which is around 17.8% of the total population in Rajasthan. And, the population of male is 6355564 and that of female is 5866029. The overall literacy amongst men in Scheduled Castes is 73.77 and among women is 44.63%. There is a total population of 9238534 of Scheduled Tribes in the state which constitutes around 13.5% of the total population (GoI, 2011). The male population of Scheduled Tribes is 4742943 and that of female is 4495591. The literacy rate in Scheduled Tribes men is 67.62 and that among women is 37.27%. There are around 59 sub-categories of Scheduled Castes. There are 12 sub-categories of Scheduled Tribes in Rajasthan. The state also has a sub types of Denotified Tribes, 10 types of Nomadic Tribes and 13 types of Semi Nomadic Tribes and also the “ Seheria” has been identified as the Primitive Tribal Group in Rajasthan. There is a large population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Rajasthan.

#### **3.2.7 Let Us Sum Up**

The Census Survey of India 2011 shows that there is a rise in the total population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the state. There is a significant rise in the population of the community when compared with the Census 2001 and 2011. Though the population of Scheduled Castes is spread all over the state and majorly concentrated in districts of Jaipur, Nagaur and Alwar. Whereas, the population of Scheduled Tribes are scattered in various tribal regions of Rajasthan but majority of their population are concentrated in Udaipur, Banswara and Dungarpur.

The politics of reservation in Rajasthan is not just about quotas—it's a tool of identity, negotiation, and power. Political mobilization around caste remains a central axis of electoral competition, while also exposing tensions between social justice and legal-constitutional constraints.

While we can notice a certain erosion of the upper castes' representation in the Rajasthan Assembly between the years 1952 and 2003, the share of the lower OBC among the MLAs remains very small whereas the Jats — so called OBC — literally surged. In 2003, the Jats represented the most important group in the state Assembly. The Scheduled Tribes, because of the Meenas, were the other group which experienced a significant rise too though to a much lesser extent. The limitations of the political empowerment of the lower castes in Rajasthan — so far as the social profile of the political class is concerned — are even more pronounced when one considers other institutions such as the composition of the government and the apparatus of the political parties. Consequently, the evolution of the political class of Rajasthan can be characterized by a transition from one conservative situation where the upper castes dominate to another which is defined by the over-representation of the dominant Jat caste.

### **3.2.8 EXERCISES**

1. Write a detailed note on Maratha's reservation.
2. Discuss the two major reasons for the demand of the Maratha reservation.
3. Discuss in detail the Caste policies in Rajasthan.

### **3.2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS**

- Falling Over Backwards (Marathas & Reservation) (swarajyamag.com)
- Will you table Bapat committee report, court asks government - The Hindu
- Falling Over Backwards (Marathas & Reservation) (swarajyamag.com)
- Supreme Court verdict on Maratha quota brings a moment of reckoning (indianexpress.com)
- Maratha Reservation and the Reservation Policy in India - Explained, Pointwise - ForumIAS Blog
- Maratha Reservation Issue - UPSC GS2 - IAS4Sure
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/quota-unquota-maharashtra-state-reservation-socially-and-educationally-backward-5009421/>
- For Kopardi rape and murder of 14-year-old, all 3 convicts sentenced to death - India Today
- [https://www.patkarvardecollege.edu.in/studymaterialpdf/15SY\\_Socio\\_Paper%202020\\_Unit%203\\_Sem%203\\_The%20Maratha%20mobilisation%20in%20Maharashtra%20\(Final%20](https://www.patkarvardecollege.edu.in/studymaterialpdf/15SY_Socio_Paper%202020_Unit%203_Sem%203_The%20Maratha%20mobilisation%20in%20Maharashtra%20(Final%20)
- Read all Latest Updates on and about Maratha Reservation (livelaw.in)
- Maratha Quota Case: SC Declares Reservation Over 50% as Unconstitutional (thewire.in)
- Shivaji's descendent goes on hunger strike demanding Maratha reservation | Deccan Herald

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## **3.3 CASTE IN STATE POLITICS: UTTAR PRADESH, AND KARNATAKA**

**- V. Nagendra Rao**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **3.3.0 Objectives**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

#### **3.3.2 Caste in Contemporary India**

#### **3.3.3 The Rise of Caste Politics**

##### **3.3.3.1 Political Co-Option**

##### **3.3.3.2 Political Mobilisation**

#### **3.3.4 Caste in India: Views of Rajni Kothari**

#### **3.3.5 Caste in Uttar Pradesh**

#### **3.3.6 Rajasthan**

#### **3.3.7 Bihar**

#### **3.3.8 Caste in Karnataka**

#### **3.3.9 Let Us Sum Up**

#### **3.3.10 Exercises**

#### **3.3.11 Suggested Readings**

### **3.3.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this topic, you should be able to know:

- The influence of caste in Indian society and its changing dynamics;
- The rise of caste politics in India and the explanations provided by scholars, particularly Rajni Kothari
- the interface between caste and politics in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar.

### **3.3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Caste has always been central to modern Indian politics. Even the power structure of mediaeval India was based on caste. Caste also operated as the central principle in the distribution of power and material resources in the colonial period. Colonialism in India created a democratic and modernist space; nevertheless this space was also predominantly captured by upper-caste groups. The nationalist struggle against the imperial power was aimed at establishing the caste-class hegemony. Non-Brahmin and low-caste movements were active during the colonial era, broadly pursuing two

aims: achieving upward caste-class mobility and annihilation of caste.

The caste system played a significant role in determining the content and direction of the processes of political socialisation, political mobilisation and institutionalisation within the framework of modern democracy. The dynamics of caste and class were at the root of the complexity of Indian politics in its functioning.

Behind the seemingly religious and communal movements in post-independent India, it was the dynamics of caste-class hegemony that was the real operational factor. Both the anti-caste and the upwardly mobile caste movements are guiding the pro-reservation movement, which aims at upward class mobility of the hitherto excluded castes.

As a result, caste emerged as one of the influencing factors in Indian political system, as democratisation and electoral politics brought many castes that hitherto excluded from the political process in to the political scene of contemporary Indian political scene. The following sections would highlight some of the issues underlying this process.

### **3.3.2 CASTE IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA**

More than one hundred years of social reform movements, public pronouncements by political leaders, constitutional declarations, and legislation have undermined the ideological basis of caste in India. No political parties, and no political leaders, no intellectual stating that caste is part of natural moral order based upon hierarchy. There is no public opposition to the preamble to the constitution of India which calls for “equality of status and of opportunity” or to the constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth and call for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating employment or appointment to any office. This is a significant development considering the caste based discrimination that was practiced so long in Indian society.

Perhaps no other major society in recent history has known inequalities so gross, so long preserved, or so ideologically well entrenched as in India. The notion that men should remain in the same occupation and status of life as their forefathers was due to caste they belong to was enshrined in religious precepts and social custom. The social dignities in India were marked by indignities: the kissing of one's feet by a beggar and supplicant for a job, the outstretched hands of the grovelling poor, the stooped backs of low-caste sweepers.

However, the principle of equality implied revolutionary transformation in India. The nationalist elite that took power in 1947 wrote a constitution that contained the democratic institutions based on the principle of equal political rights. Equality was to be achieved in part through democratic institutions and procedures, particularly universal suffrage without a literary requirement, equality before the law, legislation banning discrimination, and through the establishment of a system of reservations that would guarantee representation to members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe. Equality was also to be achieved through socialist planning. The nationalist elite did not promise a classless society, but they did offer the promise of a casteless society in which social status would not be based upon hereditary social rankings and individuals

would not be denied opportunities because of their birth.

### **3.3.3 THE RISE OF CASTE POLITICS**

The revolutionary transformation did not of course take place. Caste as an ideology may not be pronounced, but as lived-in social reality it is very much alive. The demise of orthodoxy, right beliefs, has not meant the demise of orthopraxy, right practice. Lower castes remain badly treated by those of higher castes. But the gap between beliefs and practices is the source of tension and change. The lower castes no longer accept their position in the social hierarchy, no longer assume that their lower economic status and the lack of respect from members of the higher castes are a “given” in their social existence.

But the movement for change is not a struggle to end caste; it is to use caste as an instrument for social change. Caste is not disappearing, nor caste as an instrument for social change. Caste is not disappearing, nor is “casteism” – the political use of caste – for what is emerging in India is a social and political system which institutionalizes and transforms but does not abolish caste. Forty years ago India's distinguished sociologist, M. N. Srinivas, presciently wrote that “caste is so tacitly and so completely accepted by all, including those who are most vocal in condemning it, that it is everywhere the unit of social action”.

#### **3.3.3.1 POLITICAL CO-OPTION**

Caste emerged as an important political instrument due to the functioning of the Congress Party in the post-independent India. The capacity of the Congress Party to incorporate members of the middle castes and the scheduled castes was strengthened by intra-party factionalism and rivalries among members of the upper castes. As party leaders from the upper castes competed with one another for positions within the party and for seats in parliament and the legislative assemblies, they set out to broaden their own base by recruiting new members. The result of intraparty factionalism, as well as competition between political parties, was to induce party leaders to mobilize caste leaders at the local level and to create vote banks. These recruitment efforts brought into the elite structure social groups that were previously excluded from the political process.

In both UP and Bihar, the opposition parties proved to be particularly skilful in undermining the electoral strength of the Congress Party by building a coalition of the middle and the lower castes, then pulling in large numbers of Muslims alarmed by the growth of the Bharatiya Janata Party. In both states, non-Brahmin, non-upper caste elite took power, first the Jats, then the Yadavs, and by the latter part of the 1990s, UP had a Dalit Chief Minister.

In South India, the mobilization of the non-Brahmin castes was earlier than in the north. In Karnataka the Kalingas and Lingayats became the political base of the Congress Party. In Tamil Nadu the Dravidian movement was so committed to the destruction of the caste system but, in practice, it used caste as a means of political mobilization and ultimately increased the political importance of caste. In Andhra Pradesh the Reddys and Kammas, the two non-Brahmanic castes, became ruling elite.

### 3.3.3.2 POLITICAL MOBILISATION

A second factor in the rising political consciousness and organisation of the lower castes was the widespread rejection of the ideological foundations of India's hierarchical social order. Once caste lost its moral legitimacy the upper castes no longer had the moral authority and the political will to stand in the way of lower castes who sought greater political power, access to education, and social respect. With the erosion of the moral basis of caste, the self-imposed barrier to protest by the lower castes, that is, their acceptance of their place in the hierarchy, was also eroded.

In the mid-1970s the Dalits launched a series of political campaigns aimed at improving their economic and social status. In the 1989 parliamentary elections, the newly formed Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) built a coalition of "oppressed" groups, Muslims, and other backward castes. In 1995 the BSP joined with other parties to form a government in UP, with a Dalit women chief minister, Mayawati.

### 3.3.4 CASTE IN INDIA: VIEWS OF RAJNI KOTHARI

Rajni Kothari examined the relationship between caste and politics by analysing the issue as to what happens to political system because of the vote of castes. He found that three factors—education, government patronage, and slowly expanding franchise (including 18-21 year old young persons in electorate)—have penetrated the caste system because of which it has come to affect democratic politics in the country. Economic opportunity, administrative patronage, and positions of power offered by the new institutions and the new leadership drew castes into politics.

This involvement (of castes in politics) resulted in two things: the caste system made available to the leadership the structural and the ideological basis for political mobilisation, and two, leadership was forced to make concessions to local opinion and organise castes for economic and political purposes.

The use of caste in politics was analysed by Rajni Kothari in two different stages. The *first* stage involved intellectuals, and antagonism and resentment between high entrenched castes (like Reddi in Andhra Pradesh, Pattidars in Gujarat, Lingayats in Karnataka, Bhumihars in Bihar, and Rajputs in Rajasthan) and high ascendant castes (like Kayastha in Bihar, Jats in Rajasthan). The second stage involved factionalism and fragmentation within the competing castes as a result of which multi-caste and multi-factional alignments develop. The lower castes also are brought in to support high caste leaders and to strengthen a faction.

In the first stage, only three components of caste are involved—the power structure of caste, distribution of economic benefits, and caste consciousness. But in the second stage, other components of castes like caste consciousness, client loyalties etc. also come to be involved. Further, three sub-stages are pointed out by Kothari in the first stage. In the first sub-stage, the struggle for power and benefits is at first limited to the entrenched castes, i.e., those which exercised preponderant influence economically and politically but not necessarily numerically. In the second sub-stage, ascendant castes (i.e., unsatisfied castes wanting higher roles) also start competing for power.

In the third sub-stage, there is not only competition between entrenched and ascendant castes

(for power and benefits) but also within these castes. In the second stage, called as the stage of caste fragmentation or factionalism, the leadership cleavages are created and multi-caste and multi-factional alignments come into being. This also creates the problem of rival caste leaders in politics. These leaders come to involve masses too because they want to appeal to wider identities. There is also change in leadership in this stage.

Kothari has talked of the third stage also in relationship between caste and politics. While in the first stage, 'entrenched' high castes are first politicised and 'ascendant' high castes respond with resentment and feeling of relative deprivation (e.g., entrenched caste of Brahmins and ascendant caste of Marathas in Maharashtra) and in the second stage factions emerge within the competing (entrenched and ascendant) castes and lower castes are also brought in for support, in the third stage, identifications other than those of caste are likely to become more important with advancing education, urbanisation and adoption of modern achievement orientation. There, thus, emerge cross-cutting alliances.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the role of Caste in Contemporary India.

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2. Elaborate the views of Rajni Kothari on Caste in India.

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#### **3.3.5 CASTE IN UTTAR PRADESH (UP)**

Uttar Pradesh retains a central position in the electoral strategies of the national parties as well as within a larger political imaginary. The attention that India's most populous state draws often eclipses important political dynamics taking place in other parts of the country. UP has given India eight of its 14 prime ministers. It has been the home state of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty for five generations. The United Provinces, as it was called at the turn of the 20th century, has also been the stage for many uprisings against colonial occupation. Many of the nationalists who fought British imperialism in the Gangetic plain would play an essential role on the national stage once India became independent.

The political significance of UP is thus not limited to its numerical strength in the Lok Sabha, to which it sends 80 representatives. In recent years, its politics has come to define the dominant narratives of Indian politics: the decline of national parties, caste or identity politics, religious mobilisations and the criminalisation of politics.

Scheduled Caste and Muslims constitute about 25% and 17% respectively of the population,

their proportions are higher than the all-India average. UP has upper caste constituting 20-22% and backward classes (BC's) constituting 40-42% of its population. Traditionally, the upper castes were dominant in all spheres of life, but since late 1970s BC's and SC's have managed to effectively challenge their position. UP politics has its central feature as caste -mobilization and conflicts involving castes.

### **3.3.5.1 RISE OF BACKWARD CASTES**

Uttar Pradesh has a tradition of backward castes politics since the 1950s and 1960s through the efforts of Ram Manohar Lohia, Kansi Ram and Chaudhury Charan Singh. Lohia mobilised the backwards and advocated for 60 per cent reservation for minorities, backward castes and SCs/STs in government services. Kansi Ram mobilised the entire backward class (OBCs, SCs/STs and Muslims) through a movement in 1971, which culminated in the formation of the All-India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) whose aim was to organise the elite of the bahujan samaj, essentially wage earners with intellectual qualifications who had benefited from quotas. Charan Singh mobilised the middle castes especially the jats and yadavs in the late 1960s in western districts of UP. The appointment of the Mandal Commission in 1979 by the Janata Party government and the acceptance of its report a decade later by V P Singh's Janata Dal government in 1989 accomplished the twin objectives of mobilisation and empowerment of the backwards. Thus, the 1980s were a landmark decade in our political history where we saw a 'three-dimensional' movement of the backward castes in the political space of India; they moved horizontally leading to better integration among the various subaltern castes; moved downward to establish a hold over grassroot political institutions and processes; and upward to claim a legitimate share in the leadership structure in different parties in different states.

The entire backward movement in the state of Uttar Pradesh since the 1960s has taken three routes – one, through the mobilisation of the peasant class-castes; two, through the mobilisation of the lower middle class of government servants; and three, through the mobilisation of the lower and middle castes by political parties.

The mobilisation of the peasant class-castes acquired sharpness in UP in the wake of the decline of the Congress after the fourth general election in 1967, the rupture between Charan Singh and the Congress, and the formation of the BKD, to mainly protect the interests of the rich peasantry, particularly the jats and yadavs of western Uttar Pradesh, though it was projected as protecting the interests of the peasant class as such.

The mobilisation of the backwards through the efforts of the BAMCEF (1978) under the leadership of Kansi Ram prepared adequate ground for the backward class movement. The activities of the organisation inculcated a sense of identity among backward class government employees all over the country. Though the BAMCEF failed to keep the dalits and OBCs together, it laid solid ground for the dalit and OBC movement to take firm root in Uttar Pradesh. The mobilisation of the lower and backward castes got impetus through the instrument of political parties in the post-Congress polity. The space vacated by the Congress was open for competitive bidding. Three bidders appeared on the scene – the BSP, BJP and SP.

Despite the popular support it gained, the performance of the backward movement has been less than satisfactory in Uttar Pradesh. The backward movement could not develop a 'class politics'. Congress was a 'catch all' party and had all the blandishments of a 'class party'. The backward class-caste parties operated on the 'cleavage-framework' and tried to develop a backward class Hindu and Muslim combine. They attempted to build a solid bloc of Muslim votes by juxtaposing it to the threat emanating from the BJP and also classifying Hindu society into two sections, the forward and the backward classes, and projecting themselves as the sole representatives and protectors of the backward community. However, 'cleavage politics' is electorally limiting, and warrants a coalition of sorts to cross the electoral threshold. But the SP could not come to an alliance with the BJP owing to its anti-BJPism, with the Congress owing to its policy of non-Congressism, and with the BSP due to tension between the OBCs and the dalits. The anti-BJPism of the party emanates from its ideological commitment to secularism whereas the political history through which Mulayam Singh has evolved inhibits his party from entering into an alliance with the Congress. The possibility of an alliance with the BSP is restricted because of the structure of social relations in which the influential among the OBCs have in no way been less exploitative of the dalits than the upper castes.

The backward movement in Uttar Pradesh failed in mobilising the backwards on four counts. One, it failed to develop a 'backward class constituency' by not succeeding in persuading the dalits to join hands with the OBCs. Two, it failed to attempt a 'homogenisation of the upper and the lower OBCs' by not being able to prevent a vertical split among the OBCs owing to the dominance of yadavs and jats in party structures. Three, it failed to 'consolidate the upper backward castes throughout the state by not evolving a yadav-jat combine. There could not be even a limited and partial backward caste mobilisation at an all-UP level owing to differences in social stratification, production relations and power structures in different parts of the state. The more prosperous jat peasants of western UP and the more numerous but poor 'kisans' of eastern UP could not constitute a common political platform. Fourth, the backward movement failed to connect the backwards in different states of the country, though it did attempt such a formation with the Rashtriya Janata Dal of Laloo in Bihar.

The SP has gravitated from its 'exclusionary politics' to 'inclusionary politics' which shows that the party is convinced of the limitations of its cleavage politics. Its attempt to attract the thakurs and brahmins of late in UP shows that the party is keener to cross the electoral threshold than retain its distinct identity. It is turning to the urban areas and capitalist friends.

It could not formulate a clear approach to socialism and, hence, its commitment to Lohia and his socialism has been questioned repeatedly. Backward caste politics in Uttar Pradesh under the Samajwadi Party seems to be on a decline.

### **3.3.5.2 DALIT POLITICS**

In Uttar Pradesh (UP), Dalits, who comprise the lowest rung of the Hindu caste hierarchy, had been in all senses subordinated by the upper castes and had to struggle hard to develop a strong identity and move towards political empowerment through identity politics. The process that began under Kanshi Ram, who founded the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1984 with the aim of politically empowering Dalits or the bahujan (the majority), was successful—BSP President Mayawati was

elected Chief Minister of UP four times. This has immensely helped empower vast sections of Dalits and other marginalised groups in the state.

Several studies have shown how the identity generated through a bahujan politics in UP has provided many marginalised castes and communities with the self-confidence, self-respect and self-awareness needed in the struggle for power. Several redistributive claims such as issues related to economic marginalisation, deprivation and so on, and claims for recognition, such as cultural domination, dominant visibility, disrespect, humiliation and non-recognition, were woven into this form of politics. This politics laid a strong emphasis on the construction of a Dalit identity through making icons and symbols of cultural markers of Dalit pride and glory. Kanshi Ram believed that unless the culture and consciousness of the oppressed was put forward visibly in public debate and was prepared to clash with the culture and consciousness of the enemy in public, a society of equals would remain an illusion. Thus, a strong Dalit identity emerged from creating a dissenting culture based on Dalit heroes, histories and symbols, which helped to culturally and politically empower long-marginalised sections of the population.

In UP, emerging from a strong identity-based movement, the BSP's agenda for dalit uplift is based on the notion of 'swabhiman' (self-respect). Its leadership has argued that "self-respect is more important to dalits than material gains" and "what we are fighting for is dignity and self-respect". Dalit upliftment has been conceptualised as social justice that is both retributive in character and meant exclusively for dalits.

### ***BSP Model of Political Empowerment***

The BSP's model for dalit upliftment is based on political empowerment, i e, it believes that state power is the 'key' or agent to introduce social change. The party has followed a two-fold strategy: electoral and coalitional in order to widen its base and capture power. Based on identity mobilisation which led to increasing politicisation of the dalits, the BSP by the early 1990s was able to replace the Congress as the party representing them in UP. It gradually increased its seat and vote share in the state vis-à-vis both the SP and the BJP throughout the 1990s from 9.2 per cent in the 1991 state assembly elections to 10.8 per cent in 1996 and over 20 per cent in the 2003 assembly elections. Consequently, in a situation where no party had a clear majority, no government could be formed without the participation of the BSP. The formation of three coalition governments with the BJP and the implementation of a number of dalit-oriented programmes played an important role in the consolidation of dalit vote behind the party by the end of the decade.

The BSP believes that an egalitarian order can be achieved by means of 'social engineering from above', i e, introducing developmental and welfare programmes using the power of the state rather than grass roots mobilisation and revolution from below. The main role of the state following the capture of power is to provide dignity and an alternative 'social justice' to the dalits. Social justice forms the core of the party's political tenets – a tool of mobilisation, an agenda of social and political action and the base upon which the party's programmes rest.

### 3.3.5.3 DECLINE OF CASTE POLITICS

The 2014 election results in Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) indicate a complete saffron sweep. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 71 seats and its ally Apna Dal (AD) won two seats. Thus, the BJP-AD combine won 73 out of 80 seats, completely decimating all their opponents. The Congress barely retained the seats of its president Sonia Gandhi and vice-president Rahul Gandhi. The Samajwadi Party (SP) won only five seats which were contested by Mulayam Singh Yadav's family whereas the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and other parties could not open their accounts.

If we analyse the results of the 2014 general elections, we can see three things are simultaneously unfolding. One, the traditional caste and community-based model of politics was redefined. Two, development became the focal point for voters' aspirational upsurge. And three, regional variations practically disappeared. Not only caste, but class too lost its relevance in this election. Voters of all ages, educational backgrounds, economic statuses and genders supported the BJP. The highest support (47 per cent) came from the first time voters (18-22 years). Even though caste politics took a back seat in this election in U.P., it would be hasty to say that caste politics has ended in the State.

In 2014, the BJP improved upon its previous best performance in 1998 when it won 52 seats and 36 per cent votes. The SP managed a mere 22 per cent then and the BSP got 20 per cent of the vote share. While a high vote share for the BJP is important, it is the difference between the winner and the runners-up which helped the party virtually sweep the State.

Though the BJP got support from all sections of society, there are three critical aspects to its support base in U.P. First, the BJP regained the support of lower Other Backward Classes (more than half of the Kurmi community and Most Backward Classes voted the BJP). Second, the party garnered a substantial proportion of Dalit votes, mainly among the non-Jatavs. And third, there was an unprecedented level of polarisation among the upper caste voters in favour of the party. Since the 1990s, the BJP in U.P. has had two main support groups: the upper castes and the lower OBCs. Mr. Modi's repeated emphasis on his caste background in his campaign speeches seems to have helped the BJP improve its vote share among OBC voters.

The 2014 election verdict in U.P. rather suggests a story of failed social engineering on the part of the SP and BSP. The SP continues to receive support from Yadavs and Muslims; however, its support among Yadavs has decreased. It has also failed to get support from any other social section. In the case of the BSP, its Jatav support remained more or less intact but it did not receive support from either the lower OBCs or the Muslims. This has left the BSP to shrink to its Jatav vote base alone. With a limited support base, the capacity of both these parties to post any victories was seriously restricted.

The BJP seems to have succeeded in evolving a grand Hindu coalition, while the Muslim vote by and large went to non-BJP parties. Thus, the saffron sweep has created an imbalance in minority representation as there is no Muslim MP elected from U.P. One thing is clear: the rhetoric and the success of the BJP have posed a serious challenge to politics based merely on caste or community identities. Whether this will usher in a new era in the State's politics, where the paradigm of performance and development will shape electoral destinies in the future is an open question.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the rise of Backward Castes in Uttar Pradesh

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2. Comment on the role of BSP in the mobilization of backward castes in UP.

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3. The 2014 general elections suggest the decline of caste politics in Uttar Pradesh. Comment.

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### 3.3.6 RAJASTHAN

Most of Rajasthan's population consists of Indians of various social, occupational, and religious backgrounds. The Rajputs (various clans of landowning rulers and their descendants), though representing only a small percentage of Rajasthan's residents, are perhaps the most-notable section of the population; indeed, the state draws its name from that community. In terms of caste structure, the Brahmins are subdivided into many gotras (lineages), while the Mahajans are subdivided into a bewildering number of groups. In the north and west the Jats and Gujars are among the largest agricultural communities.

Aboriginal (tribal) peoples constitute more than one-tenth of the population of Rajasthan. In the eastern part of the state, those groups include the Mina (and the related Meo), most of whom are farmers; the Banjara, who have been known as traveling traders and artisans; and the Gadia Lohar, another historically itinerant tribe, who traditionally have made and repaired agricultural and household implements. The Bhil, one of the oldest communities in India, generally inhabit southern Rajasthan and have a history of possessing great skill in archery. The Grasia and Kathodi also largely live in the south, mostly in the Mewar region. Sahariya communities are found in the southeast, and the Rabari, who traditionally are cattle breeders, live to the west of the Aravallis in west-central Rajasthan.

#### 3.3.6.1 CASTE POLITICS IN RAJASTHAN

Caste has also been an important factor in the politics of Rajasthan. The Rajputs dominated the scene for centuries and even during the Mughal and the British regimes, various states in Rajasthan were being ruled by the Rajput-Princes. At the time of the integration of States and the formation of Rajasthan, the Jagirdari system was prevailing in the State covering more than 60% of the State area. These Jagirdars were the Rajputs and the peasantry constituted most of the Jat community besides

other communities. It is a fact that political systems are based on the relationship between the social structure and the political structure. Inspite of the fact that the Rajputs have been a dominant force in the politics of Rajasthan, they have not been a numerically dominant caste in the state with less than 6 per cent.

The Congress Party, which was in power in most of the time, in order to consolidate its position and to face the challenge of opposition parties, wooed the Jats and other communities. But it soon, became clear that no group can expect to gain significant support in Rajasthan unless it has the support of the important members of the Rajput community.

Hence, Rajasthan's political structure and electoral politics were always always witnessed a close contestation between Rajputs and Jats. The competition between Jats and Rajputs has been transformed into a bipolar party situation some times. In 1952, when the first elections were held, the state has come out from the influence of princes following the merger of states in Indian Union. But in 1952 State Assembly elections, the princes fielded a large number of their nominees. The the electorate was under the hangover of the feudal era and they voted in large number in their favour. As a result, 54 Rajputs were elected in a house of 160 in 1952. In this election, the share of Jats was 12, Brahmins 22. But after the 1952 elections, because of greater awareness, the Rajputs started losing their grip and in 1957 only 26 could win. In fact, the Jats started showing their power and in 1957 the number snowballed from 12 to 23. The Rajputs started getting marginalized after the emergence of Jats and Bishnois.

### **3.3.6.2 MANDAL COMMISSION AND CHANGED POLITICAL CONTEXT**

The caste politics in the State transformed after 1989 because of the Mandal Commission report. The issue of reservations for OBCs following Mandal Commission Report and the claims of the OBC leaders for power sharing cropped up. Acceptance of the OBC reservation became a state policy. During the same period, various parties incorporated OBCs resulting in the changed composition of representatives. These developments have meant that the OBCs within themselves would go for greater share of power.

The influence of caste in politics got intensified as competition increased even among the backward communities. Because of caste politics, people vote en bloc as a community and they benefit as a bloc. This is what happened when Jats were granted OBC status. Since they are powerful and well off they started cornering the benefit of reservations. The Gujjars, who has an OBC status, started demanding for ST status. Apart from reservations the Gujjars have another reason to protest. They have had very less political representation and they envy the Meenas who enjoy the ST status with over 500 IAS, IPS and other white-collared job holders. The Gujjars feel that given the benefit of quota they can outclass the Meenas in all walks of life.

### **3.3.6.3 POLITICS OF RESERVATION: GUJARAGITATION**

Gujjars, who comprise nearly 8 per cent of the population in the State, are not an economically, politically or socially powerful group. The only Gujjar leader who endeared himself to a cross-section of people in and outside the State was Rajesh Pilot. Although his son Sachin Pilot won the Dausa seat

in the last Lok Sabha elections, by and large the Gujjar community was left rudderless after Rajesh Pilot's passing away.

The BJP seized upon this vacuum in the 2003 Assembly elections. During her election campaign, Vasundhara Raje promised to look into the grievances of the Gujjar community, particularly its long-standing demand for inclusion in the ST category. In what was seen as a clear appeal to caste feelings, the Chief Minister claimed that she was a daughter of Rajputs, daughter-in-law of Jats, and a relative of Gujjars (her daughter-in-law hailed from the Gujjar community). Whatever is its worth, the caste card paid off. Jats had been mollified by the previous Atal Bihari Vajpayee government at the Centre by including them in the OBC list. Gujjars were aggrieved as they now had to share the OBC pie with the economically, politically and socially dominant Jats.

Coupled with aggressive campaigns in the ST belt, the BJP won major dividends in the elections; it secured 120 seats, winning the majority of the 28 reserved seats, unprecedented in the history of the Party. Six of the eight Gujjar legislators belonged to the BJP. Clearly, the Gujjar base had begun to shift from the Congress to the BJP.

But compared to Meenas, Gujjars appear to be politically dispensable. Vasundhara Raje remained complacent even after the Gujjar legislators submitted their resignation in protest against the police firing.

The Gujjars maintain that they qualify for ST status in every manner. According to their leaders, in 1857 the British branded the Gujjars as a criminal tribe as the community had taken cudgels against the colonial rulers. In 1924, under the Criminal Tribes Act, Gujjars and other tribes designated as criminal tribes were subject to strict regulations. In 1951, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel got the Act repealed. Gujjars figured were among the Backward Castes in 1981. Subsequently, in 1993, the community was included in the list of OBCs.

As the Gujjars were failed to convince either the BJP government or later on the Congress Government, they have undertaken a serious agitation. The December 2010 agitation was triggered by two High Court orders, one issued in October 2009 and the other on December 22, 2010, both of which rejected a petition seeking 5 per cent reservation as the total reservations are crossing 50 per cent. The earlier order, interim in nature, stayed the operation of the State government's notification, which provided 5% reservations to Gujjar as special backward community. The Gehlot government did not appeal against that. It, however, decided to provide 1 per cent reservation to Gujjars in government jobs, ensuring that the 50 per cent ceiling was not crossed, and decided to wait for the court's approval regarding the remaining 4 per cent. However, the Court consented for 1% reservations and refused to consider 5%.

This resulted in the eruption of violent agitation by Gujjars. They felt very much offended because neither they got ST status nor 5% special reservation. The year-long Gujjar agitation, which claimed 70 lives and disrupted rail and road services on a large scale, was called off after an agreement was reached between the community's delegates and representatives of the Vasundhara Raje government in Rajasthan. The leader of the Gujjar reservation movement, Kirori Singh Bainsla, who participated in the marathon discussions, declared it was time for a truce. But the community is

perceived it as betrayal.

Gujjars have actually not got what they demanded: a letter from the Bharatiya Janata Party government recommending the inclusion of the community in the Scheduled Tribes list. Instead, the Gujar delegates settled for much less and even agreed to certain humiliating pre-conditions. The agreement arrived at between the 11-member delegation of the Gujjar Arakshan Sangharsh Samiti and an eight-member government delegation revolved around granting 5 per cent reservation to Gujjars, Banjaras, Gadia Lohars and Raikas under a “special, separate backward class” category. These groups currently figure in the list of Backward Classes.

The agreement states that the 5 per cent reservation for these socially and educationally backward classes will not in any manner disturb the existing reservation for the Scheduled Caste, ST and Other Backward Class categories. However, in an action aimed at appeasing the other castes, the government announced a 14 per cent reservation for economically backward Rajputs, Brahmins, Vaishyas and Kayasthas. By skirting the main demand of ST status for Gujjars, the government also managed to allay the fears of the Meena community.

In a sense, Gujjars were back to square one. For the BJP government, it was a smart electoral move. The quantum of reservation in the State is 49 per cent. With the creation of the new categories, it has now risen to 68 per cent (1 per cent lower than the quota prescribed in Tamil Nadu, which is the highest in the country). It was not surprising that the Akhil Bharatiya Gujjar Mahasabha rejected the agreement signed the previous day on the grounds that not only was the new reservation open to judicial scrutiny but the government had not even touched the subject of reservation for Gujjars under the ST category. Two members of the Gujar delegation did not put their signatures on the agreement.

Many consider that the Gujjar agitation was a result of the Raje government's failure to keep the promise made in the run-up to the 2003 Assembly elections. Unfortunately, in contemporary political scenario, the nexus between caste and politics is always centred on game of electoral politics. The electoral calculations are becoming more important than providing some special opportunities to those actually need it. The reality is that the real Scheduled Tribes are in a very bad shape and no one is thinking about them.

### 3.3.7 BIHAR

The birth of caste politics in Bihar is linked to the issue of separation of Bihar from Bengal. In other words, role of castes in Bihar politics is not only a post-colonial affair but as early as 1894 a local branch of the “All India Kayastha Mahasabha” was established in Bihar. On account of their education and high connections Kayasthas had occupied high posts in Governments of Bihar. They were treated as the most forward caste in Bihar and like the enlightened Muslim house of Bihar they had easy access to the British rulers in pre-independent days. However, their number in Bihar Congress was more than that of the Muslims. In rural areas of Bihar they were dominant political force which is evident from their presence in the districts boards of Bihar. In the beginning, towns of Bihar were the centres of state politics. But gradually sentiments of caste politics was aroused in the remote villages also due to which the simple village life became comparatively more complicated and poisonous through the venture of capturing power by dint of caste votes.

Dominance of the Kayasthas in public and political life of Bihar generated a sense of rivalry among the educated Bhumihars and Rajputs. As early as 1878, 'The Bihar Landlords Association' had been established with its members in Bhumihars, Rajputs and Brahman castes, who by the time of the formation of Bihar province had developed a keen sense of competition and resultant jealousy. This encouraged the Bhumihar landlords to establish their caste associations known as 'Bhumihar Brahman Sabha' in 1899. Now the Kayastha supremacy was challenged by Bhumihar political leaders on account of which 35% of seats in 1935 were captured by the Bhumihars in Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee. Rajputs had 14% and Kayastha had 28% in comparison to their position of 53% in 1934. Both the Bhumihars and Rajputs had made much advancement in caste politics.

### **3.3.7.1 THE BACKWARD CASTES**

The backward castes, who constitute nearly 60 per cent of population, and the scheduled castes and the tribes had very meagre representation before independence. Only after independence, they steadily increased their representation, but their numerical preponderance in the population was not and still is not reflected in the Congress leadership. Till the early part of 1970s, these castes were politically not significant.

The political rivalry among the upper castes in Bihar has a significant impact on the way different social groups have been allowed entry into the political system and assimilated. The fact that the upper castes contended among themselves for political power required that each contending caste group go beyond its own VARNA and seek support from other cast groups. This necessarily widened the scope of political involvement and the caste groups which stood on the periphery of political process were inducted into it.

Gradually with expansion of the adult franchise, and the growth of party system Yadav, Kurmi, Koeri, Bania and Scheduled Castes came in and with them came also the Tribal and Muslim communities. The turning point in the organisation of these castes was in 1977 when Karpuri Thakur, the then chief minister introduced reservations for backward castes in government service. The forward castes reacted vigorously against this decision as a consequence of which the process of backward caste solidarity gained momentum. Since then politics in Bihar has been characterised by a fourfold division – forward castes, backward castes, Harijan, and regional (tribal) politic. Apart from their success at the Legislative Assembly and the ministerial level in Bihar, the leaders of the backwards castes had also been successful in capturing power at the Panchayat level in villages where they command numerical superiority. Here also the traditional upper caste leadership had been set aside, gradually.

Though the backward class started sensing this empowerment as early as in the mid-1970s, however, it was fully opened to everybody only when Laloo Prasad Yadav became the chief minister of Bihar. With his implementation of welfare programs for the lower sections of society, especially the Dalits community, they too began sensing the change in the mid-1990s. During anti-reservation struggles of later 1980s and early 1990s, when rest of the India was silent against upper caste agitating people, in Bihar, by contrast, the backwards mobilized and put up a stiff challenge to the Anti-Mandal agitators. There was a prolonged and violent struggle between the anti-reservationists and pro-

reservationists. This led to the externalization of the undercurrents of age-old and deep-seated antagonism between the upper castes and backward castes.

One of the major achievements this time was that the majority of the most deprived sections, the Dalit community, were allowed to vote. For the first time, they had a sense that they mattered in electoral politics. They felt that they did have a share in the political power in the state. During the Congress regime, power remained monopolized by the upper castes and no serious attempt was made to incorporate the aspirations and demands the Dalits and backward castes into governance of the state.

It was the first time, in Bihar politics, upper castes remained on the margins of the political struggle. The backwards managed to have a firm control over political power. The changing social composition of political representation is an indication of the fact that the backward castes have come to play a major role in Bihar politics.

When it comes to Scheduled Castes, in the post-Mandal scenario, the contradictions inherent in the agrarian structure and between the backward castes and Dalits in north India were developing at a rapid pace, particularly after certain backward castes which had a defining historical advantage made good use of new opportunities in land and agriculture. However, in Bihar Lalu Prasad Yadav successfully incorporated the Dalit cause into his self-respect and social justice agenda for a considerable period of time, at least till the assembly elections in 2000.

However, much before Yadav's legitimacy was lost, Nitish Kumar had shifted away from the Janata Dal. The mid-1990s saw a consolidation in Bihar, a socio- political class alliance of sorts, between the Brahmins and Bunias represented by the BJP; the non-Yadav middle castes under Kumar's Janata Dal (U). Nitish Kumar, hence, represented the political compromise between a section of backward castes and upper castes. While the backward caste and Dalit votes gradually get divided, the upper-caste votes gradually got solidly behind the BJP-Janata Dal (U) combine, along with Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Jana Sakti Party, in recent electoral politics, particularly since 2010. This process has been gradual, but it can be said that the BJP succeeded in gaining acceptability across castes while projecting Nitish Kumar as the backward-caste face of the alliance. This is the alliance that is presently holding success in the electoral politics of the Bihar.

### **3.3.8 Caste in Karnataka**

Like other southern states, caste identity has been the principal rallying point of political life in Karnataka too. All over the south, numerically significant, marginalised caste groups have used democratic institutions to claim the pickings of political power, but line-ups along the caste divide differ across states, depending on local situation. Karnataka's state politics remains imbued with caste and the parties provide just a thin veil for local caste wars. Vokkaligas and Lingayats dominated the political scene in Karnataka till the 1970s. The years that followed saw pulls and pushes among different caste groups; minority communities were also involved. With the advent of the BJP, the caste game became even more complex, with caste leaders joining hands irrespective of their party affiliation

## **Dominant Castes in Karnataka**

The political climate of Karnataka is characterised by firmly entrenched caste-based voting patterns, which, although not uniform, have been subject to change throughout time. Below is an analysis of many significant patterns:

### ***Majority Castes:***

**Lingayats** (amalgamation of various sub-castes) comprising approximately 15-17% of the population, have historically supported the Congress and later became a key constituency for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Leaders like B.S. Yediyurappa played a crucial role in mobilizing Lingayat support for the BJP, especially in North Karnataka.

**Vokkaligas** (one who tills the land and belong to Shudra Community) Primarily concentrated in Old Mysore, the Vokkaligas (about 12-14% of the population) have been closely associated with the Janata Dal (Secular) [JD(S)] and, historically, the Congress. H.D. Deve Gowda, a former Prime Minister, emerged as a prominent Vokkaliga leader and established a strong regional base for JD(S).

### ***OBCs:***

The **AHINDA** alliance, which is an abbreviation in Kannada for All Backward Classes, Hindus, and Muslims, was established by Devaraj Urs with the objective of enhancing the empowerment of these people. Initially, there was widespread support for Congress. However, support has been more splintered over time. Congress still has a solid base, particularly among Dalits and some OBC sub-castes. The BJP has also gained influence.

### ***Dalits and Adivasis:***

SC/ST communities constitute around 23% of Karnataka's population. While politically fragmented, they have been courted by all major parties.

### **Rise of non-dominated Castes under Devaraj Urs**

Until November 1956 when the States were reorganised on the basis of linguistic homogeneity, the Chief Minister of Mysore, as Karnataka was then known, was invariably an Vokkaliga, and after 1956, invariably a Lingayat. In the pre-reorganisation Mysore, Vokkaligas were the largest single caste, while that distinction went to Lingayats after 1956. S Nijalingappa was the first Lingayat Chief Minister of Karnataka, and he became so powerful that even after relinquishing State-level politics, he installed his proteges hailing from his caste as CM. The year 1969 saw the split between him and Indira Gandhi, resulting in the formation of Congress(O), headed by the Nijalingappa, and Congress(R), headed by the Indira Gandhi. In Karnataka, a majority of Congress party members chose to remain with Nijalingappa, but Devaraj Urs broke away from his political mentor to cast his lot with Indira Gandhi. Urs revealed his capacities for leadership. After Indira Gandhi's spectacular success in the 1971 mid-term elections, Urs engineered defections from the ruling Congress(O) party. In his role as the leader of the Congress(R), Urs nominated as many individuals as he could from the numerically small and backward castes and the scheduled castes and tribes, and the minorities, and the newly joined regions of the State, to contest the elections to the

Karnataka Assembly in 1972. Urs's party swept the polls, and Urs became the Chief Minister. In forming his ministry, Urs was careful to choose as many as he could from the non-dominant castes. Urs tried to break the stranglehold of the dominant castes on the politics of Karnataka and made efforts to improve the living conditions of the backward classes - medley comprising the non-dominant castes, scheduled castes and tribes, amid the minorities - with a view to becoming their champion.

One of his early acts on assuming office was to constitute a backward classes commission under the chairmanship of L G Havanur. The Commission produced a massive report in 1974, and most of the recommendations were broadly accepted by the government with few crucial changes. The most significant recommendation of commission was considering economic and educational standing as far more relevant for determining backwardness than social standing. However, traditionally the unit for inclusion or exclusion in the backward classes category was caste, or more properly, the sub-caste. The commission went against the recent tendency of distinct jatis or sub-castes to come together for political and other purposes. Thus, one unit of a large caste could be included among the backward classes while another was not. Yet another new principle introduced by the Commission was the roster within the backward classes category according to which it was divided into three sub-categories, viz, backward communities, backward castes and backward tribes. A share of seats in educational institutions and jobs in the government, was recommended to each sub-category in order to prevent the benefits of backwardness being monopolised by a single dominant sub, category or group.

Going against the specific recommendation of the Commission, Urs included the Muslims in the backward classes category, an eleven percent minority could not be ignored. He also reserved 5 per cent of the seats and jobs to those who were economically backward, without reference to their caste. This was the result of his recognition that there were very poor people in every caste. Later this category was expanded to 15 per cent, and was welcomed by the poor of the non-backward classes. Eventually the reservations, including 18 per cent for the scheduled castes and tribes, amounted to 68 per cent for seats and 66 per cent for jobs, and thus went against the explicit advice of the Supreme Court to keep them under 50 per cent. In effect, the government order included practically every group except the Lingayats, Bunts, Brahmins and few others. But members of the backward classes had to have an annual income of less than RS 10,000 for their offspring to be eligible to claim to be backward.

Urs also extended the area of positive discrimination. He extended the principle of reservation to include promotions in the civil service. It was also observed in the distribution of loans, subsidies and other facilities and concessions available to the poor to increase their earnings and improve their living conditions. In short, Urs's backward classes policy was the most comprehensive and radical to be introduced by any Chief Minister in the country.

Urs was at the peak of his power during the years 1977-79. However, his policies roused opposition from various affected section. The exclusion of Lingayats from the backward classes list was deeply resented by them especially as their political rivals were included in the list. Moreover, the

groups he was trying to unite were not only too disparate but had mutually conflicting interests. Mere dislike, or even hatred, for the dominant and higher castes was not enough to cement them into a force. Each wanted to enlarge its share of the cake and was watching what others got. The higher castes could exploit the divisions among the non-dominant caste.

### **Gundu Rao's dismal innings**

Political developments within the Congress Party during 1979 resulted in the break-down of the alliance between Devraj Urs and Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The January 1980 Assembly elections brought Gundu Rao to the office of the Chief Minister, in Karnataka with the support of Indira Gandhi and more so her son Sanjay Gandhi. The struggle between the lingayats and vokkaligas for political power and influence surfaced again. The lingayat political leaders in particular lost no time in trying to establish close links with Gundu Rao and isolate the vokkaligas. But the unfortunate farmer's agitation in the Ghataprabha and Malaprabha areas in which mostly lingayat farmers were involved and the manner in which the Government used force to handle the situation resulted in a cooling off of the relations between Gundu Rao and the lingayats. Taking advantage of the situation, the vokkaligas started getting closer to Gundu Rao (which the latter also encouraged) along with other factions of some of the minority communities. However, the fact that Gundu Rao belonged to the brahmin community, led to a feeling among the lingayats and the vokkaligas that they should come together to prevent brahmins from re-emerging as a dominant group in the State.

Gundu Rao's tenure as Chief Minister was marked by the lack of political vision, unbridled growth of corruption in government and the increasing alienation of the ruling class from the weaker sections of the society. The Congress (I) in the State was weakened by factional divisions and at times these led to intra party violence or threats of violence. Gundu Rao was an unmitigated disaster for the Congress(I). He did not just alienate rural patrons. His actions and policies even eroded the traditional support his party enjoyed among the Scheduled Castes, Muslims and other minorities. The latter groups lost faith in his and his party's ability to resist the pressures of the majority groups. With such an image, no wonder the Congress (I) was thoroughly rejected by the politically mature voters of Karnataka during the Assembly elections of January 1983.

### **The 1983 election**

The January 1983 Assembly Elections in Karnataka constituted a major watershed in the political development of the State. The Janata Party-Kranti Ranga combine which won a total of 94 seats (much to their surprise) was however in a difficult position to choose their candidate for the office of the Chief Minister due largely because of the inner party fighting between the vokkaliga and lingayat elements. Several days of intense political activity within the Janata Party on caste lines resulted in the compromise solution of Ramakrishna Hegde being chosen as CM candidate. Thus, Ramakrishna Hegde not only became the Chief Minister, but his election to the State Assembly from the vokkaliga dominated Kanakapura constituency was also arranged within six months, the constitutionally stipulated period. But as Head of the Government, Hegde faced considerable pressure from the vokkaliga and lingayat communities for political spoils. To back up his promise of help to the oppressed castes, Ramakrishna Hegde however managed to initiate certain reformist

measures largely on the lines of Devraj Urs.

To counter these inroads into their traditional voter base of 'minority' communities (which includes every caste except the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats, that is scheduled castes and tribes, other back ward castes, Muslims, Christians. Vaisyas and even Brahmins), the Congress (I) also began to flirt with hitherto banished leaders of the two 'majority' communities. The caste-based political line-up between the Congress (I) and the Janata Dal was thus substantially diluted, but in the nature of all power struggles, the net gainers were naturally the dominant castes. Backward caste leaders have been given key portfolios and visibility in the Janata Dal, something which would have been inconceivable earlier, Siddaramaiah being the best example.

On the Congress side, however, party leadership itself was ceded to Vokkaligas and Lingayats. The process started with Veerendra Patil, the Lingayat stalwart of the erstwhile Congress (0), who had once contested against Indira Gandhi at Chikmagalur, crossing the floor and eventually being made the chief minister in 1990 to offset the pull of his Janata Dal counterpart, S R Bommai. The Vokkaligas too have had their day in the sun, with their representative, S M Krishna, playing out a full five-year term as chief minister. Within the Congress, 'minority' community leaders like Bangarappa and Moily have had to slug it out, not just by making themselves acceptable to other minority castes through some power sharing formula, but also by facing up to solid larger Vokkaliga and Lingayat groups of MLAs, who tend to vote in blocs and change parties unless the chief ministership is promised to one of their compatriots.

### **Advent of BJP and After**

These developments have not diluted the drawing power of caste to any extent: they have only made the political game more complex. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s emergence in Karnataka's caste politics began in the **early 1990s**, marking a transformative phase in the state's political landscape. BJP's strategic outreach to the **Lingayat community** marked its entry into the core of Karnataka's caste politics. The Lingayats, concentrated in northern Karnataka, had traditionally supported the Congress. But dissatisfaction with Congress policies and the emergence of **B.S. Yediyurappa**, a prominent Lingayat leader within the BJP, began to shift the balance. The 1994 Karnataka Assembly elections saw the BJP emerge as the **principal opposition party**, a first major breakthrough. By the late 1990s, the BJP had positioned itself as the primary political choice for a large section of the Lingayat community, particularly in northern Karnataka districts like Dharwad, Belagavi, and Bagalkot. In 2004, the BJP emerged as the **single largest party** in the state assembly but could not form the government. However, by **2008**, the party formed its **first-ever government in South India**, with B.S. Yediyurappa as Chief Minister. This victory was not only due to the party's ideological appeal but also the result of a carefully cultivated caste coalition: dominant Lingayats at the core, supported by sections of OBCs, Dalits, and urban upper castes. Yediyurappa's leadership was crucial in converting caste influence into electoral victory.

The political climate of Karnataka is greatly impacted by caste dynamics, with different dominating castes having a significant impact on election results. In order to gain widespread community support and guarantee electoral victories, the state's parties carefully handle these

dynamics. This is reflected most starkly in the candidates selected by parties. In 2023 general assembly elections nearly 45% of the candidates picked by the Congress, BJP and JD(S) are from the Vokkaliga or Lingayat community. The BJP has the highest number of candidates from the Lingayat community; JD(S), whose leadership centres around HD Deve Gowda's family, is dominated by Vokkaliga candidates. Party strategists from across the spectrum agree that the candidates do not reflect the caste composition of the state - instead, they reflect the political dominance of certain castes in Karnataka's politics. Karnataka has not released figures of a caste census conducted in 2017-18. However, unofficial estimates peg Lingayat voters anywhere at 14-18% of the population; and Vokkaliga population at 11-16% of the population.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss various dominant castes in Karnataka and their political affiliations.

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2. Discuss the rise of non-dominated castes in Karnataka under Devaraj Urs.

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3. Gundu Rao's policies eroded the traditional support of congress party among SCs, Muslims and other minorities. Comment.

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4. Explain how does the 1983 elections became turning point in Karnataka politics.

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#### **3.3.9 LET US SUM UP**

The eradication of caste became a major part of the programme for social change after Independence in India. The hope of many was that the forces of economic development and modernisation would reduce the dominance of caste and result in an egalitarian society. Indeed, there were noticeable signs of change in some parts of the country, especially in urban areas.

However, caste is still surviving and thriving in India. Castes endure in India, but not for the reasons which bound them together in earlier decades, such as rituals, notions of pollution, wedding norms, etc. These are no doubt weakening. But, as Andre Beteille, one of the finest Sociologist in

India, says “We will have to turn to a different sphere of activity to understand the peculiar tenacity of caste, and that is the sphere of politics.” With adult franchise, the style of electioneering has changed. It is easy for a voter to identify himself more readily with a caste than with a class. “Where caste consciousness was dying down, it was brought back to life by the massive campaigns that became a part of every election.”

It is clear that caste remains an important political resource, but it would be mistaken to view caste identities as ascribed. Rather, they are complex constructs that draw upon yet differ from earlier categories. Institutional incentives, that is the provisions and benefits that state provide, are distributed to caste categories. This is one of the important reasons for the emergence and functioning of number of caste based parties across India.

### **3.3.10 EXERCISES**

1. How important caste as a social category in India?
2. Write a note on rise of caste in Indian politics.
3. How do you understand Rajni Kothari views on caste in Indian politics.
4. How rise of backward caste changed political dynamics in Uttar Pradesh?
5. Do you agree with the proposition that the dominance of middle castes in Bihar undermining the upper castes ?
6. Write a note on caste dynamics in the politics of Rajasthan.

### **3.3.11 SOURCES & SUGGESTED READINGS**

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## 3.4 RELIGION IN STATE POLITICS: GUJRAT AND KERALA

- V. Nagendra Rao

### STRUCTURE

- 3.4.0 Objectives**
- 3.4.1 Introduction**
- 3.4.2 The Interface between Religion and Politics**
- 3.4.3 Religion and Politics in India**
- 3.4.4 Communal Riots**
- 3.4.5 Electoral Politics and Religious Mobilisation**
- 3.4.6 Religion in Gujarat**
- 3.4.7 Religion and Politics in Kerala**
- 3.4.8 Let Us Sum up**
- 3.4.9 Exercises**
- 3.4.10 Suggested Readings**

### 3.4.0 OBJECTIVES

This topic provides you basic understanding about how religion has become an instrument in the state politics of India. After reading this topic you will be able to know:

- about the interface between religion and politics
- the roots of religious communalism in India
- the linkage between electoral politics and religious mobilisation
- Understand the role of religion in the politics of Gujarat
- Comprehend the interface between religion and politics in Keral

### 3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The relation between religion and politics continues to be an important theme in political science, despite the emergent consensus on the right to freedom of conscience and on the need for some sort of separation between religion and state. One reason for the importance of this topic is that religions often make strong claims on people's allegiance, and universal religions make these claims on all people, rather than just a particular community. Thus, it is probably inevitable that religious commitments will sometimes come into conflict with the demands of politics. But religious beliefs and practices also potentially support politics in many ways. The extent and form of this support is as

important to political scientists as is the possibility for conflict.

### **3.4.2 THE INTERFACE BETWEEN RELIGION AND POLITICS**

Religion remained to be the main binding force for the people across various periods of history and continues to be so in the present age. Despite the fact that modern age is considered to be the age of reason, religion continues to dominate the hearts of people. Secularization, the normative foundation on which most of the Western democracies were found, does not eliminate religion from the political realm. It is more a matter of religious communities finding themselves in a more politically pluralistic context in which their particular agendas and claims are given less recognition. It is a context, therefore, in which those religious bodies turn, wherever and whenever possible, to parties and/or pressure groups to defend and promote their interests.

It is very difficult in the contemporary world to ignore the presence of religion in public affairs. Virtually on a daily basis, the media provide instances demonstrating that the people, institutions, and ideas that make up the religious sphere have a continuing relevance to the political realm. What they demonstrate, unequivocally, is that religion and politics have a lot to do with each other: they interact in a number of important but complex ways. Whether it is at the local, national or international level, whether it involves ordinary citizens, activists or major leaders, whether it concerns legislative institutions, pressure groups or competing political parties and ideologies, religion and politics relate.

Since religion has many dimensions with multiple realties, detailing the connection between religion and politics requires specifying how each dimension of religion may affect political behaviour. Belonging to a particular religion may influence political behaviour because a religious community may serve as an information for politics. Simply being affiliated with a religious group, without necessarily joining in the practice of its faith, may socialize individuals to certain political and partisan preferences. Behaving, in turn, increases the likelihood that socialized preferences will be reinforced; religious practice places people

in religious environments, particularly organized environments – theological, spiritual or social – where they are likely to receive political information. Religious beliefs, finally, may be a source of social and political values and attitudes that in turn influence political behaviour.

The political participation and action that the people undertake also reflect important underlying beliefs, values and opinions—the mass political culture. This, too, extends the relationship between politics and religion. To what extent, for example, are religious orientations linked to the national political culture and/or given subcultures? Are religious belief systems, such as they are at the mass level, systematically associated with ideological dispositions in the political realm? In general, the answer seems to be positive. In numerous countries and contexts, religion and politics do indeed connect in this way.

#### **3.4.2.1 RELIGION AND ELECTORAL POLITICS**

Electoral politics is the most visible and symbolic form of political participation. The impact of electoral politics on the political mobilization of people further brought religion closer to the

focused on the relationship between religion and political parties; the religious composition of their mass base, the religious outlooks of party activists and leaders, and the religious character of the party's ideology and programme are some of the issues extensively probed all over the world.

Many religious groups are functioning as pressure groups to influence the agendas of political parties, promoting their particular views on the current public agenda. They are building and using links with political parties and forming alliances with other like-minded pressure groups. In some cases, religious leaders may even actively seek office themselves. But equally, there are religious groups who seek no engagement at all in the political realm, who see it as a corrupt and corrupting arena.

Political parties frequently play an important role in generating relationships between the dimensions of religion and political behaviour. Parties may form to represent distinctive religious groups or traditions. In these circumstances, the party- group linkage is direct, and party support comes mostly from the social group it claims to represent. Even if not explicitly representing a single religious group, parties may make appeals to particular religious groups, basing the appeals on the group's social status or on policy positions that align with religious beliefs and values. In another variation, parties may appeal generally to those who practice religion and have strong beliefs, regardless of religious tradition or denomination, thus producing electoral coalitions of religious persons that cut across religious groups.

Religious group leaders may also influence the religious bases of political behaviour. They may reinforce party mobilization efforts and the connection between party policy positions and the group's values and beliefs. The religious leaders, through the organizational structure and cadre that they command, provide vital support network to the political parties in the election campaigns and propaganda.

In addition to these historical considerations, contemporary political issues and electoral strategies may also explain electoral divisions between religious groups. Particularly in countries where electoral system is based on First-Past-the Post principle, a small tilt in voting in favour of a particular political party considerably influences the electoral fortunes.

Lastly, the most important element in the electoral politics is the mass populace. Though in many ways the least powerful in the play of power, one can easily find a rich array of inter-connections between the religious and the political at gross roots level. Perhaps the most significant act is that of voting which, at least in competitive systems, is the major means through which citizens as individuals come to participate in the play of power. Under this heading a variety of important questions are raised. To what extent, for example, are voting decisions founded upon, or influenced by, religious criteria? Many studies carried out revealed that religion retained a remarkable saliency in fixing voting alignments in many countries of the world. To put it another way, religious groups may form moral and indeed political communities, shaping and mobilizing their members' electoral activities as they react to the candidates, parties and issues within the campaign.

### **3.4.3 RELIGION AND POLITICS IN INDIA**

In August 1947, India was finally freed from its prolonged era under British colonial rule, winning independence. Independence, however, was accompanied by a very painful division into two separate states within its borders, the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan. That separation became the source of great turmoil to follow in Indian history.

Independence itself did not involve bloody struggles with the former suzerain, Great Britain, but a series of hideous massacres occurred between Muslims and Hindus, who had lived together as compatriots for a long time. Partition into the two independent states led to the largest-scale mass migration of religious groups in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Muslim refugees headed for Pakistan, and Hindu and Sikh refugees for India. As they met midway, many cases of bloodshed occurred on a scale comparable to war. This tragedy was caused when religion became linked with the modern territorial state. The dogmatism that brought about such conflict and disputes between religious groups has been called 'communalism' or religious confrontationism.

#### **3.4.3.1 ROLE OF BRITISH COLONIALISM**

One may be inclined to think that 'communalism' between Hindus and Muslims has prevailed since Muslims took over India. As recent historical research has pointed out, however, there are strong indications that it was during the British colonial rule that rigid boundaries were established between Hindus and Muslims. In other words, the unambiguous articulation of religious groups assumed primary importance under the modern governing system, and confrontation became palpable along those articulated lines.

Communalism, as is often thought by some, is not the product of religion; it is, in fact, the product of politics of the elite of a religious community. In other words religion per se does not give birth to communalism. It is also important to note that communalism was not the product of medieval ages but of the modern period. Medieval polity was not competitive, much less democratic. The modern colonial polity was competitive and proto-democratic. It is competitive politics between the elite of two or more communities that give rise to communalism. And when a third Party in the form of a colonial authority is present it assumes grave proportions. Though the British colonial rulers cannot be solely held responsible for the genesis of communalism, they did play a vital role in promoting it as well as in its genesis. Right from the day the British rulers sensed the damage Hindu-Muslim unity could cause to their empire, they began dividing the two communities and distortion of history proved quite a powerful instrument in doing so. This engineering of the division between Hindus and Muslims by the British rulers was aggravated by competitive politics between the elite of the two communities, which ultimately led to the partition of Indian subcontinent and division of the one unified people.

#### **3.4.3.2 RELIGION AND POLITICS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA**

In the background of partition and communal clashes, a crucial issue facing independent India, then, was how to deal with these communities and their concerns. It was clear that religion could not be restricted simply to the private domain, but in what way should religion and religious communities be accommodated? This was the crucial question upon which the unity of India and the

viability of her democratic system depended.

The Constituent Assembly deliberated at length on this issue and eventually devised a framework that neither adopted the American model of secularism, which separated religion from politics completely, nor followed the path of many other countries in the region, which endorsed and privileged a particular religion. At the time of independence religious communities, particularly minority communities, needed assurance that they would be equal partners in the emerging democracy, and would enjoy the freedom to pursue their religious and cultural way of life.

### **3.4.3.3 RELIGION AND POLITICS: CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

There were two choices before independent India. As a separate homeland had been created for the Muslim population, it might have been possible to make India the homeland for the Hindu community. Alternatively, it could opt to become a secular democracy, equally hospitable to people of different communities. India chose the latter path. There was a general consensus that the State would have no established religion of its own and would treat members of different communities as equal citizens.

A consensus emerged that equal treatment for all religious communities would be assured by protecting the religious liberty of all. To ensure this, three kinds of fundamental rights were given by the Constitution. Article 25 gave each individual equal liberty to “profess, propagate and practise” their religion. The personal laws of different communities were also protected, which meant that community institutions and codified community laws would decide all matters relating to family, such as marriage, inheritance, divorce, maintenance, adoption and the custody of children. Assessing positively the work done by different religious institutions in various spheres of social life, as for instance, setting up educational institutions, fellowships, free dispensaries, inns for travellers and provision for drinking water, Article 26 of the Constitution gave all religious communities the right to “establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes”. In addition, Articles 29 and 30 gave all minorities the right to set up their own educational institutions to protect their language and culture and to impart education of their choice. To make this an effective option, the Constitution included an enabling provision that allowed such institutions to receive funds from the State.

At a more substantive level, religion entered into the public domain, as individuals who shared a religious identity could come together and form political organisations and associations. Based on the view that members of a religion may have shared concerns and even interests, they were at liberty to organise themselves, campaign with existing political parties, or form their own political party to pursue their demands and concerns. Religious political parties claiming to speak on behalf of a community could, therefore, coexist with “secular” parties that were not bound to the interests of any one religious community. Both kinds of parties could voice the demands of a community, so long as they did not encourage inter-community hatred or refer to a candidate's religion in order to seek votes for themselves.

As a result, different regions saw the emergence of specific religion-based parties, such as the Akali Dal in Punjab, the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and the Indian Union Muslim League in Kerala.

The constitutional framework provided the space for the emergence of religious parties.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the impact of Religion on Electoral Politics.

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2. During the British colonial rule, rigid boundaries were established between Hindus and Muslims. Comment.

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3. What are the constitutional safeguards available in India to ensure religious liberty of all?

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4. What are the reasons behind the resurfacing of Communal tensions in post-independent India?

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#### **3.4.4 COMMUNAL RIOTS**

During the first decade after Independence, there was no large-scale intercommunity violence. Possibly, the migration of Muslim leaders and the ban on Hindu organisations prevented communal violence, but unresolved tensions between communities since the time of Partition began to resurface with the beginning of the 1960s. After the Jabalpur riot of 1961, there were a series of communal riots in different parts of the country. In 1967, in Ranchi, 155 people were butchered. On 9 June 1968, a communal riot broke out in Nagpur “between Hindu scheduled castes, now converts to Buddhism, and Muslims”. In 1969, after communal clashes in Ahmadabad, the violence spread to other towns – Meerut, Firozabad, Aligarh and Malegaon. North Indian cities were vulnerable to communal violence, particularly Meerut, Moradabad and Aligarh. The 1987 riots in Meerut and the 1989 riots in Bhagalpur sent shock waves through India. Usually, cities with a sizeable Muslim population or with Muslim-owned prosperous businesses (Aligarh, Firozabad) were sites of violence.

#### **3.4.5 ELECTORAL POLITICS AND RELIGIOUS MOBILISATION**

Several scholars argue that political mobilisation and vote-bank politics are the primary bases on which communalism has grown in independent India. It is said that the Muslim vote block has been

opportunistically used by almost all political parties. The aggressive stances of the Hindu Organisations have also compelled Muslims to vote en masse. Their underrepresentation in politics and insecurities are a few reasons for their voting behaviour. Many consider that the soft communal policy pursued by Congress in many states actually led to the assertion of the religion in politics.

The numerical strength of the Muslim population gained further political significance from the early 1980s onwards. Political parties tried to capture this vote block and conceded religious demands such as preserving Muslim Personal Law. In the 1980s, the Congress frequently played the “Hindu card” in the states of Punjab, Kashmir and elsewhere and communalised “the state apparatus on an unprecedented scale through the anti-Sikh pogrom of 1984 and the subsequent cover-up of the guilty”. Similarly, Oommen explains how apart from its unique social structure and geographic composition, the opportunism of major political parties has intensified communalism in Kerala. For Desai, Hindu communalism does not rest with the RSS and the BJP; leaders from other political parties are profoundly communal and casteist.

It is not only the Sangh parivar that exploits religious sentiments for political gain and the establishment of cultural hegemony. Many Islamic groups have asserted their cultural purity and have appealed to people to go “Back to Islam”, the original Islam followed by the Prophet, and in Mecca. Religious sentiments are exploited and the appeal to follow Muslim Personal Law is always made. Madrasas are seen as sources of growing Islamisation. There may be formal schooling in religious texts, and often the maulana and mulla socialise students into Islamic traditions. Islamisation and political communalism is engineered by the religious groups and exploited by the political elites.

Within the Muslim community, various orthodox groups such as the Jama'at- e-Islami and Tablighi Jama'at invoke different religious interpretations. Similarly, for groups such as the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), Islam is a complete world view and ideology that governs every aspect of a Muslim's personal as well as collective life. For it, it is not the Constitution of India but Islam that lays down a complete code of conduct. Unfortunately, its activities stereotype the entire Muslim population in India. For them, democracy and secularism are un-Islamic. According to Sikand, “In SIMI discourse, Hinduism is painted in the most lurid colours, and as an inveterate foe of Islam and its followers. The only way to salvation, then, is by converting to Islam”.

In this way, all the religious organisations in India one way or the other, one time or the other attempted to appeal to their fraternity on matters related to politics, especially during the time of elections. As D. L. Sheth states, “the inevitably messy and chaotic character of this high-intensity politics of democratisation, even as it empowered the socially peripheral majority of the Indian population, is fraught with the danger of the open, competitive politics of representation being reduced to a pure politics of numbers, and democracy to a singular principle of rule by the majority”.

Many scholars also view that the assertion of the religion in India is linked with the competitive electoral politics. For instance, Steven I. Wilkinson states that large-scale Hindu-Muslim violence is primarily premeditated by politicians who seek electoral gains.

### 3.4.6 RELIGION IN GUJARAT

According to D.L.Sheth, from the days of the Independence movement till about the late 1960's, Gujarat could, relatively speaking, legitimately project itself as 'Gandhi's Gujarat' in certain respects. The political culture of protests and of governance that developed during this period, by and large affirmed the values of nationalism. The numerous instances of nationalist agitation, even though not lacking in aggression and innovation, did not on the whole transgress some basic democratic codes of political mobilisation. The Mahagujarat Movement (the movement for Gujarat as a separate linguistic state) and later even the Navanirman Movement (a student movement against corruption) could also arguably claim such distinction as compared to the kind of collective expressions of social unrest and political agitation that took place in the 1980's and 1990's.

#### 3.4.6.1 COMMUNAL POLARISATION

However, the process of communal polarisation in Gujarat began with the 1969 riots in Ahmadabad. And since then riots of one kind or another have been recurring in some sort of a pattern every few years. From 1969 to this day close to 7,000 lives have been lost and property worth thousands of crores of rupees has been looted or destroyed in these riots. Most of these riots were communal in nature and they were often engineered by interested parties for short-term political gains. But in the process they created long term consequences in the form of communal polarisation. Even the anti-reservation agitation of 1985 that initially targeted the Dalits ended-up in Hindu-Muslim riots. Communal polarisation in Gujarat is primarily a post- independence phenomenon.

#### 3.4.6.2 FACTORS FOR COMMUNAL POLARISATION

Many factors have contributed to the increased communal polarisation between majority Hindus and minority Muslims. Some of these are explained below.

##### *Urbanisation*

There are several factors that have indirectly contributed to the growth of communal polarisation. Gujarat has undergone rapid urbanisation, in the last 50 years. Many former villages have grown into towns, mid-sized towns have grown into large cities and big cities like Ahmadabad, Surat and Vadodara have been fast acquiring the character of metropolises. But more important than the rate of urbanisation is the pattern of urban growth and spread in Gujarat. Every district, including in the tribal belt, has at least a couple of sizeable cities and a number of middle and small towns. Even the villages are much larger than usual. A large part of rural Gujarat could in fact, be described as urban hinterland. Urban-rural transactions of all kinds - not just economic, but social, cultural and political - are close and frequent. Moreover, the growth of media, both the print and the visual media, have created over time a vertically and closely linked system of cultural and political communications which is overly marked by a majoritarian Hindu ethos.

##### *Transformation of Hinduism*

All this, among other things, has transformed the local and rural character of Hindu practices into some sort of folk Hinduism, giving it a strong urban imprint of anonymity and marketised entertainment. The anonymous and marketised character of this folk Hinduism has yielded

participative spaces to the tribals and dalits. The new folk-Hinduism in Gujarat has however been appropriated by political Hinduism.

### ***The KHAM Alliance***

In the course of the last 30 years the demographic composition of urban centres in Gujarat has radically changed in two major respects. First, there has been a massive influx of OBCs, Dalits and Tribals into the towns and cities of Gujarat. Second, a sizable number of non-Gujaratis have migrated and settled in all urban centres of Gujarat. The former type of migration - i.e., the rapidly increasing rate of urbanisation of the OBCs, Dalits and Tribals - threw up a new kind of leadership from these communities by providing them with an urban base. It was through this process that the challenge to the Congress party's Mahajani-Gandhian leadership emerged in the form of the KHAM alliance, comprising the Kshatriyas (OBCs), Harijans, Adivasis (Tribals) and Muslims. This massive infusion of the subaltern communities into politics provided a basis to the Gujarati-elite fear of political instability. And the influx of non- Gujaratis generated deep anxiety in the Gujarati middle class and was fraught with chronic urban tensions.

Many of the educated non-Gujaratis who migrated to cities in Gujarat have found significant positions in the corporate sector and higher level government jobs where knowledge of the English language is at a premium. Here, most Gujaratis, even the university educated, feel disadvantaged because even middle-class Gujaratis have not developed competence in the English language. More importantly, members of the business communities from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have made significant inroads in the Gujarat business world at all levels. Earlier, as a consequence of the Partition, a very significant proportion of Sindhi traders had already carved a niche for themselves in the Gujarati business world.

Although the percentage of non-Gujaratis in Gujarat is not very high (about 10 per cent) their concentration in the cities makes their presence quite visible. Labourers from Orissa, Maharashtra and Karnataka as well as from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have in significant numbers entered the urban labour market in Gujarat. On the whole, what has been conventionally perceived as the Gujarati character of cities like Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot and many smaller cities has been visibly altered. This is also reflected in the changes in ethnic composition of elected representatives. It is not unusual to find non-Gujaratis in the municipal governments, corporations, universities and college student unions, as well as in the trade unions. Although on the surface a fair degree of peace and harmony seems to exist between Gujaratis and the non-Gujarati linguistic groups, a strong undercurrent of resentment runs among a cross-section of Gujaratis comprising the businessmen, traders and petty-traders, as well as among the professionals and intellectuals. Interestingly, the resentment is not about the cultural differences of language, life-style or even religion.

### ***Politics of Hindu Ekta***

The resentment that has grown in the course of the last two decades comes from a sense of economic insecurity and frustration among the Gujarati youth. They feel they are being systematically edged out or peripheralised from their respective, traditionally occupied arenas of

economic activity by the non-Gujarati immigrants. Such feelings are expressed more frequently and strongly in the business world.

Even though the insider-outsider divide in urban Gujarat has been considered a potential source of ethnic conflicts since the inception of Gujarat as a state it has all along remained an undercurrent. It did not give rise to any ethnic-chauvinist sons-of- the-soil movements in the past. This was primarily because the Mahajani-Gandhian political culture dominant at the time was not conducive to such movements. And it is not likely to arise in the future because the present politically dominant hindutva leadership in Gujarat views any such movement as constituting a threat to its politics of Hindu Ekta. Hindutva political leaders instead desire to garner the 10 percent non- Gujarati (mainly Hindu) population as a vote-block and co-opt their leadership into the Party's power and patronage structure.

Thus the fear that the Maharashtra kind of ethnic conflicts ('insiders' vs. 'outsiders') could take place in Gujarat was warded off by the Parivar's politics of Hindu Ekta that took root in the 1990's. In fact, it has almost removed such a possibility from emerging on the political scene in Gujarat. This has been done by co-opting the non-Gujarati leadership in the BJP and directing the Gujarati ethnic passions towards the religious minorities. Even earlier, attempts by the upper-caste middle-class Gujaratis to assert their power by resorting to anti-reservations and anti-Dalit agitations of the 1980's and 90's were thwarted by the hindutva leadership by supporting the reservations and then co-opting the Dalits and Tribals into the party and its front organisations.

The BJP politics of hindutva did not just provide an ideological basis to their goal of converting the religious majority into a political majority and thus help forge a massive electoral majority based almost entirely on Hindu votes. It also created a social-cultural infrastructure in support of this politics. The hindutva politics of 1990's succeeded in erasing not only the old Mahajani-Gandhian political culture but also its short-lived successor - the subalternist political culture of the KHAM coalition consisting of the OBCs, Dalits, Tribals and the Muslims. This was achieved by bringing large chunks of the OBCs, Tribals and Dalits into the patronage structure of the ruling BJP.

In sum, in the course of 1990's the Sangh Parivar's politics of communal polarisation succeeded in transmuting the ethnic and caste conflicts into communal conflicts, thus securing the consolidation of Hindu votes in favour of the BJP. This resulted in the BJP winning two successive elections in Gujarat with a massive majority.

This communal polarisation led to the violent riots in the aftermath of the Godhra incident in which the Hindus were attacked and burnt to kill when they are on pilgrimage. The riots that took place after this Godhra incident were very serious and brutal in which more than 2000 Muslims were killed, many houses were burnt. Though many consider the Sangh Parivar and BJP were directly responsible for this violence, the BJP refutes these charges. For instance, Amit Shah, then Home Minister and now BJP President said that the violence in Gujarat was inevitable given the massacre at Godhra. In his words: "The BJP has nothing to do with the riots of 2002. The riots were the reaction of the people to the Godhra incident. The reaction was so huge that the established machinery could not

meet the challenge of these spontaneous reactions.” However, many say that the BJP, over the decades, has so polarised the state that a single incident led to a state-wide orgy of revenge. The reason that so much anger and bitterness and hatred exists in Gujarat is because of the divisive language and policies of the BJP. And this polarisation is helping the BJP to gain electoral victories in the state.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What factors led to the process of communal polarization in Gujarat?

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2. Discuss the role played by KHAM alliance in politics of Gujarat.

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3. What was the role of Hindutva politics in communal polarization in Gujarat?

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### **3.4.7 RELIGION AND POLITICS IN KERELA.**

Many scholars talk about Kerala's legacy of peaceful co-existence and cosmopolitan social ethos. Two major religions, Islam and Christianity, took root in Kerala from the very early years of both religions and both were introduced through trade and by word rather than through the sword or war. More than 25% of the population is Muslim and more than 20% is Christian. People belonging to the Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities have lived together peacefully for centuries, nurtured their Malayali identity, and played a key role in enriching the culture, society, economy and political process of the state. In spite of multiple religious and caste identities, it is the cosmopolitan social ethos that has made Kerala a very distinct society, known for communal harmony, peace and social development. People from different religious and caste groups nurtured and shared the same cultural, social, economic and political space.

However, there is a tendency in recent times to assert various shades of identity politics based on the politics of exclusion and also new pressure politics based purely on a religious, denominational or caste identity. There is growing soft and hard sectarianism of various shades. And, above all, there is also a trend towards moral policing even by parties that are expected to uphold 'progressive' values and gender justice. The entrenched patriarchal attitude and the new tendency of questioning any man and woman travelling together gives the impression that regressive trends have crept into this society.

#### **3.4.7.1 COMMUNALISM IN KERALA**

KERALA has always been affected by political instability right from its formation in 1956. It

has seen no less than 10 elections and 15 ministries between 1956 and 1994. Except twice, no ministry could complete its normal tenure of five years in power. One of the reasons that contributed to political instability was communalism based on religion.

### **3.4.7.2 RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNAL MOBILISATION IN KERALA**

Kerala is noted for its uniqueness in religious diversity and communal harmony as compared to other states. But with all these positive attributes, we find the electorate being swayed by communal feelings and identities. In a similar vein, the appointments to government posts are influenced by communal considerations. Moreover, there is the rising phenomenon of various communities launching their own political parties with a view to strike bargains during the elections and share the spoils of powers in event their alliance wins the elections. Communalism as prevalent in Kerala may be defined as a feeling of group solidarity among different communities and to assert its presence in the day-to-day functioning of society. Its style of operation is peaceful coexistence carried out through milder social processes. The number of political parties that one finds in Kerala are nothing but a conglomeration of pressure groups and are meant to promote the interests of the communities. More employment, more business facilities, more forest land for cultivation, more schools, more seats in professional colleges, more berths in the ministry, are some of the issues around which communal parties and groups revolve. The communal interest groups bring with them the whole weight of the communities and are, therefore, powerful enough to dictate terms to the government. Before going into the dynamics of communalism, it is imperative to trace the growth of communalism in the state.

The major communities in Kerala are the Ezhavas, the Nairs, the Muslims and the Christians. These four communities comprise roughly 80 per cent of the state's population and various governments have survived or fallen due to the shifting alliances of these communities. The demographic composition is such that each community is in a position to dictate terms to the political parties. One significant factor about these communities is their geographical concentration. Although they are scattered throughout the state, they have certain areas of concentration or what may be called 'pocket boroughs'. Out of the total of 14 districts in the state, the Christians and the Muslims constitute a significant number in six districts. In one district, Malappuram, the Muslims constitute more than 60 per cent of the population. This geographical concentration helps the communal parties like the Kerala Congress (basically a Christian Party) and the Muslim League to win more seats from the Christian and the Muslim dominated areas respectively.

Over the years, the communal groups have created for themselves an important role in the coalition politics of the state due to their ability to become instruments for expressing political preferences and mobilising political resources and support. In the realm of politics, they act as pressure groups and guard the interests of their respective communities. The sharp division of the society coupled with the mosaic nature of politics makes the various community interest groups far more important. They play a crucial role in the making and unmaking of governments. Sometimes, the 'social arms' get converted into 'political arms' so as to project the community interests more forcefully. Accordingly, the Muslims have the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the Nairs, the

National Democratic Party (NDP), the Christians, mainly, the Kerala Congress (Mani) and the Kerala Congress (Joseph), and the Ezhavas have the Socialist Republican Party (SRP). Given the individualistic nature of the Malayalis, the parties underwent fissions resulting in spawning of new parties. This resulted in a situation wherein Kerala began to be ruled by coalition governments as no single party could win majority of seats on its own. As the coalition government consisted of disparate communal interest groups, interest aggregation became a difficult proposition.

The high level of caste consciousness is also one of the contributing factors in the shaping of political behaviour. The Hindus are divided on caste basis and hence cannot take a united stand in the electoral game. This is in contrast to the Muslims and the Christians who are more organised and show more solidarity in the electoral exercises. This solidarity certainly helps them in greater bargaining capacity in securing concessions from the government. It is the claims and counter-claims regarding the bargaining capacity that reinforces the communal polarisation of the communities giving rise to instability of the political system.

Apart from these specific social conditions, communalism gets intensified in Kerala due to the absence of ideology among political parties and dominance of opportunistic politics. Alliances are formed not on the basis of ideology but on the basis of getting maximum seats at the time of elections. The small communal parties see the advantages of retaining their identity for bargaining with the major parties. The major parties for narrow electoral considerations show no qualms in entering into seat adjustments with communal parties. The result of this opportunism displayed by major political parties is that these small parties begin to call the shots in politics. Any reluctance on the part of the government to accede to their demands results in shifting of their loyalty to the opposite front. The net result was political instability at the macro level. For instance, the Kerala Congress (Mani) quit the LDF under the pretext of law and order problem in 1982. The Kerala Congress (Joseph) threatened to quit the front when the government refused to give title deeds to those who had encroached on the government land. The UDF government had to give in to this demand so as to continue in the office.

Both the Communist and the Congress parties have played a role in the growth of communal politics in Kerala. The Communist Party could attain power in 1957 only because of the cooperation and support extended to it by some communal powers and the tactics of identifying their candidates according to the communal ratio. The Liberation Movement of 1959 against the Communist government strengthened communal pressure groups and the fall of the ministry can be attributed to the agitation led by these groups. The Communist Party's alliance with the Muslim League in 1967 and the formation of Malappuram district is another instance of a Party succumbing to pressure politics. During the 1987 elections, the CPI(M) severed its ties with the All India Muslim League (AIML) against the background of the Shalh Bano case. But lately EMS Namboodiripad who had advocated a strong stand against the AIML then, is talking of forging alliance with the Indian National League. The compelling factor behind this change of policy is the forthcoming election in the state. The CPI (M) knows that it is difficult for the Left Democratic Front to come to power on its own. The support of splinter parties is crucial considering the wafer-thin majority that separates the victor from the loser in Kerala.

The Congress with all its secular credentials in not aligning with communal parties finally tied up with the Muslim League and the Kerala Congress to fight the Communists. The opportunity it got to rule the state was more powerful than the ideology it professed. At one time, almost all communal parties were part of its front. Sanctioning pensions to the Ulemma, declaring Friday as holiday for schools with a majority of Muslim students and granting title deeds to those encroaching on government land are instances of appeasement of the communal parties by the Congress. Another instance is the Congress (I) vacating its Rajya Sabha seat to the IUML in order to placate the latter which suffered a drubbing during the Guruvayoor assembly election.

Thus, communalism constitutes almost an essence of politics of Kerala. Apart from the unique social structure and the demographic composition, communalism got intensified due to the opportunism displayed by the major parties. By aligning with small splinter communal parties, the major political parties which could have played an important role in the political process became a participant to the communal processes. Consequently, the communal divide in the society gets reinforced and the possibilities of a consolidated secular base for the political systems get narrowed.

### **3.4.7.3 RISE OF RSS**

The rise of RSS in Kerala as a powerful political wing has been significantly facilitated by these endless pampering of the minority communal lobbies in Kerala politics by the dominant groups of the Communists and the Congress. It was more often through their campaigns against these 'appeasements' that the RSS membership was substantially increased. Protests against the so-called preferential treatment of the Wakf boards by the government, state's involvement in Hindu Temple Management, state pensions to the Muslim priests and other similar issues are raised by the RSS at regular intervals. Obviously all these did really help them to claim for themselves the status of being the champions of the Hindu cause.

The BJP is also making strong inroads into Kerala's politics. In the last parliamentary elections, BJP's vote share in Kerala increased from 6% to 10.8%, encouraging the party to raise its game. It is expecting the debacle of CPM in Kerala as well as it happened in West Bengal. It is considering the popularity loss of CPI (M) will become major gain for its future in Kerala politics. The BJP has many plans for Kerala and it involves weaning away CPM's support base to start with. In a state where the party has not won a single seat ever in the assembly or Parliament, even as there is a fairly strong RSS organisation in place, BJP's target is to make inroads in the civic and panchayat polls in October 2015, to be followed by assembly elections in April 2016. BJP State President V. Muralidharan states that "Since the Left's main support comes from Hindus in Kerala and BJP's voters are also Hindus, our growth will have to be at the cost of CPM."

BJP is targeting Scheduled Castes and OBC communities, a very small chunk of which supports the party at present. But the attempt is to win over the big OBC group of Ezhava which constitutes about 22% of the state's voters and Scheduled Castes which account for 10% of the population.

### **3.4.7.4 COMMUNAL CONFLICTS**

The 1990's had already seen a spate of communal tensions and conflicts and some of them

assumed violent proportions causing considerable political embarrassment. The towns of the Nadapuram, Panur, Taikal and Pathanamthitta have witnessed communal clashes. However, the the incidents of Marad, a coastal village near Kozhikode, have left deep impact on politics of Kerala. In these clashes nine persons were brutally killed and several injured-on May 3, 2003. It was not a communal riot in the generally accepted sense, in which the members of two communities violently engage with each other, in most cases spontaneously, due to some immediate provocation. In Marad, it was a sudden attack by a group of people well-armed and well organized who carried out the operation in one sweep in less than 15 minutes. Similarly, in 2015 the two communities are indulged in violence against each other in Nadapuram in which one killed and nearly 70 houses were gutted.

The Ministry of Home Affairs report on communal violence in Kerala noted that the state witnessed 100% rise in the number of communal incidents in 2017 as compared to the previous year. While 12 communal incidents and one death were reported in 2017, six incidents were reported in 2016 and three in 2015.

All these incidents are indicating that notwithstanding its plurality, social development, and more literacy, Kerala also experiencing polarisation of communities and politicisation of identities. Each of the religious communities, the Hindus, Muslims and Christians are getting mobilised on religious lines under the influence of various political and non-political organisations mushroomed in Kerala's landscape over a period of time.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. The absence of ideology among political parties and dominance of opportunistic politics intensified communal politics in Kerala. Comment.

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2. The high-level caste consciousness is a contributing factor in shaping the political behaviour in Kerala. Comment.

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3. Discuss the rise of RSS in politics of Kerala.

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#### **3.4.8 LET US SUM UP**

In the last decade of the 20th century, profound political changes took place in India. While the changes may have occurred as part of the ongoing process of democratisation, today it seems the

changes that were not managed politically and institutionally, have produced a severe breach in the secularising process of democracy. The independent Indian state managed, and considerably evened out, the built-in asymmetrical relationships in a deeply hierarchical, multi-ethnic (lingual) and multi-religious society by redefining, institutionally and legally (constitutionally), the relationship among antecedent pluralities (communities), and between them and the state in new terms of secularism that recognised the basic rights of individuals as citizens and their collectively held cultural rights as members of (ethnic and religious) communities. However, this framework that imparted sustainability to Indian democracy has today been replaced by a new form of pluralist discourse, that totalises interests and community identities, and this has resulted in a battle between majoritarian and minoritarian communalism.

### **3.4.9 EXERCISES**

1. Write a note on interface between religion and politics.
2. Critically analyse how the partition of India influenced the religionisation of politics?
3. Briefly state the impact of communal riots on Indian society and people.
4. How electoral politics are influencing the religious mobilisation?
5. Write a note on the role of religion in the politics of Gujarat.
6. Critically analyse communalism in Kerala politics.

### **3.4.10 SUGGESTED READINGS**

- D L Sheth, “Political Communalisation of Religions and the Crisis of Secularism”, Economic & Political Weekly, Vol. XLIV, No. 39, September 26, 2009.
- D. L. Sheth, “The politics of communal polarisation: Gujarat - from Gandhian nationalism to religious carnage”, Manushi, issue 129, 2002.
- Surya Prakash Upadhyay and Rowena Robinson, “Revisiting Communalism and Fundamentalism in India”, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XLVII, No. 36, September 08, 2012.
- John Oommen, “Politics of Communalism in Kerala”, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 30, No. 11, March 18, 1995, pp. 544-547.

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## 4.1 REGIONAL DISPARTIES : CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

- V. Nagendra Rao

### STRUCTURE

- 4.1.0 Objectives
- 4.1.1 Introduction
- 4.1.2 Regional Disparities
- 4.1.3 Regional Disparities in India
- 4.1.4 Regional Disparities: Causes
- 4.1.5 Regional Disparities: Consequences
- 4.1.6 Let Us Sum up
- 4.1.7 Exercises
- 4.1.8 Suggested Readings

### 4.1.0 OBJECTIVES

This topic provides you basic understanding about regional disparities India. After reading this topic you will be able to:

- understand what actually meant by regional disparities
- know the nature of regional disparities in India
- comprehend the various causes that are leading to regional disparities in India
- understand the consequences of regional disparities

### 4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Economic well being of a nation or a region or state depends upon its rate of economic development. The earliest concept of development was interpreted in terms of growth of output over time and later in terms of per capita output. The terms growth and development were used interchangeably. In material terms it means availability of more goods and services for the people in the country. However, in contemporary times, economic development was redefined in terms of a better human life. The main goal of economic development is the improvement in the standard of living of the people which depends not only on per capita income but also on social and welfare services, satisfaction, self-reliance, self-esteem and economic freedom. Michael Todaro suggested that development should “expand the range of social and economic choices to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation states, but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery”.

Economic welfare or well being of a people does not merely depend upon the rate of development but also on its distributive aspect. It has been seen worldwide that development outcomes are not equally distributed among states, causing disparities and imbalances in economic development.

#### **4.1.2 REGIONAL DISPARITIES**

Regional disparity denotes regional dualism or regional income or growth differentials. The term “poles de crois scurce” in French literature defines regional disparity as the presence of socially and economically advanced and backward regions between nations or different states within a nation. Disparity has also been defined as the condition or fact of being unequal as in age, rank or degree. Synonyms for disparity are inequality, unlikeness, disproportion and difference. In different parts of the country sharp differences are found to exist in physical features and resource endowment across states which are responsible for development disparities within countries.

The prevalence of regional disparities is a common phenomenon and present in both developed and developing countries. Even the richest country of the world, U.S.A., has the problem of unbalanced regional development and many small and rich countries are also faced with this problem. Different regions of a country grow at very unequal rates, resulting in inter-regional and intra-regional imbalances, which in turn give rise to socio economic problems. Many countries which are developed today, stressed regional development in fifties, though, in western countries regional development began to receive attention in the 1930's due to welfare considerations.

Disparity and development are two sides of a coin. In the literature, disparities have been measured in terms of economic backwardness across the states or districts in a state. It is also evident that the economic backwardness has been measured by either sector-specific or composite indices, which often cover more than one sector. The first case measures disparities by developing an Aggregate Composite Index of Development by taking different sectors into account, these sectors may be agriculture, industry, banking, power, education, health and sanitation, transport and communication and so on.

#### **4.1.3 REGIONAL DISPARITIES IN INDIA**

Regional disparity or regional dualism is an important feature of the Indian economy. Disparities in economic development exist in terms of per capita income, poverty, literacy, gross enrolment ratios, life expectancy, indicators of mortality and access to safe drinking water etc. Not only are there interstate disparities but even within the states variations in development exist. Sometimes these are expressed in terms of the northern, southern, eastern or western states when the problem is not confined to a state alone but the entire region including several states of the region. The problem of regional disparities is prevalent in the country. Over development of developed states and lesser development of backward states has resulted in misallocation and underutilization of resources.

Many studies show that regional disparities in India are increasing in spite of measures adopted

by the government for their reduction. On the basis of internationally observed pattern of regional changes, it may be pointed out that India has reached a stage when interregional divergence starts generating regional pressures for the development of backward regions. In India there are significant regional differences in terms of size, population, climate, geography and culture and so on. Similarly, there are large differences in the level of economic development and hence the existence of the problem of regional disparities. For example there is a high level of variation among the states in terms of the size of population and manifest in a high percentage of population living below the poverty line as in Bihar and Orissa (40-50%). On the other hand there are states such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka where poverty ratios are low.

What is of great concern is that there is a concentration of poverty and backwardness in a group of contiguous states accounting for about as much as 50 percent of the total population of the major states of India. The relative positions of these states as a group in terms of income and of almost all other indices of development have deteriorated over time.

Bihar had the lowest per capita income. In 2004-05, its per capita income was only Rs 5,430 that is about Rs 450 per month at 1993-94 prices. The gap between the highest and lowest per capita income (in 1993-94 prices) among the 15 states increased from 2.55 times to 3.76 times (in absolute figures, from Rs 5,735 to Rs 14,967) in this period, indicating a stark widening of income disparity among the states. This difference was more in current prices. In 2004-05, the per capita income of Maharashtra at Rs 36,423 was 4.01 times larger than that of Bihar at Rs 9,082.

Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, which had the six lowest ranks in per capita income in 1995-96 and 2004-05, are together referred to here as “backward states” (BWS) and the others as “better-off states” (BOS). The gap between the average per capita income (GSDP) of the BWS and BOS (in 1993-94 prices) drastically increased from Rs 1,862 in 1980-81 to Rs 8,908 in 2004-05, both because the average GSDP of the BWS grew at a slower rate than that of the BOS and also because the average population of the BWS grew much faster.

What is really worrisome is that the current pattern of growth leads to widening disparity not only in income but also in all other indices of development. For instance, the poverty ratio (2004-05) was 46.4 per cent in Orissa and 41.1 per cent in Bihar as against

8.4 per cent in Punjab. The infant mortality rate (IMR) (2005) was 14 in Kerala but 76 in Madhya Pradesh. The life expectancy (2001-06) was only 59 years in Madhya Pradesh as against 71.7 years in Kerala. Bihar had the lowest literacy rate (2001) of 47 per cent and female literacy of 33.1 per cent while Kerala had the highest literacy rate of 90.9 per cent and female literacy of 87.7 per cent. The Human Development Index (HDI) (2001) of Bihar was only 0.37 and of Kerala was 0.64. Kerala is, of course, an exceptional case but even if one takes the next best performing state, the relative indices of the BWS turn out to be quite poor.

Economic growth rates also reflect economic disparity within the country because economic growth rates vary considerably among states. Growth rates vary from 7 percent to 9 percent (as in Gujarat, Haryana and Delhi) to 4-5 percent as in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In Gujarat

growth rate is 8.8 percent, in Haryana it is 8.7 percent in Delhi it is 7.4 percent while in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, growth rates are very low at 5.1 percent, 4.4 percent and 3.5 percent respectively. This varied economic growth in India is also shown by the fact that rural Orissa and rural Bihar are the poorest regions in the world with the poorest growth rates while rural areas of other states such as Haryana have higher growth rates. There are mainly seven states in India which are lagging behind in economic growth namely Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and states such as Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat and Maharashtra have maintained a continuous lead over other states.

A study of economic history reveals that development originates in regions which are endowed with resources natural, human and others. These regions also draw investment from other regions. But in India these problems cannot be explained with reference to endowment of natural resources alone. There are poor states possessing rich resources like Orissa and rich states possessing poor resources like Maharashtra. Thus in India the process of development has not been determined by the availability of natural resources alone. Political and social factors have also had an important bearing on development.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What do you mean by regional disparities?

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2. How did British Colonialism lead to regional disparities in India?

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3. Discuss various factors that lead to regional disparities in India.

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#### **4.1.4 REGIONAL DISPARITIES: CAUSES**

The economists of India attribute many factors for the regional disparities in India. Early on they focused chiefly on the role of capital as an accelerator of economic growth. However, many developing countries demonstrated that investment does not by itself achieve economic growth. Technical progress enhanced productivity and then with the emphasis on human development by the UNDP, other factors have been brought in to explain growth. They include the stock of different types of infrastructure; human resources such as skilled labour, power and roads. Non-economic factors like quality of public governance, its efficiency in developing infrastructure, delivering social

services, etc, are seen as key factors. This is apart from more familiar factors like stability of the financial system, availability of skilled labour and technology locally or through import, substitutes like diesel generated power, using railways when roads are poor or limited, moving to other states where there is better law and order, but the quality of governance in the state in which investment is made provides no substitutes. Literacy, higher education, institutional quality, etc., are all part of human resource development.

Some of the important factors for regional disparities in India have been discussed below; the relative importance of these factors change from one region to other.

#### **4.1.4.1 BRITISH COLONIALISM**

The present regional disparity in India has its roots during the British period. In India, the historical factors guided the development of the port cities of Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), and Chennai (Madras). These three cities have, in turn, worked as nuclei for the development of Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu respectively, which are, at present, the most industrially advanced states of the country. On the other hand, the areas having natural advantages in the form of mineral resources such as Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh have lagged far behind. The interest of the British was to 'use' the dependent countries or colonies both as supplier of raw material to home country's manufacturing industry and as a market for its products. Hence, the present day regional disparities have their origin during British period.

#### **4.1.4.2 HISTORICAL FACTORS**

Before the independence, the better-off states were having a progressive land tenure system like Ryotwari or Mahalwari, whereas most of the less developed states were princely states and were under exploitative tenures like the Zamidari and Jagirdari systems. The social structure that evolved under progressive tenures has been more conducive to growth and generated incentives for work, whereas the structure perpetuated by the exploitative land tenure has been inimical to enterprise. Even after independence, the system of land tenure has not improved, especially in poorer states. Also, the developed regions have had relatively efficient system of governance in terms of skills, responsiveness and quality of delivery systems, whereas the poorer regions continue to lack such systems of governance. Unlike capital, which is highly mobile across regions and continents, good governance cannot be transplanted in an area. It has to evolve from within. Though it cannot be quantified, but it is an important cause of economic backwardness of states like Bihar.

#### **4.1.4.3 REGIONAL ATTRACTION FOR INDUSTRIALISATION**

The mechanised industrial development in India started mainly in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the location of industries the availability of raw material was the main consideration. In such areas once the economic development started, they attracted more industries, especially industries where raw material considerations played an important role in deciding the location. For example, the location of jute, cotton textiles, sugar, tea, and mineral-based industries were located in the areas where their raw materials were available.

#### **4.1.4.4 MIGRATION AND INVESTMENT OF CAPITAL**

The dynamic, healthy, skilled, and young labour that migrated to the industrial centres of Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), and Chennai (Madras), affected the age structure. The age structure of the place of origin of migration became lopsided where the dependency ratio increased resulting into an excessive burden of children and old people. The economy of such areas could not flourish and lagged behind. Moreover, because of increasing investment opportunities and expectations of higher profits, capital also moved to the rich region. This outflow of capital further depressed economy in backward regions. Consequently, a circular process of more investment and more income was initiated in the rich regions, while an opposite circular process operated in the poor regions.

#### **4.1.4.5 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT**

During the Pre-Independence period, the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation were closely linked with the development of port-cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in India. From its beginning in 1853, India's railway system expanded rapidly to become, by 1910, the fourth largest in the world. The development of transport (and especially railways) also increased the regional disparities as all parts of the country were not well connected by railway network.

Even presently, the development of transport and communication networks significantly influencing the development outcomes. The states which developed infrastructure in these areas are rapidly growing well, while those states that are lagging are stagnating. For instance, in case of metalled roads considerable variations exist among various states.

As against national average of 37 per cent of villages, the variations range between 13 per cent in Nagaland to over 90 per cent in Goa, Haryana and Kerala. With regard to communication, a little less than one-fourth of the villages are covered by post and telegraph facilities. The regional variations in case of these services is surprisingly very high, with states like Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Manipur, Orissa and UP having much less coverage of about 23 per cent, the coverage in states like Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Tripura is about 50 per cent; and in case of Kerala it is 99 per cent.

#### **4.1.4.6 IMPACT OF GREEN REVOLUTION**

The green revolution of 1970s considerably altered the growth in various states. The States that are benefitted from green revolution are the states that later on also achieved overall development. The classic examples are Punjab and Haryana in the north, apart from Southern states. The surplus income generated in the agriculture moved to other sectors, particularly to industrial to increase the growth rate tremendously. The states that missed the green revolution, drastically lagged behind in economic development.

#### **4.1.4.7 MODERN EDUCATION**

The improvement in the education significantly influences not only economic development but social and other skill development as well. Those states that have exposed to modern education system early were the states that are presently ahead of the other states in overall development.

For instance, in Madras Presidency, which was one of the first British settlements in India, Missionaries opened many English medium schools in Madras. They concentrated on educating the lower strata there. There were some government schools as well, where the means of school education were vernacular languages. British government gave funds to indigenous schools in need of help and dictated its own terms. Slowly more and more schools got government's aid there. Higher education was granted in English only.

English became just like their mother tongue for educated people in Madras long ago – whether belonging to Brahmin community or non-Brahmin communities. In 1855, Education departments were created in the provinces of Madras, Bombay and Bengal. In 1857 Universities were established in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. All these developments gave leverage to their respective populations.

#### **4.1.4.8 INDEBTEDNESS AND LOWER CREDIT WORTHINESS OF POORER STATES**

The debt-GSDP ratios of poorer states are higher and because of their lower creditworthiness are not able to have access to market borrowings to the same extent as the richer states. It is pertinent to mention here that the per capita market borrowing of the four poorest states were almost equal to certain better-off states, viz., Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana and Kerala during the Sixth Five Year Plan but declined to 72 per cent in 2004-05.

This has reduced their capacity to allocate sufficient resources for the development of social and economic infrastructure to redress the problem of regional disparities.

#### **4.1.4.8 FLOW OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT TO BETTER-OFF STATES**

As there is positive correlation between infrastructure and private capital investment, the infrastructure rich regions attract more private capital. The Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Technical Collaboration which sustain growth and bring at least four things of value: financial capital, management skills, technology and access to export market and enhance a country's and its regions' competitiveness in the global market place. But in case of India such investments and collaborations approved from August 1991 to December 2000, the better-off states, viz., Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Delhi together accounted for half the share as against the combined share of less than 10 per cent by the four poorest states. This is because of the fact that the poorer states do not have adequate infrastructure to attract such investments.

#### **4.1.4.9 INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Investment in infrastructure, with its significant impact on regional development, can be an important instrument to contain the regional disparities in economic development. The equitable development of infrastructure, both physical and social, can be a vital yardstick as well as a key element of balanced growth. But its uneven development can accentuate regional imbalances besides creating other vexing problems like migration, overburdened/ collapsing infrastructure, pollution, increasing number of unplanned settlements and other socio - political problems in regions which at one time were having rich infrastructure.

The existing studies show that regional imbalances in physical infrastructure have been responsible for rising income disparities across the states. The process of economic reforms initiated in the early 1990s of the last century has uneven impact on various sectors of the Indian economy and there is a growing concern that regional disparities in India have increased after advent of economic reforms.

#### **4.1.4.10 CASTE CONFLICTS IN NORTH**

The caste demography of the South and West was quite different from the North. Its people have been more conscious of their legitimate rights. The Dravidian politics in South, the influence of Ambedkar and other social reforms in West somewhat undermined the social hierarchies. As a result many of the backward and Scheduled Castes people were also attained some kind of education which in turn contributed to the socio - economic development. The prevalence of rigid caste structure in the North somewhat narrowing the social development in northern states.

#### **4.1.4.11 GOVERNANCE**

Good governance is the present day slogan for arresting all evils in the society and economy. Hence, every country in the world is praising governance. Governance is indicated by the efficiency of the governments to deliver goods and services as quickly as possible, reducing influence of bureaucrats, adhering to the rule-based system, usage of technology in the administration, systematization of processes, etc. All these create an investment atmosphere so that the companies can come and invest. The states that are better governed are the states which are received maximum investment, especially from private sector, both foreign and domestic.

#### **4.1.4.12 LOBBYING**

Some states are attracting huge investments because of the efforts made by its political and bureaucratic class. There are continuous efforts of by some of the state governments to pursue the multinational companies and Indian companies to start their activities in their states. The states are hiring foreign consultancies to lobby for investments. As a result, some of the states that are showing dynamism attracting more investment and in that process attaining economic development. However, mostly private investment prefers to travel to the states that are already developed and have a good consumer market. Apart from this, due to coalition politics, some of the regional parties are attaining more clout with the central government and influencing the governmental decisions for public sector investment.

### **4.1.5 REGIONAL DISPARITIES: CONSEQUENCES**

In India, sectoral and regional imbalances have always been a source of great social and psychological tensions. Fruits of economic boom have never been equally shared by all the regions and their people throughout India. It has given rise to new tensions – social, economic and political. It poses a danger to the integrity and stability of the whole society as well as unity of the nation.

There is a wide gap between region to region/province to province. There are pockets of poverty amidst plenty within each province/state. Dry and hilly areas as well as those with tribal

populations are still far below the national average. It has widened the gap between the prosperous and backward states and created a wide gap between the rich and poor within a region.

Uneven regional development results in numerous complications such as wastage of resources increase in public costs, social justice, deceleration of economic growth, threat to national integration and possibility. There is an urgent need to tackle these problems; otherwise, they will aggravate the imbalances in the economy. Political, economic, social and ethical considerations also call for measures to attain greater parity in the levels of development. Many experts in the field of regional economics and development economics have graphically narrated the adverse consequences of persisting disparities in various studies.

Harvey Armstrong and Jim Taylor contend that severe regional differences in levels of employment and dangerous for social cohesion. Co-existence of backward regions along with developed ones with lower purchasing power in former makes inflation worse than it otherwise would be. According to them, national employment and output could be substantially enhanced if regional unemployment disparities are reduced. When such disparities reduced with more geographic distribution of demand for labour, inflationary pressures would be less severe. There will be optimum utilization of social overhead capital.

As pointed out by Friedman and Alonso, reduction in regional disparities would pave way for greater national integration, increase in economic growth and political stability. On the contrary, if the disparities are widening, a sense of unfairness and injustice may kindle regional and parochial movements, as seen in many countries. Reduction in income disparities is also in line with noble goal of social justice. There is a general agreement that there should be greater equality in the living standards of people residing in different parts of the country.

#### **4.1.5.1 CONFLICT BETWEEN RICH AND POOR STATES**

The prevailing regional disparities are increasing friction and conflict between various states, especially between rich and poor states. When the Central government allocates more resources to the poor states, the relatively developed states are complaining that they are penalising for their development efforts. Their efforts to reduce population growth and improve the relative standard of living of people is becoming a negative factor to allocation of finances, since the Finance Commission is factoring the population and poverty as a criterion for allocating the resources. This is creating a sort of friction between various states in India.

#### **4.1.5.2 DEMANDS FOR STATEHOODS**

The regional imbalances are quite often leading to the demands for separate statehood, especially in a state where inter-state disparities are creating a sense of discrimination among the segments of population. The Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh states were created due to demands from the people of backward regions in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Similarly, there is a long-standing feeling that Telangana has not received its due share in investment allocations, and that the 'surpluses' from Telangana have been diverted to the other regions.

Ultimately this sense of deprivation led to the long struggle which culminated with the creation of Telangana in 2013. Similarly, other movements such as Gorkhaland, Vidarbha, etc. are related to the same regional imbalances. The backwardness and lack of investment in Darjeeling Hills is the region for separate state demand by Gorkha people. Similarly, in Vidarbha, the biggest grouse of the people relates to water resources. Thirty-six per cent of the country's dams are in Maharashtra, but Vidarbha faces drought almost every year, leading to farmers committing suicide. Similarly, the demand for Purvanchal and Harit Pradesh in Uttar Pradesh are primarily base on demand for development. Purvanchal, the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, falls in the Gangetic plains and is rich with fertile soil, but it is not as developed as the western part of state proposed as Harit Pradesh. While successive state governments in Uttar Pradesh have demarcated funds for development of Purvanchal, the region's power and infrastructure is one of the worst in the country. People in Purvanchal think the benefit of the green revolution was reaped by western Uttar Pradesh and they have gained very little.

#### **4.1.5.3 SEPARATISM**

Many demands of separatism, particularly in Northeastern region are becoming serious and violent due to prevailing poverty and regional disparities in the region in general and within each of the Northeastern states in particular. The demand for Bodo land was largely a fight for getting more access to resources, both human (employment) and material. The claims and counter claims of each of the groups increasing unrest among the people and it is leading extremism and separatism.

#### **4.1.5.4 MAOIST VIOLENCE**

The main support for the Maoists, according to a report of an expert group set up by the Planning Commission entitled Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas (March 2008), "comes from dalits and adivasis". The group identifies large-scale displacement, forest issues, usury, land alienation, insecure tenancy contracts among other socio-economic reasons in backward areas as the main reason for the spread of Maoism. It also clearly states that for dalits, apart from sub-human poverty, there are issues of unemployment, discrimination and exclusion which are the main reasons for discontent. The adivasis, on the other hand, fare the poorest in terms of all human development indicators. The report goes on to locate the rise of Maoism in the context of the developmental paradigm of the Indian state.

#### **4.1.5.5 FLOW OF RESOURCES FROM POORER REGIONS**

The regional disparities are also creating a situation where the human and material resources are moving from backward regions to rich regions. For instance, all the savings which were kept the banks of the backward regions are utilized to the industrialization process in rich regions. Since private companies prefer to start industry in a developed regions due to availability infrastructure and market, they are indirectly contributing to the flow of resources from poor regions to rich regions. Similarly, the educated and skilled people are also moving from their respective areas to industrial and urban centres. This material and brain is further aggravating the backwardness and leading to increase in poverty. The balanced regional development with an aim to reducing regional disparities only can stop the shifting of resources from poor regions to developed parts of the country. Since, the

public investment has drastically reduced in the post-reform period, there are fears that the regional imbalances might increase in the future. This is going to create serious strains to Indian state and its political system.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Regional disparities have triggered the demand for separate statehood in India. Explain.

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2. Maoist Violence in India is often viewed in context of regional disparities. Comment.

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#### **4.1.6 LET US SUM UP**

Disparities between the people, regions within a country and even between countries are the result of natural differences, socio -cultural conditions and policy decisions. Though because of inherent natural differences, it is difficult, if not impossible to remove all disparities completely, it is possible as well as necessary to remove the entire man made obstacles such as social constraints and policy decisions that stop people and regions within a country from developing their full capabilities. In the context of Indian economy, the man made obstacles have their differential impact on the development of different regions. For instance, before independence the better-off regions had a progressive land tenure system, whereas the less developed regions were under exploitative land tenure system and the social structures that evolved under these systems had different impact on economic growth of various regions. The policies pursued by British to suit their colonial interests are to a large extent responsible for present regional imbalances. Similarly, in the post-independence period, though Government of India made significant efforts in terms of Planning Commission, still Indian states are divided as rich and poor based on various criteria. Some states like Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu are marching ahead while others are lagging behind. Four most populous and large states of Bihar, MP, Rajasthan and UP lag far behind and are known as BIMARU states.

The Five year plans in India have stressed on industrial development in the backward regions as industries were concentrated in urban areas and port cities. In the second and third five year plans an effort was made for balanced regional development through industrial development of the backward regions by providing tax concessions, cheap land, concessional freight etc. and a separate chapter in the plan documents was devoted to balanced regional development in the third five year plan. Various measures were undertaken in subsequent plans for the development of less-developed and backward regions. Balanced regional development has been an important objective of economic

planning.

Focused investments in social and economic infrastructure can enable people and regions to develop their full capabilities as per their potential. Such investments in infrastructure with its significant impact on regional development can be an important instrument to contain regional disparities in economic development. The equitable development of infrastructure, both economic and social, can be a vital yardstick as well as a key element of balanced growth.

#### **4.1.7 EXERCISES**

1. How do you understand regional disparities? Explain in the context of India.
2. Explain various causes for the regional disparities in India.
3. What are consequences of regional disparities and how they are affecting Indian society?

#### **4.1.8 SUGGESTED READINGS**

Bakshi, S., Chawla, A., & Shah, M. (2015). Regional disparities in India: A moving frontier. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44-52.

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Kurian, N. J. (2000). Widening regional disparities in India: Some indicators. *Economic and Political weekly*, 538-550.

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## 4.2 PLANNED DEVELOPMENT TO MARKET LED DEVELOPMENT

- Mamta Sharma

### STRUCTURE

**4.2.0 Objectives**

**4.2.1 Introduction**

**4.2.2 India's Model of Development: From Planned to Market Led Development**

**4.2.2.1 Evolution of Development Policymaking in India**

**4.2.2.2 India's Development Trajectory**

**4.2.2.3 The Indian Model of Development – Promises and Pitfalls**

**4.2.3 Post Reforms Development Strategies (Especially 2003 Onwards): From Embedded Capitalism to Neo Liberal Turn and Socialist Pattern of Society to Inclusive Growth**

**4.2.4 Let Us Sum Up**

**4.2.5 Exercises**

**4.2.6 Suggested Readings**

**4.2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this lesson you will be able to understand

- The India's model of development starts with the periods of 1950s which was based on five year plans strategy and shift towards market led development during the period of 1990s.
- To Know the various phases evolved in the transition of planned to market led development.
- To Know the Post Reforms Development strategies which focus on inclusive model of development.

### 4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

After a long journey of developmental struggle, negotiated through meticulous planning and policy initiatives spanning over nearly six decades, India finally emerged as a major player in the world economy and polity. India's journey began as a newly independent poor underdeveloped nation in 1947, the year of its independence from the British rule. At that time, India was one of the poorest nations in the world in terms of per capita income, wealth and materialcapacity. However, it had an illustrious history of an ancient civilization dating back to 5000 BC, with periods of high prosperity and a rich cultural heritage, intellectual capacity and enlightened leadership. With these assets, India embarked on its path of post-colonial economic development. The original architects of India's development planning and policy were perhaps chasing a goal of bringing back India's past glory to re-establish its lost position in the world after a prolonged (two centuries of) colonial rule. Over the

next six decades, the trajectory of India's development policies evolved through the ups and downs of its development performance.

#### **4.2.2 INDIA'S MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT: FROM PLANNED TO MARKET LED DEVELOPMENT**

India's development experience has attracted significant attention in the economic development literature. Much of this literature focuses on the failure of India's initial approach of "State-directed" development with a strong inward-looking bias in its development strategy. It has been well demonstrated how India's prolonged strategy of import substitution was followed by a paradigm shift towards a more liberalized open economy model of development in the 1990s. India's successful emergence in the world economy has often been attributed to this liberalized trade and industrial policy regime. Essentially, the existing literature on India's development experience analyses its economic performance in an attempt to link it with the broad theoretical contours of outward versus inward looking industrialization and development.

However, we believe that this approach is too simplistic to understand the complexities of the so-called "Indian model" of development. Accordingly, this lesson has a very different flavor, rather than focusing on the broad contours of overall development strategies, we argue that specific policy elements are formulated within such an overall strategy framework to achieve narrow and targeted goals of development. Each and every policy element may not necessarily be an integral component of a particular development strategy package, as theoretically understood in the development economics literature. While many of the policy elements might have played complementary roles in achieving desired developmental goals, some of the others might have been conflicting. Moreover, new policy elements have been added over time, while older ones have been modified and sometimes discarded. In this lesson, we consider India's quest for development as a composite of a multitude of policy initiatives addressing specific aspects of a multi-dimensional conceptualization of development. Indeed, this approach towards understanding India's development policies will also enable us to address a frequently raised yet less understood question: Is there indeed an "Indian model" of development within such a diversity of policy initiatives? The present lesson marks an attempt to unveil the enigma of this "Indian model" of development.

The lesson begins with a discussion of the evolution of development policymaking in India. In Section I we demarcate the first couple of decades as a period during which policies were driven by ideology and idealism, followed by deeper penetration of self-reliance during 1970–1985. The second half of the 1980s was a period of policy ambivalence with sporadic reforms and opening up, while 1991 marked the beginning of a paradigm shift in India's policymaking. Section II presents India's development trajectory, showing how India finally emerged a global player in the last couple of decades, despite its lost opportunity to be a part of the Asian Miracle of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Section III highlights the foundations of India's success story and discusses its promises and pitfalls.

##### **4.2.2.1 Section I: Evolution of Development Policymaking in India**

As already indicated, the conventional discourse presents India's development policy largely within the paradigm of inward- versus outward-looking strategies, dividing it into two distinct

regimes – import substituting industrialization extending until the 1980s, followed by a paradigm shift in 1991 towards a liberalized trade and industrial policy regime. Here, we refrain from such a broad-brush depiction of India's development policy evolution. Accordingly, we demarcate four distinct phases of India's development policy, distinguished by their guiding philosophies and compulsions.

#### **A. Policy planning driven by ideology: 1950s and 1960s**

India remained a virtually closed economy for nearly four decades after its independence in 1947, following an inward-looking development strategy. The key goal was to achieve *self-reliance* in all possible dimensions of economic activities of the nation. The immediate aspiration of independent India was perhaps to mimic the development trajectories of the “advanced” industrialized nations, albeit very much within the framework of import substitution and self-reliance. It was perhaps important for Indian policymakers to signal to the rest of the world that India could do whatever the advanced nations could. Accordingly, a diversified industrial production base was meticulously planned out for India, ranging from simple consumer items to sophisticated capital goods and heavy machinery. This drive towards self-reliance also prompted India to engage in highly-complex and resource-intensive activities such as space research and nuclear technology. The notion of natural comparative advantage took a back seat in this planning process. This policy approach was perhaps a result of the hangover of the prolonged colonial rule that fostered a process of “drain of wealth” through tripartite and unequal trading relations dictated by the colonial rulers. This hangover was reinforced by the contemporary scholarship on *dependency theories* pioneered by the Latin American School of thought, highlighting notions of elasticity pessimism and in-equalizing trade. All this led to deep cynicism about trade and openness among the founding fathers of India's development policy. Therefore, the goal was to achieve “self-reliance” by doing away with all elements of dependence on the western world. Indeed, the notion of *self-reliance* played a major role in defining the *norm* of development in post-colonial India. However, the idea of *self-reliance* itself has gone through a metamorphosis in India's development policy

The architecture of India's post-colonial development policy framework was inspired by the Soviet model of development. Indeed, the foundations of India's second Five Year Plan model (Mahalanobis, 1953) closely resembled Feldman's (1964 [1928]) model developed in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, arguing for a larger share of investment in the capital goods sector, which may slow down growth in the short run but would result in a much higher growth rate in the long run, accompanied with higher levels of consumption.

India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, with his Cambridge exposure, had a strong faith in socialist ideals, which left a significant imprint on India's post-colonial development model. If we consider the Nehruvian era, which extends probably until the mid-1960s, we note that socialist sentiments went a long way towards defining India's own understanding of development, in terms of both its means and ends. Indeed, there are several pointers to substantiate this claim.

Soviet style ***Central Economic Planning*** was the cornerstone of India's initial development

strategy, aimed at a “socialistic pattern of development”. There was lack of faith in the market and the role of the State was emphatically highlighted. Although a mixed economy was envisaged, there was a clearly assigned role earmarked for the private sector, primarily restricted to the consumer goods segment, and even that was subject to pervasive regulatory control by the State. The public sector was expected to reach the “commanding heights” of the economy with clearly demarcated priority sector industries reserved for the public sector, progressively expanding its ambit during the Nehruvian era.

Trade received very little attention in the foundation of India's post colonial development strategy. India's trade policy was characterized by pervasive import and exchange control, primarily relying on quantitative restrictions. From 1962 onwards, these restrictions were supplemented by the increasing use of import duties. There was initially a pessimistic neglect of exports, although the Third Plan (1961–1966) included some piecemeal and ad hoc attempts towards export promotion through export incentives (subsidies, fiscal incentives, and import entitlements). Of course, there was a temporary and short-lived trade-liberalization attempt during the devaluation of 1966, with an announced goal of eliminating / rationalizing export subsidies and liberalizing import licensing and reduced import duties, albeit only to be followed by a reversal to the protectionist policy framework.

Socialist ideals were also reflected in the deliberate policy attempts on several other fronts: (i) the reduction of monopoly and concentration of economic power; (ii) the promotion of a small-scale sector that generates income and livelihood for the common man through a policy of industrial reservation; (iii) ensuring balanced regional development through freight equalization policy to eliminate regional disparities in growth and development; and (iv) price controls aimed at ensuring the availability of certain “essential” (“crucial”) products at “reasonable” prices, namely fertilizer, cement, iron, steel and pharmaceuticals.

Another area that warrants special attention in India's development policy during the Nehruvian era is its concerted focus on social sector policies, driven by the ideals of the so-called *Nehruvian Socialism*. The need for a proactive role of the Government in the provision of merit goods like health and education was clearly highlighted. An elaborate public health care system and infrastructure was envisaged and created during this period. Likewise, government-funded higher education and research, especially in the fields of science and technology, was emphasized with the creation of an elaborate network of public-funded colleges and universities, as well as other institutions of higher learning in sciences, technology and management.

### ***B. Deeper penetration of self-reliance: 1970–1985***

The decade of the 1960s witnessed several changes in the global political economy scenario. Two neighbourhood conflicts (1962 China and 1965 Pakistan) exposed the ground realities of India's limited military capabilities and the consequent vulnerabilities against global forces and alliances. Moreover, the acute food crisis of 1966 revealed India's economic vulnerability vis-à-vis the United States, when it withdrew its food aid to India under public law 480. This was followed by an acute currency crisis and a major devaluation of the rupee.

Despite being one of original founders of the non-aligned movement in a bipolar world, India

slowly started aligning with the Soviet Union, on both a strategic and economic front. There was urgency to rapidly march towards the goal of self-reliance, both economically and strategically. India's achievement of nuclear capability in 1974 was a clear step in this direction. This was also a period during which the private capitalists were emerging as a powerful class in India, as an outcome of its original vision of a mixed economy. This class had a vested interest in protecting their business from international competition and a policy of self-reliance and import substitution was in perfect harmony with their narrow interests. The policy of licence-raj had already created a rent-seeking vested interest among bureaucracy. Against this backdrop, India's development policy framework tilted towards deeper penetration of self-reliance in every sense of the term. However, the original policy goal, whereby the public sector was expected to reach the commanding heights of the economy, seemed to have been substantially diluted by now and the private capitalist class was being rolled out a larger space to operate. In the re-classification of the industrial sectors, greater access was accorded to private capitalists. The public sector was also mentioned, although it was no longer expected to reach the "commanding heights" of the economy. Industrial licensing continued in full steam. There was an announced intention to relax licensing policies with a change in the political regime in 1977, although it never quite materialized and was promptly reversed in 1980.

This period also witnessed a passage of several legislative acts that have a direct bearing on India's development model. The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) of 1973 was introduced to restrict and regulate the operations of foreign (multinational) companies in India to protect and develop indigenous industrial and technological capability. A 40 per cent ceiling was imposed on foreign equity share, with the exception of some "core" sectors like pharmaceuticals, where up to 74 per cent foreign equity was allowed to high technology bulk and formulation producers, with the proviso that 50 per cent of the bulk was supplied to non-associated formula-tors and the share of own bulk in their formulation should not exceed one fifth. The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act of 1970 was enacted to ensure that industrialization did not result in the concentration of economic power in hands of a few rich. The Patent Act of 1970 was a radical departure from the earlier patent law inherited from the British period. This Act only granted process patent for *chemical substances including pharmaceuticals*, reduced the duration of patents to seven years from the date of filing or five years from the date of sealing whichever is lower, excluded all imported substances from the domain of patent protection (i.e. only new substances manufactured in India were entitled to patent protection) and placed the burden of proof on the plaintiff in case of infringement.

All these acts introduced in the 1970s, in conjunction with several other policy initiatives towards the active promotion of indigenous technology creation and adoption, resulted in a policy framework that took the goal of *self-reliance* beyond mere manufacturing capabilities to technological *self-reliance*. Given the protectionist environment, considerations of costs and quality as per global standards were not considered to hold much relevance during this phase of India's development model.

Another important dimension of this deepening of *self-reliance* during this era was evident in India's

strive towards attaining self-sufficiency in food grains production. India's *green* revolution was made possible through the Government's concerted effort and investment in agricultural research and extension services.

#### **C. Policy ambivalence and sporadic reforms: 1985–1990**

The flipside of this protectionist policy regime soon revealed itself in the form of inefficiencies of various kinds. For one thing, there was no incentive to keep pace with the fast changing global technology frontier in many of the manufacturing sectors, which resulted in Indian industry becoming technologically backward and inefficient with respect to global standards of cost and quality. India's industrial sector was characterized by very high effective rates of protection and associated domestic resource costs. The concept of natural comparative advantage appeared to have taken a back seat in India's development trajectory. The country settled at a "Hindu" rate of growth of 2–3 per cent per year and was branded by development scholars as a growth laggard in the world.

From the mid-1980s, with Rajiv Gandhi taking over as prime minister with a young and dynamic appeal along with his team of technocrat advisers like Sam Pitroda, a technological view of development was gaining momentum in India's development policy. It was realized that being able to produce everything could not be the end-all goal; rather, it is also very important to be able to do things "efficiently". This may require opening up the doors to the latest technological development on the global frontier, marking quite a departure from its earlier inward-looking policy regime. At the same time, global scholarship on development strategy was also undergoing a metamorphosis, fuelled by the trumpeting of the success of outward oriented industrialization strategies adopted by East Asian economies. There was some serious re-thinking about India's development path among Indian scholars and policymakers, albeit with significant scepticism and hesitation.

In a sense, this marked the beginning of India's policy of liberalization. However, the policy response beginning in the mid-1980s was feeble and sporadic, given that it was limited to liberalizing particular aspects of the control system, without any major change affecting the system itself in any fundamental way. These attempts of liberalization have been arguably piecemeal and somewhat ad hoc without a comprehensive programme of reforms that some of the other inward-looking economies had already adopted (including China since 1978).

#### **D. Paradigm shift: 1991 onwards**

1991 marked a radical departure from the past, when, faced with an exceptionally severe balance of payments crisis, India launched a massive economic reforms package comprising short-term stabilization measures along with a longer-term programme of comprehensive structural reforms. Indeed, the reforms initiated in 1991 were much wider and deeper than earlier piecemeal attempts. It ushered in a complete paradigm shift in policymaking that now emphasized the liberalization of government controls, a larger role for the private sector as the engine of growth, freer operation of the market and competitive forces to boost efficiency, as well as greater integration with the world economy.

Interestingly, the *balance of payments* crisis of 1991 that precipitated India's massive economic

reforms package coincided with the Uruguay Round of negotiations culminating in the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), thus heralding the beginning of a new world order of globalization. Hence, a better perspective on the Indian reforms process may be gained by viewing it against the backdrop of the evolution of the WTO-driven new world order, rather than regarding it merely as an isolated occurrence.

In terms of outcomes, the reforms process put in place a trade regime compatible with the diktats of the WTO over a period of time, with the removal of all quantitative restrictions on trade, reduction of tariff rates, market-aligned foreign exchange rates with full current account and limited capital account convertibility and a liberal, transparent, investor-friendly foreign direct investment policy in place. In the industrial sector, the reforms led to the virtual elimination of industrial licensing and de-reservation. The number of sectors reserved for small-scale enterprises was drastically reduced. Most significantly, the role of public sector was re-defined with the stated objective of disinvesting and privatizing public sector units. Finally, the establishment of bodies like the Investment Commission and the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council clearly highlight a major shift in the government's role from "control" to "regulation" as far as the industrial sector is concerned.

On the fiscal front, the *Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act* was passed to achieve fiscal consolidation and stabilization. This act enjoined the central government to eliminate its fiscal and revenue deficits in a phased manner in the medium term. In another significant move, a uniform system of value-added tax was adopted and services sector (contributing to more than 50 per cent of GDP) was brought under the tax net in a comprehensive manner. Finally, subsidies on petroleum products were progressively dismantled by linking the domestic retail prices to international prices, which considerably reduced government expenditure on the petroleum account.

Financial sector reforms entailed the deregulation of the banking sector, which has significantly expanded the size of the sector in terms of the number of new private banks and branches, as well as enhanced the scale of operations, particularly in new businesses like merchant banking, mutual funds, etc. The *capital market* has also been liberalized with the gradual removal of controls on various transactions in the capital account. The Securities and Exchange Board of India was set up in 1995 to regulate the primary and secondary stock markets along with the stock exchanges and market intermediaries. The *Insurance Regulatory and Development Act* was introduced in 1999, opening up the insurance sector to private participation.

Agriculture had received scant attention during the initial phases of India's economic reforms process, largely due to the absence of a political consensus. Although such a consensus remains somewhat elusive, a growing realization regarding the urgency of removing various inefficiencies in the farming sector has resulted in the introduction of some reform measures, essentially in three areas: subsidies, procurement and the public distribution system.

In this section, we attempt to portray India's development trajectory with the objective of unveiling the process of its emergence as a major player in the world economy. India had to wait for

five long decades before it could make its presence felt in the world economy. Despite its rich heritage and endowment of intellectual and scientific capacities, India remained a poor underdeveloped nation with very low material capacity for more than half a century after independence. It is needless to mention that India had significant ideational influence on global politics and international relations during the Nehruvian era (1950s). However, over time, even this influence became eroded, perhaps due to its failure to match its global diplomatic presence with commensurate economic and/or military presence in the world. It is rather intriguing to note that much of labour-surplus Asia (East and South-East, in particular) forged ahead with economic prosperity from the 1960s and 1970s, despite starting from a much lower base compared to India. Over the last forty years, some of the economies in East and South-East Asia have grown at rates unprecedented in human history, whereas India remained stuck at low levels and growth rates of per capita income.

Despite its bulging population, where was labour-surplus India in this Asian Miracle? Given its autarkic trade policy regime that created strong anti-export bias in the relative incentive structures, India could never experience the Asian Miracle driven by rapid expansion of labour-intensive manufactured exports. However, if the inward-looking trade policy regime was indeed the only reason for India's inability to join the miraculous growth experience of its East Asian neighbours, one would naturally expect India, with its low labour costs, to surge ahead in flooding the global markets for labour-intensive mass manufactures after it opened up its trade in 1991. Nonetheless, this never happened. By the time that India's policy shift took place, competition in the global mass market in labour-intensive manufactures had intensified and India had already lost out in the race against the East and South-East Asia. This was perpetuated by India's obsolete industrial policies, and especially the policy of product reservation for small-scale enterprises. It was supposedly in the interests of equity and employment, which spectacularly succeeded in crippling the textile industry, the spearhead of labour-intensive export expansion in the rest of the developing world. Effectively, India almost voluntarily opted out of the world's mass market for traditional labour-intensive

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the process of evolution of development policymaking in India.

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2. What was the impact of Soviet model of development on India's post-colonial development policy framework.

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3. Analyse the impact of license raj on India's development politics?

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4. Discuss the elements of self-reliance in India's development policy during 1970-1985.

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5. Briefly explain shift in India's development policy towards liberalization.

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#### 4.2.2.2 Section: II India's Development Trajectory

In this section, we attempt to portray India's development trajectory with the objective of unveiling the process of its emergence as a major player in the world economy. India had to wait for five long decades before it could make its presence felt in the world economy. Despite its rich heritage and endowment of intellectual and scientific capacities, India remained a poor underdeveloped nation with very low material capacity for more than half a century after independence. It is needless to mention that India had significant ideational influence on global politics and international relations during the Nehruvian era (1950s). However, over time, even this influence became eroded, perhaps due to its failure to match its global diplomatic presence with commensurate economic and/or military presence in the world. It is rather intriguing to note that much of labour-surplus Asia (East and South-East, in particular) forged ahead with economic prosperity from the 1960s and 1970s, despite starting from a much lower base compared to India. Over the last forty years, some of the economies in East and South-East Asia have grown at rates unprecedented in human history, whereas India remained stuck at low levels and growth rates of per capita income

Despite its bulging population, where was labour-surplus India in this Asian Miracle? Given its autarkic trade policy regime that created strong anti-export bias in the relative incentive structures, India could never experience the Asian Miracle driven by rapid expansion of labour-intensive manufactured exports. However, if the inward-looking trade policy regime was indeed the only reason for India's inability to join the miraculous growth experience of its East Asian neighbours, one would naturally expect India, with its low labour costs, to surge ahead in flooding the global markets for labour-intensive mass manufactures after it opened up its trade in 1991. Nonetheless, this never happened. By the time that India's policy shift took place, competition in the global mass market in labour-intensive manufactures had intensified and India had already lost out in the race against the East and South-East Asia. This was perpetuated by India's obsolete industrial policies, and especially the policy of product reservation for small-scale enterprises. It was supposedly in the interests of

equity and employment, which spectacularly succeeded in crippling the textile industry, the spearhead of labour-intensive export expansion in the rest of the developing world. Effectively, India almost voluntarily opted out of the world's mass market for traditional labour-intensive goods; indeed, it was the conquest of this market that propelled China's boom of the 1990s.

However, this did not prevent India from charting out its own trajectory of emergence in the world economy that transgressed simple labour cost advantage. Fortunately, the advantage conferred by low labour costs is pervasive and extends well beyond the realm of traditional labour-intensive goods into new industries and services, like software, information technology (IT) and IT enabled services (ITES), biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, where knowledge inputs prove the key source of comparative advantage. India's opening up in the 1990s coincided with a new era, during which these knowledge-intensive sectors began to dominate the world economy. India's advantage in these activities arises from a strong university-educated middle class (translating labour abundance into skill abundance) and its public investment in science and technology science and technology (S&T) research. We must underline here the role of idealism and ideology in shaping India's development policy in the immediate post-independence era. The policy thrust on higher education and research, especially in S&T, has created a knowledge base, skilled labour force and S&T capacity that are well-equipped to capitalize on the IT and biotechnology booms.

Apart from knowledge, skills and S&T capacity, another key source of India's strength has been its knowledge of English language, inherited from its colonial past. This has proved an asset of incalculable value for India in an age of instant worldwide communication, essentially in the English language. Thus, while China continues to dominate the vast world market for traditional labour-intensive manu-factories, new vistas have opened up for India, where knowledge resources – as opposed to simple labour abundance – prove the key source of comparative advantage.

Given that India's emergence has centered on a limited number of specific sectors, an obvious question that arises is whether (and to what extent) it has been ignited by sector-specific policies. We find quite a divergence among sectors in this regard. India's success in IT and ITES has largely been self-driven, taking off on its own in response to the new global economic opportunities created by an IT driven global production structure in a globalized world. Of course, India's advantages in terms of skilled (university-educated) manpower and English language naturally led to the flourishing of IT and ITES in India, even without any specific government policies towards IT during the initial phases. It is interesting to note that the National Policy on Information Technology was only announced in 2011, long after the successful emergence of India's IT sector.

However, the story is somewhat different in the case of the pharmaceutical sector. Here, India created a unique policy space for itself that fostered the technological capability of the domestic pharmaceutical industry. Carefully designed and targeted policy framework adopted in the 1970s helped this industry to become self-reliant, not only in manufacturing but also in technology, eventually competing successfully in global markets through technological capability. In the first two decades after independence, India's overall development strategy of import substituting

industrialization – supplemented by an active role played by public sector enterprises – acted as the key driving force behind the growth and expansion of the pharmaceutical industry. However, the industry continued to remain largely dominated by foreign firms and drug prices were among the highest in the world. Simply trade policy alone is perhaps inadequate to foster self-reliance, especially in a process-driven sector where learning and technological capability building has to be actively nurtured through complementary policy instruments, and particularly intellectual property rights (IPR). This policy reinforcement towards technological self-reliance started in the 1970s with the passage of several government directives directly shaping the growth path of this sector, including the Drug Price Control Orders of 1970 and 1979, the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act of 1973, the New Drug Policy of 1978 and, of course, the Patent Act of 1970. Within this favourable policy environment, the pharmaceutical industry in India embarked upon a new trajectory of technological learning and acquired substantial technological capability of process development through reverse engineering both infringing processes for off-patented molecules and non-infringing processes for patented molecules. Through the 1970s and 1980s, the Indian pharmaceutical industry reached new heights of process capabilities to “knock off” any new drug with a non-infringing process and market them at low prices. This phenomenon has often been referred to as the “process revolution” in the Indian pharmaceutical sector, whereby India was now poised to make a major dent in the global generics market. The story of India's economic emergence, coupled with the diversity of its experiences in the IT and pharmaceutical sectors, makes it evident that the Indian model of development cannot be fully comprehended with a broad-brush analysis of its transition from an inward-looking policy regime to a more open and liberalized economic environment in line with the neoliberal traditions. We have analysed how finer elements of development policies – ranging from higher education and S&T research to product reservations and IPR – have played a role in India's economic emergence in one way or another. In some cases, non-targeted general policy elements have produced desired results for specific sectors, while in others targeted and sector-specific policies have yielded positive sectoral outcomes.

## **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Explain the role of educated work force, technological capability and knowledge of English on India's economic upsurge.

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2. Discuss the features of Indian model of development.

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3. India's remarkable success in lower-end activities of the high-end knowledge-intensive sectors can hardly be called truly inclusive strategy of economic development. Comment.
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#### **4.2.2.3 Section: III The Indian Model of Development – Promises and Pitfalls**

As we have explained above, the Indian model of development, as it has unfolded in the last couple of decades, is based upon a foundation of knowledge resources. The importance of knowledge as a principal driving force behind economic growth and development is now well recognized, given that there are unlimited opportunities that can be tapped by nurturing and augmenting knowledge resources. Indeed, India has enormous potential and unprecedented opportunities to make effective use of its knowledge resources to enhance productivity in all fields and make a successful transition towards a knowledge economy.

However, India's assets and advantages on this count (namely its educated workforce, technological capability and knowledge of English) are far from being permanent in character; rather, they can be replicated in other countries with some effort. Indeed, some of the other emerging economies like Brazil and China are quickly catching up with India in terms of these assets. More seriously, these assets created by India's colonial history and post-colonial policy effort can be irreparably damaged, if not destroyed, by unimaginative policy. For instance, the language policy (shunting English) adopted by some of the State governments as well as the union government (at times) or the lack of a consistent higher education policy to bring India to newer heights of intellectual achievements could prove serious impediments to nurturing these invaluable assets that have propelled India's economic emergence in the world.

The Indian model of development – principally driven by rapid expansion of *high-end* knowledge-intensive sectors (IT, biotech, business/ knowledge process outsourcing and other similar services) – comes with a tragic neglect of *low-end* labour- intensive mass manufactures. Even with all the rhetoric about India's high-end capabilities, one must confront a fundamental question: *how high is India's high end?* Ironically, India's high end is not quite so "high. It shows that although India has demonstrated significant competitive strength in routine (though skill intensive) tasks like coding (in software) or process development (in pharmaceuticals), it has been lacking creativity and innovativeness to reach the global frontiers of technological advancement. India is yet to make a mark in cutting-edge global technologies. For instance, it is noteworthy that despite India's global presence in the generic market and its declared effort to reach newer heights in pharmaceutical research and development (R&D), we are yet to see a *new chemical entity* (drug) from India hitting the global market. Effectively then, India cannot compete with advanced nations in the truly high-tech segments in terms of creating new technologies and ideas. While India has created a niche for itself in the so-called lower-end activities of the high-end sectors (like customized IT and ITES and generic medicines) requiring skills and technological capability that India has acquired, it is yet to reach the

levels of the league of technologically advanced nations.

In the framework of the conventional structural transformation paradigm, the Indian model of development seems to have skipped the middle phase of an expanding secondary sector, in which manufacturing is supposed to account for the lion's share of the GDP. From an agriculture-dominated economy, India straight away jumped to an economic structure, albeit with a transition period of three or four decades during which services assumed the lead role. However, in the process, India completely lost out to other emerging economies (mainly China) in the low-end segment of mass manufactures. At the same time, it has been unable to compete with the technologically advanced nations in the truly high-tech segment.

India's remarkable success in *lower-end activities of the high-end knowledge- intensive sectors* has undoubtedly created unprecedented opportunities for a limited segment (creamy layer) of the society, mainly for the English-speaking, college/university- educated urban elite. It might have also created incentives for upward mobility and opportunities for the less fortunate to ascend the social ladder and be absorbed in what has been described as the Great Indian Middle Class. Nonetheless, it can hardly be called a truly inclusive strategy of economic development. It emphasizes services performed by an educated middle class as the leading sector in growth, in the midst of an ocean of illiteracy and poverty. Of course, arguably the incomes generated in the leading high-end sector may eventually trickle down to the poor through increased demand for food and manufacture, although this is a process that raises the aspirations of the masses for a better life and then fulfils them – if at all – at an excruciatingly slow pace. It is not only inequitable in the extreme, but also a prescription for political volatility. This is surely not a sustainable development model, especially in a democracy. The political economy of neglecting the bottom quarter billion people, who lack health, nutrition, education and shelter, must be clearly understood. We believe that it is simply unviable to sustain such a growth process in a democratic setup.

To employ the billion strong population productively, one cannot rely on a policy of picking winners and supporting a narrow set of sectors, whether capital-intensive import substitutes (as during the pre1991 regime) or knowledge based IT, pharmaceuticals, biotech, etc. (as pursued now). It is essential to tap the potentials for labour-intensive “low-end” sectors (mass products) that create job opportunities for the masses. This cannot necessarily be achieved through counterproductive policies of reservation and prolonged protection, but rather through a proactive policy framework to resolve infrastructure deficits on the one hand and improve labour productivity through health, primary education and appropriate technology policy on the other.

The new global economic order that has emerged during the last couple of decades has ushered in a process of globalization that entails greater integration of the global economy, following the principles of *free trade* and *laissez-faire*. While opening up new and exciting opportunities for India's economic growth and development in the 21st century, globalization has also posed serious challenges, especially regarding the social sectors. The architecture of this new world order, principally designed by the WTO agreement and supplemented by the prescriptions of *structural*

*adjustment* offered to developing nations by the IMF/World Bank, has an immediate consequence of retreat of the State from active engagement in economic activities. Fiscal reforms initiated everywhere (India being no exception) have clearly mandated for public expenditure compression, whereby the soft targets for public expenditure compression – as always – happen to be the social sector allocations, in particular education, health and poverty reduction. This directly affects the poor in a material sense. It is somewhat ironic that while the primary threats of globalization in India are directed towards the underprivileged masses of its enormous population, it is this same pool of human resources – if properly nurtured – that will prove to be its greatest strength and source of opportunity to embrace globalization positively and productively to become a global economic power in every sense of the term.

#### **4.2.3 POST-REFORMS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES (ESPECIALLY 2003 ONWARDS): FROM EMBEDDED CAPITALISM TO NEOLIBERAL TURN AND SOCIALIST PATTERN OF SOCIETY TO INCLUSIVE GROWTH**

The socialist planning approach guiding development policy started giving way to the market-based economic thinking by 1985. The Chakravorty Committee report (1985) recommending the rationalization of public sector banking policy heralded the new beginning of development decision making. But it took another five years to effectively formalize the new economic policy. The balance of payment and exchange rate crises provided an opportunity to the Congress government to liberalize the economy in 1991, under the then Finance Minister, Manmohan Singh. The changing international economic and political environment also helped in reforming the economy. Soviet Union had got dismembered in 1989, and that led to the belief that the socialist policy framework was no longer relevant to guide future development. The Asian Tigers, under liberal economic regimes, were developing faster than India. The conditionality of structural reform was forced on India by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which salvaged India during the balance of payment crisis. Thus, in 1991, the stage was well set for initiating the policy for liberalization, privatization, and globalization of Indian economy and financial sectors. Sweeping changes were made in the industrial sectors and most government controls on this sector were removed. Under the previous system, government kept a close watch on what the private sector was investing in and by how much—making the industry inflexible, inefficient, and unresponsive to the market. The embedded capitalism, where the government guided major economic decision making and spent heavily on welfare programmes, including balanced regional development, gave way to neoliberal economic regime. Neoliberal policies seek to transfer control of the economy from public to the private sector and this involves the 'restoration or production of class power'. The neoliberal Indian state now enables capital to exploit new, or sometimes old, sources of wealth through accumulation by dispossession or primitive accumulation, as in tribal areas, by denying rights to common property and forcefully acquiring land from farmers for private sector. In the post-reform period, neoliberal economic thinking and foreign direct investment (FDI)-led development have become pervasive. The public-private partnership has come into vogue and much of this strategy has become part of infrastructure from national highway building to golden quadrangle plan (see Planning

Commission 2008). There has also been considerable shift in the desired form of society by the Indian state. Till the late 1980s, considerable emphasis was placed to create a 'socialist pattern of society', as mentioned in the Preamble of the Constitution of India, and that was thought to be the ultimate aim of the state. However, since economic reforms in the early 1990s, the term 'socialist pattern of society' has been replaced with 'inclusive growth' in government literature and policy documents . The inclusive growth philosophy connotes that growth and development may be made inclusive (for all section of society), but unequal endowment or initial inequality in the society would not be corrected. Given the initial hyper inequality in ownership of means of production and wealth, interpersonal inequalities and similarly regional inequalities are expected to rise in the regime of this philosophy of 'inclusive growth'. India's growth following the reforms has been highly capital and skilled labour intensive. Unfortunately, this has constrained the much-needed growth in employment. Many analysts think that India's strategy of growth, via heavy industrialization, stress on higher education, and inflexible labour laws that have kept the firms from hiring labour efficiently, is one of the major reasons why capital intensity has been so high in the industry. Without a major growth in employment, reforms cannot generate equitable development. Also, while urban India has seen major change in income, consumption, and access to resources, rural India has been left with a much smaller share of the fruit of development. A distinctive characteristic of India's neoliberal policy-led growth in the 1990s and thereafter is that the services sector picked up and became the fastest-growing segment of the economy. India's services sector accounts for more than 60 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the post-reform period. This is unusual, for none of the developing countries that had gone through similar phases in the past have had a similar experience. Neither was it planned in the reforms—at least, reforms were not directly targeted at the services sector—but it has still occurred. Particularly spectacular is India's growth in IT and information technology enabled services (ITES), such as business process outsourcing, customer service, medical transcription, and financial services. In spatial terms, this development implies concentration of economic activities in urban centres, or in a few regions, as the English-speaking and higher and technical education institutions are located in few big cities. The agglomeration economies have further helped locating these new knowledge economic activities in a few centres, like Bangalore, Pune, Noida, Mumbai, and Delhi. As discussed earlier, India's growth during the post-reform period has not followed the expected route of agriculture to industry to services. It is rather agriculture to services directly. However, the expectation that growth will automatically generate employment remains unfulfilled. Therefore, employment generation needs to be part of policy now and the general consensus is that labour-intensive manufacturing sector needs to be encouraged to make this happen. The liberalization implied many fundamental changes in planning approach and emphases. These have been discussed later, along with new development initiatives. The changes in socio- economic policy or globalization imply creation of new spaces—the spaces of new centrality and marginality. The repercussions of the policies can be seen from micro-regions to macro level or global level, and on various sectors. Next, we attempt to understand the changes these policies have created at sectoral and spatial levels with regard to development praxis.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the economic policy of neoliberal Indian state.

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2. India's growth during the post-reform period remains concentrated in urban centres. Comment.

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### 4.2.4 LET US SUM UP

India has recorded steady growth despite domestic and global challenges, including, once in a century pandemic COVID-19 followed by an oil price shock. Many of the ideas that have motivated Indian policy makers are also gaining acceptance in the developed countries and across the World. India's indigenous development strategy has not been static, but has evolved & developed with experience and changing national & international environment. It is therefore an appropriate moment to attempt a formalization of this development model. The Indian model of inclusive growth, viewed from a development economics perspective, has three pillars: (1) Market economics, (2) Empowerment, and (3) Pragmatism.

Indian government has pioneered the area of digital public goods & soft infrastructure. This includes the development of Unique ID for all citizens/residents (Aadhar), a universal payments interface (UPI) for payments, Digi Locker, India Stack and Health stack. It has promoted electronic markets like Government e-market (GeM) for purchase of goods and services by GOI (later opened to all State govts), National Agricultural Market (eNAM), and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC). The present Bharatiya development model can be denoted as, “sustained, fast, inclusive growth,” where “inclusive” means all round development of the society and empowerment of every citizen, to develop own capabilities & competence through application of mind and effort.

### 4.2.5 EXERCISES

1. Explain in detail the process of evolution of development policy making in India?
2. Discuss the development strategy in India.
3. Write a short note on development strategy since 2003.

### 4.2.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

Byrd, W. A. (1990). Planning in India: Lessons from four decades of development experience. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 14(4), 713-735.

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## 4.3 LAND ACQUISITION: CRITICAL ISSUES

- Devender Singh

### STRUCTURE

- 4.3.0 Objectives
- 4.3.1 Introduction
- 4.3.2 Meaning and Objective
- 4.3.3 Laws and Land Acquistion
- 4.3.4 Land Acquistion Law After Independence
- 4.3.5 Problems and Critical Issues Land Acquistion
- 4.3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.3.7 Exercises
- 4.3.8 Suggested Readings

### 4.3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this lesson you will be able to know

- the meaning and objectives of land acquistion.
- the laws of land acquistion which was adopted by India after Independence.
- problems and critical issues which confronted with land acquistion.

### 4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The process of Land Acquisition is not a modern concept and it had been in the practice since ancient period in one form or the other. But with the emergence of modern state, particularly the welfare state, the concept of land acquisition became significant as state was made responsible for all type of developmental works for which land is the primary need.

### 4.3.2 MEANING AND OBJECTIVE

Land acquisition is a process of land acquiring, either through government powers or by purchase. The purpose of land acquisition can vary widely, ranging from building highways, airports or railways to establish schools, hospitals, public parks, infrastructural projects, urban development, industrialization and conservation or environmental safety projects. The usage can be both public or private. Private use indicates toward developing industrial areas, economic zones and land reforms for providing land to the landless tillers.

Regulations regarding land or land tenure system has a long History in India. It has its roots in Hindu period of Indian History. Kautilaya has mentioned in his “Arthashastra”. To him, the whole

land of a country is owned by or belong to the king. That is why in ancient times the, king was termed as 'Bhupal' or 'Bhupati' which means the owner and protector of the land. At the ground level the tiller was considered as the owner but he had to pay tax to the king for that. In the medieval period, Sher Shah Suri introduced land revenue system.

In British period, Zamindari System was introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1793. Under this system Zamindars or landlords were recognized as the owner of the land who had to collect rental from the farmers or the tillers. This system was regulated with sole purpose was to increase the revenue of East India Company.

Zamindars were intermediaries between the State and the farmers and their settlement were both permanent as well as temporary. But this system was exploitative and made the cultivator insecure. It was also ridden by absentee land lordism. Indirectly, it gave way to the compulsory land acquisition as the usage of the land was to be decided by East India Company, for example compulsory cultivation of Indigo. This imposed agricultural policy also hindered the development of agriculture in India. Another system introduced by British in some regions was that of "Mahalwari" system where the village land was collectively owned by village people and headman was responsible to collect the land revenue. The Britishers also introduced "Ryotwari System" where there was no intermediary and revenue was to be collected directly from the individual land owner. The major contribution of British Systems of land settlement is that it gave land settlement is that it gave birth to the private ownership of land.

#### **4.3.3 LAWS AND LAND ACQUISITION**

In India British introduced the laws regarding land acquisition. First such law was Bengal Regulation-I of 1824, it was followed by Bengal Act XLII of 1850, Bombay Presidency Building Act XXVIII of 1839 and Madras Act XX of 1852. These Acts were brought for the acquisition of immovable property and land for public works and purposes with compensation "at a fair valuation".

Thereafter, Act XXII of 1863 also provided for acquisition for private individuals and companies. In 1870 Act X was made as a consolidated Act on repealing the Acts of 1857 and 1870. Finally, Land Acquisition Act as 1894 was made which gave authority of land acquisition, valuation to the collector. In the twentieth century amendments were made in this Act in 1914, 1919 and 1920. A new Land Acquisition Act was brought in 1921 which was again amended in 1923 and 1933.

#### **4.3.4 LAND ACQUISITION LAWS AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

All the land acquisition Laws were adapted after Independence through the India Independence (Adaptation of Central Acts and Ordinances) Order 1948 and the Adaptation of Laws Order of 1950. In 1962 and 1984 Land Acquisition Act was again amended.

In the Constitution of India, the acquisition and requisition of property were initially under entry 33 of list I, entry 36 of List II and entry 42 of list III of Seventh Schedule and Article 31 of the constitution. But all these provisions were altered when Article 31 was deleted through constitution 42nd Amendment Act 1978. Right to property under Article 31 was a fundamental Right but after 44th

Amendment it became a legal Right under Article 300 A. This was done only to legalise the process of land acquisition, as earlier, being a fundamental right, the acquisition of property often mounted to the violation of constitution which could have been challenged in the court. The provisions of Directive principles in the Constitution also authorised the State to acquire the land for the welfare functions.

Today the land acquisition in India is governed by the Right to Fair compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013. (LARR Act).

### **Key steps of the process of Land Acquisition**

The process of Land Acquisition in India includes following key steps.

- 1. Identification of land:** The government or an entity seeking to acquire land identifies suitable parcels of land for the intended purpose.
- 2. Notification and consultation:** Once the land is identified, the affected landowners or communities are notified about the intention to acquire their land. Consultations may be held to discuss the project, address concerns, and negotiate compensation.
- 3. Land assessment and valuation:** Experts assess the value of the land based on various factors such as location, size, productivity, and potential use. Valuation is important to determine fair compensation to be paid to the landowners.
- 4. Negotiation and agreement:** Negotiations take place between the acquiring entity and the landowners or communities. The terms of acquisition, including compensation, resettlement, and rehabilitation, are discussed and agreed upon.
- 5. Legal processes and approvals:** Once an agreement is reached, legal procedures are followed. which may involve obtaining necessary approvals, clearances, and permissions from relevant authorities. This ensures that the acquisition is in compliance with the law.
- 6. Compensation:** The competent authorities after the assessment and valuation of the land determine the fair compensation for the acquired land and he agreed- upon compensation is paid to the landowners.
- 7. Transfer of ownership:** After all legal requirements are fulfilled and compensation is provided, the ownership of the land is transferred to the acquiring entity.
- 8. Rehabilitation and Resettlement (if applicable):** In cases where land acquisition leads to displacement of communities, the acquiring party may have a responsibility to provide rehabilitation and resettlement measures, ensuring the affected individuals or communities are adequately compensated and provided with suitable alternative arrangements.

### **Other aspects of Land acquisition in India**

Land acquisition in India under LARR Act also need to focus on following aspects.

- 1. Purpose:** Land acquisition can be done for a wide range of purposes, including, building roads, railways, airports, power plants, industrial parks, housing projects, urban development and public infrastructure.

2. **Government Authority:** The power to acquire land rests primarily with the state and central government. These authorities can acquire land for public purposes or for companies that are deemed to serve public interest.
3. **Compensation:** The LARR Act mandates that fair compensation must be provided to landowners whose land is acquired. The compensation is based on the market value of the land, taking into account various factors such as location, potential use, and structure on the land. Additionally, the Act provides for rehabilitation and resettlement of affected families.
4. **Social Impact Assessment (SIA):** Before acquiring land for public purposes, a Social Impact Assessment must be conducted. This assessment evaluates the potential impact of the project on the local community, including social, economic, and environmental aspects.
5. **Consent:** The LARR Act requires obtaining the consent of affected families in certain cases. For public private partnership projects, the consent of at least 70% of the affected families is required, and for private projects, consent from at least 80% of the affected families is necessary.
6. **Legal Procedures:** The land acquisition process involves several steps, including issuing notification, conducting surveys, hearing objections, and providing compensation. If landowners are dissatisfied with the compensation or the process, they can challenge the acquisition through legal means.
7. **Controversies:** Land acquisition in India has been a subject of controversy and debate. Critics argue that the process often leads to displacement of communities, loss of livelihoods, and inadequate compensation. There have been demands for more stringent safeguards and protection of the rights of landowners and affected communities.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What is land acquisition and what are the purposes behind land acquisition?

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2. Regulations regarding land has a long history in India. Comment.

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3. Discuss the laws of land acquisition in British India.

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#### 4.3.5 PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL ISSUES OF LAND ACQUISITION

Land acquisition process can be both complex and controversial, particularly when it involves displacing communities, infringement of people's rights or clash of interest of various public and private parties. Under such circumstances the acquiring authority needs to be engaged in fair and transparent practices, consider the social and environmental impacts and ensure adequate compensation and support for affected individuals or communities.

Certain problems and restrictions which can be faced during the process of land acquisition. Following are the critical issues which should be kept in mind during the execution of any process of land acquisitions.

- 1. Legal Problems:** Land acquisition laws contains 'emergency clause' to adopt forced or compulsory measures to acquire land. These 'emergency' provisions have become notorious because of their frequent misuse by the State. Moreover, compulsory acquisition is always prone to litigations.
- 2. Problems of the involvement of Private Interests:-** Some times, land is acquired by the State for private companies for industrial development or encouraging market economy. Here the difference between purpose of overall public welfare and protecting the interest of particular company gets blurred. For example land acquisition by West Bengal Government for TATA motors forced huge public resistance and ultimately the project got shifted out of the state.
- 3. Litigations over Compensation:** Often there are excessive litigations over the issue of compensation. Authorities some time use different basis for determining the compensation, therefore there is always the scope of raising of doubts and disputes over the 'fair' compensation for acquired land. These litigations hinder the whole process of smooth land acquisition.
- 4. Concerns of Civil Society:** There are many NGOs and activists who are concerned about the environmental, social and cultural repercussions of land acquisition. These NGOs also raise the issues of fair compensation and rehabilitation of the people of acquired land. They often mobilise local people over these issues and some time, even fight legal battle for this. Such, moves of civil society also create problems for land acquisition. But the other aspects of these NGO's is that they act as watchdog and provide useful feedback due to which state can modify the process for the better.
- 5. Political Interests:-** Sometimes political leaders and parties get involved in resisting land acquisition in the name of justice or they get involved in biased compensations for their supporters and against their opponents. Political interests can also instigate community polarisation over land issue for electoral gains.
- 6. Community Issues:-** Some time local communities like tribes, consider the forest, river-water and other natural resources in their vicinity as their natural rights. They freely graze their cattle in the forest, collect fuel wood and use water. But when the land is acquired by the state

all these people get deprived of these resources. In such conditions these tribes often resist the state and land acquisition get hindered.

**Safeguards:** For a smooth process of land acquisition the State and concerned authorities should pay attention to certain safeguards which are as follows: -

1. Proper legal reforms to restrict the misuse of emergency clauses in Land Acquisition Laws.
2. Regulatory authority should be formed to determine fair compensation which should include not only members from executive but from judiciary as well and the representatives of local community.
3. Voluntary transaction of land should be encouraged in the place of compulsory land acquisition. It will minimise the post-acquisition litigations over compensation.
4. Local communities and civil society should be taken into confidence while planning an acquisition in a particular region.
5. Cultural and environmental factors should be taken into consideration while planning the land acquisition.
6. Speedy trials through special courts should be ensured regarding the litigations over land acquisition and compensation. It will help in expediting the developmental projects for which the land is acquired.

## **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Why was Article 31 of Indian Constitution deleted by 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act of 1978?

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2. What are the key steps of process of Land acquisition under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation Act 2013 (LARR Act)?

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3. Discuss the problems and critical issues of land acquisition.

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### **4.3.6 LET US SUM UP**

In a modern state the process of land acquisition is a must, without it no state can develop. But it involves a direct clash between the public welfare issue and the domain of private rights. The state can

make it smooth by proper legal arrangements. But only that is not enough, without taking into consideration the social concerns and without mobilising the people, the land acquisition will always be subject to disputes.

#### **4.3.7 EXERCISES**

1. Write a short note on meaning and objectives of Land Acquisition?
2. Discuss in detail the Land Acquisition Laws after Independence?
3. Critically examine the Issues of Land Acquisition?

#### **4.3.8 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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## **4.4 AGRARIAN CRISIS : IMPACT ON POLITICS OF MAHARASHTRA, ANDRA PRADESH AND PUNJAB**

**- V. Nagendra Rao**

### **STRUCTURE**

**4.4.0 Objectives**

**4.4.1 Introduction**

**4.4.2 Agrarian Crisis in India**

**4.4.3 Reasons for Agrarian Crisis**

4.4.3.1 The Green Revolution

4.4.3.2 Problems in Rainfed Agriculture

4.4.3.3 Liberalisation

4.4.3.4 Declining Investment

4.4.3.5 Reduction in Agricultural Subsidies

4.4.3.6 Rural Credit and Price Policy

4.4.3.7 Liberal Import of Agricultural Products

4.4.3.8 A New Social Order

**4.4.4 Farmers' Suicides**

**4.4.5 Agrarian Crisis in Maharashtra**

**4.4.6 Agrarian Crisis in Andhra Pradesh**

**4.4.7 Punjab's Agrarian Crisis**

**4.4.8 Let Us Sum up**

**4.4.9 Exercises**

**4.4.10 Suggested Readings**

**4.4.0 OBJECTIVES**

In this lesson, we are going to study the most important aspect related India's largest people, that is crisis in agriculture sector. After going through this lesson, you will be able to:

- understand what actually called as agrarian crisis in present-day India;
- know the various reasons for agrarian crisis;
- the impact of this agrarian crisis on farming community;

- how similar or different this agrarian crisis in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab.

#### 4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Agriculture accounted for around 15 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but it is a source of income and employment for more than 50 per cent of the nation's population. Yet, the nation is engulfed with a continuous agrarian crisis from 1980s onwards, which is still continuing. The root cause of the crisis is that agriculture is becoming an economically unviable activity when compared to other enterprises. It means that the profitability of agriculture is low or nil or negative, and therefore, the income derived from these activities are not sufficient enough to meet the expenditure of the cultivators. The poor farmer is squeezed between high input costs and low returns, which is resulting in shifting of occupation.

Due to this, the rate of growth of agricultural output is gradually declining in the recent years. The relative contribution of agriculture to the GDP has been declining over time steadily. The performance of agriculture by crop categories also clearly indicates the slowing down process of agriculture in India. The onset of decline in agriculture began from early nineties and it became sharp from the late nineties. There are many reasons for this crisis in agriculture. The present lesson is intended analyse some of the factors responsible for agrarian crisis in contemporary India.

#### 4.4.2 AGRARIAN CRISIS IN INDIA

The agricultural scenario has experienced various changes over the period. Prior to the introduction of the British rule, agriculture was mostly specific to local needs and the area under cultivation was adjusted to increases and decreases in population. Crops were grown according to the suitability of climatic conditions and agricultural operations were carried on with commonly practised and simple technology. The social framework of agriculture was organised within caste, family and kinship relations. Due to similar socio-economic backgrounds, the farmers shared common values and their needs and aspirations were limited. By and large, agriculture was well integrated with the social structure.

British colonialism brought a series of changes through the introduction of new land tenure, commercialisation of agriculture and expansion of the politico-legal system. The provision of new land tenure enhanced the propensity to invest more in land, and the privileged and affluent sections started acquiring more land. The area under cultivation was increased and the emphasis was on the cultivation of cash crops like cotton, sugar cane, jute, etc, to feed Britain's industries. The cultivation of these crops was largely profitable because of rising demands in domestic as well as international markets. The rich upper-caste people reaped the benefit of the expanded forces of production because of their large-scale landholding and better economic position.

However, from the late 1980s onwards, several unfavourable trends in Indian agriculture – farmers' suicides, declining prices of several crops, widening disparities between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors and a marked slowing down in the rate of agricultural growth – have attracted much comment and discussion in the media, among scholars and in public forums. Cumulatively they

have contributed to generating a sense of a deepening agrarian crisis in the country.

Farmers' suicides, which have been headline news for several months, are the most widely discussed phenomenon. They have also highlighted the human tragedy and socio-economic crisis precipitated by this phenomenon in several regions. But the suicides and the factors underlying them are only a part of a more general crisis facing Indian agriculture.

#### **4.4.3 REASONS FORAGRARIAN CRISIS**

There is unanimity among the policy makers, scholars and activists that Indian agriculture is witnessing one of the longest crises without any signs of recovery. They seek to relate this distress to the changing nature of agriculture, economics of production, policies of the government, and the ongoing reforms in the country. In the following sections, we try to find out some of the reasons for this agrarian crisis.

##### **4.4.3.1 THE GREEN REVOLUTION**

The green revolution started in the 1960s, following the introduction of high yielding variety (HYV) technology based on water-seed-fertiliser strategy, and the associated land- and crop-based subsidised formal credit facilities generated a strong impression that agriculture is relatively profitable source of income. The first phase of the green revolution was limited to a few food crops (wheat and rice) and water-rich regions; the 1980s witnessed the second phase of the green revolution, which diversified into non-food crops like cotton.

The traditional system of agriculture that prevailed till the early 1960s was mostly self-sufficient in terms of inputs. The agriculture was closely integrated with the inward-looking village economy and was marginally linked with the market outside the village. Farmers were preparing seeds traditionally by selecting the best lot form their crops. The seeds were exchanged within the farming community, and were used and reused a number of times. Following the introduction of HYV technology, the production and distribution of new seed varieties were undertaken by the government with a set of supporting intuitions set up for this purpose.

Though the agricultural revolution initiated in the planning period spelt prosperity for the farmers, it also created conditions that were likely to push the farmers to undesirable grave consequences. True, efforts were made to expand irrigation, but excepting a limited number of states, the area under irrigation did not increase substantially and cultivation of high value crops like cotton left to the vagaries of monsoon. As the new HYV seeds require high doses of pesticides, fertilisers and other inputs, the cost of cultivation became higher.

##### **4.4.3.2 PROBLEMS IN RAINFED AGRICULTURE**

Within the farming sector, rainfed agriculture is a major constraint in raising overall agricultural growth and bridging regional inequalities. Some 200 million hectares in India constituting 62.0 per cent of the total geographical area of the country fall in this category and represent the geography with the largest concentration of poverty. Productivity of rainfed agriculture has lagged, causing widespread distress. This is due to inadequate support in terms of soil

management, seed availability, provision of water, support price, market access, agricultural research investments, etc. But even at their low land productivity levels, the absolute contribution of rainfed agriculture is by no means small. It accounts for 56.0 per cent of total cropped area, 48.0 per cent of the area under food crops and 68.0 per cent of that under non-food crops. However, the major victims of the present day agrarian crisis are the farmers from this rainfed areas due to poor support extended by the government agencies for these regions.

#### **4.4.3.3 LIBERALISATION**

During the 1990s, the Indian state embarked upon a new framework of economic liberalisation. The language of development discourses and politics of social change witnessed many shifts. The most obvious issue in this category is the marginalisation of the rural people in general and of those dependent on agriculture in particular. It is not only ideologically that agriculture experienced marginalisation in the popular imagination of the Indian people over the last two decades; its share in the national income has also declined considerably. Though a large majority of Indians continue to live in the countryside and work on land, the share of agriculture to the national income has come down to less than a quarter. The growth rates in agricultural sector have also been much slower than other sectors of the economy. The irony in India is that the marginalisation of agriculture in the Indian economy is not being accompanied by a similar degree of shift of population to non-agricultural employment.

#### **4.4.3.4 DECLINING INVESTMENT**

The initiation of liberal reforms drastically reduced investment in Indian agriculture. The reduction of investment in the rural sector is to the tune of 60 per cent compared to the year 1985. During the period between 1976–80 and 2001–03 public investments in agriculture declined from over 4% of agriculture GDP to 2%. As a research study stated that under the guidance of the IMF and World Bank, successive Indian governments slashed their expenditure on rural development from 14.5 per cent of GDP in 1985-90 to 5.9 per cent in 2000-01. Rural employment growth is now flat; per capita food grains consumption has fallen dramatically to levels lower than the 1939-44 famine. Decline in public investment on agriculture is based on the policy of minimum intervention by the government enunciated by the policy of globalisation. The expenditure of the government in rural development, including agriculture, irrigation, flood control, village industry, energy and transport, declined from an average of 14.5 percent in 1986-1990 to six per cent in 1995-2000. When the economic reforms started, the annual rate of growth of irrigated land was 2.62 per cent; later it got reduced to 0.5 percent in the post-reform period.

#### **4.4.3.5 REDUCTION IN AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES**

In order to encourage crop cultivation, the Government of India announced several subsidies time to time. Providing subsidies were unavoidable as the cost of cultivation was increasing and any modernisation required huge additional cost and burden for cultivators. Moreover, to raise the output of agriculture and to improve the productivity levels additional investment were encouraged upon. In the post-reform period, the government reduced different types of subsidies to agriculture, and this

has increased the production cost of cultivation. No doubt that this move has adversely affected the agricultural sector. It has increased the input cost and made agriculture less profitable.

#### **4.4.3.6 RURAL CREDIT AND PRICE POLICY**

The risks and uncertainties associated with modern agriculture multiplied following the economic liberalization initiated in the 1990s. After the nationalisation of banks in 1969, a package of policy initiatives ensured that the share of moneylenders in rural credit fell from an average of over 75% in 1951-61 to less than 25% in 1991. But in the post-liberalization reform period, there has been a sharp decline in the share of the formal sector in rural credit. The share of the public sector banks in rural credit has fallen continuously from the peak of 15.3% in 1987 to 8.4% in 2006, and the share of rural deposits has fallen steadily from its peak of 15.5% in 1990 to 10.8% in 2006. The “targeted priority lending” or “directed credit” to agriculture was put on the back burner at the recommendation of the Narasimhan Committee (1992) on financial reforms. As a result, farmers are required to depend on moneylenders/ private shopkeepers, who usually charge exorbitant rates of interest, for a timely agricultural input requirement.

The National Commission for Agriculture, headed by Dr M.S. Swaminathan, also pointed out that removal of the lending facilities and concessions of banks during the post-reform period have accelerated the crisis in agriculture. Low incomes on one side and relatively high consumption needs on the other side squeeze the farmer into a situation of overdue payments and possible defaults on loans. When the farmers were not able to pay back loan with high interest, they fell into the debt trap, with suicides as a extreme response.

#### **4.4.3.7 LIBERAL IMPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS**

The fall and fluctuations in the prices of agricultural products is directly related to the liberalisation policy of the government. The policy of removal of quantitative restrictions and lowering of import duties adopted in India were according to the agreements of the World Trade Organisations (WTO). The main reason for the crash of prices of agricultural products, especially of cash crops, in India was removal of all restrictions to import these products. Thus, cultivation of such products became unprofitable and so their production was fully or partly stopped.

#### **4.4.3.8 A NEW SOCIAL ORDER**

The social structure of the rural society also witnessed profound changes. The joint family, the rural caste hierarchy, and the harmony of village life have lost their tenacity. The traditional joint family was the predominant feature of agrarian economy and it was a link between continuity and change with a major potential to provide stability and support at the time of crisis. In the recent years the joint family and kinship ties have gradually weakened due to the spread of urban values, education and the impact of development planning, etc.

As a result, in most cases a single person bears the burden of taking responsibility for a satisfactory livelihood. Individualized decisions made place an unduly large burden on individuals, which compounds the sense of loneliness and individualisation. Withdrawn into their individualised

households and families, agriculturalists are often unable to understand the risk involved in engaging with an unpredictable market, varying and unreliable climatic conditions, unreliable quality of agricultural inputs and untested forms of agricultural practices.

Due to these developments, agriculture no longer draws on established principles of local knowledge and kin-based ties. It has become primarily an independent, household or family enterprise with more links between each cultivator and the market than among cultivators themselves. The new agriculture practices have restricted the interaction among the farmers, who were earlier cultivating land mostly through exchange of labour services and consulting one another regarding farm-related decisions.

It is argued that modern agriculture has led to disintegration of “community” and the kinship support system, and rise of individualist orientation. Thus, the cumulative effects of agrarian change in India broke down the traditional family, kinship, caste and community ties of the farmers and enhanced their coal and economic aspirations, which ultimately led to the emergence of anomic suicidal currents in context of growing egoism in rural society.

#### **4.4.4 FARMERS' SUICIDES**

The consequence of economic liberalisation lowered the prices of many Indian agricultural products like cotton due to the pressure at the international markets (due to imports). At the same, the production costs have drastically increased due to mechanisation, high yielding variety seeds, extensive use of pesticides and fertilisers, etc. In the post-liberalisation period, the farmers face not only yield risk but also price risk. Due to this, Indian agriculture has always submerged from crisis to crisis. If the monsoon is good then there are floods, if they are bad there droughts, if the production of mangoes is excellent then there is a problem of plenty and prices fall, if the onion crops fail then that too brings tears. The artisanal nature of agriculture has always kept farmers on tenterhooks, not knowing quite how to manage their economy, except to play it by year.

Due to factors mentioned above and with loses and indebtedness, more than 250,000 farmers have committed suicide across the country in the decade of 2000s. Studies have indicated that the farmers who committed suicide were driven to their tragic end by a three-fold crisis caused by trade liberalisation and globalisation policies; deregulation of inputs, imports and prices; and the inevitable consequence in deepening debt. The cumulative effect on India's poor has been devastating. Today, nearly half of India's children below the age of three are malnourished and stunted, and 40 per cent of rural India eats only as much food as Sub-Saharan Africa.

Most of these suicides have been located in the so-called better-off states. Unofficial figures put the number of farmers committing suicide in Punjab even higher than in Madhya Pradesh. In Maharashtra, the largest number of farmer suicides have occurred in the Vidarbha region in the last decade-and-a-half. Out of the six districts of Vidarbha, Yavatmal has recorded the highest number of suicides year after year, almost two-thirds of the total suicides recorded in the Vidarbha region.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the reasons behind the agrarian crisis in India.

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2. What are the reasons behind the farmers' suicides in India?

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### 4.4.5 AGRARIAN CRISIS MAHARASHTRA

Agriculture is the main occupation for people in rural Maharashtra. Nearly 58% of the State's population live in the rural area and around 55% of the population is dependent upon agriculture. Despite this, in 2001, Maharashtra constituted about 9.4 per cent of the all India population but accounted for 13.5 per cent of the total suicide deaths in the country. The total number of farmer suicides in Maharashtra increased from 1,083 in 1995 to 4,147 in 2004.

The state governments attribute these self- inflicted deaths mainly to crop failure, especially Cotton, the media highlights factors such as the rising cost of cultivation, indebtedness and bottlenecks in agricultural marketing. Then it is not surprising that most of the suicides reported in Maharashtra are from the cotton- growing Vidarbha region. In Maharashtra, since 2001 the districts of Amravati, Akola, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Washim and Wardha are the hotspots for farmers' suicides. All these districts are located in Vidarbha region of the state, traditionally famous for cotton cultivation.

Hence, it is interesting to understand, the regional specificity of agrarian crisis in Maharashtra and the reasons for this regional specificity. In the following section, we will try to understand the reasons for the agrarian crisis in Maharashtra.

#### 4.4.5.1 REGIONAL DISPARITIES

Disparities in development across Marathwada, Vidarbha and rest of the Maharashtra state have been a matter of socio-economic and political concern ever since the existence of separate statehood in 1960. After the formation of Maharashtra state in 1960, development efforts continued in the three regions. During the sixth plan (1980-85), State Planning department undertook a study on district wise development achievements and pointed to the noticeable disparities across regions in irrigation, roads, public health and technical education. During the sixth plan, government announced development programmes for all three regions i.e. Vidarbha, Marathwada and Konkan mainly for the removal of the regional imbalance. However, low budgetary outlays for the removal of backlog, inadequate deployment of implementing machinery and inequitable allocation of funds for non-backlog schemes resulted in the increase of regional imbalance. Which had the negative multiplier

effects on the regional economy. The Western Maharashtra has developed whereas Vidarbha and Marathwada regions remained backward.

#### **4.4.5.2 GLOBAL CONTEXT**

As we studied above, the suicide rate is high in cotton growing areas of the state. This increase in cotton farmers' suicides can be traced to the stagnation of the Indian cotton farmer against the backdrop of an international setting, which was dynamic. Liberalisation in agricultural trade policies of the government had a major impact on the cotton economy. Since 1970, imports had been canalised through the Cotton Corporation of India. However, in 1994 with the opening up of the economy, cotton lint exports were placed under an open general licence (OGL), that is they were freely importable. Further, from July 2001, raw cotton exports were also under the OGL. This made India's cotton economy susceptible to price shocks from the world market. Such a shock came at the turn of the century when world cotton prices began to decline rapidly.

#### **4.4.5.3 DECLINING RATIO OF AGRICULTURE IN GSDP**

In Maharashtra, the contribution of agriculture and allied activities to the net state domestic product (GSDP) came down from 40 per cent in 1960-61 to 13 per cent in 2004-05, whereas as per the 2001 Census 55 per cent of the total workers are either cultivators or agricultural labourers. Between 1993-94 and 2003-04, the growth rate of Maharashtra's gross state domestic product (GSDP) at 4.8 per cent per annum was lower than that of India's gross domestic product (GDP) at 5.8 per cent per annum. However, the employment opportunities in other sectors have not increased tremendously to accommodate those who lost work in agriculture due to its declining rate. That means the income generated from agriculture has reduced drastically without providing any other means of income to those involved in agriculture. This resulted in poverty and other serious problems associated with poverty. All this resulted in increased suicides in rural Maharashtra.

#### **4.4.5.4 DECLINE IN GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

Studies show that after the economic reforms started, the government's expenditure and investment in the agricultural sector have been drastically reduced. The expenditure of the government in rural development, including agriculture, irrigation, flood control, village industry, energy and transport, declined from an average of 14.5 per cent in 1986-1990 to six per cent in 1995-2000. When the economic reforms started, the annual rate of growth of irrigated land was 2.62 per cent; later it got reduced to 0.5 per cent in the post-reform period. The consequences were many. The rate of capital formation in agriculture came down, and the agricultural growth rate was also reduced. This has affected the purchasing power of the rural people and subsequently their standard of living.

#### **4.4.5.5 RESTRUCTURING OF THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (PDS)**

As part of the neo-liberal policy, the government restructured the PDS by creating two groups—Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL)—and continuously increased the prices of food grains distributed through ration shops. As a result, even the poor people did not buy

the subsidised food grains and it got accumulated in godowns to be spoiled or sold in the open market. As the in-take from PDS was less it has affected the food security of the poor, especially in the rural areas, and this has indirectly affected the market and the farmers.

#### **4.4.5.6 ISSUES OF BT COTTON**

The issue of BT cotton has generated serious debate in India during late 1990s and early 2000. In 1999 India's largest seeds producing company Marico was acquired by Monsanto. Two years later the Indian government authorized the sale of Bt Cotton, a genetically modified cotton. Monsanto is a global company which wants to dominate the seed market. It has patented the seeds of Bt cotton, and in the process, it has developed a monopoly in the market since only it can sell the patented seeds. It has tried to maximize this advantage by selling the Bt cotton seeds at high cost. There are other costs too and the total cost of Bt cotton cultivation comes out to be Rs. 6593 per acre. In 2006 majority of the farmers grew Bt. Cotton with an expectation that they could double the production. However, the production failed miserably with the growth of rotten cotton. The Net Income of the farmer for acre is on average of Rs. 1194, not even enough to meet the interest of the loan borrowed from the bank or the money lender. Due to this the farmers have become bankrupt, their debt increased manifold, which driven many to suicide. The deaths in 2006 amounted to 1886, highest we compare with the previous years.

#### **4.4.5.7 SUICIDES**

Due to the factors mentioned above, the total number of farmers' suicides, which occurred in Maharashtra during 2006 was around 1800. These are official deaths reported by the Government, there may be many without reporting. Vidarbha region, with only slightly over 10 per cent of the population of Maharashtra accounted for 55 per cent of its suicides. This implies that its farmers' suicides rate was around 5.5 times as high as that of the whole of Maharashtra. Thus, suicide rates in 2006 were 24.37 per 1,00,000 for Maharashtra and 134 per 1,00,000 for Vidarbha.

Unfortunately, the successive governments in Maharashtra have not learnt any lessons from the continuous agrarian distress the farmers are witnessing in Maharashtra. The almost 20 years of agrarian crisis, the governments have not initiated any policy measures to save the agriculture sector in general and farmers in particular. We can see this as Maharashtra witnessed one of the serious farmers protests in recent times. These protests were due to the misery and pain the farming community is experiencing in Maharashtra and its suicide rate is continuously increasing over the period. For example, according to state Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Vijay Wadettiwar, as many as 14,591 farmers committed suicide in Maharashtra between October 2014 and August 2019. He also said that 1,286 farmers ended their lives only in 2019 in just 11 districts falling under the Nagpur and Amravati revenue divisions of Maharashtra.

#### **4.4.6 AGRARIAN ANDHRA PRADESH**

Apart from Maharashtra, the phenomenon of suicide has been most virulent in Andhra Pradesh (AP), which then includes the present Telangana as well, with two- thirds of suicide deaths in India in the first half of 2000s recorded in that state alone. Apart from the general factors that are responsible

for this phenomenon across India, there are some other factors that led to this alarming and disturbing situation in the state.

Studies in various states identified an unbearable debt burden as the main reason for farmers' suicides. But the point is that indebtedness is not something new to rural areas of Andhra, but farmers are not committed suicides earlier for that. Probably this phenomenon needs to be explained by examining the qualitative difference in the nature of indebtedness then and now. Secondly, this indebtedness is itself the result of the combined effect of several other factors that characterises the present state of affairs in agriculture. Thirdly, the model of development pursued in the wake of liberalisation policies all over India, and more so in the AP, added further woes to the farmers' condition. More than anyone else in the country the farmers of India do not have a say in the formulation of governmental policies, but are subjected to the adverse consequences of these policies. Fourthly, the changed nature of politics, especially at the state level, which now centre around the urban classes – the business people, traders, investors, professionals and salaried classes – and political representatives, who have little interest in agriculture, have also played a part in causing this phenomenon.

The following section discusses some of the dimensions of agrarian distress in Andhra Pradesh, the agrarian condition in the state that contributed to the collapse of the farmer's economy.

#### **4.4.6.1 DECLINING PROPORTION OF AGRICULTURE IN GSDP**

One simple feature of the rural economy of AP over the past several years is the dwindling share of agriculture in the gross state domestic product (GSDP). It declined from about 53 per cent in 1960-61 to about 13 per cent in 2002-03. If we take the post-economic reform period, it almost halved. But the workforce in agriculture declined only marginally from 69 per cent in 1960 to 62 per cent in 2001. That means the population engaged in agriculture, which remained more or less stable, has been sharing the increasingly declining income. In a way this provides us a clue to the changing place of agriculture in the state's economy and the livelihood condition of the farmers.

#### **4.4.6.2 INCREASED COSTS**

Although the area under cash crops had increased over the years, the growth rates of yield for these crops had declined. In addition, the cost of cultivation for these commercial crops is higher in AP when compared to other states. The higher cost of cultivation in the state could be mainly attributed to the high cost of paid-out inputs (pesticides and fertilisers). Purchase of seeds was most common in AP and highest among the Indian states. Eighty-one per cent of farmer households purchase seeds, compared to 48 per cent for India. During the period 1992-2002, the prices of cotton and chilli seeds have gone up by 400 per cent. It is not simply the case of growing commercial crops, but heavy investments on account of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides that have made farming qualitatively different from what it was earlier.

With a high cost of cultivation, diminishing productivity and low returns, it becomes difficult for farmers to withstand crop failures, with high debt. When a farmer cannot clear all the outstanding

debt even by giving up all that is produced, assuming that a good crop is possible, he has to keep borrowing to meet agricultural and family expenses every year. The 59th round of the NSS survey on farmers' condition reveals the distressing picture in AP. First, the incidence of indebtedness among farmers is the highest in the state. About 82 per cent of the farmer households are indebted. Most of the debt was incurred for agricultural expenses (about 62 per cent) and very little on education, health, social ceremonies and consumption. The high cost of inputs seems to be the main factor in the growing indebtedness of the farmers.

#### **4.4.6.3 DECLINING PUBLIC INVESTMENT**

One of the most disappointing developments in AP's agricultural sector over the last two decades has been the declining public sector capital formation. Adequate expenditure on rural infrastructure like roads, markets, storage, communication, health, education and research apart from irrigation is a prerequisite for sustainable agricultural growth. The expenditure on the infrastructure will sustain the growth in production, productivity and income generation in agricultural sector. The share of agriculture and allied activity in state government expenditure under various plans has declined from 11.8 per cent in 1980-81 to 1.8 per cent in 2001-02. When compared to other states, AP had the lowest share of agriculture spending in total plan expenditure till 2002-03. While the expenditure on agriculture to total expenditure is around 7 per cent in Karnataka and 5 per cent at the all-India level, it was only around 3 per cent in AP. Clearly, the planning process in AP has neglected long-term issue of sustainable development.

Finally, we have to mention that after the initiation of economic reforms in the state, an atmosphere has been created that the agriculture as was practiced was no more a "growth engine". The emphasis was on urban infrastructure, information technology and transforming AP into a knowledge society. The then government, led by Chandrababu Naidu, claiming to be an active reformer, virtually stopped talking about agriculture. Instead of taking long-term measures to increase irrigation potential in the state, emphasis was laid upon watersheds and rainwater harvesting pits and they came a cropper, as there was anyway little rain in those years. The middlemen, commission agents, those in, agribusiness and contractors got more benefits out of these schemes and their political clout had enormously increased. As an occupation, cultivation came to be looked down upon. In their own eyes, agriculture had little esteem for the farmers and the experience of low incomes, crop failures and indebtedness vindicated this for them.

As a result, the space for farmers in the policy process is shrinking, as they are least organised and can hardly lobby with lawmakers. Political parties seem to be little interested in organising and mobilising farmers. The disunity among farmers and their inability to pool resources to conduct any sustained agitations make the political parties take them for granted. Over the years the role and importance of traders in agricultural produce, contractors and commission agents have been growing in politics at the district and state level. All these have increased the agrarian crisis in which the state has locked in for a long time.

#### **4.4.7 PUNJAB'S AGRARIAN CRISIS**

Punjab, until recently the most prosperous state of the country, is in deep economic crisis. Its predominantly agrarian economy is at the cross roads as agricultural production and crop yields have nearly stagnated. Profit margins of the farmers have come down drastically. Farmers are resorting to suicides. Soil resource, which is a critical requirement for sustainable development, has sharply deteriorated because of excessive use of chemical fertilisers and growing the same crops over and over again. Underground water table is going down at an alarming rate. Beginning with early 1980s, the word "crisis" became the dominant mode of representing Punjab. From politics and economics to culture and ecology, everything seemed to be in a state of crisis in Punjab. The following sections outline the reason for this crisis and its impact on Punjab agriculture in general and to its farmers in particular.

##### **4.4.7.1 GREEN REVOLUTION AND AGRICULTURE IN PUNJAB**

The green revolution that was initiated in 1960s was successful in other parts of India as well, but it was Punjab that it primarily came to be identified with. The Punjab model of agrarian transformation was born out of the food shortages of the 1960s when a nation lacking the resources to buy food grains from abroad had to ask for food aid from the US under the PL-480. Around the same time India had an unexpected war with China in 1962, had two consecutive droughts in 1964-65 and 1965-66 and another war with Pakistan in 1965. The major donor of food grains, US, was threatening India to withdraw the food aid unless the country accepted the policies suggested by western powers. As a result of the drought and diversion of resources, the domestic production of food grains in India during 1965-66 was just 72 million tonnes against a market demand of around 90 million tonnes.

Thus, came into existence the Intensive Agricultural Districts Programme (IADP) which with the advent of new high yielding varieties of wheat, rice, maize and bajra and package of other inputs like chemical fertilisers, insecticides and pesticides and assured irrigation facilities came to be known as a 'new agricultural strategy' or 'green revolution'. The most important feature of this 'new strategy' was the focus on popularising modern inputs and practices in the most productive areas where these were most likely to show results rather than spending the limited resources thinly over a large area. Punjab, which was a relatively developed state with requisite irrigation facilities and infrastructure, became a major beneficiary of this national strategy and was projected as a showpiece of India's successful green revolution strategy'.

After more than three decades of the adoption of new agricultural strategy with its obsession with grains to the exclusion of other foods and cash crops, Punjab's agrarian economy with a highly skewed agricultural base is in deep crisis. In the meantime, the food scenario at the national level has completely changed from the food shortages of mid-1960s to the high surpluses of late 1990s and early years of the 21st century. In this changed context Punjab's wheat-paddy dominated agrarian economy is becoming economically as well as ecologically non-sustainable and the state is being treated as if it has become a liability for the nation.

#### **4.4.7.2 REASONS FORAGRARIAN CRISIS**

There are many reasons for the present-day agrarian crisis in Punjab, some of them are related to problems faced by agriculture sector in entire India, and others are unique to Punjab only. In the following the sections, we study some of these factors.

First, the growth rate of nearly 5 per cent per annum achieved by the state's agricultural sector since the beginning of 'green revolution' in mid-1960s, though remarkable by almost any standards, has been declining over time. Second, the Punjab agriculture's capacity to absorb labour has also declined over time. Third, given the input and output price structure and superior yields of wheat and rice compared to the competing crops, Punjab agriculture has become essentially a wheat-rice monoculture, with more than 76 per cent of the total gross cropped area of the state is under wheat and rice. Fourth, the Food Corporation of India is saddled with burgeoning food stocks. FCI and other state procurement agencies have no storage space in the state. Open fields, schools, government buildings, godowns, unused roads, or for that matter any vacant space you name, are overflowing with gunny bags containing wheat and paddy. Fifth, farmers in Punjab have made huge investments in farm machinery. The tractor population of the state constitutes about 25 per cent of all tractors in the country. More than nine lakh tube wells are being supplied electricity by the state free of cost. This is leading to depletion of underground water table which is falling at a rate of 23 cm per annum. Sixth, the state's agrarian economy is in crisis not only because of the slowdown in growth rate, but more so because of declining profitability of the major crops.

Particularly, the new innovations of threshing, cultivation of land through tractors, use of pesticides and insecticides, diesel pump sets and electric tube wells increased the use of mechanical power for tilling and harvesting operations. Mechanisation of harvesting of major crops and intensive use of biological technologies have not only reduced the household use of labour power but also substantially contributed to the rise in the cost of production. Over capitalisation of mechanical power such as tractors and tube wells has made available the use of the tractor on a hire purchase basis to the small farmers which has reduced the use of family labour as well as completely eliminated tilling of land by bullocks even by the small and marginal farmers. The farmers have turned managers of the production processes of agriculture because the manual operations have been almost eliminated and the remaining tasks are being done by the migratory workforce available at low level of wages.

Due to the above-mentioned factors, there are reports of suicides by farmers because of their inability to return loans to increased costs and declining incomes.

#### **4.4.7.3 STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO FARMING COMMUNITY**

Punjab agriculture has been undergoing some interesting shifts since late 1970s. The total number of land holdings in the state declined from 13,75,392 hectares in 1971 to 10,27,127 hectares in 1981. This decline of more than 3 lakh holdings obviously suggests a sudden move away from agriculture. The decline is most clearly visible in the category of marginal and small land holdings. Though average size of the holdings has been narrowing in Punjab, the bigger farmer is not necessarily becoming more rural. While marginal and small cultivators seem to be moving out of

agriculture, the bigger farmer is moving out of the village. The big farmers of Punjab invariably have a part of their families living in the town. Their children go to urban schools/ colleges, and they invest their surplus in non-agricultural activities.

These processes of change have had a direct implication for the political agency of the farming classes in Punjab. The earlier solidarity of farmers reflected in their powerful mobilisation during the 1980s is nowhere to be seen today. The Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), which had provided leadership to Punjab farmers during the 1980s, is split into four factions. Apart from the different factions of BKU, communist parties and other leftist groups also have their farmers' unions. Put together there are a total 10 different organisations claiming to represent farmers' interests in Punjab. Though some of them occasionally come together on a common platform, most of the time they remain divided.

#### **4.4.7.4 FARMERS SUICIDE**

Though the phenomenon of farmers' suicides in Punjab started during the 1980s, it witnessed a sudden increase during the 1990s. The situation became alarming when as many as 418 cases of suicides were reported from rural Punjab only 1997.

The suicides were mostly concentrated in the Malwa districts of Sangrur, Bhatinda, Ferozepur, Mansa and Faridkot. More than 70 per cent of those who killed themselves were small/marginal farmers or landless labourers. In most cases agriculture was their only source of livelihood. A large majority of them were engaged in cultivation of wheat and paddy crops (65 per cent) or in wheat and cotton (20 per cent). More than 70 per cent of them were Jats caste, and with the exception of one, they were all men, from a relatively younger age group. The report prepared by state government also recognised that because of the declining growth rates, agriculture was no longer a profitable avenue, and the cultivators had no alternative sources of employment available to them. This scenario led to rising debts. However, in some cases conspicuous consumption and drug addiction were also important factors that led to chronic indebtedness of those who committed suicide.

To summarise the above, the contemporary crisis of the Punjab agriculture emanated from (a) limitations of the green revolution and lack of inner dynamism to build up forward and backward inter-sectoral linkages; (b) decline in the size of operational holdings and fragmentation of land as well as pauperisation of small and marginal farmers; (c) decline in the growth rate of productivity; and (d) increase in input costs and a corresponding fall in income of the small and marginal farmers.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the regional specificity of agrarian crisis in Maharashtra.

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2. Discuss some of the dimensions of agrarian distress in Andhra Pradesh.

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3. What factors contributed to agrarian crisis in Punjab?

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#### 4.4.8 LET'S SUM UP

The country has been witnessing agrarian distress for a long time, from the late 1970s onwards and continuing to the present times, with more severity. The central question related to the agrarian crisis revolves around the prices the farmers get for their produce. Input costs are not adequately compensated through the existing price mechanism the market offers to the farmers. As a result of this mismatch, today the farmers are, more or less, debt ridden and the quantum of debt continues to grow in such a manner that there seems to be no easy way out of this. As explicitly brought out by the many government reports, there is now a degree of reluctance to continue in farming. In fact, we do witness large-scale migration to urban centres for daily wage labour work. This fact is more pronounced in the dryland and rainfed areas of the country. The crisis in agriculture is thus manifold. The many layers include debt, non-viable farm sizes, non-availability of assured water supply for irrigation, and no assurance of reasonable prices for the produce, etc. This has also had a cascading effect in the rural context as less income for the cultivating class means much less income for others down the ladder, the landless labour, the marginal farmers, the small-time traders, and dependents on the agricultural sector as a whole.

Studies on agrarian distress and farmers suicides in major crisis-ridden states have convincingly proved that trade liberalisation led price fall for agricultural commodities, compounded further by the hike in production cost coupled with near total absence of state withdrawal from procurement and market interventions in 1990s and 2000s have caused the distress to take its roots in rural India claiming thousands of lives of farmers.

#### 4.4.9 EXERCISES

1. Explain in detail the reasons for Agrarian crisis in India.
2. Write a short note on Agrarian crisis in Maharashtra.
3. Critically examine the Punjab's agrarian crisis.

#### 4.4.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Das, Christopher Albert (2015). "Agricultural Crisis in India: The Root Cause and Consequences". MPRA Paper No. 18930, posted 01 Dec 2009. Available at [https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/18930/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_18930.pdf](https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/18930/1/MPRA_paper_18930.pdf)

- Jodhka, Surinder S. (2006). "Beyond 'Crises': Rethinking Contemporary Punjab Agriculture". *Economic and Political Weekly* 41 (16), April 22-28: 1530-1537.
- Mohanty, B B (2013). "Farmer Suicides in India: Durkheim's Types". *Economic and Political Weekly* 48 (21), May 25: 45-54.
- Narasimha Rao P. and Suri K. C. (2006). "Dimensions of Agrarian Distress in Andhra Pradesh". *Economic and Political Weekly* 41 (16), April 22-28: 1546-1552.
- Sidhu, H. S. (2002). "Crisis in Agrarian Economy in Punjab: Some Urgent Steps". *Economic and Political Weekly* 37 (30), July 27-August 02: 3132-3138.

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## SYLLABUS

### M.A Political Science under Non-CBCS Semester-II

Session May 2026, 2027 & 2028

Course Code: POL-203

Title- State Politics in India

**Credits : 6 (Six)**

**Max. marks : 100**

**Internal Assessment : 30**

**Time : 3 Hours**

**Semester Exam : 70**

Objectives of Course : Indian Politics constitutes macrocosm and state politics the microcosm of politics in India. While focusing on the latter, this course aims at exploring the dynamics of politics that varies from state to state. Understanding about the theoretical frameworks equips them to approach political phenomena in the politics of different states. The course tries to figure out and examine the commonalities, diversities and uniqueness in the arena of state politics across India. It also seeks to explore the role of region, religion, ethnicity, caste, class and community in the realm of state politics. This course attempts to explain that the state formation has been a continuous process and for the structural differentiation to satisfy the regional aspirations of people across the country and thereby building Indian Nation and State.

Learning Outcomes : Understanding about the state politics will prove handy for the learners to grasp the peculiarities of politics in different states of Indian Union is systematic and organized manners. The knowledge gained from theoretical frameworks equips the learners how to approach political phenomena in the politics of different states. It explores that how the assertion of regional assertions led to the reorganization of states in different phases. The course examines that the logic behind the formation of more and more states over the period of time which led to the differentiation of political structures and thereby building Indian nation by accomodating Linguistic, ethno-cultural and regional aspiration.

### Course Contents

#### **Unit - I : Theoretical and Constitutional Framework**

- 1.1 State Politics in India : Theoretical Perspectives
- 1.2 Indian States : An Overview (Indian Federalism and Constitutional Position of the States)
- 1.3 Inter-State Disputes : Naure and Institutional Mechanisms for Resolution
- 1.4 Constitutional Asymmetries : Articles - 370, 371, 5th and 6th Schedules and Union Territories

#### **Unit - II : Region and Regionalism**

- 2.1 Reorganization of States : Different Phases
- 2.2 Regional Assertion and Autonomy : Tamil Nadu and Punjab
- 2.3 Ethno-Nationalism : Nagaland and Manipur

2.4 Sub-State Regionalism : Gorkhaland, Bodoland and Ladakh

### **Unit - III : Party System and Political Mobilization**

- 3.1 State Party Systems : One Party, Bi-Party and Multi-Party System
- 3.2 Reservation and Political Mobilization : Maharashtra and Rajasthan
- 3.3 Caste in Electoral Politics : Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka
- 3.4 Religion in Electoral Politics : Gujarat and Kerala

### **Unit - IV : Economic Development and Regional Impact**

- 4.1 Regional Disparities : Cause and Consequences
- 4.2 Planned Development to Market Led Development
- 4.3 Land Acquisition : Critical Issues
- 4.4 Agrarian Crisis : Impact on Politics of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab

### **Note for Paper Setter**

- The Question Paper shall be divided into two sections. The first section will carry eight short questions of which students will be required to attempt six questions. The upper words limit for the answer of each question will be 500 words. Each question carrying 5 marks.
- The second section will comprise eight questions of which students will have to attempt four questions on the basis of 'WITHIN UNIT' choice. The upper words limit for the answer of each question will be 1000 words. Each question will carry 10 marks.

### **Suggested Readings**

Aiyar, S.P. & Mrhta (eds.) Essays on Indian Federalism, Bombay : Allied Publishers, 1965.

Arora. B. & D.V. (eds.) Multiple Identities in a Single State : Indian Federalism in a Comparative Verbey, Perspective, Delhi : Konark, 1995.

Austin. G. The Indian Constitution ; Corner Stone of a Nation, Oxford : OUP, 1966.

Austin. G. Working of a Democratic Constitution : The Experience, Delhi : OUP, 2000.

Bhargava. Rajeev, Promise of India's Secular Democracy, Oxford : OUP, 2011.

Bombwall, K.R, The Foundation of Indian Federalism, Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1967.

Chanda, M. Ethnicity, Security and Separatism in India, Delhi : OUP, 1997.

Chanda, M. Federalism in India: A Study of Union-State Relations, London : Allen and Unwin, 1965.

Chatterjee. P (ed.) States and Politics in India, Delhi: OUP, 1997.

Chatterjee. P (ed.) Politics in India : The State Society Interface, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 2001.

Das, V. Impact of Planning on Centre-State Financial Relations in India, New Delhi: National. 1978.

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## **1.1 STATE POLITICS IN INDIA: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

**- V. Nagendra Rao**

### **STRUCTURE**

- 1.1.0      Objectives**
- 1.1.1      Introduction**
- 1.1.2      Studying State Politics: A Framework**
- 1.1.3      Evolution of State Politics in India: The Early Phase**
- 1.1.4      Rise in Studies of State Politics**
- 1.1.5      Divergent Theoretical Perspectives**
- 1.1.6      Democratic/ Political Development/ Systems / Modernization Theories**
  - 1.1.6.1 Myron Weiner: Elite vs Mass Cultures
  - 1.1.6.2 Iqbal Narain: Three Dimensional Framework
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- 1.1.9      State Politics in Contemporary India**
- 1.1.10     Let Us Sum UP**
- 1.1.11     Exercise**
- 1.1.12     Suggested Readings**
- 1.1.0      OBJECTIVES**

In this lesson you will study the reasons for the emergence of State Politics as a distinct field in studying political development in India and how various scholars are used different theoretical perspectives to analyse politics in various states of India. After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- The importance states gained in the political development of India from 1960s onwards;
- The reasons for the emergence of State Politics as a distinct field to understand political phenomenon in India;
- the contributions of various scholars in providing theoretical framework to understand state politics in India; and

- the broader trends in state politics of contemporary India.

### 1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of 'State Politics' as a distinct academic field emerged in India in 1960s. There are many reasons for this, one obviously being the moment from single party dominant polity to the plural multi-party system. From late 1960s onwards many splinter groups of Congress Party started gaining their own identity and foothold in various states of India. The reorganization of India into various linguistic states also significantly contributed to this process. During the 1970s the newly emerged forces gained further momentum and seriously challenged the authority of the Congress not only at the Centre but also in many states. By 1980s this led to the raise of many regional parties in various states of India, from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in down South to Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir in up North. This changing composition of political landscape in India obviously demanded serious attention from the scholars of various disciplines more so of Political Scientists. Hence, many Political Scientists started studying state politics while focusing on historical identity of the state, its political status before independence, its role in the freedom struggle, the impact of integration of princely states or of linguistic reorganization, geographical location, infrastructure manifesting itself in social pluralism, religious, regional and caste dynamics, the level and pattern of economic development, human resources, the level of education and urbanization, etc.

To understand the dynamics of State Politics in India, many scholars attempted to develop theoretical frameworks through which the realities at the ground level can be captured. Some of the important scholars who have provided conceptual tools to understand contemporary politics in India and its states are Myron Weiner, Iqbal Narain, Rudolfs, Paul Brass, Rajni Kothari, etc. These scholars are analysed political process using various theoretical frameworks such as Democratic Theory, Political Development, Marxism, Post-Marxism and Post-Colonialism, etc.

Myron Weiner organised two seminars in USA, one at University of Chicago in 1961 and other at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1964. Myron Weiner published the proceedings of the MIT conference as a book, *State Politics in India* (1968), the first one on state politics. This was followed by Iqbal Narain's edited book with the same title in 1976 in which an article on state politics of Jammu and Kashmir also appeared for the first time. These two books signalled emergence of State Politics as a distinct academic field. In this introductory lesson we will study these developments in the field of state politics in detail and their importance in familiarising us with diverse patterns and complexities of Indian polity.

### 1.1.2 STUDYING STATE POLITICS: A FRAMEWORK

State Politics assumes an important dimension in any federal system where states operate as units of the nation, though not as independent and truly autonomous political entities. The creation of a federal structure implies the existence of territorial, cultural, linguistic, religious and socio-economic differences among the people of a nation, which make the states, differ greatly in the degree to which they fit this pattern. In the organization and spirit of their politics the states vary markedly. It is true that the impact of national policies and parties powerfully influence the form and behaviour of

state systems. But it is equally true that this impact strikes different states differently, contributing to the oddities and variations in organisation and spirit of state politics. State politics, thus, provides an arena for basic and exclusive study and research.

However, the pre-eminent structure in India, characterised by a distinct bias in favour of the Centre of Union seems to remain a pertinent factor for why the Indian states failed to attract scholarly attention for a long time. But more than the uniformity in the constitutional structures and the unitarized federal set-up, a considerable disinterestedness displayed in the study of State politics may be attributed to a variety of other important reasons. It is argued quite often that states as political systems are artificial categories for analysis. Unlike various other segments of the policy, they are not “natural” functional entities. It is not without a cause that international scholarly attention, with quite a few exceptions, has been directed only to the national systems of new states and not to the subordinate units.

There are many other reasons which are responsible for late arrival of State Politics as a distinct and autonomous field to analyse the political process in Indian states. The following section will pay attention to explain these reasons.

### 1.1.3 EVOLUTION OF STATE POLITICS IN INDIA: THE EARLY PHASE

The study of State Politics in India is one of the neglected areas till 1960s. Unlike other aspects related to India, the scholarship on India more or less neglected studying the provincial politics during British period though British initially introduced a façade of democracy at the Municipal or local bodies. The constitutional and institutional politics in British Indian provinces were also largely eclipsed by the nationalist movement politics, notwithstanding the fact that the British Acts of 1909, 1919 and 1935 introduced federal politics and institutions on India's body politic. The study of State Politics remained an underdeveloped area in the early period of independence, especially till the time Nehru was the Prime Minister.

One of the India's known scholar on State Politics, M. P. Singh, gives the following reasons for the neglect of State Politics in India during the early period of independence. **First**, the nationalist spirit and fervour of the freedom movement continuous to dominate the Nehru era, and for this reason all that really mattered was the politics at the national level. **Second**, the Congress dominance at the centre as well as state levels submerged politics in the states under the grand national patterns. Though mass movements for the creation of linguistic states in various parts of the country during the 1950s and 1960s briefly brought state politics to forefront, but once such demands were accepted, the leaders of these movements in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat tended to rejoin the Congress Party. And, the one-party dominance was easily restored. The splits in Congress Party in the late 1960s and the late 1970s were rather of relatively short spans of time after which Congress dominance was restored. **Third**, the Nehru and Indira Gandhi eras and Rajiv Gandhi years were characterized by a great deal of centralization or “nationalization” of the Indian political system. State politics were then either a subsidiary arena or were parts to national politics. **Fourth**, the distribution of powers and financial resources in the Indian federal system is heavily tilted in favour of the centre, which makes the state governments heavily dependent on Centre. The separation of powers and

functions did not prohibit the union government to spend its money even in areas that belong to state jurisdiction. *Fifth*, even though law and order is supposed to be an exclusive state concern, the 42nd constitutional amendment (1976) has made the deployment of armed forces and central paramilitary forces in aid of civil power in a state an exclusive union competence. Incidence of internal disturbances and terrorist activities by external and indigenous groups has resulted in a great deal of increase in the coercive power of governments and centralization in the political system. These developments tend to overshadow the state governments and subordinate state politics to the imperatives of national politics.

Due to the factors mentioned above, studying politics at state level was not gained the momentum immediately after the independence. However, Sudha Pai, one of the important scholar on State Politics in contemporary times, pointed out that a few studies which focused attention on the states did take place in the 1950s and 1960s. The reorganization of states and linguistic problems are main focus of these studies. A number of election studies were also conducted. The most important being S V Kogekar and R Park's study of the 1951-52 General elections under the auspices of the Indian Political Science Association (IPSA) and studies of the 1957 mid-term elections in Kerala. Kogekar and Park pointed out that the states provided far better level for analysis than the Centre. Similarly, the government organisation of many of the states was also studied.

From methodological point of view, according to Sudha Pai, most studies were conducted under the formal-legal approach. This approach led to many studies which provided an excellent description of the formal structures of the politico-administrative system. However, the use of formal-legal method has its own weaknesses since it doesn't factor the actual functioning of state governments and political processes in the states. As a result, many important political changes or developments in the states were largely ignored. We also find that some areas were hardly touched upon at all, such as leadership patterns in the states, decision-making process in the various branches of state government, economic disparities between and within states, etc.

However, the studies conducted in 1960s somewhat moved beyond legal- formalist approach to document important political developments in the states. The papers presented at All-India Seminar on State Politics in Jaipur in December 1965 were published in *State Politics in India* edited by Iqbal Narain. This marks the beginning of a systematic study of state politics. Mention must also be made of Myron Weiner's edited volume *State Politics in India* published around the same time. The importance of these volumes lies in the fact that they provided a starting point. A history of the formation of many states, their politico-administrative structure, their economic condition, state party systems, patterns of leadership and social stratification etc. were focussed on in detail for the first time. These proved useful for conducting more in-depth studies later on.

Most importantly, the need to study state politics from the 'state' rather than the 'national' perspective was first felt by the Committee on State Politics in India, "an informal group" organised by Myron Weiner, under the auspices of the Committee on South Asia of the Association for Asian Studies. The conceptual framework of state politics in the U.S.A. was developed by V. O. Key, Jr., and by the latter part of the fifties and the first part of the sixties, the study of state politics had re-entered

the mainstream of political research and experienced changes similar to those of other fields in political science.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What factors led to the emergence of State Politics as a distinct academic field in 1960s?

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2. Why did the Indian states fail to attract scholarly attention for a long time?

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#### **1.1.4 RISE IN STUDIES OF STATE POLITICS**

There has been paradigm shifts in the politics and political economy of India since the late 1980s and early 1990s which have enhanced the role and autonomy of state governments, civil society, and the market forces. The arena of state politics has in this process acquired an unprecedented importance. Many scholars from this period onwards state politics have really come into their own for the first time in the contemporary history and politics of India.

Since the beginning of 1990s attention has been more sharply focused upon the states because state governments, more than the central government are in charge of functions relating to public welfare and the political system is so structured that a large part of political activity takes place in the states. This underlines the importance of a theoretical framework would provide a direction, a focus and a framework of analysis to the increasing research on State Politics.

According to Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar, the state politics has broken free of the logic of national politics and has acquired a rhythm and logic of its own from the beginning of 1990s due to various developments. Some of these developments are mentioned here.

**First**, states have emerged as the effective arena of political choice. If the people voted in state assembly elections held in 1970s and 1980s as if they were choosing the prime minister, they now vote in the parliamentary elections as if they are choosing their chief minister. Though the rise of Narendra Modi in national politics has altered this trend to some extent, however, trends in the state elections from 2019 onwards pointed out the importance and popularity of state level leadership. The popularity of Narendra Modi has not worked in favour of the BJP in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Maharashtra Assembly elections in gaining the majority.

**Second**, the nature of political choice now varies from state to state. We have moved a long way from the old Congress vs. Opposition scenario that was replicated all over the country. Nor have we entered a multi-party system in all the states. At the state level we can find all kinds of contests: bipolar, triangular, four cornered or even more fragmented.

**Third**, 'regional parties' or state-wide parties, have become more salient than ever before. The regional parties are now playing a larger role in the functioning of national politics. Though the BJP has massive mandate in the Lok Sabha, however, it has to negotiate and use all its political skills to gain support from the regional parties to get Bills passed in the Rajya Sabha. The state units of national parties too are more independent, at least in terms of the issues, strategies and styles, if not leadership, than used to be the case.

**Fourth**, governmental outcomes have become more variegated at the state level. Citizens' access to various goods and services varies across the country, within each state, district and town and even village. But the most significant variation now is the one among different states, which is a function of how everyday politics, including social movements and political struggles, relates to the governmental apparatus.

**Fifth**, state level politics is freer of the control of national politics and is often in a position to dictate terms to national politics. This happens in the most visible manner when state-wide parties determine the agenda of national politics or enjoy an upper hand in their bargain with national parties.

**Finally**, a long-term process of differentiation of political community has ensured that the citizens' identity has crystallized around states. The reorganization of states along linguistic lines had set off this process. But a political community by that time had not emerged along the boundaries of states. The recent era in the evolution of democratic politics has witnessed the emergence of states as the markers of political identity. Each state has developed a distinctive political culture, its own vocabulary of politics. Some of the long-term political trends and patterns have also differentiated along state lines.

The 1989 Lok Sabha election, in particular, greatly accelerated the federalization process throughout the country, when a multiparty system with federal coalition / minority governments was ushered in at the national level. In the new party system regional parties have gained considerable power at the cost of national parties that have been diminished, fragmented, or have been unable to grow beyond a certain threshold of power. Led by one of the national parties like the Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party, or Indian National Congress, federal coalition governments have been particularly vulnerable to the making and breaking power of the regional parties. Whereas regional parties accounted for 8.10 percent of votes and 6.95 percent of parliamentary seats in the popularly elected house before the 1952 general election, their corresponding shares have gone up respectively to 14.39 percent and 27.97 percent in 2009 general election.

### **1.1.5 DIVERGENT THEORITICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The development of State Politics as an autonomous space to study political processes also, simultaneously, led to the many scholars opting for a variety of theoretical perspective to analyse developments in India's states. Though most of the scholars opted the dominant theoretical approach, democratic / political development, to analyse the political process, however, others are used the lenses of Marxism, Post-colonialism, etc. as an analytical tools to document political process.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the reasons given by M.P. Singh for the neglect of state politics in India during the early period of independence.

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2. Discuss Sudha Pai's take on studies of state politics in 1950s and 1960s.

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3. What factors led to the development of state politics in 1990s according to Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar?

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### 1.1.6 DEMOCRATIC / POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT / SYSTEMS / MODERNIZATION THEORIES

Most of the scholars worked on state politics in India, more or less, broadly analysed the political processes from the dominant theoretical paradigm Modernization of Political Development. Developed in American Universities by scholars like Lucian Pye, Almond and Powell, Samuel Huntington, the political development or Systems approach focuses a set of categories, viz. political culture, political socialization, political mobilization, political development to analyse the political progression in “Traditional” vs “Modernist” paradigm. The scholarly works of Myron Weiner, Iqbal Narain, Rajni Kothari, Rudolfs, Atul Kohli, etc. are mostly fall under this broader category.

#### 1.1.6.1 MYRON WEINER: ELITE VS MASS CULTURES

Myron Weiner was Ford International Professor of Political Science at MIT and a specialist in the fields of political development, political demography, migration, ethnic conflict, and child labour. He was one of the early thinkers on the problems of democracy in newly independent states. His award-winning book, *Party Building in a New Nation*, detailed how the Congress Party operated in five districts to ensure popular participation and to accommodate local interests and thereby reduce social tensions in the whole country. He was deeply involved in the comparative study of electoral behaviour in developing countries. As much as he valued democracy, he also clearly saw that modernization, rather than eroding ethnic and religious identities, could strengthen such loyalties and thus intensify internal conflicts. He documented the problems of ethnic conflict in *Sons of the Soil*.

In 1963, Myron Weiner published an article that regarded as one of his most important short pieces on Indian politics. In that article, he posited the existence in India of what he called two 'political cultures', one that manifested itself in the districts and localities, 'both urban and rural', and the other that inhabited the national capital, whose denizens occupied the Indian Civil Service, the Planning Commission, and the leading body in the governing party, the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. Weiner clearly thought carefully when he chose names for these two cultures. He rejected the idea that one was a modern culture, the other traditional because, as he said, "there are aspects of both modernity and traditionalism penetrating both views". He chose instead the terms, 'elite' political culture and 'mass' political culture. The former was elite not only or even primarily in social background, but in its outlook which, despite Weiner's recognition that it contained traditional components, was modernistic and rationalistic.

The mass political culture reflected the social organisation and attitudes of the bulk of the country's population; local politicians who inhabited this culture understood and knew how to operate within the categories of caste, tribe, ethnicity, and local and regional languages. The elite culture operated largely in English, had a vision for the country as a whole, and was attuned as much to the outside, western world as to Indian society. Weiner thought it inevitable that the two cultures would clash as they expanded in opposite directions towards each other. He thought there was a danger to be feared from such a clash, which might arise especially from the conflict between the 'utopian' elements in the elite modernising vision and the orientation of politicians in the mass political culture towards their caste, kin, and ethnic groups and the demands for 'patronage and power' that emanated from them and their clients.

According to Weiner both cultures were also expanding: the elite culture was radiating out from its political centre in New Delhi, while the mass culture was expanding from the localities up to "the state legislative assemblies, state governments and state administrations". This resulted in the emergence of state as an important factor in the political arithmetic of Indian politics.

Recognising this reality, he organised two conferences on state politics and brought out a book out of it. He prepared a framework for the authors to analyse the political process within the state. The essays in his book compare and analyse the political processes of eight of the seventeen states. The contributors have attempted to treat the various states within a common framework, illuminating the changing patterns of political participation in India, the problem of integration within the states, the many state party systems that they have developed, and the performance of the state governments. Myron Weiner's approach treats each state as a constituent unit within a larger system, but nonetheless also as a separate political system. Thus, he says that the states can be studied "as constituent units of a larger system, and the units themselves are large enough to be studied as a total system". In fact, he tries to describe and analyse "the political process in a single state" and relates that process to (a) the socio-economic environment in which politics occurs, and (b) the performance of the Government.

Myron Weiner's framework, thus, reflects distinct biases towards the 'systems approach', but with an explicit difference. He has built Systems approach "with a difference in so far as it insists on its application with a development and hence, essentially dynamic perspective." While developing

the framework, he delineates the conceptual image with five determinants: institutional, physiological levels of politics, socio-economic and political, and the elite structure. He then proceeds to construct a three-dimensional framework consisting of the contextual, structural and operational. In the contextual dimension, he includes following components: 1) history of a state; 2) the geographical locale; 3) infrastructure manifesting itself in social pluralism; 4) the level and pattern of economic development; 5) human resources; 6) the level of education; and 7) urbanisation. The structural dimension, according to Myron Weiner, consists of formal constitutional structure (Governor, Chief Minister, Legislature, political institutions and political parties, pressure groups, administration framework, etc.). However, Weiner limits the third category of operational dynamics to the role orientation of the actors, political behaviour and functional dimension, etc.

#### **1.1.6.2 IQBAL NARAIN: THREE DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK**

An analytic framework evolved by an indigenous political scientist like Iqbal Narain for the study of state politics in India, though draws heavily upon “systemic approach”, is added by quite a few relevant dimensions. He has built it “with a difference in so far as it insists on its application with a development and hence, essentially dynamic perspective”. He organised seminar in Rajasthan and invited scholars from most of the states in India to present a study on their respective states. As already pointed out, the State of Jammu and Kashmir also covered in this project and a first academic study on State Politics of Jammu and Kashmir was undertaken. He developed a framework and asked the participant to present papers on their respective state politics following the same framework. While developing the framework, Iqbal Narain delineated the conceptual image which consists of no less than five determinants: institutional, physiological levels of politics, socio-economic and political, and the elite structure. He then proceeds to construct a three-dimensional framework consisting of the contextual, structural and operational. In the contextual dimension, he includes following components:

(I) history of a state: historical identity of the state, its political status before independence, its role in the freedom- struggle, and the impact of integration of princely states or of linguistic re-organisation: (ii) the geographical locale; (iii) infra-structure manifesting itself in social pluralism, (iv) the level and pattern of economic development; (v) human resources; (vi) the level of education; and (vii) urbanisation. The structural dimension, according to him, consists of formal constitutional structure- office of the Governor, office of the Chief Minister, the Ministry and the Legislature; political institutions and processes- political parties, pressure groups and elections; and administrative framework. In the third category of operational dynamics the author limits himself to role orientation of the actors, political behaviour and functional dimension having a distinctive job connotation.

Though the analytical framework propounded by Iqbal Narain for the study of state politics in India draws heavily upon systematic approach, it is added by quite a few relevant dimensions. The analytic framework informing Iqbal Narain's collection of papers view the political system of a state in India as a point of confluence of national, state and local politics, as a system of inter-connection and interactions between the governing- elite structure on the one hand and political institutions, process and policies on the other. State politics emergences in Iqbal Narian's book, basically as a case

of linkage politics and its future are also the prospects of democratic polity in the country, as a whole, would depend on a movement away from politics of self-preservation of the elites to a politics of welfare of the masses; from a politics of drift to a politics of purposiveness; from politics of status quo to politics of socio-economic change; and above all, from politics of promise to politics of performance.

For Narain, the conceptual framework can be conjured up in terms of the nature of state politics which, in turn, leads to a discussion of its determinants. The most important determinants of state politics in India are: institutional, physiological levels of politics, socio-economic, political and the elite structure. He then proceeds to construct a three dimensional framework consisting of the contextual, structural and operational dimensions.

In contextual dimensions, he includes the components such as History of state, historical identity of the state, its political status before independence, its role in the freedom struggle, the impact of the integration of princely states or of linguistic reorganization, the geographical locale, infrastructure manifesting itself in social pluralism, the level and patterns of economic development, human resources and the level of education.

The structural dimension, according to him consists of the formal and constitutional structure like office of the Governor, Office of the Chief Ministers, the ministry and the legislature, political institutions, parties and pressure groups and elections and administrative framework. In the operational dimensions, Narain limits himself to the role orientation of the actors in the drama of state politics. He also discusses the behavioural aspect and functional aspect in the context of state politics.

#### **1.1.6.3 RAJNI KOTHARI: CONGRESS AS A SYSTEM**

The most influential account of the Indian politics from 'system' perspective was produced by Rajni Kothari in his *Politics in India* (1970). His theoretical tools were largely structural-functional. He identified the 'dynamic core' of the system of political institutions in India in the Congress Party.

The whole system worked through the dominance of the Congress. It was a differentiated system, functioning along the organizational structure of the party but connecting at each level with the parallel structure of government, allowing for the dominance of a political centre as well as dissent from the peripheries. With opposition parties functioning as continuations of dissident Congress groups, the emphasis being on coalition-building and consensus-making at each level and on securing the legitimacy of the system as a whole. Through an accommodative system such as this, the political centre consisting of a modernizing elite was shown to be using the powers of the state to transform society and promote economic development. Kothari gave it the simple name 'Congress system'.

Kothari's framework was criticized at the time from different perspectives - for overvaluing the consensual character of the system, for overestimating the autonomy of the elite, for taking far too gradualist a view of social and political change, and so on: But its usefulness was overtaken by the events of the 1970s. The rise of militant oppositional movements and the increasing use of the repressive apparatus of the state, culminating in the Emergency, were clearly phenomena that went beyond the consensual model of the Congress system. From the 1980s, Kothari himself developed

entirely different frameworks for presenting empirical as well as normative accounts of Indian politics.

However, Rajni Kothari in his later writings has attempted to develop a normative framework that serves less as an explanation and more as a critique of the present political system. He notes that unlike in the early decades after Independence, the national political elite has lost its autonomy and the state has ceased to be an agent of social change and has instead become more and more repressive. His argument is that there is a need now to assert, through grassroots movements and non-party political formations, the autonomous force of civil society over a repressive and increasingly unrepresentative state.

#### **1.1.6.4 RUDOLFS: DEPENDENT CAPITAL AND FRAGMENTED LABOUR**

In 1987, in their book, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*, the Rudolfs examined more closely the internal functioning of organised groups or, put another way, groups in the organised sectors of the economy, particularly organised labour and organised capital and minimised their potential threat to the processes of modernisation, public order, and economic development. They argued to the contrary that the trade unions were so divided, 'fragmented'. and competitive with each other that they lacked the ability to have a major impact on 'national policy'. On the other side, 'organised capital', operating in a restricted, but protected economic environment, was largely dependent upon government and could not and, in fact, did not oppose the thrust of the economic development strategy of import substitution.

Thus, both organised labour and organised capital, in the Rudolfs' understanding, emerged as the weaker parties in a triangular relationship with the Indian state, which had the capacity to prevail over these and other organised interests not only because the state was the strongest party, but also because it had "won wide acceptance for its claim that it has a special responsibility for nation building and economic development," in other words, that it had legitimacy that overrode the interests of organised groups such as labour and capital. In short, the Rudolfs, while coining the term 'weak-strong' for the Indian state, took the view that the state was strong enough to prevail against such interests.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss Myron Weiner's concept on Elite vs Mass Culture.

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2. Comment on Iqbal Narain's three-dimensional framework for the study of state politics in India.

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3. Elaborate Rajni Kothari's idea of Congress as a System.
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4. Discuss Rudolphs concept of weak-strong state.
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### **1.1.7 MARXIST PERSPECTIVE**

The Marxist approach to understand any society and changes there in, distinguish itself by emphasizing the need to initiate any investigation of social phenomenon in the context of the basic activity carried on by human beings viz. production through instruments of production, to extract and fabricate products from the nature to essential for the survival and persistence of human species. Marxist approach considers property relations as crucial because they shape the purpose, nature, control, direction, and objectives underlying the production. Further, property relations determine the norms about who shall get how much and on what grounds.

Thus, Marxist approach to understand post-independent Indian society will focus on the specific type of property relations which existed on the eve of independence and which are being elaborating legal-normative notions as well in terms of working out actual policies pursued for development and transformation of Indian society into a prosperous, developed one. The Marxist approach adopting the criteria of taking property relations to define the nature of society will help in understanding eh type of society, the class character of the state and the specificness of the path of development with all the implications.

Accordingly, Marxists argue that contrary to the spirit of the Indian Constitution that guarantees social, economic, political equality, India has remained poor with extreme inequalities. The inequalities of wealth and income distribution are increasing day after day. In the context of the caste system inequalities have assumed sharper, more anguished forms. Concentration of assets, resources and income is growing at a very rapid rate even among the capitalist groups. Unemployment has increased at a very rapid rate. In the context of market and money economy, such a dimension of unemployment reveals an alarming growth of inequality and misery. Educational opportunities are so created as to be accessible to those who have resources to buy them. This trends to accentuate social inequality in the country.

Many Marxists, in their studies, contend that the State, with the growing discontent and assertion of the masses is increasingly retrenching its welfare functions, expanding its repressive functions and is resorting to measures which curb the civil liberties and democratic rights at an accelerated tempo. In this way, the Marxist scholars argue, Marxism has a immense capability in enabling us to understand social, economic and political developments in a given society by

exclusively focusing on property relation, place of capital and labour in these relations and the role of the State in shaping these relations. Similarly, the Marxist approach will help to understand the dynamics of rural, urban, educational and other developments, better as it will assist the exploration of these phenomena in the larger context of the social framework which is being created by the State shaping the development on capitalist path of development.

### **1.1.8 SUBALTERN STUDIES**

Subaltern studies began as an intervention in the historiography of modern India in the early 1980s. There were then, on the one side, historians, mainly located in Britain and the United States, who wrote the history of nationalism as the attempt by Indian elites to mobilize popular support on the basis of traditional patron-client relations in order to compete for political power in a situation where Britain was preparing to decolonize. Methodologically, it was a mix of Weberian modernization theory with a large dose of English-style Namierite analysis. On the other side, there were nationalist historians in India, many of whom were influenced by Marxism, who saw Indian nationalism as an anti-colonial movement led by the bourgeoisie but with a strong popular base mobilized by the leaders of the Congress. Subaltern studies intervened in this debate to point out that both sides were in fact claiming that nationalist history was entirely an elitist project, since neither side had any place for the autonomous actions of the subaltern classes. The first phase of subaltern studies began with a series of studies of peasant revolts in nineteenth- and twentieth-century India. The idea was that whereas under ordinary circumstances the subaltern classes were dominated by and dependent upon their masters, it was at the moment of rebellion that they were able to display their autonomous consciousness.

The word 'subaltern' in Gramsci's sense has gained worldwide currency in historical scholarship. In India, the word in its various synonyms in the Indian languages has entered the ordinary language of politics and journalism. The distinct approach and the debates it spawned have shaped the course of modern South Asian social science in significant ways in the last three decades. Many inquiries that were begun in subaltern studies, such as the use of ethnographic methods in historical scholarship, or the study of non-canonical vernacular printed material as sources of political and cultural history, or the political aspects of popular religion have now become major areas of research in themselves and acquired theoretical shapes that extend far beyond the original project of subaltern studies. Some of the questions raised by subaltern studies were fruitfully answered within the thirty-year project. Many others could not be answered within the limits of that project: they are now being addressed by other scholars working with other projects.

### **1.1.9 STATE POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA**

Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Pulshekhar, in their well-documented essay published in *Seminar* attempted to capture the nuances of state politics in contemporary India. According to them, the rise of state politics as an autonomous domain invites and requires theoretical attention by students of comparative politics. According to them, "the state politics in India has broken free of the logic of national politics and has acquired a rhythm and logic of its own". This manifests itself in many ways related to one another. Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Pulshekhar advanced ten "Theses" to conceptualise

present day state politics in India, as stated below.

1. The political legacy of movements and ideologies at the state level has proved more enduring than that of institutions and organizations.
2. The emergence of states as real and imagined political communities has intensified political regionalism without weakening the ties with the larger, national unit or suppressing the emergence of sub-regional communities.
3. The greater political clout of the states and their unwillingness to share power with their sub-units has blunted the democratizing impulse of institutional reforms and accentuated inequalities across states instead of reducing differences in access to power.
4. The spread of a distinctive culture of democracy has given a regional flavour to political practice without ensuring a democratic culture, as emancipatory ideas confront majoritarianism and the populist tendency faces pragmatism.
5. Higher and more intense political participation at the state level has widened the base of democracy and sustained its legitimacy without enriching the quality of democratic outcomes.
6. Political regimes at the state level acquire their anchorage as well as bondage from the rise of dominant castes to power, which represents as well as halts the transfer of power to lower social orders.
7. As state politics gains greater autonomy vis-à-vis national politics and the central government, its capacity to resist corporate and other organized interests appears severely eroded, often producing regimes that act as the agents of dominant classes.
8. A system of competitive convergence has meant that the opening up of the format of party competition has not led to greater and more meaningful political choices for the citizen.
9. Struggles and movements seek to rupture the convergence of the political establishment but their non-political character limits their capacity to affect the political agenda.
10. A rise in the politics of coercion and state response to it leads to a spiral of shrinking space for democratic politics.

By advancing above theses or trends, Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Pulshekar believe that these trends more or less stay for a long time. They also believe that some consequences of the rise of states as an autonomous platform of politics are clearly good with the potential of steering democracy towards further expansion. Not only is the possibility of greater autonomy for the states in itself a welcome feature, it has also led to a differential party system that reflects the social context more clearly than was the case earlier. A new set of elites has been able to enter politics through the rise of regional parties, and gates have been opened up for higher participation in politics by more diverse sections than before.

However, it may be too early to celebrate this development without keeping in mind the contradictions that are emerging in recent political developments. The BJP under Narendra Modi has defied some of the trends mentioned above by emerging as the most powerful party in contemporary

Indian politics by almost penetrating into every state in India. Not only that, it has gained massive mandate on its own in the parliament and formed the government without depending on any of the regional parties for majority, though it has accommodated its NDA allies in the Council of Ministers. Yet, the fact that most of its rivals in various states are still the regional parties point to the influence of strong federal and regional tendencies in Indian politics. Though it has gained massive mandate at national level, but losing most of the state assembly elections also point to the weakness of the overarching strong political force in India. Hence, the trend of autonomy of State Politics will be a reality in Indian politics in the near future.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 4**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss Marxist approach to understand post-independent Indian state.

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2. Discuss subaltern approach to study on Indian politics.

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3. What are the characteristics of contemporary state politics in India?

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4. Write down Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar's ten theses on present day state politics in India.

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#### **1.1.10 LET US SUM UP**

In recent years, attention has been more sharply focussed upon the states. This is a welcome change, because state governments, more than the central government are in charge of functions relating to public welfare and the political system is so structured that a large part of political activity takes place in the states. This underlines the importance of a theoretical framework for the study of state politics. Such a perspective would provide a direction, a focus and a framework of analysis to the increasing research on State Politics which otherwise seems rather isolated. Recognizing the reality of growing complexity in State Politics in India, many scholars have paid attention to analyse the political developments in various theoretical perspectives, which has generated a rich literature on State Politics. With the emergence of the state as a more salient terrain for the unfolding of democratic

processes and competitive politics, the importance of the study of states is even more often recognized.

### **1.1.11 EXERCISES**

- 1 What are the reasons for emergence of State Politics as a distinct field?
- 2 Write note on contribution of Myron Weiner to State Politics in India.
- 3 Can you identify the contrast or difference in Myron Weiner and Iqbal Narain's theoretical frameworks?
- 4 How Marxists analyse State Politics in India?
- 5 Critically analyse the trends and theses advanced by Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar with regard to State Politics in contemporary India.

### **1.1.12 Suggested Readings**

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## **1.2 INDIAN STATES: AN OVERVIEW (INDIAN FEDERALISM AND CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION OF THE STATES)**

**Zain Bhat**

### **STRUCTURE**

- 1.2.0      Objectives**
- 1.2.1      Introduction**
- 1.2.2      Indian Federalism and Constitutional Position**
- 1.2.3      Legislative Relations**
- 1.2.4      Administrative Relations**
- 1.2.5      Financial Relations**
- 1.2.6      Views of Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations**
- 1.2.7      Let us Sum Up**
- 1.2.8      Exercises**
- 1.2.9      Suggested Readings**

### **1.2.0      OBJECTIVES**

This topic deals with the federal structure of India and elaborates the nature of the Centre-State relations. After going through this Unit, you should be able to

- Know the constitutional framework of centre-state relations with regard to legislative, executive and financial aspects
- Understand Sarkaria Commission views with regard to Centre-State relations.

### **1.2.1      INTRODUCTION**

The constitution of India being federal in structure divides all powers (legislative, executive and financial) between the centre and the states. However, there is no division of judicial powers as the constitution has established an integrated judicial system to enforce both the central as well as state laws. The centre-state relations can be studied under three heads:

1.      Legislative Relations;
2.      Administrative Relations; and
3.      Financial Relations;

### **1.2.2      INDIAN FEDERALISM AND CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION OF THE STATES**

The Indian political system and its Constitutional framework has been the most debated

political text in the post independent period. This is due to its complex nature and character of diversities and pluralities. The Constitution ushers into the country a polity based fundamentally on two ingredients – a British type democratic system of government and federalism. The Constitution makes elaborate provisions covering many aspects of Centre-State and inter-state relationship, and in this respect it differs from the constitutions of the USA and Canada which contain only skeletal provisions to regulate inter-governmental relationship.

The one party domination of Congress in the early phase of independence to a large extent determined the evolution of federalism in India, since it was in power at both Centre as well as in states. This smoothed and facilitated the working of federalism in its formative period. It stabilized the political and administrative structure of the country, minimised tensions between various governments as allowed allegiance to one party, and helped in resolving many questions informally at party forums. But this situation has undergone a change from middle of the 1970s since non-Congress parties also gained popularity among the masses.

‘The founding fathers built the fabric of Indian Federalism on three pillars, viz., a strong Centre, flexibility, and co-operative federalism. Apart from the experiences of other countries suggesting a strong Centre, there were some very good indigenous reasons in India for the same. The past history of India conclusively establishes that the absence of a strong Centre leads to a disintegration of the country. Memories of one partition on the eve of independence were very fresh, and this warranted the taking of adequate precautions to ensure unity and prevent any separatist tendencies. There was also the problem of defence looming large on the horizon due to the not so friendly attitude of Pakistan. Above all, India is an under-developed country whose socio-economic progress has been retarded for centuries. The framers of the Constitution foresaw that the country would have to force the pace of economic development so as to compress into decades the progress of centuries, and this could be done effectively by mobilising national resources and using them properly under Central leadership. A unitary constitution could not have been adopted because of the vastness of the country and the variety of its people and, therefore, the next best course was to have a federal structure with a strong Centre. The approach of the fathers was thus pragmatic, keeping in view the unity and welfare of the country as the objectives to be promoted. The accent on the Centre was facilitated by two factors – the historical background of the country and the existence of one unified all India political party.

The strength of the Centre lies in its large legislative and financial powers, in its emergency powers and in its control over State Legislation in certain situations. The flexibility of federalism lies in certain expedients which can be used to mitigate the proverbial rigidity of a federal system and to increase the Centre's powers as a temporary adjustment if a situation so demands. As noted above, in other federations, the Centre has felt handicapped at times to take effective action to meet the socio-economic needs; this is sought to be avoided in India by having built-in mechanism to enable the Centre to get more powers without resorting to a formal amendment of the Constitution. Even the method of amending the Constitution is rather flexible. In its federal features, it can be amended by each house of Parliament passing a bill by a special majority and on the same being ratified by one-half of the State Legislatures and receiving the President's assent.

There is also the judiciary with powers to interpret the Constitution and thus to draw the necessary balance in accordance with the needs of the times. But, it needs to be stated that this should not lead to the impression that States are completely subservient to the Centre. They have their own powers; they do not exist at the mercy of the Centre but claim their status from the Constitution, and many conventions have been evolved making them more autonomous in practice than what they look to be in theory. Then, the political forces, recently released, have also cabinet the Central initiative to some extent because it is more expedient for the Centre to carry the States along rather than always threaten to use its reserve powers. It might therefore be misleading if one were to take the ideas about the Indian Federalism merely from the constitutional text. For drawing a balanced picture, one has to search for practices and operating forces underneath the surface of the formal constitutional provision.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the territorial limits of the legislative powers vested in the Centre.

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2. Under what extraordinary circumstances, the constitution empowers the Parliament to make laws on matters enumerated in the state list ?

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3. In what manner, the constitution empowers Parliament to exercise control over the state legislative matters ?

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#### **1.2.3 LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS**

Articles 245 to 255 in Part XI of the Constitution deal with the legislative relations between the centre and the states. Besides these, there are some other articles dealing with the same subject. There are four aspects in the centre- state legislative relations viz.

- a) Territorial extent of central and state legislation.
- b) Distribution in the legislative subjects
- c) Parliamentary legislation in the state field and
- d) Centres control over state legislation

### **1.2.3.1 TERRITORIAL EXTENT OF CENTRAL AND STATE LEGISLATION**

The Constitution defines the territorial limits of the legislative powers vested in the centre and in following ways:

- I) The parliamentary can make laws for the whole or any part of the territory of India. The territory of India, according to Article 1 includes (I) State Territory (II) Union Territory (III) Territory acquired by Government of India.
- ii) A state legislative can make laws for the whole or any part of the state.
- iii) The Parliament alone can make 'extra-territorial legislation' thus, the Laws of the Parliament are also applicable to the Indian citizens and their property in any part of the world.

The laws of Parliament can't be applicable in the following areas:

- i) The President can make regulation for the peace, progress and good governance of the four Union Territories – the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu.
- ii) The Governor is empowered to direct that an Act of Parliament does not apply to a scheduled area in the state or apply with specified modification and exceptions.
- iii) The Governor of Assam may likewise direct that an Act of Parliament does not apply to tribal area in the state or apply with specified modification and exceptions.

### **1.2.3.2 DISTRIBUTION OF LEGISLATIVE SUBJECTS**

The constitution provides for a three distribution of legislative subjects between the centre and the states viz. list (I) (Union List), List II (The State list), list III (the Concurrent list) in the VII schedule.

- i) The Parliament has exclusive powers to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the Union list. Presently, the number of subjects in Union list are 100 (though the last item is numbered 97).
- ii) The State legislature has in normal circumstances exclusive powers to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the State list. Presently the number of subjects under state list are 61 (initially there were 66 items).
- iii) Both the Parliament and the State legislature can make laws with respect to matters enumerated in the Concurrent list. The present number of matters are 52 (though the last item is numbered 47).

### **1.2.3.3 PARLIAMENTARY LEGISLATION IN THE STATE FIELD**

The distribution of legislative powers between the centre and the state is to be maintained in normal times but in abnormal times, the scheme of distribution is either modified or suspended. In other words, the Constitution empowers the Parliament to make laws on any matter enumerated in the state list under the following five extra-ordinary circumstances:

- a) When Rajya Sabha passes a resolution, declaring that it is necessary in the national interest.

- b) During a National emergency.
- c) When states make a request by passing a resolution to the Parliament to decide laws on state list.
- d) The Parliament can make laws on any matter in the state list for implementing international treaties, agreements or convention.
- e) During president rule / state emergency.

#### **1.2.3.4 CENTRE'S CONTROL OVER STATE LEGISLATURE**

Besides the Parliament power to legislate directly on the state list, the Constitution empowers the centre to exercise control over the state legislative matters in the following ways:

- i) The Governor can keep certain types of bills passed by the state legislature for the consideration of the President, who then enjoys absolute veto over them.
- ii) Bills on certain matters enumerated in the state list can be introduced in the state legislature only with the previous sanction of the President.
- iii) The President can direct the states to reserve money bills and other financial bills passed by the state legislature for his consideration during a financial emergency.

From the above, it is clear that the Constitution has assigned a position of superiority to the centre in the legislative sphere.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the constitutional obligations on the executive powers of state

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2. Discuss the constitutional provisions to secure cooperation and coordination between the centre and the state.

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3. What was the impact of emergency on the centre- state relations?

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#### **1.2.4 ADMINISTRATIVE RELATIONS**

Article 256 to 263 in Part XI of the Constitution deal with the administrative relations between the centre and the states. In addition, there are various other Articles pertaining to the same matter.

#### **1.2.4.1 DISTRIBUTION OF EXECUTIVE POWERS:**

The executive power has been divided between the centre and the states on the lines of the distribution of legislative powers, except in few cases. Thus, the executive power of the centre extends to the whole of India and to the matter on which the parliament has exclusive powers of legislative [Union List].

Similarly, state extends its executive power to its territory in respect of matters on which the state legislature has exclusive powers of legislature [State list].

In respect of matters on which both the Parliament and the State legislature have power of legislation (concurrent list), the executive power rests with the states except when a constitutional provision or a parliamentary law specifically confers it on the centre.

#### **1.2.4.2 OBLIGATION OF THE STATES AND THE CENTRE**

The constitution has placed two restrictions on the executive powers of the state in order to give ample scope to the centre for exercising its executive power in an unrestricted manner. Thus, the executive power of every state is to be exercised in such a way:

- a) As to ensure compliance with the laws made by the parliament and existing law which apply in the state, and
- b) As not to impede or prejudice the exercise of executive power of the centre in the state.

In the both the cases, the executive power of the centre extends to giving of such direction to the state as are necessary for the purpose.

Article 356 says that where any state has failed to comply with any direction by the centre, it will be lawful for the President to hold that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provision of the Constitution. It means that in such a situation the President rule can be imposed in the state under Article 356.

#### **1.2.4.3 CENTRE'S DIRECTIONS TO THE STATE**

The centre can give directions to the states with regard to the exercise of their executive power in the following matter :

- i) The construction and maintenance of means of communication by the state ;
- ii) The measures to be taken for the protection of the railways within the state;
- iii) The provision of adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups in the state ; and
- iv) The drawing up and execution of the specified schemes for the welfare of the scheduled tribes in the state.

#### **1.2.4.4 MUTUAL DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS**

The distribution of legislative powers between the centre and the state is rigid. Consequently, the centre cannot delegate its legislative powers to the state and a single state cannot request the

Parliament to make a law on a state subject. The Constitution provides for inter-governmental delegation of executive function in order to mitigate rigidity and avoid a situation of deadlock. Accordingly, the President may by consent of the State Govt. entrust to that Government any of the executive function of the Centre. Conversely, the Governor of a state may with the consent of Central Government entrust to that Government any of the executive functions of the state. The Constitution also make a provision for the entrustment of the executive functions of the centre to state, without states consent, but in that case, the delegation is by Parliament not by the President.

#### **1.2.4.5 COOPERATION BETWEEN CENTRE AND STATES:**

The Constitution contains the following provisions to secure cooperation and coordination between the centre and the state:

- i) The Parliament can provide for adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter- state river and river valley.
- ii) The President can under Article 263, establish an Inter- state council to investigate and discuss subject of common interest between the centre and the states.
- iii) Full faith and credit is to be given throughout the territory of India to public acts, records and judicial proceedings of the centre and every state.
- iv) The Parliament can appoint an appropriate authority to carry out the purposes of the Constitutional provisions relating to inter-state freedom of trade, commerce and inter-course.

#### **1.2.4.6 ALL INDIA SERVICE**

Like any other federation, the Centre and the States also have the separate public services called as Central services and the State services respectively. In addition, there are All India Services – IAS, IPS and IFS. The members of these services occupy top positions under both the centre and the states and serve them by turns, but they are recruited and trained by the Centre.

Though All India Services violate the principle of federalism by restricting the autonomy and patronage of the state, they are supported on the grounds that:

- i) They help in maintaining high standard of administration in the Centre as well as in States;
- ii) They help to ensure uniformity of the administrative system throughout the country; and
- iii) They facilitate cooperation, coordination and joint action on the issues of common interest between the Centre and the States.

#### **1.2.4.7 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (PSC)**

In the field of PSC, the centre- state relations are as follows:

- I) The chairman and members of PSC, though appointed by the Governor of the state, can be removed only by the President.
- ii) The Parliament can establish a joint state PSC for two or more states on the request of concerned states legislatures. The chairman and members are appointed by the President.

- iii) The UPSC can serve the needs of a state on the request of the state Governor and with the approval of President.
- iv) The UPSC assists the states in framing and operating schemes of joint recruitment of any services for which candidates possessing special qualifications are required.

#### **1.2.4.8 INTEGRATED JUDICIAL SYSTEM**

The Constitution has established an integrated judicial system with the Supreme Court at top and the State High Courts below it with district judges sitting in District courts at the very bottom.

#### **1.2.4.9 RELATIONS DURING EMERGENCIES**

During National Emergency (Art. 352). The centre can legislate even in the state list's matters and can give direction to the state on any matter.

***During State Emergency (Art. 356).*** The Centre take control of the state affairs after the imposition of President's Rule and this is done after the Governor is satisfied that the state government can not be run according to the Constitution.

***During Financial Emergency (Art. 360).*** The Centre can give direction to the state to observe canons of financial propriety. Other directions by the President include reduction of salaries of person serving in the state and the High Court Judges.

#### **1.2.5 FINANCIAL RELATIONS**

Article 264-293 in Part XII of the Constitution deal with financial relations between the centre and the state.

##### **1.2.5.1 ALLOCATION OF TAXING POWERS**

The Constitution divides the taxing powers between the centre and the state in the following ways:

- 1) The Parliament has exclusive power to levy taxes on subjects enumerated in the union list.
- 2) The State legislature has exclusive power to levy taxes on subjects enumerated in the state list.
- 3) Both the Parliament and State legislatures can levy taxes on subjects mentioned in concurrent list.

The residuary power of taxation is vested in the parliament under this provision, the parliament has imposed gift tax, wealth tax and expenditure tax. The Constitution also draws a distinction between the power to appropriate the proceeds of the tax so lived and collected. Further the constitution placed the following restriction on the taxing powers of the state:

- I) A state legislature can impose taxes in professions, trades, callings and employments but the total amount of such taxes payable by any person should not exceed Rs. 2500 Per Annum.
- ii) A state legislature can impose taxes on the sale and purchase of goods (other than Newspapers).
- iii) A state legislature can impose tax on the consumption or sale of electricity, but no tax can be

imposed on the consumption or sale of electricity which is (a) consumed by the centre or sale to the centre or (b) consumed in the construction, maintenance or operation of any railway by the centre or by the concerned railway company or sold to the centre or the railway company for the same purpose.

- iv) A state legislature can impose tax in respect of any water or electricity stored, generated, distributed or sold by any authority established by Parliament for regulating or developing any Inter- state River or River valley project. But prior consent of the centre is required in this case also.

#### **1.2.5.2 DISTRIBUTION OF TAX REVENUES**

The 80th amendment of 2000 and the 88th amendment of 2003 have introduced major changes in the schemes of distribution of taxes revenues between the centre and the state. After these two amendments, the present position in this regard are as follows:

- a) Taxes leased by the centre but collected and appropriated by the states (Article 268): This category includes taxes and duties like stamp duties on bills of exchanges, policies of insurances, transfer of shares, exercise duties on medicinal things etc.
- b) Services tax levied by the centre but collected and appropriated by the centre and the states (Article 265 A) : Taxes on services are levied by the centre and its proceeds are collected as well as appropriated by both the centre and the states.
- c) Taxes levied and collected by the centre but (Art. 269) assigned to the states various taxes like on the sale and purchase of goods and the taxes on the consignment of goods in the course of inter-state trade or commerce.
- d) Taxes levied and collected by the centre, but distributed between the centre and the state (Art.270). This category includes almost all the taxes and duties related to in the union list except few.
- e) Surcharge on certain taxes and duties for the purpose of the centre (271): The parliament can at any time levy the surcharge on taxes referred to in Articles 269 and 270, the proceed of such surcharges go to the centre exclusively.
- f) Taxes levied and collected and retained by the states: These are the taxes belonging to the states exclusively. They are enumerated in the state list and are 20 in number.

#### **1.2.5.3 DISTRIBUTION OF NON-TAX REVENUE**

- a) The Centre: - The receipt from the following form the major sources of non- tax revenue of the Centre (I) Posts and telegraph, (II) Railways (III) Banking (IV) Broadcast (V) Coinage and currency etc.
- b) The States: - The receipt from the following form the major source of non-tax revenues of the states (I) Irrigation (II) Forests (III) Fisheries (IV) State's Public Sector Enterprises (V) Escheat & lapses.

#### **1.2.4.4 GRANT-IN-AID FOR THE STATES**

Besides sharing the taxes between the Centre and State, the Constitution provides for grant-in-aid to the states from the Centre. There are two types of Grants: STATUTORY GRANT (Art. 275): It provides for the grants given to any state in need as may be deemed essential.

DISCRETIONARY GRANTS (Art. 282): It provides for the union or a state may grant for any public purpose irrespective of that purpose being outside the legislative jurisdiction of the Union or State concerned.

#### **1.2.6 VIEWS OF SARKARIA COMMISSION ON CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS**

As long as there was monolithic party-system in the country and Congress party was in power, there was no real problem of centre-state relationship. It was because during this period (1950-67), there was no other political party which could provide an alternative to the Congress and every political leader looked towards this organization for his political career.

But situation practically changed in 1967, when the Fourth General Elections were held in the country. In this election, in as many as seven states, non-Congress ministries were formed. This process continued further. Regional parties like Akali Dal, AIADMK came into power. In 1977, Janata Party came into power in the centre, though for a short period of two and half-years. In the nineties, one finds the system of coalition governments at the centre. In the states too, number of regional parties either with coalition or single-handedly came into power. All these factors were responsible for re-thinking of centre-state relations.

#### **1.2.6.1 GRIEVANCES OF THE STATES**

There were many grievances of the states particularly which were ruled by the party other than that of the central ruling party. To be brief, following were the main grievances of the states.

- (a) These states wanted more of autonomy, decentralization of powers in favour of the states.
- (b) These states also complained that they were not getting their due share from the national finance. Due to non-availability of funds, the states cannot undertake their developmental projects. It was further alleged that the Planning Commission allocated resources to the states not on the basis of development needs or population of a particular state, but only on political considerations.
- (c) There was also a strong grievance against the deployment of Border Security Force and para-military forces in the states.
- (d) Then another grievance of the states against the central government related to excessive control in its hands. It even tries to control such subjects which are not within its sphere.
- (e) These states complain that present day regional imbalances are because of lack of integrated approach of the central government towards developmental activities. Central sector projects are located taking party and not national interests into consideration, which result in increased regional imbalances.

- (f) There is still another grievance that the central government deliberately avoids taxation under article 299 of the Constitution whose proceeds are meant for the states and imposes excise duties on such items, which are source of income to it.

To address all these issues and grievances, demand for setting up a separate commission was gaining currency in the post-1967 period. In 1981, a meeting of the opposition parties demanded that radical changes should be brought about in centre- state relations. On March 24, 1983, the central government announced the appointment of a Commission under Justice R.S. Sarkaria, a retired judge of the Supreme Court, to review the existing arrangements between the centre and the states in the context of socio-economic developments on the one hand and keeping in view unity and integrity of the country on the other. The Commission submitted its report in 1988. The major recommendations of it have been given below.

#### **1.2.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS OF SARKARIA COMMISSION**

- 1) It was not proper to curtail the powers of the centre as a strong centre was necessary for preserving the integrity of the country.
- 2) There was no need for making drastic changes to the Constitution as these have all along withstood stresses and strains of changes in society.
- 3) In the financial scheme, there was no need for major changes in the basic scheme as provided in the Constitution.
- 4) It favoured some amendments to provide for sharing of corporation tax and levy of consignment tax on advertisement and broadcasting.
- 5) It did not favour transfer of any subject from the central to the state or concurrent list.
- 6) It favoured deployment of central forces in consultation with the state government concerned.
- 7) No change in Articles 246 and 254 of the Constitution was recommended.
- 8) It did not favour the idea of the abolition of the office of Governor. It, however, favoured the idea that Governor should be appointed in consultation with the Chief Minister of the concerned state.
- 9) The Governor should appoint only such a person as Chief Minister who was either the leader of the majority party in the Assembly or could command a majority in the Assembly which he should be asked to prove within 30 days.
- 10) It did not favour deletion of Art. 356 of the Constitution but suggested number of steps to ensure that the power was only rarely used.
- 11) No state Assembly should be dissolved unless Parliament has approved proclamation of Emergency and that before imposition of President's rule, the possibilities of forming an alternative government should be explored.
- 12) It recommended that no Commission of Enquiry should be set up against any minister of a

state government unless a demand to that effect is made by both the Houses of Parliament.

- 13) In the view of the Commission, the centre should hold consultations with the states before legislating on a subject mentioned in the concurrent list.
- 14) It favoured setting up of Inter-State Councils.
- 15) It also favoured activating Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities.
- 16) It recommended implementation of three language formula and also suggested creation of several new All India Services.

The Commission paid great importance to the principles of national unity and integration. It had given top priority to the codes of conduct and conventions for the purpose of avoiding the dangers of communalism and narrow parochialism and developing an integrated secular democratic federal polity based on understanding and maximum cooperation between the centre and the states.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the division of taxation power between the centre and the state.

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2. What are the constitutional limits on the taxing powers of the state?

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3. Discuss the grievances of the states regarding the Centre-state relations.

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4. Discuss the recommendations of Sarkaria Commission.

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#### **1.2.7 LET US SUM UP**

Indian Constitution has all the features of a federation but it essentially differs from the classical model of federation, i.e., USA. Indian federal system has some peculiar features and these features give it a strong Unitarian bias. The balance decidedly tilts in favour of the strong centre. Whether it is distribution of powers or financial or administrative or legislative relations between centre and the states, the central government distinctly emerges to be powerful. This had brought

practical difficulties in centre-state relations particularly after 1967. The states started demanding more and more of autonomy and powers. When the problem began to assume abnormal dimensions, the centre government set up a Sarkaria Commission to look into the matter and give its recommendations. The Sarkaria Commission was in favour of strong centre in order to protect national unity and integrity. However, it suggested maximum cooperation between centre and the states, without disturbing the major distribution of powers.

### 1.2.8 EXERCISES

1. Outline important characteristics of Centre-State relations in India.
2. How the constitution divided legislative relations between Union and the States?
3. Write a brief note on Administrative relations in India.
4. Critically discuss Sirkaria Commission views on Centre-State relations.

### 1.2.9 Suggested Readings

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## **1.3 INTER-STATE DISPUTES: NATURE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR RESOLUTION**

**- Zain Bhat**

### **STRUCTURE**

- 1.3.0      Objectives**
- 1.3.1      Introduction**
- 1.3.2      Inter-State Disputes**
- 1.3.3      Water Disputes**
- 1.3.4      The Boundary Disputes**
- 1.3.5      Institutional Mechanism for Adjudication**
- 1.3.6      Let us Sum Up**
- 1.3.7      Exercises**
- 1.3.8      Suggested Readings**

### **1.3.0 OBJECTIVES**

This topic provides basic knowledge about the nature of various inter-state disputes that have taken place before and after the independence. After going this topic you will be able to

- familiar with the issues related to inter-state disputes;
- know about the inter-state water disputes;
- understand the inter-state boundary disputes;
- comprehend about the institutional mechanism meant for dealing the inter-state issues.

### **1.3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The inter-state relations in India run along the lines of both conflict and cooperation. The specifics of each case depend on the nature of constitutional provisions regarding these relations, attitudes of the institutions involved, concerned leadership and political circumstances. There are disputes among Indian states over sharing of a natural resource like water and over boundaries. The disputes have resulted in violent clashes between states on several occasions. Their failure or success in dealing with the disputes is indicative of the functioning of the Indian federalism. In this unit, you are going to study two types of disputes involving two or more states.

### **1.3.2 INTER-STATE DISPUTES**

In a constitutional set-up based on the federal principle, sovereignty is divided between the federation and the units. Division of sovereignty implies the creation of boundaries, and this is bound

to raise disputes, as to on which side of the boundary the matter falls. The reason is, that neither geographical phenomena, nor social currents, nor political forces, are defined by the boundaries so drawn. Boundaries are drawn by the minds of men. But they are mere intellectual creations, whose actual application to external realities cannot always be the subject matter of unanimity. Differences become insertable in this sphere. And, where such differences do arise, it is desirable that there be a well thought out systemic mechanism, for inter-state dispute resolution.

The Constitution of India contemplates a variety of mechanisms for the settlement of inter- State disputes-taking the word “dispute” in a wide and comprehensive sense, so as to cover not only disputes that come up before the judiciary, but also disputes for whose resolution an extra-judicial machinery is contemplated by the Constitution.

#### **1.3.2.1 THE JUDICIAL MECHANISM**

The principal provision creating the judicial mechanism for dealing with inter-State disputes involving a legal right is article 131 of the Constitution. It confers, on the Supreme Court of India, exclusive jurisdiction to deal with disputes involving legal rights. This article covers any dispute [1]—(a) between the Government of India and one or more States; or

(b) between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or (c) between two or more States, if, and in so far as, the dispute involves any question (whether of law or of fact), on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends.

#### **1.3.2.2 INTER-STATE COUNCIL**

The Constitution has, through Article 263, made a comprehensive provision relating to the discharge of certain functions on matters having an inter-State dimension. One of the functions to be discharged by the Council contemplated by the Article is that of inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between States, [under Article 263 (a)]. The article (which appears under the sub-head: States “Co-ordination between States) reads as under –

“263. Provisions with respect to an inter-State Council.

If at any time it appears to the President that the public interest would be served by the establishment of a Council charged with the duty of –

- (a) inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between States;
- (b) investigating and discussing subjects in which some or all of the States, or the Union and one or more of the States, have a common interest or
- (c) making recommendations upon any such subject and, in particular, recommendations for the better co-ordination or policy and action with respect to that subject, it shall be lawful for the President by order to establish such a Council and to define the nature of the duties to be performed by it and its organisation and procedure”.

The Inter-State Council is a constitutional body that has representatives of the Union government as well as chief ministers of states. The council is chaired by the prime minister, and it

also has a few Union ministers as permanent invitees.

It may also be proper to mention that under the States Re-organisation Act, 1956, five Zonal Councils have been set up. Besides this, a North Eastern Council has been set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971.

### **1.3.3 WATER DISPUTES**

Water is one of the most important requirements of human beings. It is used for multi-purposes—drinking, cleanliness, agriculture and industries. Its shortage or absence can lead to disputes in society. Its unequal distribution among states can disturb the federal relations. Water disputes arising from the need in agriculture for irrigation has had the most effective political expression in our country. Before discussing the cases of water disputes, it is relevant to discuss the unevenness of water availability and the river basin in India.

#### **1.3.3.1 UNEVEN AVAILABILITY OF WATER**

India is considered rich in terms of annual rainfall and total water resources available at the national level. However, the uneven distribution of the resource causes regional and temporal shortages. India's average annual rainfall, about 4000 billion cubic meters (BCM) is unevenly distributed, both spatially as well as temporally. The annual per capita utilisable resource availability varies from 18,417 cubic meters in the Brahmaputra Valley to as low as 180 cubic meters in the Sabarmati Basin. Even in the Ganga Basin, the annual per capita availability of water varies from 740 cubic meters (cu m) in the Yamuna to 3,379 cum in the Gandak. Levels of precipitation vary from 100 mm annually in western Rajasthan to over 9,000 mm in the north-eastern state of Meghalaya. With 75 percent of the rainfall occurring over the four monsoon months and the other 1000 BCM spread over the remaining eight months, the Indian rivers carry 90 percent of the water between June and November. Thus, only 10 per cent of the river flow is available during the other six months. India can, however, boast of a good network of rivers flowing through different parts and sustaining the economy.

#### **1.3.3.2 RIVER BASINS**

The country's rivers have been classified as Himalayan, peninsular, coastal and inland-drainage basin rivers. Himalayan rivers are snow fed and maintain a high to medium rate of flow throughout the year. The heavy annual average rainfall levels in the Himalayan catchment areas further add to their rates of flow. During the monsoon months of June to September, the catchment areas are prone to flooding. The volume of the rain-fed peninsular rivers also increases. Coastal streams, especially in the west, are short and episodic. Rivers of the inland system, centred in western Rajasthan state, are few and frequently disappear in years of scant rainfall. The majority of the rivers flow through broad, shallow valleys and drain into the Bay of Bengal. River basin as a unit of understanding the river flow through different states provides a scientific approach. The basin area is the extent of the area from where water may be expected in the river. It includes tributaries and even drains. Indian rivers have been divided into three categories depending on basin area. Major rivers are

those rivers whose basin area is 20,000 square km or more. The river basin areas in between 2,000 and 20,000 square kilometres are grouped as medium rivers and the rest are minor rivers. Major river basins are 13 in number and as a group they cover 80 per cent of the population and 85 per cent of total river discharge. Three major rivers i.e. the Ganga, the Brahmaputra and the Indus are snow-fed rivers, originating in the Himalayas. The other ten rivers originate either in Central India or in the peninsular regions. These rivers are Godavari, Krishna, Pennar, Mahanadi, Cauvery, Narmada, Tapi, Brahmani, Mahi and Sabarmati. The medium river basins are forty-five in number while the minor river basins are fifty five. Thus, the 113 river basins ranging from major to medium to minor based on their basin areas transcend different political boundaries. The increasing needs of water in different parts of India to meet varied demands especially in the arid and the semi-arid regions have given boost to large inter basin transfers in the last few decades. Accordingly, many schemes of large-scale water transfer projects (interlink proposals) have been planned and some of them implemented. There have been cases of hydro-animosity amongst different states and communities as the users are many while the supply is limited.

Harnessing the waters of the major rivers that flow through different states is therefore, an issue of great concern. Issues of flood control, drought prevention, hydroelectric power generation, job creation and environmental quality provide a common plank for debate as the states grapple with the political realities, of altering the flow of various rivers. The rapid increase in the country's population accompanied by the growth of agriculture, rapid urbanisation, economic growth and improved access to basic services has resulted in an increase in the demand for water. The 3 spatial and temporal variations give rise to shortages in some regions. The Western Plains, the Kachchh region and some pockets in the Northern plains face an acute water shortage. The widening gap between demand and supply has led to a substantial increase in the share of groundwater consumption by the urban, agricultural and domestic sectors. The quality of water sources is threatened because of inadequate provisions for the treatment of wastewater. Therefore, the gap between availability and supply has led to provocation and ensuing discords due to the diversion of waters from riparian states to the non-riparian states. Several water tribunals have been formed and judgments pronounced in many river basin disputes but solutions have been few. In the case of Cauvery, the problem has persisted for more than a century. There are also many court cases pending at local levels as regards the uses of water, and this affects the livelihoods of many.

### **1.3.3.3 POLITICS OF WATER DISPUTES**

Resolution of water disputes depends largely on political considerations. Out of the several water disputes in India, we will focus on the Cauvery Water, Ravi-Beas and Satlaj-Yamuna Canal Link disputes. In resolving these disputes, the political leaderships of the concerned states, the centre, and the courts are involved. Yet they remain unsolved. The failure of negotiations has led to the appointment of authorities and tribunals innumerable. But even the awards of the tribunals have not been respected by one or the other parties involved in the disputes. According to Scholars like Alan Richards and Nirvikar Singh the most important reason for this is the merely advisory nature of

various water authorities. Water remains virtually a state subject vide entry 17 in the State List. The centre has not utilised its authority to legislate on this matter vide entry 56 in the Union List according to Article 262 of the Constitution. While the Ravi-Beas and Satlej –Yamuna Canal Link remain unresolved, there are cases which have been resolved. Alan Richards and Nirvikar Singh attribute the main reason for their resolution to negotiations. The tribunals in this case proved ineffective. But regarding the Cauvery Water dispute and the Ravi-Beas water dispute both the negotiations and the tribunals proved ineffective

Besides the ineffective awards of the tribunals, the centre's unwillingness to utilise entry 17 in the Union List according to Article 262 of the Constitution to legislate on water disputes, political considerations are the major hindrances in resolving them. The possibility of resolution of the issue is viewed in a contradictory manner. While one state considers it advantageous to it the other sees its interests, as against its interests. The political parties even within the same state view matters in the light of repercussions on their political support base. These parties may disagree on all other major issues, yet share a common stance on the concerned water dispute. They apprehend that taking a contrary stance might push their political support to their political rival. As pointed out by some scholars, the state political leaders can even defy their national leaders and the advice of the court in this matter. For them their political support is more important. For example, the political leadership in Punjab passed an Act in 2004 against the completion of the Satlej-Yamuna Canal Link. It was to be completed within one year. Haryana challenged the decision in the Supreme Court. The latter decreed for a Presidential reference. The matter is still unresolved. Any inter-state water dispute has its repercussions on the politics and people in neighbouring states. It has ethnic implications. As some linguistic and ethnic groups live within states which have disputes over the sharing of water, these ethnic groups also get drawn into violent riots. In 1992 the Cauvery water dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka led to anti-Tamil riots in Tamil Nadu. This had further repercussion in the state politics of the two states. While the Tamil groups demanded protection of their ethnic and linguistic identities, the Karnataka political leadership in general opposed giving water to Tamil Nadu. They said that there was no surplus water that could be given to Tamil Nadu.

## **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. The federal structure of Indian state has led to the creation of boundaries, which in turn raises inter-state disputes. Comment.

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2. Discuss the Judicial mechanism provided by the Indian constitution for dealing with inter-state dispute.

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#### **1.3.4 THE BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

In this unit, so far you have read how and why water, a vital natural resource, has been a cause of major disputes between some states of the Indian Union. Now, you will read about territorial boundaries as a source of conflict among certain states of our country. You might have, during the course of your studies, come across references about the longstanding tension between the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka over the rightful ownership of the district of Belgaum, between Punjab and Haryana over the Abohar- Fazilka Tehsils or about several such cases involving two or more states. In fact, the creation of certain new states in the last few years—Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh for instance—was partly a recognition of the longstanding problem of contesting territorial boundaries. The issue is complex and vexed and its roots can be traced to India's colonial past.

##### **1.3.4.1 COLONIAL LEGACY**

India, as we know it today, has traversed a chequered path from ancient times. The boundaries of its constituent geographical units have been continually changing. However, till the advent of the British it was not really a nation-state, as the term is understood and the frequent changes in territorial limits did not amount to much. The British, in pursuance of their own colonial agenda, set about defining and redefining geographical limits and this created problems, the lingering effects of which can be felt till today. These effects can be felt even internationally. For example, India's boundary disputes with Pakistan, China and Bangladesh. This was essentially because our colonial masters were guided primarily by the consideration of facile governance and towards this end, they focused on administrative aspects rather than linguistic/cultural etc. unification. The result was a mismatch between people's personal identities and the territories they inhabited. It was left to the central government of free India to rectify the damage caused by the British colonialists' sectarianism and short sightedness.

##### **1.3.4.2 TERRITORIAL ISSUE IN THE POST-COLONIAL PERIOD**

The central legislature – the Parliament – was empowered by the constitution 'to create new states or merge old states or parts of such states or alter their boundaries in future'. It may interest you to know that even during the tenure of the Constituent Assembly the specially created and convened body to draft free India's constitution—demands had been raised for a linguistic reorganisation of states, the assumption being that linguistic commonality is an index of a common culture and thus, states created on the basis of a common/unifying language would be more homogenous and thus, conducive to effective governance. However, at that time, the founding fathers of the Constitution had postponed the demand for a linguistic reconfiguration on the ground that the newly formed country might plunge into chaos and turmoil. But soon after independence, the government of Jawaharlal Nehru—India's first Prime-Minister—changed tacks. Possibly, it felt that there was no other way out.

Thus, it had to cope with the agitation for an Andhra state. According to the Linguistic Provinces Commission, the demand first raised in the coastal regions of Andhra had become “a passion” and “ceased to be a matter of reason”. Immediately after the First General Election (1951-52), the Andhra Pradesh Provincial Congress Committee (APCC) had passed a resolution for the creation of a separate Telugu speaking state. The then Madras state also came in the picture and the State Congress Committee there endorsed the creation of the proposed new state. Initially, the Central Government under Nehru tried to checkmate this demand, but the death of Potti Sriramulu, a venerable Andhra Congress leader who went on a fast into death precipitated matters. Finally, in 1953 a new and separate Andhra state was formed by carving out the Telugu speaking areas of the erstwhile bi-lingual Madras state. The creation of Andhra gave a fillip to the demand for a further linguistic reorganisation of states and the government ended up setting a three member States Reorganisation Commission in 1953 to look into the whole question of altering old/creating new state boundaries. The Commission submitted its report in 1955 and its major recommendation was the creation of new states in the South of the country. In 1956, the States Reorganisation Act was passed. However, consequent to the passing of this act, no really new state was created as such. What actually happened was the integration of several formerly princely states on the basis of language.

For instance, the new state of Andhra Pradesh was a coming together of the erstwhile Part B State of Hyderabad and the old Andhra state. Similarly, the new state of Karnataka was an amalgamation of the old Part B Mysore state and territories transferred from the former Madras and Bombay states. But from the 1960s onwards, the process of creation of new states got going. Thus, in 1960 itself the state of Bombay was partitioned to create the new states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Similarly, in 1966 the new state of Punjab was created. We have already mentioned about the creation of the new states of Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand in recent times. It is important to mention here that during the period, the northeastern part of the country also underwent a major reorganisation. Thus, in 1963 the state of Nagaland and in 1972, the state of Meghalaya were created. The demand for the creation of new states has not ceased in post- independence India. Demand for a separate Vidarbha state has been a longstanding demand of an influential section of populace in Maharashtra, but has not been conceded so far. Similarly, though the demand for a separate hill state of Uttaranchal gained fruition, a similar demand for a separate state of Western U.P. (Harit Pradesh) has not been legitimised so far. As we mentioned before in this unit, territorial reconfiguration has been a complicated issue. And even when given a concrete shape, it has not been an answer to every citizen's aspirations. To cite a very prominent example, though the newly created state of Andhra Pradesh brought together the Telugu speaking people dispersed in different parts of South India, the new state since its inception has faced the problem of prolonged agitation for another new state of Telangana. Similarly the creation of new states in the North-East has not resolved territorial disputes. The demand of Nagas to bring Nagas of three different states into a single “Nagaland” is among such examples. A look at a well known case relating to the dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka over Belgaum, may throw some light on the vexed question of altering/creating territorial boundaries.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What factors led to emergence of water disputes in India?

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2. Discuss the politics of water disputes in India.

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3. Boundary disputes in India has its root in colonial past. Comment.

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4. What are the major territorial issues in the post-colonial period ?

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### 1.3.4.3 BELGAUN DISPUTE: AN EXAMPLE

The district of Belgaun is currently located in the state of Karnataka (North-West) and borders Maharashtra as well as Goa. Approximately, 20% of the local populace is of Maharashtrian origin. Atul Kohli observes “the issue of whether or not the areas with Marathi pluralities, especially the town of Belgaun, should be transferred from Karnataka to Maharashtra continues to be one of the central political issues in this district”. The roots of the Marathi-Kannadiga conflict over the district of Belgaun-as with many such conflicts - are directly attributable to the linguistic reorganisation of states in India after independence. Belgaun district consists of a mixed population of Marathi and Kannada speakers. After the formation of Maharashtra state, some parts where Kannada was spoken got transferred to Karnataka, but some Marathi speaking pockets were also transferred to Karnataka. Belgaum is one such district which has a population of Marathi and Kannada speakers. The cause of these displaced Maharashtrians has been spearheaded for more than four decades by the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES). It has stood for transferring selected Marathi dominated areas of Belgaun (especially the town of Belgaun) to Maharashtra. The case of the MES is based on two premises: i) Language and ethnicity – the criteria for the reorganisation of states; ii) Alleged or real discrimination against Marathis in education and employment (particularly government service).

The Kannadigas, especially that resident of Belgaun Town, lay claims to the area on historical grounds. Mainly, that the town of Belgaun had always been an intrinsic part of a district that

was chiefly Kannada speaking. A third and no less significant factor in the longstanding conflict has been the political compromise effected by the then central government. That is, some Kannada speaking districts of the old Hyderabad state were given to the new state of Andhra Pradesh in exchange for Belgaum being given to Karnataka. Thus, as Atul Kohli has remarked “the MES's argument on linguistic grounds, the argument of Kannadigas on historical precedent, and the national decision based on political considerations all combined to set up the basic matrix within which the conflict has evolved.

### **1.3.5 INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR ADJUDICATION**

We have discussed above some of the significant tension areas in Centre-state relations. In fact the very dynamism of the federal system anywhere with all its declared balances brings in its wake problems and conflicts in working of Union-state relations.

Therefore, need for a common mechanism which would ensure co-operation among the common units of federation seems to be natural. The founding fathers of the Indian Constitution anticipating problems in Union-State relations provided for such a mechanisms through Article 263 of the Indian Constitution making provision for an inter-state council.

#### **1.3.5.1 INTER-STATE COUNCIL**

As already pointed out the Administrative Reforms commission (ARC), reviewing the post-1967 situation in its report in 1989 recommended the setting up of an Inter-state council. The commission felt that an unnecessary onus came to be placed in the case of many inter-state disputes, such as those over respective borders, on the Central government and any action or inaction on its part could be misunderstood by a contending party. But the Central Government did not bother about this warning and an Inter-state council was not established till 1990. One of the major complaints of various states before the Sarkaria Commission was relating to the non-appointment of such a council.

The Sarkaria Commission in its report recommended that an Inter-state council charged with duties set out in clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263 should be formed. The Constitution felt that it was essential to avoid reported references to the President for piecemeal orders under Article 263 authorizing the Council to deal with specific issues as and when they crop up.

The Congress (I) Government headed by Rajiv Gandhi remained lukewarm to the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations in general. Therefore, no efforts were made to establish such a council. The National Front in its 1989 Election manifesto promised to undertake a comprehensive review of Union-State relations in consultation with all Chief Ministers. In pursuance of this promise the National Front Government got established the Inter-state council through a Presidential notification on May 25, 1990.

#### **1.3.5.2 INTER-STATE COUNCIL (ARTICLE 263)**

The Council to consist of the Prime Minister ,Chief Ministers of all states, Chief Ministers or Administrators of Union territories and six Cabinet ministers of the Union Government.

The Council is headed by the Prime Minister and in the absence by the Union Minister of

Cabinet rank nominated by him. The council prepares issues to be brought before the council every year. Its meetings are held in-camera. It arrives on decisions on consensus-basis which are final and binding. It shall have its own secretariat comprising of officers as the Chairman may decide.

The Congress (I) Government which came to power again in June, 1991 also accepted the constitution of the Inter-State council. The Inter-state council for its effective functioning has constituted a sub-committee consisting of some union ministers and chief ministers. In the sub-committee meeting, it was announced that the Government of India's acceptance of the Sarkaria commission's recommendations that there should be prior consultation with the state governments "individually as well as collectively" before the Centre sponsor's legislation on a subject in the concurrent list.

Needless to say this is only one step towards normalization of union-state relations. But the fact remains that till now ours is a highly centralized state system. From the appointment of Governor and the imposition of President's rule, to the very large number of subjects included in the Union List, or in the Concurrent list, it is basically a centralized structure, and in political parlance the strength of the Indian state is often equated with the existence of a strong centre.

The question is not whether there should or should not be a strong centre. No reasonable person will dispute the need for a strong centre. Question is can centre be strong if states remain weak. The centre is bound to remain strong because of its authority in decisive fields. The State autonomy in other fields would help the strong centre to pay undivided attention to its work in decisive fields. It is important to understand that federalism is essentially a political culture, an outlook on national life. It is not merely a question of centre-state relations. At the core lies the question whether in a land of our continental dimensions of rich diversities regional linguistic and other profound cultural traditions, our nationalism, requires suppression of the diversities or whether the national well-being will be fostered by encouraging and allowing the diversities to have full play within the national frame work.

### **1.3.5.3 ZONAL COUNCILS**

The idea of Zonal councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister Mr. Nehru in 1956 during the course of debate on the report of the State Reorganisation Commission.

The objective of these councils were to minimize the hostilities that threatened the social fabric of the Indian society and to create healthy inter-state and centre-state environment with a view to solving the inter-states disputes and problems and fostering balanced development of the respective zones. Accordingly five Zonal councils were set up vide Part -III of the State Reorganisation Act 1956. They are as follow:

- 1) The Northern Zonal Council comprising the states of Haryana , Punjab ,Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir ,Rajasthan , National Capital Territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh ;
- 2) The Central Zonal Council comprising the states of Chattisgarh, Uttarakhand,Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh ;

- 3) The Eastern Zonal Council comprising the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Sikkim and West Bengal.
- 4) The Western Zonal Council comprising the states of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territory of Daman and Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli; and
- 5) The Southern Zonal Council comprising the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

As far as North Eastern States are concerned, they are looked after by the North Eastern Council set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the Inter-State Council.

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2. Comment on Zonal Councils.

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#### **1.3.6 LETS SUM UP**

What is required in the name of integration is the unity, diversity and pluralistic elements in Indian culture and not homogenization. Recent formation of NITI Aayog ( Policy Commission ) or National Institution for Transforming India on 1 January 2015, is a policy think-tank of Government of India that replaces Planning Commission and aims to involve the states in economic policy-making in India. It will be providing strategic and technical advice to the central and state governments i.e., by adopting bottom –up approach rather than traditional top-down approach. Therefore, institutions like NITI Aayog are steps leading to the recognition of unity, diversity and pluralistic elements in Indian culture and not homogenization.

#### **1.3.7 EXERCISES**

1. How do you understand inter-state disputes in India?
2. Critically analyse water disputes among various states in India.
3. Outline Institutional mechanisms for resolving inter-state dispute.

#### **1.3.8 References**

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## **1.4 CONSTITUTIONAL ASYMMETRIES: NATURE AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS (ARTICLES 370, 371, 5<sup>TH</sup> AND 6<sup>TH</sup> SCHEDULES)**

- Zain Bhat

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **1.4.0 Objectives**

#### **1.4.1 Introduction**

#### **1.4.2 Asymmetric Federalism**

#### **1.4.3 Asymmetry in Indian Federalism**

#### **1.4.4 Article 370**

#### **1.4.5 Article 371**

#### **1.4.6 5th Schedule**

#### **1.4.7 6th Schedule**

#### **1.4.8 Exercises**

#### **1.4.9 Suggested Readings**

### **1.4.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going this topic you will be able to know:

- asymmetries in India's Constitution;
- article 370 and 371 and their implications to Indian political system
- importance of 5th and 6th Schedules in India's constitution.

### **1.4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Constitutional Asymmetries is found in a federation or confederation in which different constituent states have constitutional status. The division of powers between sub- states is not symmetric. This is in contrast to symmetric federalism, where no possess similar powers: one or more of the states has considerably more autonomy than the other sub states, although they have the same distinction is made between constituent states. This kind of arrangement is frequently proposed as a solution to the dissatisfactions that arise when one or two constituent units feel significantly different needs from the others, as the result of an ethnic, linguistic or cultural difference.

The governance of India is based on a tiered system, wherein the Constitution of India appropriates the subjects on which each tier of government has executive powers. The Constitution uses the Seventh Schedule to delimit the subjects under three categories, namely the Union list, the State list and the Concurrent list. A distinguishing aspect of Indian federalism is that it is asymmetric.

Article 370 makes special provisions for the state of Jammu and Kashmir as per its Instrument of Accession. Article 371 makes special provisions for the states of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim as per their accession or statehood deals. Although the Constitution did not envisage it, India is now a multilingual federation. India has a multi-party system with political allegiances frequently based on linguistic, regional and caste identities, necessitating coalition politics, especially at the Union level.

#### **1.4.2 ASYMMETRIC FEDERALISM**

“Asymmetric federalism” is understood to mean federalism based on unequal powers and relationships in political, administrative and fiscal arrangements spheres between the units constituting a federation. Asymmetry in the arrangements in a federation can be viewed in both vertical (between Center and states) and horizontal (among the states) senses. If federations are seen as 'indestructible union of indestructible states', and Centre and states are seen to exist on the basis of equality; neither has the power to make inroads into the defined authority and functions of the other unilaterally. However, such 'purists' view of federalism is rarely, if at all, seen in practice. Even when the constitution guarantees near equal powers to the states, in the working on federal systems Centre dominates in political, administrative as well as fiscal spheres.

There is considerable volume of literature on Central domination in Indian federalism in the assignment system in the Constitution and central intrusion into the States' domains in the working of the federation. Unlike the classical federations like the USA, Indian federation is not an 'indestructible union of indestructible states'. Only the Union is indestructible and the States are not. Article 3 of the Constitution vests the Parliament with powers to constitute new states by separating territories from the existing ones, alter their boundaries, and change their names. The only requirement for this is that the Bill for the purpose will have to be placed in the Parliament on the recommendation of the President and after it has been referred to the relevant State legislature for ascertaining their views (their approval is not necessary). The federation is not founded on the principle of equality between the Union and States either. The central government in India has the powers, and it actually does invade the legislative and executive domains of the states.

#### **1.4.3 ASYMMETRY IN INDIAN FEDERALISM**

Asymmetric arrangement in Indian federalism has a long history and goes back to the way in which the British unified the country under their rule and later the way in which the territories under the direct control of the British and various principalities were integrated in the Indian Union. While the territories ruled directly by the British were easily integrated into the Union, the treaties of accession signed by the individual rulers covered the integration of different principalities. The provinces ruled directly by the British had a modicum of autonomy and rudimentary form of parliamentary government as the British loosened the grip gradually from 1919. The Constitution that was adopted in 1951 itself classified the states into four categories. The provinces directly ruled by the British were classified as Part A states. Those princely States which had a relationship with the Government of India based on individual treaties signed were classified as Part B States. These

included the States of Hyderabad, Mysore, Jammu and Kashmir and 5 newly joined unions of princely states. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the powers special powers were given in the terms of accession. The remaining princely states acceding to the union were grouped under Part C states. Finally, the territories ruled by other foreign powers gaining independence (French and Portuguese) and areas not covered in the above three categories were brought under the direct control of the union to form Part D states or Union Territories.

While many of the former princely states, particularly the Part B states continued as administrative units after their integration into India, this continuation was not an essential part of the bargain. Furthermore, reorganization of state boundaries from 1953, freely permitted to the Centre by Article 3 of the constitution, gradually eroded this status. Thus, in general, the princely states ceased to matter as geographic entities. ed. The asymmetries present in 1947 with respect to almost all the princely states disappeared from Indian federalism. The sole exception, of course, was the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What do you understand by asymmetrical Federalism ?

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2. Discuss asymmetry in Indian Federalism.

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#### **1.4.4 ARTICLE 370: THE CASE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

Article 370 of the Indian constitution is a law that grants special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir. The article is drafted in Part XXI of the Constitution, which relates to Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions.

##### **1.4.4.1 NATURE:**

Article 370:- Temporary provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

- (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Constitution,—
  - (a) the provisions of article 238 shall not apply now in relation to the state of Jammu and Kashmir;
  - (b) the power of Parliament to make laws for the said state shall be limited to—
    - (I) those matters in the Union List and the Concurrent List which, in consultation with the Government of the State, are declared by the President to correspond to matters specified in

the Instrument of Accession governing the accession of the State to the Dominion of India as the matters with respect to which the Dominion Legislature may make laws for that State; and

- (ii) such other matters in the said Lists as, with the concurrence of the Government of the State, the President may by order specify.

Explanation: For the purpose of this article, the Government of the State means the person for the time being recognized by the President on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly of the State as the Sadr-i-Riyasat (now Governor) of Jammu and Kashmir, acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers of the State for the time being in office.

- (c) the provisions of article 1 and of this article shall apply in relation to that State;  
(d) such of the other provisions of this Constitution shall apply in relation to that State subject to such exceptions and modifications as the President may by order specify:

Provided that no such order which relates to the matters specified in the Instrument of Accession of the State referred to in paragraph (i) of sub-clause (b) shall be issued except in consultation with the Government of the State:

Provided further that no such order which relates to matters other than those referred to in the last preceding proviso shall be issued except with the concurrence of that Government.

- (2) If the concurrence of the Government of the State referred to in paragraph (ii) of sub-clause (b) of clause (1) or in the second proviso to sub-clause (d) of that clause be given before the Constituent Assembly for the purpose of framing the Constitution of the State is convened, it shall be placed before such Assembly for such decision as it may take thereon.
- (3) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this article, the President may, by public notification, declare that this article shall cease to be operative or shall be operative only with such exceptions and modifications and from such date as he may specify: Provided that the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the State referred to in clause (2) shall be necessary before the President issues such a notification.

#### **1.4.4.2 POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS**

This article specifies that the states must concur in the application of laws, except those that pertain to Communications, Defence, Finance, and Foreign Affairs.

Similar protections for unique status exist in tribal areas of India including those in Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Nagaland. However, it is only for the state of Jammu and Kashmir that the accession of the state to India is still a matter of dispute between India and Pakistan still on the agenda of the UN Security Council and where the Government of India vide 1974 Indira-Sheikh accord committed itself to keeping the relationship between the Union and Jammu and Kashmir State within the ambit of this article. The 1974 Indira-Sheikh accord between Kashmiri politician Sheikh Abdullah and then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated, "The State of Jammu and Kashmir which is a constituent unit of the Union of India, shall, in its relation with the Union, continue to be governed by Article 370 of the Constitution of India".

In notifications issued as far back as 1927 and 1932, the state created various categories of residents – with some being called permanent residents (PRs) with special rights. Though the law did not discriminate between female and male PRs, an administrative rule made it clear that women could remain PRs only till marriage. After that they had to seek a fresh right to remain PRs. And if a woman married someone who wasn't a Kashmiri PR, she automatically lost her own PR status. But a 2002 high court ruling made it clear that a woman will remain a PR even after marriage to a non-PR, and enjoy all the rights of a PR. A People's Democratic Party government, led by Mehbooba Mufti, passed a law to overturn the court judgment by introducing a Bill styled "Permanent Residents (Disqualification) Bill, 2004". This was not Mufti's solo effort. Omar Abdullah's party, the National Conference, backed this Bill and got it passed in the lower house of the assembly. But it did not ultimately see the light of day for various reasons.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the state's 'Prime Minister' and leader of the Muslims in the Valley, found the inclusion of Article 370 in the 'Temporary and Transitional Provisions' of the Constitution's Part XXI unsettling. He wanted 'iron clad guarantees of autonomy'. Suspecting that the state's special status might be lost, Abdullah advocated independence from India, causing New Delhi to dismiss his government in 1953, and place him under preventive detention.

Some argue that the President may, by public notification under article 370(3), declare that Article 370 shall cease to be operative and no recommendation of the Constituent Assembly is needed as it does not exist any longer. Others say it can be amended by an amendment Act under Article 368 of the Constitution and the amendment extended under Article 370(1). Art. 147 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir states no Bill or amendment seeking to make any change in the provisions of the constitution of India as applicable in relation to the State; shall be introduced or moved in either house of the Legislature. As per Article 5 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir the executive and legislative power of the State extends to all matters except those with respect to which Parliament has power to make laws for the State under the provisions of the Constitution of India as applicable in relation to this state.

### ***Applicability of the Constitution of India to J&K***

In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of article 370 of the Constitution, the President, with the concurrence of the Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir made The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1950 which came into force on 26 Jan 1950 and was later superseded by the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954 which came into force on 14 May 1954.

### ***Applicability of Central Acts to J&K***

Acts passed by Indian Parliament have been extended to Jammu & Kashmir over a period of time. These acts are:

- All India Services Act
- Border Security Force Act
- Central Vigilance Commission Act

- Essential Commodities Act
- Haj Committee Act
- Income Tax Act
- The Central Laws (Extension To Jammu And Kashmir) Act, 1956
- The Central Laws (Extension To Jammu And Kashmir) Act, 1968
- Claims of Non Applicability of Central Acts
- Non applicability of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Act by claiming recourse to Article 370 was set aside in 2010

### ***Revocation of Article 370***

In 2019, Indian parliament revoked the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 and Article 35A. Though Article 370 was a temporary provision in the constitution, it cannot be amended through an ordinance. Its amendment can be done only through parliament, like any other constitutional amendment. On the other hand, section 35 A was not added to constitution by Parliament but by a Presidential proclamation in 1954 and hence can be withdrawn in a similar manner by presidential proclamation. However, such proclamation can only be brought when cabinet pass a resolution and send it to president.

In 2019, president by using power under Article 370 (1) pass the “The Constitution (Application to J&K) order 2019 which supersedes, 1954 presidential order. As the 1954 order repealed, hence the constitution of J&K and Article 35A cease to exist. As far as the Article 370 is concerned, the provision for its revocation was laid down under the article itself. The article states that in order to revoke it, the permission of constituent Assembly is required. However, the constituent assembly of J&K was dissolved in 1957. The presidential order of 2019 ended this deadlock. The order add clause 4 to Article 367 (interpretation clause of Art 370). Article 367(4) says that from now the constituent assembly means legislative assembly. The government argued since J&K is under president's rule which meant that parliament was standing in place of state assembly, parliament have every right to pass such orders. Two resolutions were passed by the parliament- rendering Art 370 inoperative and the J&K reorganisation bill 2019.

Implications:

- Single citizenship
- No special power
- Only one flag (tricolour)
- Art 356 & art 360 become applicable
- Reservation for minorities
- Constitution of India applicable in J&K
- Protection of property rights of women marrying non-domicile of J&K.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Article 370

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2. What are the special provisions provided by article 371 with respect to states of Maharashtra and Gujarat?

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3. Discuss the special provisions provided by article 371A, 371B, 371D, 371E and 371F.

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### **1.4.5 ARTICLE 371 (SPECIAL PROVISION WITH RESPECT TO THE STATES OF MAHARASHTRA AND GUJARAT)**

#### **1.4.5.1 NATURE:**

There is a special provision incorporated with regard to Maharashtra and Gujarat and later on extended to few of other states. As per this article the constitution states that “Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the President may by order made with respect to the State of Maharashtra or Gujarat, provided for any special responsibility of the Governor for -

- (a) The establishment of separate development boards for Vidarbha, Marathwada, and the rest of Maharashtra or, as the case may be, Saurashtra, Kutch and the rest of Gujarat with the provision that a report on the working of each of these boards will be placed each year before the State Legislative Assembly;
- (b) the equitable allocation of funds for developmental expenditure over the said areas, subject to the requirements of the State as a whole; and
- (c) an equitable arrangement providing adequate facilities for technical education and vocational training, and adequate opportunities for employment in services under the control of the State Government, in respect of all the said areas, subject to the requirements of the State as a whole.

#### **1.4.5.2 POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS**

When in 1960 a proposal for the bifurcation of Bombay was under consideration the demand for the creation of a separate state of Vidarbha was revived. Some Congress MLAs from the Nagpur area strongly demanded the formation of Vidarbha. In order to forcefully and effectively press their demand, the people of the region organised Nag Vidarbha Andolan Samiti, which also organised

violent demonstrations near Nagpur city. That the Vidarbha area would be given special representation and finance for its development, did not satisfy them. With the lapse of time the agitation for Vidarbha subsided although as a demand continued to be made. Marathwada Statutory Development Board Marathwada Statutory Development Board (MSDB) is a constitutional body created by Presidential Order in 1994 to develop Marathwada region of Maharashtra and to decrease regional imbalance in development within the state. MSDB releases annual report assessing problems within various districts of Marathwada, also monitors development work and expenditure.

### ***Constitutional Provision***

Article 371(2) of Constitution of India is a special provision in respect of States of Maharashtra and Gujarat. According to this article, President of India can give special responsibility to Governors of Maharashtra and Gujarat to create separate development boards for Vidarbha, Marathwada, Rest of Maharashtra regions of Maharashtra and Kutch, Saurashtra regions of Gujarat.

### ***Article 371A***

This article is incorporated in The Constitution of India in 1949 to provide special provision with respect to the State of Nagaland. This article provides guarantees to religious and social practices of Nagas, their Customary law and procedures, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law. The ownership and transfer of land and its resources, shall apply to the State of Nagaland unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by a resolution so decides. The Governor of Nagaland shall have special responsibility with respect to law and order in the State of Nagaland. The Governor also has the power to establish a regional council for the Tuensang district.

### ***Article 371B***

Special provision with respect to the State of Assam Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the President may, by order made with respect to the State of Assam, provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the State consisting of members of that Assembly elected from the tribal areas specified in Part I of the table appended to paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule and such number of other members of that Assembly as may be specified in the order and for the modifications to be made in the rules of procedure of that Assembly for the constitution and proper functioning of such committee.

### ***Article 371D***

Article 371D was added to the Indian Constitution to provide special provisions to the Telangana region of undivided Andhra Pradesh. When the State of Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956, certain safeguards were envisaged for the Telangana area in the matter of development and also in the matter of employment opportunities and educational facilities for the residents of that area. The provisions of clause (1) of article 371 of the Constitution were intended to give effect to certain features of these safeguards. The Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act, 1957, was enacted to provide for employment opportunities for residents of Telangana area. But in 1969, the Supreme Court held the relevant provision of the Act to be unconstitutional as far as it related to the safeguards envisaged for the Telangana area. Owing to a variety of causes, the working of the

safeguards gave rise to a certain amount of dissatisfaction sometimes in the Telangana area and sometimes in the other areas of the State. Measures were devised from time to time to resolve the problems. Recently several leaders of Andhra Pradesh made a concerted effort to analyse the factors which have been giving rise to the dissatisfaction and find enduring answers to the problems with a view to achieving fuller emotional integration of the people of Andhra Pradesh. On the 21st September, 1973, they suggested certain measures (generally known as the Six-Point Formula) indicating a uniform approach for promoting accelerated development of the backward areas of the State so as to secure the balanced development of the State as a whole and for providing equitable opportunities to different areas of the State in this matter of education, employment and career prospects in public services. This formula has received wide support in Andhra Pradesh and has been endorsed by the State Government.

This Bill has been brought forward to provide the necessary constitutional authority for giving effect to the Six-Point Formula in so far as it relates to the provision of equitable opportunities for people of different areas of the State in the matter of admission to educational institutions and public employment and constitution of an Administrative Tribunal with jurisdiction to deal with certain disputes and grievances relating to public services. The Bill also seeks to empower Parliament to legislate for establishing a Central University in the State and contains provisions of an incidental and consequential nature including the provision for the validation of certain appointments made in the past. As the Six-Point Formula provides for the discontinuance of the Regional Committee constituted under clause (1) of article 371 of the Constitution, the Bill also provides for the repeal of that clause.

#### ***Article 371E***

Article 371E grants special status to six backward districts of Hyderabad-Karnataka region to establish a separate Development Board. This board will see that sufficient funds are allocated for Development of the region. It provides reservation in education and Government-jobs to locals.

#### ***Article 371F***

Article 371F was incorporated in Indian Constitution to provide special provisions with respect to the State of Sikkim. Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution. According to this Article, the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall be constituted under the Constitution of India. Parliament may, for the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of the different sections of the population of Sikkim make provision for the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim which may be filled by candidates belonging to such sections and for the delimitation of the assembly constituencies from which candidates belonging to such sections alone may stand for election to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim. The Governor of Sikkim shall have special responsibility for peace and for an equitable arrangement for ensuring the social and economic advancement of different sections of the population of Sikkim and in the discharge of his special responsibility under this clause, the Governor of Sikkim shall, subject to such directions as the President may, from time to time, deem fit to issue, act in his discretion.

## **1.4.6 5<sup>th</sup> SCHEDULE**

### **1.4.6.1 NATURE:**

The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India deals with administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes in these areas.

**Scheduled Areas:** The Fifth Schedule covers Tribal areas in 9 states of India namely Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan. The North Eastern states such as Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram are covered by the Sixth Schedule and not included in the Fifth schedule.

### **1.4.6.2 FIFTH SCHEDULE PROVISIONS**

The provisions related to Fifth Schedule Areas are incorporated in Article 244(1), to administer and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes

#### **PART A: GENERAL**

1. Interpretation.—In this Schedule, unless the context otherwise requires, the expression “State” does not include the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
2. Executive power of a State in Scheduled Areas.—Subject to the provisions of this Schedule, the executive power of a State extends to the Scheduled Areas therein.
3. Report by the Governor to the President regarding the administration of Scheduled Areas.—The Governor of each State having Scheduled Areas therein shall annually, or whenever so required by the President, make a report to the President regarding the administration of the Scheduled Areas in that State and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to the State as to the administration of the said areas.

#### **PART B: ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL OF SCHEDULED AREAS AND SCHEDULED TRIBES**

Tribes Advisory Council.— (1) There shall be established in each State having Scheduled Areas therein and, if the President so directs, also in any State having Scheduled Tribes but not Scheduled Areas therein, a Tribes Advisory Council consisting of not more than twenty members of whom, as nearly as may be, three-fourths shall be the representatives of the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of the State:

Provided that if the number of representatives of the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of the State is less than the number of seats in the Tribes Advisory Council to be filled by such representatives, the remaining seats shall be filled by other members of those tribes.

- (2) It shall be the duty of the Tribes Advisory Council to advise on such matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes in the State as may be referred to them by the Governor.
- (3) The Governor may make rules prescribing or regulating, as the case may be,—
  - (a) the number of members of the Council, the mode of their appointment and the appointment of the Chairman of the Council and of the officers and servants thereof;

- (b) the conduct of its meetings and its procedure in general; and
  - (c) all other incidental matters.
4. Law applicable to Scheduled Areas.—(1) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the Governor may by public notification direct that any particular Act of Parliament or of the Legislature of the State shall not apply to a Scheduled Area or any part thereof in the State or shall apply to a Scheduled Area or any part thereof in the State subject to such exceptions and modifications as he may specify in the notification and any direction given under this subparagraph may be given so as to have retrospective effect.
- (2) The Governor may make regulations for the peace and good government of any area in a State which is for the time being a Scheduled Area.
- In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such regulations may—
- (a) prohibit or restrict the transfer of land by or among members of the Scheduled Tribes in such area;
  - (b) regulate the allotment of land to members of the Scheduled Tribes in such area;
  - (c) regulate the carrying on of business as money-lender by persons who lend money to members of the Scheduled Tribes in such area.
- (3) In making any such regulation as is referred to in sub-paragraph (2) of this paragraph, the Governor may repeal or amend any Act of Parliament or of the Legislature of the State or any existing law which is for the time being applicable to the area in question.
- (4) All regulations made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the President and, until assented to by him, shall have no effect.

#### 1.4.7 SIXTH SCHEDULE

The Sixth Schedule is an interesting document. It was created to ensure that the rights of tribals who are minorities within a state or geographical area populated by a dominant non-tribal population are not subsumed within the rights framework of the latter. The person who mooted this idea was JJM Nichols Roy, a Khasi from undivided Assam, who at that time had a vision for his people and for other tribes.

The British policy of excluding various “primitive” tribes in the North-east, particularly those from the Naga Hills and the Abors of the North East Frontier Agency (now Arunachal Pradesh) whom they found particularly belligerent, had kept the tribes out of the purview of any kind of administration. They remained out of the formal systems of governance and were guided by their own tribal laws. Had they been mainstreamed after Independence and treated as equal citizens within the state of Assam, their plight might have been indescribable.

The Sixth Schedule was aimed at granting some kind of autonomy to the tribes so that they could be guided by their customary laws and practices and not be pushed to conform to a modern system of governance where they might not be able to negotiate their own liberal political space

and to grow according to their own genius. Despite the Sixth Schedule, many tribes who came under the larger rubric of Assam felt stifled by the authoritative nature of the dominant Assamese caste Hindu rulers who did not display the magnanimity expected of them.

One of the fundamental provisions of the Sixth Schedule is that state governors play a very special protective role within these areas. They are empowered to make regulations prohibiting or restricting the transfer of land from tribals to non-tribals and prevent exploitation of the tribal communities. Since these Scheduled Areas are supposed to enjoy autonomy protected by the Constitution, the laws passed by Parliament and the state legislatures do not automatically apply to them. But after Meghalaya was created in 1972 vide the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, the Sixth Schedule was amended with the addition of Article 12 (A). Basically this Article gives supremacy to the laws passed by Parliament or by the state legislature over those passed by the district councils which were created by the Sixth Schedule to govern tribal or scheduled areas. The insertion of Article 12 (A) has in a sense diluted the powers of the district councils but the argument put forth at the time of the amendment is that the newly created state of Meghalaya is already ruled by tribal legislators, with non-tribals contesting from only a very few seats.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss 5<sup>th</sup> schedule of the Indian constitution.
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2. Discuss 6<sup>th</sup> schedule of the Indian constitution.
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#### **1.4.8 EXERCISES**

1. Critically analyse importance of Article 370 to the Indian Constitution.
2. Outline Articles 371 and state reasons for incorporation of various sections.
3. Explain how 5th and 6th Schedule empowers weaker sections of the society?

#### **1.4.9 Reference**

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## 2.1 REORGANISATION OF STATES: DIFFERENT PHASES

-Mamta Sharma

### STRUCTURE

#### 2.1.0 Objectives

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

#### 2.1.2 Pre Independence Scenario

#### 2.1.3 Birth of New States

#### 2.1.4 History of State Reorganisation in India

#### 2.1.5 Factors that instigated the demand for the creation of new states in India

#### 2.1.6 Let Us Sum Up

#### 2.1.7 Exercises

#### 2.1.8 Suggested Readings

### 2.1.0 OBJECTIVES

This lesson provides the basic knowledge regarding the reorganization of states since independence. After going through this lesson you will be able to understand

- The nature of the states before independence
- About the beginning of demands for the reorganization of states
- Comprehend the structure of Indian states

### 2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

India is today a union of twenty eight states and eight union territories. The geography of the Indian federal polity, however is a product of a long period of development and even after it came into existence, it has been continuously changing. The demand of creation of new states in India started soon after the independence and such demands remained a chronic feature in Indian politics. The creation of new states is seen as an answer to preserve the ethnic, cultural and language differences by various groups who feared that emerging trends of Indian politics may create a challenge to their unique identity. It is also seen as a solution for many problems Indian polity is facing, like the lesser participation of people in democratic affairs, low electoral turn-out and ethnic and cultural clashes. Having smaller states is also considered important for developmental challenges various regions of the country is facing now. Thus, the demand for the creation of new states has been put by various political groups and people of the regions from time to time. However, the problem of Indian cultural and ethnic differences and underdevelopment still seems unsolved and many new demands for separation and creation of new states are in line. Now the question is that do we need more states to

strengthen our democratic and federal structure and to bring development in the regions still lying unnoticed. This lesson will look into the history of state reorganization in India and will explore the factors that have instigated the demand for separation and statehood. It will also analyze the rationale behind the creation of several new states in India and the viability of those. It would further discuss the present scenario of Indian states and how much and how efficiently the issue of reshuffling of state boundaries has been done in the country. And lastly, where should we put an end to the creation of new states in India and what should be the basis for the creation of any new states.

### **2.1.2 PRE-INDEPENDENCE SCENARIO**

The debate on reorganization of states in India is a century old issue. The partition of Bengal in the beginning of 20th century, which witnessed Rabindranath Tagore in the forefront of protest marches in the streets of Calcutta against the division of Bengal, was perhaps the first such an exercise in India to divide a state for serving political goals. Although the proposal to divide Bengal was withdrawn in the face of countrywide protests, the necessity of reorganising the states was felt in subsequent years. The Congress Party in 1920 Nagpur session adopted a resolution to reorganize states primarily based on language to address local cultural aspirations. Subsequent decades witnessed several proposals for the formation of provinces of Andhra, Orissa (Odisha), and Sindh based on culture and language. There were also issues related to the Bihar-Bengal separation, new demands emerged for Chotanagpur and Santhal parganas under the name of Jharkhand, and Darbhanga within the region of Mithila. The demand for separation of Marathi and Hindi-speaking areas was also raised. There were proposals for Pakhtoonistan, Pathanistan, Azad Punjab, independent Travancore, Dravidistan and Achhutistan. The Congress sessions in 1927, 1937, 1938 and 1945-46 did take note of the various proposals of state reorganisation based on language. Yet realising the potential of linguistic nationalism on rise, and the ensuing problems that it can create, the Congress working committee in 1938 advised people to desist from making demands for linguistic provinces

### **2.1.3 BIRTH OF NEW STATES**

In the post-Independence period, the first movement for reorganisation was to create a state for Telugu-speaking people, which the Congress government acceded to and Andhra Pradesh was created in the process. The victory of the struggle to create Andhra Pradesh boosted demands in other provinces. The Hyderabad session of the All India Congress Committee adopted a resolution recommending the redefinition of boundaries of the states in India primarily based on language, in 1953. The Government of India appointed the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in December 1953. The SRC advocated the following: (i) “To recognise linguistic homogeneity as important factor but not to consider it as an exclusive and binding principle; (ii) To ensure that communicational, educational and cultural needs of different language groups are adequately met; (iii) Where satisfactory conditions exist, and the balance of economic, political and administrative considerations favour composite states, to continue them with the necessary safeguards to ensure that all sections enjoy equal rights and opportunities; (iv) To repudiate the 'home land' concept by upholding equal opportunities and equal rights for all citizens throughout the length and breadth of

the union; (V) to reject the theory of one language, one state ; (VI) to the extend that realization of unilinguism at the state level would tend to breed a particularistic feelings, to counter balance that balance by positive measures calculated to give a deeper content to Indian nationalism, to promote greater interplay of different regional cultures and interstate cooperation and accord, and to reinforce the links between the centre and the states in order to secure a greater coordinated working of national policies and programmes.

#### **2.1.4 History of State Reorganisation in India**

After Independence, internal map of Indian Union is redrawn a number of times. The political history of remapping of India since independence is divided into four distinct phases: first phase of integration of princely states and reorganisation (1947- 50); second phase of reorganisation on the basis of language (1950-1966); third phase of reorganisation of North-East (1960-90); and fourth phase of contemporary reorganisation of Hindu-Hindi heartland States and Telangana (1990- 2014).

##### **The First Phase: Integration of Princely States and Reorganisation (1947-50)**

The Independence of India was a glorious achievement for the Indian people and its political leadership. It was the end of the British Empire almost after two centuries. But it did not signify the end of the struggle for India. As Alfred Cobben said, “it raised more problems than it solved”. First and the foremost problem which India faced were of the unity and integration of the country which was the result of the crisis that India faced at the time of its Independence. The British entered India after the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. British Empire was the area directly administered by the British; Princely India had treaty relations (Paramountcy power) with the British and certain tribal areas of north eastern and central India were ruled by the Viceroy of India directly. The princely states in the subcontinent numbered around 600. A number of states like Bhopal, Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Gwalior, Indore, Baroda, Travancore, Mysore, etc. were quite large and economically as well as militarily viable. After the Second World War, Labour Party Government came into power in Britain. Under the Cabinet Mission plan 1946, new government announced the transfer of power to Indian people and the paramountcy which they exercised over the princely states would automatically lapse. On 20th February 1947, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee announced that, “As was explicitly stated by the cabinet mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their power and obligations under paramountcy to any government of British India”. On June 3rd British Government declared that the transfer of power was to take place on 15th August, and paramountcy was to lapse on that day. Consequently, rulers of several states claimed that they would be independent from 15th of August. Once the paramountcy lapsed, some of these states refused to join either India or Pakistan and declared their intention to remain independent, and some Excluded Areas too wanted to remain outside both the countries. On 11 June 1947, Travancore had decided to become an independent state, and next day, Hyderabad too made the same announcement. The rulers of Jammu and Kashmir, Junagadh and many other viable states were also thinking on similar lines. Integration of the princely states is a fascinating chapter in the history of India. For the integration of these states into Indian Dominion, Indian Constitutional Assembly created a new

ministry under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on June 1947. Its primary task was to bring the states into some form of organic relationship with the centre in order to prevent the balkanization of the country. For this purpose Sardar Patel and V. P. Menon produced two key documents: 'Instrument of accession' on three subjects (defence, external affairs, and communication), and a 'Standstill Agreement' which kept alive the existing relations between the states and the Government of India. The territorial integration of princely states took three forms - merging with the adjacent provinces; grouping of certain States into separate units; and transformation of certain States into centrally administered areas. By August 15, 1947, all the princely states had acceded to India by signing the Instrument of Accession, except Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Jammu & Kashmir. These three states after 1947 were also acceded into India by different methods: Junagadh by plebiscite, Hyderabad by police action and Jammu & Kashmir by instrument of accession (With Special article 370). The accession of Indian states went side by side with their physical integration and reorganisation, 310 states were organised into six unions, while 215 were merged with their neighbouring provinces. Another 5 states were converted into Chief Commissioners' Provinces, but Hyderabad and Mysore were left untouched initially. Thus, as a result of integration, in the place of 554 states, 14 administrative units had emerge. In all these units, responsible Governments were set up, and the former rulers were given the title of 'Raj Pramukhs'. They were allowed to retain their personal privileges, and tax free privy purses were granted to them. The policy of integration served a great purpose. On the completion of this process, India emerged as an integrated entity both geographically and politically.

### **Second Phase: Reorganisation on the Basis of language (1950-66)**

India is considered to be the most diverse and complex society in the world linguistically and it is also one of the prominent factors that lead to the demands of separate states. "This linguistic diversity was speculated to lead to the break-up of the country in the initial years immediately after independence". All around the country various states started demanding the reorganisation on the basis of language (one language, one state) particularly in the southern regions. But the national leaders started expressing the fear that separation of provinces on such a basis would foster the growth of subnationalism in the reorganised states and could lead to further divisions whereas even the one (Pakistan partition) that had taken place earlier had been very painful and cruel. The Congress party had historically been the initiator and most vigorous exponent of a linguistic solution to the problem of division of the Indian states. During British rule, the Congress party had advocated the redivision of the Indian states on a linguistic basis as a part of its platform. In 1903, Sir Herbert Risely, the Home Secretary in the Government of India, first raised the issue of reorganisation of Bengal province. "The MontagueChelmsford Report (1918) considered the linguistic reorganisation of the provinces impractical even through reforms favoured smaller states. The Simon Report (1928) recommended the formation of provinces on linguistic basis. The reorganisation of Orissa (1936) and Sindh on linguistic principle was the only example of the British acceptance of this principle." As early as in 1905, the Congress Party had supported the principle of linguistic states but it opposed the division of the Bengal Province. Thus, Congress Party's linguistic policy between 1905 and 1920 was

ambiguous. It gained a concrete shape only in 1920 at the Nagpur session when the Congress accepted it for the first time in principle. And in 1921 the Congress went ahead in establishing 20 Provincial Congress committee's based on language. Officially, the Congress Party endorsed the linguistic principle in 1928 with its acceptance of the Nehru Report which advocated that the present distribution of Indian provinces had no rational basis and believed that its distribution was merely accidental. The Nehru Report endorsed that "the redistribution of provinces should take place on linguistic basis on the demand of the majority of the population of the area concerned". Congress reiterated its faith in this policy at Calcutta session in 1937 and in its election manifesto of 1945-46. On 17th June 1948, the Government of India appointed the Linguistic Provinces Commission under the chairmanship of S.K. Dhar to study the feasibility of organizing states on linguistic basis. In its 10th December 1948 report, the Commission recommended that division on linguistic basis would not be in the larger interest of the nation. It says: "In any rational and scientific planning that may be take place in regard to the provinces of India in the future, homogeneity of language alone cannot be the decisive or even an important factor. Administration convenience, history, geography, economy, culture and many other matters will also have to be given due weight". The report submitted by Dhar commission led to much resentment among people. As a result, in the Jaipur session of 1948, Congress appointed a three member JVP Committee to consider the recommendations of Dhar Commission. This committee also rejected the linguistic factor of reorganisation of the states. Rather it recommended the reorganisation of states on the basis of security, unity and economic prosperity of the nation. It observed: "We feel that conditions that have emerged in India since the achievement of independence are such as to make us view the problem of linguistic provinces in a new light. The first consideration must be the security; unity and economic prosperity of India and every separative and disruptive tendency should be rigorously discouraged" (JVP Committee Report, 1949). After the reports of Dhar commission and JVP committee, constitutional assembly agreed with the ideas proposed in these reports and on 26th January 1950 made a federal constitution within centralised federal system and divided the 28 states into four categories- A, B, C, and D on rational basis or balanced approach. By the early 1950s, it was apparent that regional and non-congress political parties, state politicians, regional elites, and in some cases ordinary people did not agree with this classification. People all over India especially in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamilnadu and Kerala demanded reorganisation on the basis of language. The demand for Andhra, creation of a Telugu- majority state in the part of Madras state had become stronger in 1952. A Gandhian leader Potti Shreemalu was demanding formation of Andhra. He died on 16th December 1952 after undertaking a fast unto death and as a result, the Telugu majority 'Andhra state' was formed by Nehru in 1953. The problem of reorganising the states of the Union of India assumed a new perspective with this announcement by Prime Minister Nehru. Consequently, his Government decided to appoint a three-members State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) under the Chairmanship of Syad Fazl Ali to "investigate the conditions of the problem, the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon". After three years, on 30 September 1955 the Commission submitted its

report to Government of India. It recommended the establishment of 16 states and 3 union territories without any distinction and rejected the previous division on basis of four categories. After much debate, Parliament called for a reorganisation of India based on the criteria laid down by the SRC. The State Reorganisation Act 1956 implemented some of the recommendations of SRC and re-drew Indian map into 14 states and 6 union territories. Indian Government hoped that these changes would satisfy the demand for territorial reorganisation, but the struggles continued in and across a number of states. Once the principle of linguistic states had been accepted, the demands for reorganisation on the basis on linguistic and ethnicity increased in Punjab and Bombay. In 1960, the bilingual Province of Bombay was divided into the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat after violent language riots. The demands for a separate Punjab State were also denied by the Central Government because they considered it as a religiously (Sikh) motivated demand. In 1966 'greater Punjab' was split between Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. It was accepted only when the Sikh leadership abandoned religious rhetoric and implied its demands in ethno-linguistic arguments.

### **Third Phase: Reorganisation of North-East (1960-90)**

The third phase focussed on the division of the Assam state in Northeast India. The Northeast was the least integrated region in the territorial and administrative sphere of British Empire. The North-East is a patchwork of tribal and mixed linguistic communities. In the Indian Constitution, Six Schedule added for the protection of hills district, which made all the hill district of Assam autonomous with their respective district councils. Although several new States had been created in India on the basis of language after independence but in Assam there were no such demands. But the tribal leaders demanded the formation of a hill state, cut off from plains area under one administrative unit. Another proposal was raised for the formation of Purbanchal state, composite of Cachar, Tripura, Manipur, the Lushai Hills, the Naga Hills and the NEFA. Naga National Council (NNC) also wanted an independent Naga homeland for the Naga people outside Assam and India. Under the leadership of A. Z. Phizo, NNC launched a violent struggle against the government. "Taking all these entire factors into consideration, State Reorganisation Commission had come to conclusion that formation of hill state in this region was never feasible nor in the interest of the tribal peoples themselves. The hill district therefore should continue to be part of Assam and no major change should be made in their present constitution pattern". Ethnic and linguistic group in various areas, especially in the hill area and Naga leaders expressed their dissatisfaction with the recommendations of the SRC. In 1960, Assam Government made Assamese the sole official language of the state. The tribal leaders expressed anxiety over the predominance of Assamese language in the region. Tribal of the hills and linguistic minorities had strongly protested against the imposition of Assamese language. Some had even said that, "as long as tribals remained with Assam their destiny lay in the hands of the Assamese" (Barpurji, 1998). In 1960, various party of hills area merged into the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) and again demanded a separate state within the Indian union.

APHLC consistently protested against the state government's language policy of 'Assamisation' of hill people. In the end, Government of India acted in the favour of the APHLC and five states and two Union territories were carved out of Assam, under the act of North-East

Reorganisation Act 1972. This state attained full statehood: Nagaland (1963), Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura (1972), Mizoram (1986) and Arunachal Pradesh (1987).

#### **Fourth Phase: Contemporary Reorganisation of Hindi Heartland States and Telangana (1990-2014)**

In 2000, Once again the internal map of India was redrawn to create three new states – Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand. These new states 109 were proposed on the grounds of administrative efficiency rather than on the language principle. These were the first states which were created on nonlinguistic basis. Let us consider the following reasons that played important role in redrawing these states: - The trends that had become visible in the 1980s like the decline of Congress, the rise of Hindu nationalist forces, the emergence of coalition governments, the regionalisation of politics, and changes in political economy were important reasons for the creation of these states. The idea of smaller states has found support among political elites across parties over time due to the change taking place, particularly with the emergence of the other backward caste communities and the presence of their strong leaders within the Congress and the BJP. The most important structural change arose from what Christophe Jaffrelot has called the 'silent revolution' that swept north Indian politics in this period as a result of the rise to political power of lower castes. Regional parties across India became important players within federal coalition government. Maya Chadda explains the formation of three new states in 2000 as one of the reasons for closer integration of ethnic and caste based regional parties in the central government. After 1989, the formation of coalition government in the centre had made the roles of regional parties even more significant in the national politics. Emma Mawdsley (2002) suggests that in the new era of unstable coalition government at the centre, a few seats either way could help to determine who governs in the state, and even at centre. All these states witnessed the emergence of distinctive types of social movements in the early 1970s. Mary Katzenstein, Smitu Kothari and Uday Mehta (2001) had argued that identity-based movements (around caste, regional, or religious identity) emerged successfully within electoral politics. Rajni Kothari (1985) observed the emergence of new movements or 'non-party political formations' in the 1970s was linked to a shift towards a more participatory vision of decentralized democracy and development in which grass root issues became the subject of political activism. Regional inequality has markedly increased since the early 1990s. Globalization and liberalization have led to the establishment of a global national market economy which has opened up the floodgates for private capital which leading to regional inequalities among states and contributing to the rising demands for smaller states. The new political economy created 'region within the region.' The Marxist intellectual A.K. Roy calls it an 'internal colonialism.' He says: "In India, the under- developed area is exploited by the developed areas as colonies, as are the underdeveloped by the developed people. The natives of the internal colonies are not only the victims of underdevelopment, but of development as well in central India, as this development does not mean the development of the people there but their displacement and replacement by the 110 colonies of developed people, the clever people, the political connected people coming from the developed areas". The emergence of the Hindu national forces in the Indian politics is the next factor behind the demands for separate states. In the general

election of 1989, BJP consolidated a position of a national political party. The implementations of Mandal Commission's recommendations for affirmative action for OBC, and the destructions of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and continuing campaign to build a Ram Mandir on its site, consolidated its base in the middle and upper class Hindu voters. In early 1990s, BJP became a stronger proponent of states' right in India's federal system and emphasised the need for the decentralisation of power. In 2000, BJP government that had come to power with the support of regional parties and created three new states on the basis of administrative efficiency. L. K. Advani, then the home minister, explained that the states were being created on the grounds of 'administrative and economic viability' as well as for the 'overwhelming aspirations of the people of the region'. Telangana, the 29th state of the Indian Union came into being on 2 June, 2014 after a long drawn-out struggle of more than six and half decades. K. Srinivasulu says that three trends in the discursive articulation on Telangana can be identified: first, political marginalisation of the leadership, second, Economic and educational backwardness of the region or uneven development of the region (logic of internal colonialism) and third, Constructing the identity of Telangana as an 'imagined community' in opposition to the Andhra identity. Much like the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand formed in 2000, Telangana too has moved away from language affinity as the sole basis of state formation to a more complex network of socioeconomic, political-ideological and regional bases of identities, favouring the creation of states in contemporary times.

## **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. After the end of British Empire, India witnessed many problems regarding the unity and integration of the country. Discuss

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2. Discuss the process of integration of princely states in to India.

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### **2.1.5 FACTORS THAT INSTIGATED THE DEMAND FOR THE CREATION OF NEW STATES IN INDIA**

Demand for statehood in India has spurred up from time to time and there have been various reasons to stir up these demands. The first important factor was that there was no rational basis of statehood at the time of Independence. At the time of Independence, India was divided into 10 British Provinces and 565 princely states. These were further divided into 27 states under three broader groups. Group A, Group B & Group C states. Part A states were the former governors provinces of British India and were ruled by elected governors and comprises state legislature. Part B states were

the former princely states governed by Rajpramukh, who were earlier rulers of the states. Part C states included both British provinces and princely states governed by Chief Commissioner appointed by the president. Thus, we see that there was no rational basis for state formation in India at the time of Independence. This led to suspicion and chaos among the society having various identity groups, about the nature of state formation and goal of state machinery.

Second, important factor behind the demand of new states was lack of democratic and decentralized system of governance. India, till the establishment of panchayati raj system faced the problem centralization of authority and resources. The concentration of authority and resources at central and state level has created the problem of developmental imbalance and ignorance of the interest of certain sections of population. Further, the issue of having a state language on the basis of majority led to the thought that certain sections of population can dominate and challenge the ethnic and cultural identity of others. Government failed to root out these insecurities and in some way fueled to increase these suspicions.

Third, important factor for the demand of new states was lack of government attention towards the development issues. Indian government failed to pay equal attention towards the development of all the regions and help to promote a balanced growth of all the states. For example, government remained inattentive towards the development of all the regions and help to promote a balanced growth of all the states. For example, government remained of north east region of the country till arm uprisings started in the region and demand for separation on various grounds took a violent form. Similary, the case of Telangana worsened because the state and central governments paid no heed towards the development of the region knowing the fact that the regions needs an immediate attention. Thus, political conflicts in Telangana and Gorkhaland have been broken out after failure in redistribution policies.

Another important factor that created and instigated the demand for separation is election propaganda to win votes. Many demand of separate statehood were politically motivated and the political groups made it an electoral issue to gain votes or to gain power in the newly formed states. The creation of Chhattisgarh is an example to this where the two major political parties, Congress and BJP it an issue of electoral promise.

The last and the most important factor that propelled such demand is identity issue. The identity differences in India were never projected by the political class in very right way. Language, ethnicity and cultural differences have been looked upon as a source of empowerment in India and as a cure to all the existing evils.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What was the initial response of Indian government to states demanding reorganization on the linguistic basis?

2. Discuss the recommendations of various commissions appointed to study the feasibility of reorganization of states on linguistic basis.

## **Rationale behind the reorganization of states in India**

Since independence, India has gone through three phases of state reorganization and several new states have been created by redrawing the internal map of India. Now, the issue here is what led to the major and continuous reorganization process in India and what are the rationales behind state reorganization in India. One of the important reasons behind state reorganization was that separate statehood on the basis of cultural and language differences will promote a sense of security among various identity groups. The very first demand for statehood started in 1950s was based on language. The Tamil speaking population identified themselves as a homogenous ethnic and cultural group and demanded a separate statehood forced the central government to bow to the demand of the creation of new state.

The state reorganization commission formed in 1956 recommended the reorganization of state on language basis giving the rationale that creation of such cultural homogenous states would create a sense of security among the diverse cultural groups in India. However looking at the diversity of Indian society, creation of states on the basis of language did not prove effective and ethnic clashes within states is still taking place. Further, even after the reorganization of states on language basis, there are many states where more than one major language group existed like Maithili in Bihar, Bengal in Assam and Santhali in Jharkhand.

Another reason behind the creation of new states was that it would strengthen the federal structure of the country. Formation of new states on ethnic, cultural and other grounds has been justified has been justified on the ground that it will strengthen the federal structure of the country.

The supporters of state reorganization are of the opinion that reorganization of states on cultural, ethnic and language grounds will help to promote the democratic ethos. Reorganization of states and creation of new states has been advocated in India on the basis that it would ensure greater participation of the marginalized sections of the population and promote democracy. Those groups which remained suppressed by the will of majority will get a chance to express their views in a state represented by them and they would come in the mainstream of political process. This rationale for state reorganization has also not proved very effective. Voting percentage in Indian states is still low. There is widespread corruption and the benefits of economic prosperity and development have not reached to the lower strata of population. The tribal and vulnerable groups in Jharkhand,

Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and other states are still at the margins either in terms of economic development or political participation.

It has also been argued that, smaller states will be administratively more efficient and would be easy to manage. However, in the new states created to bring efficiency are still caught in bureaucratic and political autocracy. Many of the big states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab and Karnataka are comparatively more administratively efficient than the parts of north-east, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. To bring administrative efficiency, we need to revamp the system at every level.

Reshuffling of states boundaries in India has also been done on the rationale that it would help to promote economic development. The recent state of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttranchal is said to be based on the criteria of bringing economic development. Also the reorganization of the states in north east region has been done to address the challenge of development in the region. However less has been achieved by the reorganization of the states on the principle of economic efficiency. These states have become a spot of scams and politically motivated corruptions. The marginalized and deprived classes have got very less in terms of economic development.

Thus we see that the rationale behind the reorganization have failed to bring the desired changes in the Indian system because of lack of substance. In many cases it has further proved to be disastrous and worsened the situation of the regions needed immediate attention. Lack of a feasible ground for state reorganization has thus resulted into further demands on irrational grounds and poses a threat to the unity and development of the country.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 4**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What factors led to demand for reorganization of Assam?

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2. The fourth phase of reorganization of states in India is on the grounds of administrative efficiency rather than on linguistic basis. Comment.

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3. Discuss the reasons that stir up the demand of statehood in India.

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4. Discuss the rationale behind the reorganization of states in India.
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### **2.1.6 LET US SUM UP**

The social, economic, environmental and political context today is hugely different from that prevailing in the decades of 1950 & 1960. Regional disparities, lack of equitable distribution, take out resources from hinterlands to the urban centers and lack of reciprocity in ploughing back of resources from the core to the hinterland, the discontent between local people and resources and above all not fulfilled local aspirations all singularly or in combination seem to drive the demand for reorganization. The process of democratization, identity politics and globalization are playing their role. The decline of the dominance of a single party such as the Congress and the emergence of regional parties, coalition government and local power centers are equally important issues. A new analytical framework is required to deliberate on reorganization in a holistic manner internalizing physical variables along with cultural milieu. The unequal development process develops the demand for new states believing that they will be empowered to chart out a better future for themselves

### **2.1.7 EXERCISES**

1. Write a short note on role of SRC.
2. Discuss the factors which led for recognition of Indian States.
3. Examine the various phases of recognition of Indian states.

### **2.1.8 SUGGESTED READINGS**

Mawdsley, E. (2002). Redrawing the body politic: federalism, regionalism and the creation of new states in India. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 40(3), 34-54.

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## **2.2 REGIONAL ASSERTION AND AUTONOMY: TAMIL NADU AND PUNJAB**

**- Zain Bhat**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **2.2.0 Objectives**

#### **2.2.1 Introduction**

#### **2.2.2 Autonomy and Separatist Movements in India**

#### **2.2.3 Demand for Dravid Nadu (Tamil Nadu)**

#### **2.2.4 Demand for Khalistan (Punjab)**

#### **2.2.5 Let us Sum Up**

#### **2.2.6 Exercises**

#### **2.2.7 Suggested Readings**

#### **2.2.0 OBJECTIVES**

This lesson provides basic knowledge about the various autonomy and separatist movements in India. After going through this topic, you should be able to know:

- the nature of autonomy and separatist movements in India
- the difference between an “integrationist model of autonomy” and a “disintegrationist model of autonomy”;
- about the autonomy movement in Tamil Nadu
- about the separatist movement in Punjab.

#### **2.21 INTRODUCTION**

The demand for restructuring Centre-State relations is as old as the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950. The creation of a new structure of constitutional government for independent India deserves to be seen in historical context, particularly by taking into account the objective political situation that existed then. In fact, political imperatives emerging out of the independence movement historically as well as the immediate imperatives of the Partition of India influenced the design of government incorporated in the Constitution. On the one hand, the framers, drawing the spirit of the independence movement, found the federal scheme appropriate for India; on the other hand, Partition created a fear of centrifugal elements in the nascent nation. Indeed, the major part of the history of the struggle for self-rule and independence reflects efforts to find a solution to India's gigantic diversity. Even the mobilization for the national movement was based on federal principles. The acceptance of language as the basis for redrawing the provincial boundary, for

example, was a result of such a mobilization. The history of federalism and Centre-State relations in India is marked by political mobilization and intermittent struggle to fashion a more federal set-up. Even though such efforts have not yet resulted in any major constitutional changes towards a more federal orientation, the struggle has not been entirely fruitless.

### **2.2.2 AUTONOMY MOVEMENTS IN INDIA**

The issue of autonomy changes its connotation in the context of Indian polity and in this sociopolitical milieu has to be studied in a federal context. Autonomy in the classical sense would mean a community's legitimate, sovereign right to self-determination or self-legislation, unimpeded by any external intervention. However, any attempt to study "autonomy" in the classical sense in the Indian case is bound to lead to conceptual delusions and contradictory conclusions. Autonomy in the Indian case has been primarily used to denote the demands of plural regional-ethno-national identities for a greater degree of self-administration within the larger federal framework of the Indian constitution. The other form of autonomy, which seeks to promote the idea of self-determination outside the purview of the Indian federation, is usually termed secessionist, antistatist, and antinational. For a clearer understanding, one could term the former an "integrationist model of autonomy" and the latter a "disintegrationist model of autonomy."

Integrationist autonomy within the Indian union, without altering the central preponderance in the federal domain which means dependence on (and not autonomous independence from) the central administration has been accommodated, even after initial hesitation. In many cases, after the initial sanctioning of autonomous councils, the Indian state has granted statehood (status of a full-fledged federating unit with representative governance within the Indian union) to such autonomous units. Demands for "autonomy" within the Indian union but which seek to redefine the centre-state (federation-unit) relations in favour of the states (units), have been viewed with suspicion and as a prelude to secession, which could lead to the breakup of the Indian state in the long term. This has often provoked the coercive might of the Indian state. In cases of demands for secession, the secessionist forces have often agreed to demands of greater autonomy, which would mean redefining the centre-state relations. But the Indian state has not yet grown out of the postcolonial inertia of Unitarian federalism to the degree that it can accommodate such demands. The obsession with a Unitarian federal system has paralyzed the state's capacity to tackle such problems without violence.

### **2.2.3 DEMAND FOR DRAVIDANADU (TAMILNADU)**

Dravida Nadu, also known as Dravidistan or Dravidadesa, was the name of a proposed sovereign state for the speakers of the Dravidian languages in South Asia. The major political parties backing the demand were the Justice Party led by E. V. Ramasamy and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) led by C. N. Annadurai.

The concept of Dravida Nadu had its root in the anti-Brahminism movement in Tamil Nadu, whose aim was to end the alleged Brahmin dominance in the Tamil society and government. The early demands of this movement were social equality, and greater power and control. However, over the time, it came to include a separatist movement, demanding a sovereign state for the Tamil people. The

major political party backing this movement was the Justice Party, which came to power in the Madras Presidency in 1921.

Since the late 19th century, the anti-Brahmin Tamil leaders had stated that the non-Brahmin Tamils were the original inhabitants of the Tamil-speaking region. The Brahmins, on the other hand, were described not only as oppressors, but even as a foreign power, on par with the British colonial rulers. The prominent Tamil leader, E. V. Ramasami (popularly known as "Periyar") stated that the Tamil society was free of any societal divisions before the arrival of Brahmins, whom he described as Aryan invaders. Periyar was an atheist, and considered the Indian nationalism as "an atavistic desire to endow the Hindu past on a more durable and contemporary basis".

The proponents of Dravida Nadu constructed elaborate historical anthropologies to support their theory that the Dravidian-speaking areas once had a great non-Brahmin polity and civilisation, which had been destroyed by the Aryan conquest and Brahmin hegemony. This led to an idealisation of the ancient Tamil society before its contact with the "Aryan race", and led to a surge in the Tamil nationalism. Periyar expounded the Hindu epic Ramayana as a disguised historical account of how the Aryans subjugated the Tamils ruled by Ravana. Some of the separatists also posed Saivism as an indigenous, even non-Hindu religion.

The Indian National Congress, a majority of whose leaders were Brahmins, came to be identified as a Brahmin party. Periyar, who had joined Congress in 1919, became disillusioned with what he considered as the Brahminic leadership of the party. The link between Brahmins and Congress became a target of the growing Tamil nationalism.

In 1925, Periyar launched the Self-respect movement, and by 1930, he was formulating the most radical "anti-Aryanism". The rapport between the Justice Party and the Self-Respect movement of Periyar (who joined the party in 1935) strengthened the anti-Brahmin and anti-North sentiment. In 1937–38, Hindi and Hindustani were introduced as new subjects in the schools, when C. Rajagopalachari of Congress became the Chief Minister of Madras Presidency. This led to widespread protests in the Tamil-speaking region, which had a strong independent linguistic identity. Periyar saw the Congress imposition of Hindi in government schools as further proof of an Aryan conspiracy. In August 1941, Periyar declared that the agitation for Dravida Nadu was being temporarily stopped. The reason cited was that it was necessary to help the government in its war efforts. The agitation would be renewed after the conclusion of the war. In August 1944, Periyar created a new party called Dravidar Kazhagam out of the Justice Party, at the Salem Provincial Conference. The creation of a separate non-Brahmin Dravidian nation was a central aim of the Party. In 1944, when Periyar met the Dalit leader B. R. Ambedkar to discuss joint initiatives, Ambedkar stated that the idea of Dravidistan was applicable to entire India, since "Brahminism" was "a problem for the entire subcontinent".

### **2.2.3.1 DRAVIDA MUNNETRA KAZHAGAM**

In 1949, Annadurai and other leaders split up from Periyar and established Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. Annadurai was initially more radical than Periyar in his demand for a separate Dravida Nadu. In highlighting the demand for Dravida Nadu, the economics of exploitation by the Hindi-

speaking, Aryan, Brahminical North was elaborated upon. It was contended that Dravida Nadu had been transformed into a virtual marketplace for north Indian products. And, thus, Annadurai explained that to change this situation, a separate Dravida Nadu must be demanded. Throughout the 1940s, Periyar spoke along the lines of a trifurcation of India, that is dividing the existing geographical region into Dravida Nadu, Muslim India (Pakistan), and Aryan Land (Hindustan). In public meetings that he addressed between March and June 1940, he projected the three-nation doctrine as the only solution which could end the political impasse in the country.

In 1950, Periyar stated that Dravida Nadu, if it comes into being, will be a friendly and helpful state to India. When the political power in Tamil Nadu shifted to the non-Brahmin K. Kamaraj in the 1950s, EVR's DK supported the Congress ministry. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Dravida Nadu proponents changed their demand for an independent Dravida Nadu to an independent Tamil Nadu, as they did not receive any support from the non-Tamil Dravidian-speaking states. Periyar changed the banner in his magazine *Viduthalai* from "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians" to "Tamil Nadu for Tamils".

The reorganisation of the Indian states along linguistic lines through the States Reorganisation Act of 1956 weakened the separatist movement. In June–July 1956, the founder of Kazhagam, E. V. Ramaswamy, declared that he had given up the goal of Dravidistan.

However, by this time, DMK had taken over from DK as the main bearer of the separatist theme. Unlike Khalistan and other separatist movements in Republic of India, DMK never considered violence as a serious option to achieve a separate Dravida Nadu. DMK's slogan of Dravida Nadu found no support in any state of India other than Tamil Nadu. The non-Tamil Dravidian speakers perceived the ambitions of the Tamil politicians as hegemonic, ultimately leading to the failure of the Dravida Nadu concept. C. Rajagopalachari, the former Chief Minister of Madras State and a Tamil Brahmin, stated that the DMK plea for Dravida Nadu should not be taken seriously.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Dravidian movement has its root in anti-Brahminism movement. Comment.

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2. Highlight the role played by DMK in the Dravidian movement.

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### 2.2.4 DEMAND FOR KHALISTAN (PUNJAB)

In Punjab, there was a demand for Sikhistan. As early as 1949 the Sikhs under Master Tara Singh declared that the Hindus of Punjab had become highly communal and that the Sikhs could not

hope to get any justice from them. Tara Singh demanded a 'Sikh State' consisting of the Gurgaon district of Punjab and Patiala and the East Punjab State Union (PEPSU). This demand grew stronger after the reorganisation of the States on linguistic- basis in 1956, when the demands of Punjab for its reorganization on unilingual basis was not conceded. The Sikhs under the Akali Dal put a demand for a separate Punjabi-speaking state. When the Sikhs were demanding bifurcation of Punjab, some political and religious bodies like the Jana Sangh and Arya Samaj were demanding that composite Punjab Should be created, which should include not only the present Punjab, but also Himachal Pradesh and PEPSU. The demand for a separate Punjabi speaking State assumed serious dimensions after the Akali Dal leader Sant Fateh Singh announced his plan to burn himself alive if the demand of Punjabi Suba was not conceded by 25 September, 1966. In view of the serious repercussions of this threat being implemented, the Government of India conceded the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State.

The creation of separate Punjabi Suba did not satisfy all Punjabi leaders. Certain Sikh leaders continued the agitation for the establishment of a 'Socialist Democratic Sikh State'; Dr. Jagjit Singh, former General Secretary of the Akali Dal, undertook tour of a number of foreign countries to mobilise world opinion in favour of this demand. During this tour he tried to enlist the support of the members of the Sikh community living abroad for this purpose. He also prepared a plan for the setting up of a 'Rebel Sikh Government', at Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, in West Pakistan.

The Akali Dal leadership is well aware that it is not possible to have Sikhistan, as a separate independent state outside the Indian Union. They, therefore, started demanding, like the DMK in Tamil Nadu, that the state should be given more powers and autonomy. Today, the Akali Dal stands for more powers for the state and there is no demand of Sikhistan.

#### **2.2.4.1 THE DEMAND FOR KHALISTAN**

Since April 1981, the Akali extremists have been taking a hard-line approach for establishing a new all -Sikh nation called Khalistan, a demand originally voiced by a former member of the Akali Dal, Jagjit Singh in June. This was taken up in various milder forms by officially reorganized and influential bodies such as the Sikh Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC). Even a purely educational organization known as the Chief Khalsa Diwan, at its 54th Sikh Education Conference in Chandigarh in March 1981 passed a resolution demanding Khalistan and seeking associate membership of the United Nations. Later, moderate members of the community withdrew its demand for UN membership but stood by the Sikh Nation Theory. The chief political organs, the Akali Dal, clearly split over the issue, with the extremist group headed by Jagdev Singh Talwandi demanding a separate nation and middle of the road Akali leadership led by Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, President of the Akali Dal, bemoaning the "pariah status of the Sikhs." Sikh demands of a similar nature have their precedent since Indian independence when a resolution passed by Hindi-Sikh members of the Punjab Assembly stated that "in the divided Indian Punjab special constitutional measures are imperative to meet the just aspirations and rights of the Sikhs."

The Dal Khalsa, an extremist and militant Sikh youth organisation whose members hijacked

the plane to Lahore, was started on 6th August, 1978 with the avowed objective of attaining an 'Independent Sovereign Sikh Nation'. As a part of their strategy to expand their bases in Punjab, the Dal started actively participating in the political activities of all the Akali factions. For example, Dal Khalsa activists were vocal and conspicuous during the month-long agitation launched by the Akali Dal in May 1981, demanding holy city status for Amritsar. Subsequently on 26th July, 1981 Gajinder Singh and his followers "distributed pro-Khalistan literature during the World Sikh Convention held in Amritsar. Less than a month later while the rest of the nation was celebrating independence on 15th August, 1981, over a dozen Khalsa volunteers gathered in a Gurdwara and saluted their flag which had the map of the proposed Khalistan State inscribed in the centre. On 27th August, Dal Khalsa members raised pro-Khalistan slogans from the gallery of the Punjab Assembly.

M.S. Dhammi remarks: "Extremist Sikh movements such as the demand for Khalistan are a purely urban-middle class phenomenon. The urban Sikh has been unable to translate his economic power into political power-the way the rural Sikh has and this insecurity is further aggravated by the fact that 75 per cent Hindu population in Punjab is concentrated in towns- This causes the urban Sikh to resist being overwhelmed by Hindu values." -According to Lt. Gen. Sartaj Singh (Retired), "too much has been made of the Khalistan movement. It started as a joke but is now dangerous." Brigadier Jaswant Singh Sandhu (Retired) observes : "There is a very big segment of Sikhs demanding Khalistan and you cannot ignore them. If smaller countries 'can exist and do well for themselves, then why not an independent Punjab. Nothing can stop Khalistan from coming into being, sooner or later."

Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the self-appointed President of Khalistan, has also been getting clandestine support from Pakistan and has often been used by that country for anti- India propaganda. He had planned to file an application at the United Nations to seek recognition for Khalistan as a non-governmental organization as also a complaint with the human rights division of the UN about alleged violation of human rights in Punjab.

## **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What factors led to the demand for separate Punjabi-speaking state?

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2. The demands for more autonomy gradually transformed into demand for a separate Khalistan. Comment.

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## 2.2.5 LET US SUM UP

The greatest strength of Indian polity is its gravest weakness. India is hailed by many as a shining example of a multicultural, multiethnic, and multinational democratic state, which has successfully weathered many internal threats of disintegration. But still, the assertive face of multiple ethno cultural identities has worried many observers. The Indian federation has temperamentally behaved as a “union” and not a “federation.” However, the leadership in the country has to take care to adopt federal principles to judge such cases of autonomy and gradually devolve powers (especially financial powers) to the units if it is to contain such ethno-cultural assertions.

## 2.2.6 EXERCISES

1. What are the reasons for autonomy movements in India?
2. Critically analyse Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu.
3. How do you understand Khalistan movement in Punjab?

## 2.2.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Hardgrave Jr, R. L. (1965). *The Dravidian Movement*. Routledge.

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Jodhka, S. S. (2001). Looking back at the Khalistan movement: some recent researches on its rise and decline

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Van Dyke, V. (2009). The khalistan movement in punjab, India, and the post-militancy era: structural change and new political compulsions. *Asian Survey*, 49(6), 975-997.

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## **2.3 ETHNO-NATIONALISM: NAGALAND AND MANIPUR**

**- V. Nagendra Rao**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **2.3.0 Objectives**

#### **2.3.1 Introduction**

#### **2.3.2 Ethnicity in North-eastern States**

#### **2.3.3 Factors Contributing to Rise of Ethnic Consciousness**

2.3.3.1 Linguistic and Religious Revivalist Movements

2.3.3.2 Role of Democratic Federal Structure

2.3.3.3 Presence of Migrants and Outsiders

2.3.3.4 Perceptions of Dominance

2.3.3.5 Elite Formation and Emergence of Middle Class

#### **2.3.4 From Ethnicity to Ethnic Politics**

#### **2.3.5 Ethnicity in Assam**

2.3.5.1 Bodo Movement

2.3.5.2 Resistance of Non-Bodos

#### **2.3.6 Ethnicity in Nagaland**

2.3.6.1 Role of Separatist Organisations

2.3.6.2 Backlash with other Ethnic Groups

2.3.6.3 Army Strike against Naga Rebels in Myanmar

#### **2.3.7 Ethnicity in Manipur**

#### **2.3.8 Let Us Sum Up**

#### **2.3.9 Exercises**

#### **2.3.10 Suggested Readings**

#### **2.3.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this topic, you should be able to know:

- The patterns of ethnicity in northeast region;
- The factors contributing to the rise of ethnicity in northeast region;
- Ethnicity in Assam with special reference to Bodo movement;

- The ethnic insurgency in Nagaland and its impact.

### 2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Northeast region of India comprising of eight states – Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura and Sikkim – a region poorly connected to the Indian mainland by a small corridor, and surrounded by many countries such as Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and China, is the setting for a multitude of conflict that undermines the idea of India as a prosperous and functioning democracy.

The Naga insurgency, which started in the 1950s, known as the mother of the Northeast insurgencies, is one of the oldest unresolved armed conflicts in the world. In total, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland and Tripura have witnessed scales of conflict that could, at least between 1990 and 2000, be characterised as low intensity conflicts. Currently, most of the states in the region are affected by some form of conflict, except for Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim in which the situation is at the moment relatively stable. The reasons for the respective conflicts are wide ranging from separatist movements, to inter- community, communal and inter-ethnic conflicts.

The conflict in the Northeast region has been an all pervasive phenomena, and in its violent form, it has not only affected the territorial and political sovereignty of the Indian state, but also the life of the various people living in the region in incomprehensible and inexplicable terms. However, amidst the widespread sense of helplessness, there is also an overwhelming desire and force to be free from such a situation of conflict which cripples the people from all sides.

To gain a holistic understanding of the problem that has historical and contemporary dimensions, it is important to assess and understand the various facets of the problem that interact with each other.

### 2.3.2 ETHNICITY IN NORTHEASTERN STATES

In order to understand the nature of contemporary social formations, it is helpful to do so on the basis of three definable phases or periods: pre-colonial, colonial and post- colonial or post-Independence periods. As will be evident, in each of these periods conditions proved to be rather different for functioning of ethnicity in the Northeastern region.

The hills and plains of the region have been occupied by different streams of Mongoloid people who came from the north and the east at different periods wellbefore the onset of colonial rule. The diverse Mongoloid groups which eventually settled in different habitats and ecological settings crystallized into distinct tribal societies.

It is important to note that in the long centuries before the advent of British rule in the region, there was a high degree of fluidity in the socio-cultural arena so that inter- mingling of various streams of people, including biological admixture, produced diverse social alignments and group identities. The boundaries of the groups were never very rigid. It is this flexibility which provided scope for shifting alliance and identities. Pre-colonial social setting in the region was more fluid and flexible than in the subsequent colonial and post-colonial periods.

The conditions radically altered during a rather brief period (1826-1947) of British colonial

rule. The annexation of Assam by the British brought the people of this region into greater and deeper contact with sociopolitical currents then prevailing in the rest of the country. The channels of contact and the levels of communication were further accentuated in the early part of the 20th century. The British set in motion a series of moves in order to establish a degree of political and administrative dominance over the plains as well as the hill people. The British policies and the activities of Christian missionaries who came into the region contributed significantly in creating a freeze effect on the communities. Colonial rule and missionary activities also contributed significantly in detailing the character and tenor of identity movements among the tribals and non-tribals in the post-Independence period.

Following Independence, the governmental approach to tribals was radically altered. The old policy of maintaining status quo and isolation was replaced by a policy of development and integration. The post-Independence period has been one of acceleration in the pace of social change and modernization of various tribal groups and their effective induction within the framework of the nation-state. However, it is also during the last five and a half decades since independence that the freeze effect in the various social formations became more vivid, functional and effective in turning tribes, castes, communities and language groups into ethnic blocks. Many groups have shown varying degrees of strain in accepting and adjusting to the demands of integration, which often has an assimilation overtone, made on them.

Thus, while the pre-colonial setting was fluid and flexible, the colonial and post-colonial settings have been less so and the societal boundaries became more rigid, doing in the process distinct cultural orientation--the phenomenon we call 'ethnicity'. Societies

became ethno-political blocks. In addition, this period is characterised by revivalist trend so that the various social formations looked to their primordial cultural assets to define and consolidate their boundaries.

Ethnic self-consciousness and its consolidation and asserting along the lines of tribe, community or language groups have become increasingly manifest in the recent years in the entire region. In every one of the seven states that make up the north-eastern region, there is a perception of who constitute the 'insiders' and who are 'outsiders' vying for the limited number of jobs and other assets and resources of the respective territories. Regionalism along social and ethnic lines has been a dominant development in the years since Independence.

In the post-colonial north-east, we can recognise five different parameters of identity consolidation. These are tribe, caste, language, territory and religion. These often work in combination with one another. Emergence of tribal social formations, often with demand for specified territories as politico-administrative units are features common enough in north-east India these days. The context of smooth integration of tribals and non-tribals, of various language groups, of locals and immigrants and of various religious communities appear to be fraught with many hurdles.

### **2.3.3 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO RISE OF ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS/ CONFLICT**

There are many factors contributed to the rise of ethnic consciousness among the tribes of Northeastern region. The primordial loyalties, socio-economic context, dominance of majority group, crossborder relations, etc. contributed to the growth and ethnic mobilisation of various groups and communities. Some of them have discussed below.

#### **2.3.3.1 LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS REVIVALIST MOVEMENTS**

Language has always been in the centre-stage of ethnic turmoil in the northeast. Making Assamese as the compulsory language from class VIII onwards led to massive agitation in the Barak valley, reminiscent of the agitation launched earlier over the issue of the medium of instruction. In 1972 the Bodo led Plains Tribes Council of Assam (PTCA) complained that the tribes of plains have been 'uprooted in a systematic and planned way from their own soil' and that the 'step motherly' treatment of the administration, dominated by the Assamese-speaking people has reduced them as 'second class citizens' of the state. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha (established in 1952) and PTCA however, ultimately succeeded in making the Bodo language the medium of instruction (up to the secondary level). The Ahom, Meitei, Zeliangrong, Seng Khasi, and Zomi communities had all felt threatened by the near extinction of their original language and religion.

#### **2.3.3.2 ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC FEDERAL STRUCTURE**

The liberal democratic federal political arrangement bears the seeds of ethnic conflict in the north-east. Freedom of movement and free competition, which constitutes the fundamental principles of the political arrangement, evokes uneven competition and promotes economic and social inequality and therefore a sense of deprivation in the weaker partner in the competition. This results in a backlash by the local communities against the migrant settlers. The tribal attack on the Bengali settlers in Tripura is a case in point. The uneven economic prosperity of different groups of people is bound to happen following the laws of market society. It is also obvious that the groups that have greater initial control of human and other resources will reap the benefits of market competition. Moreover, in our democratic arrangement the numerically dominant communities will, in most cases, control power. The principles of 'protective discrimination', total or partial seclusion and granting of autonomy have not proved to be enough in arresting the negative fallout of market competition, because of a wide gap among the competing groups on the control of resources.

#### **2.3.3.3 PRESENCE OF MIGRANTS OR OUTSIDERS**

It is a matter of folk-perception in the north-east that the local population, speaking the local regional language, should have a prior claim to employment, housing, and educational facilities in their land. The root of the ethnic backlash was the apprehension that 'outsiders' would grab the employment opportunities locally available. The expression of such feelings and the resultant action is termed 'nativism' by Weiner. He defines nativism as that form of ethnic identity that seeks to exclude those who are not members of the local or indigenous ethnic group from residing and/or working in a territory because they are not native to the country or region. This kind of anti-migrant or nativist movements is different from other forms of ethnic movements. The nativist movement is essentially anti-migrant in character, but the ethnic movement need not be so. What is common, in

both ethnic and nativist movements, is the competition between linguistic, regional or social groups. The nativist reaction in India is not necessarily against the migrants from another country, but often against so-called 'foreigners' from other cultures within the country.

The rise of nativist sentiments among the local people is understood to be the fallout of the pursuance of the ethnic line of mobilisation by political parties, both at the central and state levels. The leaders of both the ruling and opposition groups in a state regard protection of the interests of their own people against the outsiders as one of their primary responsibilities. The state governments too give priority to local claims against migrants. The central government, though it is supposed to represent the interests of all citizens of the country, also does not like to risk its electoral fortunes in the state by not accommodating the local ethnic sentiments in its policies and programmes.

#### **2.3.3.4 PERCEPTIONS OF DOMINANCE**

The 'national' identities shaped around the struggle for greater political space in the shape of ethnic movements, in course, turn out to be hegemonic over the minority communities. Thus, when the minority communities mature as a political self and challenge the hegemonic regional nation, fields of ethnic conflict proliferate in the region. For instance, many smaller communities of Manipur contested the tacit support by the Indian state for the demand of carving Naga dominated areas from Manipur to create greater Nagaland on the grounds of the perceived threat of vivisection of Manipur and subsequent dominance by the Nagas. The Bodo nationalism in Assam emerges through a multifaceted contestation: against the Indian State, against the dominance of Assamese nation and a clash with other peripheral and dominant identities such as adivasi, Bengali, and Koch. While the Bodo upsurge resists the appropriation by the dominant, it attacks other non-dominant identities.

#### **2.3.3.5 ELITE FORMATION AND THE EMERGENCE OF MIDDLE CLASS**

The problem of ethnicity is further aggregated by the regional consciousness aroused by elites, especially the middle class. Both in the western context and India in general, the middle class is viewed as the champion of liberal democracy promoting democratic values such as toleration, liberty, equality and justice. However, in the northeast, the middle class can be seen as the promoter of ethnic extremist movements. For instance, the Assam movement emerged as Assamese middle class movements whose interest was mostly affected by the migration of outsiders.

Another dimension of the elite formation in the tribal communities is that the dominant communities allied with state power exclude certain groups from accessing resources, institutions and opportunities, generating a feeling of exclusion of other groups. In such situation, smaller ethnic communities assert for resources and opportunities. The assertion of marginalized identities and its extremist posture are giving a new direction to state politics. In this context, democratic politics is overshadowed by ethnic politics. The elite within the ethnic communities mobilize people in ethnic lines to realize its goals. As Brass argues, "the cultural norms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elites in competition for political power and economic advantage".

These above mentioned factors, along with other ones created a situation in which every group politicised and invoked their group identity in ethnic terms and started making demands on the state to recognize their identity, sometimes even by deploying violent means.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the pattern of ethnicity in North-East India.

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2. What factors contributed to the rise of ethnic consciousness in the North-East region?

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### 2.3.4 FROM ETHNICITY TO ETHNIC POLITICS

The ethnic demand for homeland created a number of smaller states in the northeast. For instance, the greater Assam was divided into Nagaland (1963), Meghalaya (1972), Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram (1987) to meet the demands of these ethnic groups. However, mere making of territorial boundary did not solve the problem; on the contrary, it further aggregated it. It is argued that the creation of separate state further fanned the fire when various smaller and bigger communities started to demand establishment of more states. As Ambrose Pinto pointed out “the competition for power among different social and ethnic groups was legitimized on the premise that all social and ethnic groups will have equal space and opportunities. However, with the majoritarian groups or the dominant social group gradually aspiring for power, the minority groups have felt marginalized and rejected”. Further, the creation of smaller territorial units acceding to the demands of the dominant ethnic community in a region often threaten the existence and survival of numerically less ethnic communities as the positions and jobs and resources were monopolized by the dominant ethnic group. The Hmar problem in Mizoram and the Garos disadvantageous positions in accessing resources and positions in Meghalaya are such examples forcing them to arouse ethnic feeling and violent mobilization. While the making of territorial boundary satisfied the dominant ethnic community, it created despair for the minority ethnic economic communities. As a result, the level of extremist activities percolated from one level to another.

How this politicisation of ethnicity led to ethnic mobilization and ethnic mobilization to ethnic conflict in the northeastern region will be analysed with regard to Assam and Nagaland in the following sections.

### 2.3.5 ETHNICITY IN ASSAM

Ethnicity and identity have been the key issues of mobilisation in Assam as in rest of north-east India. Most of these challenges have emerged from tribal communities from the hill areas or the plains. Whenever Assamese leaders equated the territorial identity of multi ethnic Assam with the ethno-linguistic identity of Assamese speakers of the Brahmaputra valley, they pushed the other ethnic groups to seek security through their own autonomous structure. The central government responded favourably to these demands carved out new states for these groups. Thus Nagaland

became a separate state in 1963, Meghalaya was created in 1986. Those were the hill areas for which the plains elite in Assam probably had little affection. But gradually, the plains tribals were also demanded for separate statehood as they perceived the policies pursued by Assamese government are discriminatory to them. The largest party of this revolt is broadly known as Bodo separatism or simply the Bodo movement. The Bodo movement is positively interested in the Indian national cohesion. The ethnic rage in this case is directed mainly towards Assam. The term “Bodo” refers to a group of closely related tribes including the pure Boro language speakers who are called the Boro Kochari people.

### 2.3.5.1 BODO MOVEMENT

Bodos are the most numerous single indigenous ethnic communities in Assam. The Bodos claim to be the earliest known inhabitants of Assam and also the earliest as well as the longest chain of rulers. The Bodos assert that the Assamese people are, in fact, outsiders who have unleashed an anti-tribal policy to arbitrarily cleanse Assam of its genuinely original and authentic inhabitants. They accuse the Assamese government of conducting a deliberate policy of Assamization through an imposition of Assamese language and culture upon the tribals undemocratically violating the constitution of India. Like the hill tribal people of the state, the Bodos and other plains tribal people deeply resent the imposition of Assamese language in part because it is not the aboriginal language of Assam and because it violates the pluralism of multi ethnic society.

Bodo leaders formed the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) in 1967 to fight for full autonomy in the predominantly plains tribal areas in Assam. The formation of Meghalaya as a state and Mizoram as a Union Territory in 1971, reflecting institutionalised autonomy for the hills tribals of the respective areas of Assam, gave new impetus to Bodo racialism. The All Bodo Student Union (ABSU) formed in 1967 was eager to build a wide front of Bodo forces.

A large-scale mass movement led by ABSU and the Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC), beginning in 1987, continued to exert pressure on political authorities for about six years. The Bodo leader's complaint was that they had lost land to non-tribal people. Moreover, they were educationally backward and their language was not taught to their own children in schools. Therefore, they demanded recognition of their language and creation of a separate state, “Udayachal”, so that they could preserve their language and culture. All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) on January 1, 1987 presented a Memorandum containing many demands. They demanded increased jobs reservation for Bodos and inclusion of their language in 8th Schedule of the Indian constitution. After failing to get their demand conceded, Bodo movement became violent in 1988. Violence ranged from massacres to stray incidents of killing and injuring, loot, plunder and destruction of private and public property. Men, women and children lost their lives and the government had to incur heavy expenditure in large induction of security and administrative personnel. This led to peace talks and in 1993 the first Bodo Accord was signed by the ABSU leadership, Assam government and the central government.

The accord agreed to the formation of a Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC), but the territorial limit was left ambiguous. The demand for territory by the Bodo leaders was to be determined on the basis of majority demography; areas with 50% or more Bodo population would be a part of BAC. But

some areas with less than 50% population were included to give the BAC a contiguous area. The indeterminate attempt to collapse territory with demography led to confusion and conflicts. There were non-scheduled tribal populations in the area and non-Bodo people. ABSU rejected the Assam government's demarcation of territory and the conflict escalated. By 1996, the Bodos had renewed their demand for statehood. Two armed groups, the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) demanded a separate statehood, and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), was formed to struggle to create a sovereign state for the Bodos. In 1999, the BLT faction of the movement declared ceasefire and the peace talk process started.

Due to intensity of conflict and to stop violence and bloodshed, the Central government conceded some of their demands. In 2003, a new accord established the Bodo Territorial Council (BTC) guided by the principles of the Sixth Schedule. The BTC was supposedly comprised of Bodo majority villages, though the status of another 93 villages demanded by the BTC remained unresolved around that time. The question of sustaining peace in BTC is dependent on the prospects of development and also its negotiations with the non-Bodos.

### **2.3.5.2 RESISTANCE OF THE NON-BODOS**

There is substantial population of non-Bodos in areas which are claimed by Bodos for their separate state. A section of the ABSU during an early phase of the movement issued "quit notices" to non-Bodos in these areas. During the early negotiation for the BAC, it was made clear that the areas where Bodos were less than 50% cannot be included in the council area. From this began the Bodo endeavour of ethnic cleansing of non-Bodos so that the panic-stricken non-Bodos leave the area to make the Bodos a majority in that region. It was done under the aegis of the armed wings of the Bodo militants. The Bodo-Santhal and the Bodo-non-Bodo conflicts of the late 1990s were a part of this majority-building politics. But after the 1996 Bodo-Santhal clashes, the non- Bodo communities have been regrouping into political and armed militant groups and planning to resist such attempts. Armed groups like the Adivasi Cobra Militants and the Bengal Liberation Tigers began retaliating and attacked several Bodo villages. Even after the accord of 2003, the fears of ethnic violence remained strongly entrenched in the minds of the non-Bodo population as there were many pockets in the intended BTC areas, where the Bodos were not a majority. Sanmilita Janagosthiya Sangram Samiti (SJSS) was formed by 18 non-Bodo organisations to oppose the proposed map of BTC. Before and after the signing of the accord, the SJSS had led protests opposing the territorial demarcation and reorganisation of the areas of lower Assam and the north bank of Brahmaputra. SJSS expressed the fear that the BTC, once formed, would concentrate power in the hands of the Bodos and jeopardise the lives of the non-Bodos.

It is this context of simmering discontent amongst a whole section of population of various communities, varying from citizenship or its loss, the empowerment of marginalised tribal communities and the failure of the Sixth Schedule to deliver, the contest over land and resources, the lack of development and the fear of disempowered smaller groups are all tangled in the web of electoral politics of the ruling classes. The ruling and aspiring elites are playing narrow communitarian and communal politics. The present violence between Bodos and non-Bodos is a result of this politics.

### **2.3.6 ETHNICITY IN NAGALAND**

The Nagas struggle for recognition of group identity has a long history. On August 14, 1947, on the eve of Indian independence, the Naga National Council declared independence for their people. The fact remains that the Nagas, who did not have a written history or a script until the 19th century, when the British colonial power arrived, followed by its missionaries and those from the United States and elsewhere, have always seen themselves as a separate people. It is a conviction which is still deeply held by many people, who also want to live under one administrative roof as Nagas in a Naga homeland that would include parts of the hills of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. This is the oldest independence struggle that the subcontinent has seen, one of the oldest in Asia and as old as free India, although the armed revolt began in the 1950s. The underground fighters have been called many things in the past—hostiles, insurgents, rebels, militants, armed Naga gangs.

The early decades of the conflict were characterised by a certain dignity and honour. Civilian men and women from the rest of India were not targeted; security personnel, camps and convoys were attacked.

The Nagas received training and arms from the Chinese and Pakistanis, who saw the situation as a good chance to bleed and weaken India. Other insurgent groups were also supported by the Chinese and Pakistanis at the time: the Mizo National Front (MNF) of Laldenga in the Mizo Hills and the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) of Biseswar in Manipur. The latter was trained in urban warfare in Tibet. The support from China officially ended in 1976, when Delhi and Beijing resumed full diplomatic relations. In 1986, the MNF signed a peace accord with New Delhi and has never reneged on its word.

#### **2.3.6.1 ROLE OF SEPARATIST ORGANISATIONS**

The Naga National Council (NNC) was the founder and leader of the Naga movement. But things changed after the Shillong Accord of 1975 between a section of the Naga underground and the Government of India. Under terrific pressure from the Indian army and exhausted by attrition of the civil population, this group accepted the Indian Constitution, agreed to lay down their arms and work for a final settlement. That agreement confused the Naga public and fractured both the mandate and the movement.

Within a few years, the NNC split with the formation of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN, now called Nagalim) led by Isak Swu, Th. Muivah and S.S. Khaplang. In 1988, Khaplang's followers attacked Muivah's camp in Myanmar, killing hundreds of his supporters. It is an event that Muivah has neither forgotten nor forgiven and his NSCN (I-M)'s relentless campaign against the 'Khaplang' group needs to be seen in this light.

At present, there are negotiations with the Government of India between the I-M, led by Muivah and Swu, and a ceasefire between them that has lasted more than five years. There is peace in the Naga Hills—a fragile peace, but it exists. People are speaking out, civil society has found articulate voices through a platform for Naga tribes, the Naga Hoho, as well as church leaders. The tenuous lines of ceasefire ground rules have been framed under a Ceasefire Monitoring Group but not given much

teeth yet. Many cadres continue to live outside the designated camps for both groups. There is a ceasefire between the Government of India and the other main faction, the Khaplang faction. But the two factions target each other constantly; there is no ceasefire between them, and there lies the heart of the Naga tragedy.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. The Naga insurgency is known as the mother of the Northeast insurgencies. Elucidate.

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2. Discuss the role of separatist organizations in creating ethnic consciousness in Nagaland.

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#### **2.3.6.2 BACKLASH WITH OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS**

One of the most contentious demands of the Nagas is related integration of all Naga inhabited areas under one administrative unit. However, the demand for Greater Nagaland or Nagalim has created friction with other states and groups as this demand claims territories of other states and areas inhabited by other ethnic groups. However, this demand for Greater Nagaland/Nagalim has provoked violent protests by the Meiteis in Manipur. Apart from the Meiteis, the Assamese and the Arunachalese have also expressed their opposition to any move aimed at altering the borders of their states to accommodate the demands of the NSCN (IM). Succumbing to the popular pressures, the state governments in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh have declared openly that they would not accept any agreement by the government of India that altered their state boundaries

#### **2.3.6.3 ARMY STRIKE AGAINST NAGA REBELS IN MYANMAR**

The Indian army carried a surgical strike inside Myanmar on June 9, 2015 in which 38 Naga insurgents killed and seven injured. The decision of “hot pursuit” was taken hours after the Naga militants killed 18 soldiers in an ambush in Chandel area of Manipur on June 4 and clearance was obtained from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the night of June 7, soon after his return from Bangladesh. Once on the ground, the contingent of the special forces split into two groups and headed for two camps being run by NSCN (K) and KYKL, who are believed to be responsible for the deadly ambush on June 4.

This is one of the rare occasions that India entered into the territory of other country to targets the insurgents who are carrying violent acts and creating law and problem.

This particular operation was carried out to target the Khaplang's group who is continuously opposing the agreement concluded between Government of India and with main Naga groups NSCN (I-M) led by Muivah.

These incidents are indicating that despite the considerable progress achieved by the Central government to resolve the problem of Nagaland, still it has not achieved real progress to establish peace and security in the Nagaland and adjoining regions. The factional rivalry among the Naga groups is the main reason for continuation of insurgency. Some of the groups are having a feeling that by accommodating Muivah group, the Centre has ignored rest of organisations. The way forward is to accommodate as many groups as possible in the discussions and accommodate genuine demands of the groups within the limits of Indian Constitution.

### **2.3.7 Ethnicity in Manipur**

Manipur is a multi-ethnic state located in Northeast India witnessing a divisive politics of identity and acute ethnic conflict. In an ethnically sensitive society, problems of ethnic tensions may develop intentionally or unintentionally. Conflict of interests often becomes inevitable when different people who live next to each other enjoy the freedom to pursue their own preferences, but forget to consider and respect the position of others. Conflicts can develop between different ethnic groups, or even within the same group of people and it may result in violence. Manipur has witnessed several ethnic conflicts between different ethnic groups. During 1990s, there emerged violent clash between Nagas and Kukis, more precisely between 1992-1997. However, the recent ongoing conflict that began in May 2023 was the result of the outbreak of violence between the Meiteis and the Kukis. Manipur is inhabited by three main ethnic groups - namely, the Nagas, the Kukis, and the Meiteis. The present chapter will shed light on various factors responsible for emergence of ethnic conflict between these ethnic groups.

### **Ethnic Groups in Manipur**

Historically, Manipur was an independent kingdom ruled by the Meitei dynasty. The physical boundary of Manipur has been fluctuating with historical changes in political power and intra-state and the inter-state boundaries. Manipur formally joined India as a 'C' state in 1949 and was administered by the President of India through the Chief Commissioner. In 1956, it became a Union Territory and, in 1972, it was given statehood. There are thirty-three Scheduled Tribes and seven Scheduled Castes recognised in contemporary Manipur. Most Scheduled Tribes placed in this list belong to either the Kuki or the Naga category. Many of the Naga and Kuki clans were individually listed and recognised as Scheduled Tribes in 1956. The Scheduled Tribe population in Manipur is predominantly rural based, with 95.3 per cent living in hills and only 4.7 per cent residing in urban areas. The political history of the region reveals the shifting identities and affiliations of some of these ethnic groups, which are now recognised as Scheduled Tribes.

There persist differences in the settlement patterns of different ethnic groups, (the Kukis and Nagas live in the forested hills, and the Meiteis live in the cultivated valley area), their distinctive politico-economic basis of livelihood and farming practices (the Meiteis cultivate rice in irrigated fields in the valley areas, the Nagas practice terrace and wet-rice cultivation in the hills, and the Kukis engage in shifting-cultivation in the hills), religious affiliations (the Nagas and Kukis were originally animistic, but converted to Christianity, and the Meiteis are Hindus and Muslims), and trajectories of political administration of their localities of belonging. On the whole, the Nagas, the Kuki-Chins, and

the Meiteis do differ a little, yet have a lot in common with each other. The hill tribes of Manipur present a picture of homogeneity and heterogeneity among themselves and with their neighbours in the Northeast India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. However, the ethnic boundaries between the three groups have been reinforced by post-colonial policies of giving preferential entitlements to the Scheduled Tribes and appeasing of separatist ethnic sentiments. Ethnic differences between these three groups have been sharpened due to differences in political economy, and the sanskritisation of the Meiteis, and the conversion of the Nagas and the Kukis into Christianity. The Naga and the Kuki appellations and identities crystallised during the British rule; these ethnic labels have a colonial legacy. The name Naga was given to a group of hills men by the colonial administrators following a policy of identifying and classifying them for administrative convenience. The Nagas were never a homogenous ethnic entity; their constituent groups have been known by distinctive names throughout the 19th and the early 20th century. Similarly, the Kukis are a conglomeration of numerous clans. Unlike the Nagas, linguistic affinities prevail among the Kukis and members belonging to different groups can easily converse with each other. 'Kuki' had much in common in both language, manners, customs and system of internal government. The British, using linguistic and cultural affinities and migration history as criteria, subdivided and invented the 'Old Kuki' and 'New Kuki' appellations to group them. Identity is a contestable construction and ethnic groups are constantly created and transformed by the elites; same thing happens in Manipur.

Since the 1960s, various militant groups have emerged in Manipur, claiming to represent the various demands and grievances of their respective ethnic communities; the Kukis and the Nagas, in particular, have been fighting for their separate homeland, a struggle that naturally conflicts with the aim of the Meiteis to defend the state's territorial integrity. Its long border with Myanmar which is ungoverned territory, and the fraternal and other ties between the militant groups across the border, compounds the security threat on Manipur.

The current episodes of ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kukis, beginning in May 2023, are the result of decades-long mistrust among the communities, the indifference of successive governments towards people's genuine grievances, the uneven distribution of resources, asymmetric political representation, and a massive governance deficit. Officially, as stated by the Inspector General of Police, I. K. Muivah, as of 14 September 2023, 175 people have been killed across the state, and 5,000 cases of arson including the torching of more than 4,700 houses have been reported. Moreover, 386 religious structures (254 churches, mostly belonging to the Kukis, and 132 temples) have been vandalised. Other sources report different figures. According to the Kuki Student Organisation, for example, the Kukis have suffered 146 deaths; 7,000 houses and 360 churches have been burnt down in their areas.

The following section outline the most crucial issues that have birthed and fuelled the ethnic conflicts in Manipur.

### **Homeland Claims and the Politics of Territorial Inviolability**

The contestation over indigeneity has manifested itself in the decades-long clash between the fight for Manipur's 'territorial integrity', as asserted by the Meiteis, and the demands for separate

homeland by the Kukis and the Nagas. The NSCN-IM-led militancy, for one, demands the creation of Nagalim-Greater Nagaland that covers a substantial portion of the Naga-majority areas in Manipur. In June 2001, the Government of India and the NSCN-IM signed the Bangkok Agreement that extended the three-year ceasefire including in the Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur; the agreement was not accepted by the Meitei groups, and violent clashes killed 13 people in one day alone. Similarly, the Kukis' demand for a Kukiland-*Zale'n-gam* also causes apprehensions to the Meiteis.

Indeed, the Meiteis consider themselves the custodians of Manipur. The former Home Secretary of India, G. K. Pillai once argued that conferring statehood to Nagaland before Manipur- an extension of the provisions of the ceasefire agreement to the Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur-in many ways, legitimises the emergence and operations of the Meitei militant groups in the name of protecting the territorial integrity of Manipur. To be sure, the Kuki organisations have recently started showing differences over the demands for a separate homeland, versus calls for separate administrative arrangements. The Kuki Innpi Manipur (KIM)—the apex body of the Kukis, along with the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) is pitching the demand for a separate state or a Union Territory whereas the Zomi Council and the Suspension of Operation (SoO) groups are demanding autonomy.

### **Uneven distribution of resources**

The violent clashes between the Kukis and the Meiteis that erupted on 3 May are often attributed to the High Court's order to the Manipur state government to submit its recommendations on the Schedule Tribe (ST) status demand of the Meiteis. The ST status would legally allow the Meiteis to have ownership over the land resources that, at present, are mostly under the control of the Nagas and the Kukis. For their part, the Nagas and the Kukis fear that granting ST status to the Meiteis would give the latter monopoly over the land, which in turn would further strengthen their dominance over political and economic resources. Moreover, Manipur's geographical make up i.e., Meiteis living in the valley and the Kukis and the Nagas living in the hills, sustains the narratives of marginalisation by the non-Meitei communities.

Demographically, the Meiteis constitute more than 50 percent of the state's total population and fall either under the unreserved or Other Backward Class (OBC) category; the Kukis and the Nagas (who are Christians), meanwhile, are STs. The Meiteis inhabit only 10 percent of the total land cover of Manipur, whereas the Nagas and the Kukis (together constituting close to 40 percent of the population) live in the remaining 90 percent of the land. The Meiteis are not legally permitted to buy land in and around the Kuki- and Naga-inhabited areas. Ever since Manipur joined the union of India in 1949, the collective grievances of the Meiteis have been around their lack of rights to protect their customs, land, beliefs, and livelihoods. The Meiteis, under the banner of the Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee of Manipur (STDCM), have been demanding ST status since 2012. The Government of India, on 29 May 2013, asked the Manipur State Government to submit a recommendation as to whether the Meiteis should be included in the ST list. The state government has failed to respond at the time of writing this brief. Once again, on 31 May 2022, the Union government asked for a recommendation. Mutum Churamani, a Meitei, petitioned the High Court to direct the state

government to submit its recommendations. A one-member bench of the High Court issued an order on 4 April 2023, directing the state government to file its response within four weeks. Any response from the state government has since been overshadowed by the eruption of clashes.

### **The Hill-Valley divide: Development disparities and Asymmetric political representation**

The Hill-Valley divide in Manipur in issues such as the demand of the Meiteis for ST status and the opposition to it is deeply rooted. Among the multiple factors that have historically wedged this divide is asymmetric development and political representation. Economic development and political power has been valley-centric, leaving the Kukis and the Nagas bereft of the benefits. Over the years, whatever infrastructure development has been recorded in Manipur has largely been in the Valley. The unevenness is stark in the budget allocations: Between 2017 and 2020, for example, the total budget allocation for the Imphal valley was INR 21,481 crores whereas for the hills, it was a far lower INR 419 crores. At present, the Nagas, Kukis, and other tribal populations living in the hills (~40 percent of the state's population) have only 19 seats in the Manipur state legislative assembly, whereas the Meiteis (50 percent of the population) have 40 seats.

With such disproportionate representation, the Kukis and the Nagas are left dependent on a state assembly that is controlled by Meitei lawmakers, irrespective of party affiliation. Existing literature produced by the Kukis asserts that since the laws and the policies are mere instruments of the Meitei assertion into the tribal areas, the former cannot see any solution to the ongoing conflict under the current arrangement. Scholars have also reflected on the uneven development in Manipur; they argue that the marginalisation of the Kukis and Nagas is not merely because of their limited political representation but also related to their locality, ethnic status, and history.

### **Governance Deficit and Politics of autonomy**

The issues of asymmetric political representation and development are worsened by a persisting governance deficit. As mentioned briefly earlier, insurgency movements belonging to each of the ethnic communities have established governance mechanisms parallel to the formal governance structures in Manipur. In the absence of a perceived or real governance, the informal governance structures play important roles. Arguably, the governance deficit can be directly attributed to the faulty and ineffective decentralisation of power in Manipur, where the populations in the hill districts are often unable to obtain justice for their grievances. As scholars have argued, the linkages between identity and discrimination in governance have driven ethnic polarisation in Manipur. The key issues related to decentralisation in Manipur are the formation, and the functions, of the Hill Areas Committee (HAC) and Autonomous District Councils (ADCs), as well as the demands for the Sixth Schedule status for the Hill districts. The HAC, formed under Article 371C with the legislation of the Manipur State Assembly (Hill Areas Committee Order, 1972) and the ADC through the District Council Act-1971 (enforced in 1973) aimed at protecting the rights, entitlements, and interests of the tribal populations in the hill districts. Accordingly, the six ADCs were constituted to ensure decentralised governance for the state's tribal people. However, the ADCs of Manipur are often toothless; with their limited legislative and judiciary powers, they remain dependent on the state government for policies to be implemented. They are reduced to being mere administrative and

executive bodies, creating resentment and grievances. Yet, such conflicts are not always limited between the valley-based majority and the hill-based minorities. Even among the tribal groups i.e., the Nagas and the Kukis, there is no consensus on the extension of Sixth Schedule provisions in the ADC areas. The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, in its report of March 2002, recommended the extension of the Sixth Schedule in the Hill areas of Manipur. However, it got a cold response from the Nagas as militant groups like the NSCN-IM and the United Naga Council (the apex Naga body) found it a hindrance to their greater objective of a separate homeland, *Nagalim*. Similarly, at the legislation level, the demands for more autonomy for the tribal communities in the hill regions face impediments. In a recent attempt to ensure more autonomy to the HAC and to the ADCs, the Manipur (Hill Areas) Autonomous District Council Bill, 2021 was to be introduced in the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Manipur Legislative Assembly as a Government Bill on 20 August 2021. This was also an attempt to bring about amendments to the existing HAC Act of 1971. Before the introduction of the Bill, the State Government accused the HAC members of attempting to divide the state into two power blocs. Instead, the government introduced the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bills (read without mentioning the Autonomous aspects in it) and the Kukis felt betrayed.

### **Illegal immigration, War on drugs, and Anxiety over citizenship**

Issues emanating from certain neighbouring countries of India also contribute to the ethnic conflicts in Manipur. These include the dumping of goods from China; the illegal migration (both real and the perceived) of the Chins from Myanmar; and increasing cultivation of poppies and consequently the rising drug trade in Manipur. While the dumping of goods from China is often seen through the prism of state security, the illegal immigration from Myanmar, and the rise of poppy cultivation and the drug trade are often linked to the Kukis of Manipur. The majority of Meiteis (and to some extent the Nagas, too) are of the view that the illegal migration of the Chins from Myanmar, following the takeover of the *junta* in 2021, threatens the 'demographic balance' of Manipur. Moreover, the Meiteis believe that with the illegal immigration of Chins from Myanmar, there has been a spike in poppy cultivation in and around the Kuki majority areas, leading to the rise of the drug trade in the state. Such claims, however, are rejected by the Kukis. For the Meiteis, the Kukis are "shifting the demography" of Manipur; for the Kukis, the Meiteis are pushing their "majoritarian agenda".

While the competing narratives fuel the ethnic conflict, Kukis view certain policies of the Manipur state government as being targeted against them. These include the 'war on drugs', the conduct of surveys through the Manipur State Population Commission (MSPC) supposedly to identify 'illegal immigrants'; and the eviction and demolition drives in various parts of Manipur. Data from the state government belie these views, however: Of some 2,518 arrests made under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act between 2017 and 2023, 1,083 were Muslims, 381 were Meiteis, 873 Kuki-Chins, and 181 were from other communities. Moreover, during the same period, the Kuki-Chin community cultivated around 13,121 acres of land for growing poppies while the Naga community cultivated around 2,340 acres.

Along with the government's measures to crack down on poppy cultivation and drug trade, the surveys conducted through the MSPC to identify the illegal immigrants induced by the demands from the Meiteis for the implementation of the NRC in Manipur has created fear and anxiety among the Kukis. Moreover, the implementation drives to protect the forests, since October 2022, is perceived to be biased against the Kukis. The eviction of villages, mostly belonging to the Kuki-Z-Chin communities, the demolition of Kuki churches and of the tribal colonies in Imphal Valley, have all fueled perceptions among the Kukis that they were being persecuted. The government rejects any alleged bias against the Kukis. Official figures say that the eviction drive between October 2015 and April 2023 has evicted 413 households from the reserved forests of Manipur. Of these, 280 households were Meiteis (143 Meitei Hindus and 137 Meitei Pangal-Muslims); 59 were Kukis; 38, Naga; and 36 were Nepali.

It is around these claims by the Kukis being targeted, and the counterclaims by the Meiteis that the Kukis are shifting the demography by providing a safe haven to the illegal Chin migrants from Myanmar and engaging in poppy cultivation that the ethnic conflict has worsened since erupting in early May 2023. The ongoing violence has caused heavy losses in lives and property, to both the communities. The failure of the government in containing violence puts into question its political will in minimising the risks of ethnic conflicts in Manipur through an effective policy framework.

There is an urgent need for meaningful dialogue among the conflicting communities that could precede confidence-building measures among the ethnic groups. In turn, the only way that such confidence-building measure could be initiated is to bring an end to the violence. The political will of the state government would be key. Earlier attempts to engage the ethnic communities in dialogue have offered little in terms of positive outcomes. Unfortunately, community-based organisations are keeping ethnic sentiments hostile against each other. It is important to mention that conflicts resolved through social platforms have more far-reaching positive results than the ones that are managed politically. Disarming the militant groups (both those that are active and others who have suspended operations) and the civilians engaged in violent activities is of paramount importance, and the onus is on the state and the union government to act swiftly. Conflicts of this nature often provide fertile ground for militant groups to operate, recruit, ensure finance, and legitimise their existence and operations. The state of Manipur has been reeling under the massive ramifications of violence for decades and it can no longer afford to have its communities armed against each other. The governments need to check the illegal flow of arms across the border and their availability within the state. The issues of competing ethnic sentiments over traditional ownership of land require a critical interrogation. Debates and discussions are required on the rationale of ethnic communities' assertion of customary ownership on land that necessarily functions around principles of 'othering'. The position of the Kukis and Nagas to limit the Meiteis, constituting more than 50 percent of the state population, to a mere 10 percent of the land makes little sense. Similarly, the patterns of state-led development benefits being concentrated among the Meiteis need to be reversed. Accordingly, the available land and other resources, socio-political status, and the benefits of development need to be equitably distributed and democratised. A step forward would be to revisit and restructure the existing political representation, which has long been asymmetric in favour of the Meiteis. The issues of

decentralised governance and demands for autonomy could rightfully be addressed, as the focus can shift to addressing the legitimate issues of governance without getting compounded by ethnic-specific sentiments.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss main ethnic groups in Manipur and their settlement patterns.

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2. What factors led to the emergence of ethnic conflicts in Manipur?

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3. How does the distribution of resources have created animosity between different ethnic groups of Manipur?

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4. Discuss the external factors that contributed to the intensification of ethnic violence in Manipur.

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#### **2.3.8 LET US SUM UP**

The Northeast region has had a long history of being marginalised, whose inclusion in the Indian nation has been seriously challenged by communities and where identity politics has shaped the politics of resistance. The struggle for power, both political and economic, has become bloodied. Many struggles, in the process of establishing their own identity and political right, have carried historical retribution to an extreme extent. Democratic politics in India is dependent on the logic of vote banks, the politics of numbers crunched together with caste and tribe. Religious configuration has made identities very crucial in the postcolonial period. Hence, territoriality and political power, and control over resources for the ruling classes of such communities give rise to politics of exclusion and politicisation of ethnicity.

Northeast India has earned a dubious distinction of being home to Asia's longest running insurgency. Geo-strategic locations of the region surrounded by Bhutan and China (Tibet) in north, Myanmar in east and south and Bangladesh in south and west and approximately 4000 square kilometres of porous international borders further accentuating the security threat. For the last two months, the intensification of insurgency incidents has put a question mark on the various security efforts in

Northeast region.

Three things are essential to meet the challenges posed by Northeastern conflicts: the restoration of governance at its most fundamental and basic level, the creation of confidence that indigenous groups will not be reduced to a minority, and bringing antagonistic groups together in the process of peace-building through strong civil society movements.

### **2.3.9 EXERCISES**

1. Briefly explain the ethnic make-up of North-eastern people in India.
2. Explain the factors leading to the rise of ethnic consciousness among the people of North-east.
3. Write a note on ethnicity in Assam with a special reference to Bodo Movement.
4. Critically analyse ethnic conflict in Nagaland and its impact on neighbouring states.
5. Write a short note on ethnicity in Manipur.

### **2.3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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## **2.4 SUB-STATE REGIONALISM: GORKHALAND, BODOLAND AND LADAKH**

**- V. Nagendra Rao**

### **STRUCTURE**

**2.4.0 Objective**

**2.4.1 Introduction**

**2.4.2 Statehood Demand**

**2.4.3 Statehood Demands for Gorkhaland**

2.4.3.1 Agitation under GNLF and formation of DGHC

2.4.3.2 Agitation under GJM:

2.4.3.3 Impact of formation of Telangana on Gorkhaland Movement

**2.4.4 Statehood Demand for Bodoland**

2.4.3.1 The Impact of Assamese Nationalism

2.4.3.2 Rise of Bodo Movement

2.4.3.3 Constitution of Bodoland Territorial Council

**2.4.5 Other Demands for Statehood**

**2.4.6 Sub-Regionalism in Ladakh**

**2.4.7 Let us Sum Up**

**2.4.8 Exercises**

**2.4.9 Suggested Readings**

**2.4.0 OBJECTIVES**

This topic provides basic knowledge about the different states which demands separate statehood in India. After going through this topic, you should be able to:

- understand the background of statehood demands in India
- know the demands made by Gorkha people in West Bengal
- understand the issues of the Bodo people in Assam
- comprehend the demands of various groups for separate statehood.

**2.4.1 INTRODUCTION**

India is comprised of 28 states. Since India gained independence from Britain in 1947 the country's democracy has endured many external and internal challenges. Besides poverty, religious,

cultural, and language clashes, one of the biggest issues that India faced is the issue of the creation of states. India, being multicultural state, has to face many conflicts based on region, religion, caste, tribe and other identities. If an identity group which is in conflict with dominant and majoritarian tendencies also located in a specific territory, then statehood demands based on this territorial identity arising. As a result, India witnessed many conflicts, sometimes very violent, in all its parts, based demands for separation, autonomy or separate statehood

#### **2.4.2 STATEHOOD DEMANDS**

Recently, India has witnessed a sort of assertion of identity politics in all the parts, east, west, north and south. There have been struggles around the assertiveness and conflicting claims of the identity groups, and of struggles amongst them, often fought out on lines of region, religion, language, caste and community. These struggles have found expressions in the changed mode of electoral representation that has brought local/regional into focus with the hitherto politically dormant groups and regions finding voices. Emergence of a more genuinely representative democracy has led to the sharpening of the line of distinction between or among the identity groups and the regions.

The process has received an impetus with the introduction of the new economic policies at the marginal groups as well as the peripheral regions increasingly feel left out with the centre gradually withdrawing from the social and economic sector and market economy privileging the privileged, be it the social groups or the regions. Regional inequalities within the states in terms of income and consumptions have been widening. Inter-state as well as intra-state disputes have grown faster in the post-reform period.

The above processes have significantly contributed to the regionalization of polity with the regional states emerging as the prime arenas where politics and economy actually unfold. Cultural heterogeneity of the regions within the states over the years has been sharpened as a result of the unevenness of development and unequal access to political power in a centralized federal political economy.

As a consequence, India's federal ideology has registered a marked shift as regional identity, culture and geographical difference now appear to be better recognized as a valid basis for administrative division and political representation. As a result, the recent decades have witnessed to the assertion of well defined geographically, culturally and historically constituted distinct regions that have emerged within the states, showing sharpened ethnic/communal as well as other socio-political cleavages like the regional and rural-urban ones.

The newly found assertion of the regions received an impetus in the wake of the creation of the three new states of Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand in November 2000. Significantly, this new wave of reorganization was supported by all parties, in particular, by the two parties with nearly all-India presence, that is the Congress and the BJP. What also helped the cause was the fact that 'ethnic communities in three new states were unconnected with foreign enemies in the three new states were unconnected with foreign enemies or cross border nationalities'.

The qualitative shift in the thinking about the territoriality of a region is visible in the way demand for a 'homeland of one's own' has become a 'permissible' issue for party agendas creating a new 'field of opportunities' for regions demanding statehood. Debates over territorial reorganizations have re-entered 'mainstream' political discussion after remaining a taboo for a long period, especially during the centralizing and personalizing leadership that took over after Nehru when assertions of regional identity were essentially viewed with suspicion and were stigmatized as parochial, chauvinist and even anti-national. Arguably, such apprehension is not evident in the Constitution which provides for a great degree of flexibility given to the Parliament under Article 3 to decide the bases on which new states are to be created, i.e., geography, demography, administrative convenience, language, tribalism or culture. Such constitutional flexibility has not only allowed for the accommodation of regional aspirations in the past but has also provided an incentive for ongoing political demands aimed at separate statehood.

With the Centre agreeing in principle to consider the demand for the creation of a separate Telangana state in December 2009, old and new demands for redrawing the boundaries of the states have been coming up thick and fast with increased intensity.

There are two major statehood movements that will be discussed in the subsequent sections. One is the Gorkhaland demanded by the people of Darjeeling hills and the people of Gorkha (Nepali) ethnic origin in Dooars in northern West Bengal on the basis of ethno-linguistic rights and the other one is Bodoland demanded by the Bodo people located in the extreme north on the north bank of the Brahmaputra River in the state of Assam.

#### **2.4.3 STATEHOOD DEMAND FOR GORKHALAND**

The ethnic Nepalis in Darjeeling hills of West Bengal are demanding for separate statehood, Gorkhaland for a long time. The movement for Gorkhaland has gained momentum in the line of ethno-linguistic-cultural sentiment of the people who desire to identify themselves as Indian Gorkhas. Two mass movements for Gorkhaland have taken place under the Gorkh National Liberation Front (1986–1988) and Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (2007–till date). Crucial to the separate statehood demand is relative backwardness of North West Bengal region where the Darjeeling hills are located. Ethno-linguistic identity added to this backwardness to take turn of statehood movement.

Backwardness in North Bengal had affected different ethnic groups adversely in the region in varying degrees, which is the cause of resentment among them. The resentment against backwardness gets exacerbated and takes the form of ethnic politics principally because of three reasons. First, it is because of the presence of ethnic groups that are linguistically and culturally different from the dominant one who are largely placed in the category of SCs and STs and who have clearly lagged behind in terms of development indicators. The second is related to the practices of the ruling party for a long time, CPI (M) and the Left Front, which to a certain extent stems from its domination in the state and in the region. The CPI (M) has been using aggressive tactics for capturing and controlling institutions within the state, which has led to an erosion of democracy. It has failed to accommodate and address their grievances and has also failed to accommodate and address their grievances and has

also failed to accommodate the elites of these ethnic groups. Third, in the absence of a sensible and organised opposition at the state level, the demand of the principal ethnic groups finds expression in one form of identity politics which demands the formation of separate state.

The demand for autonomy in Darjeeling did not have its origins in 1980 when the Gukha National Liberation Front (GNLF) was formed. It predates it. The demand for a separate administrative unit in Darjeeling has existed since 1907, when the Hillmen's Association of Darjeeling submitted a memorandum to Minto-Morley Reforms demanding a separate administrative setup. In 1947, the undivided Communist Party of India (CPI) submitted a memorandum to the Constituent Assembly with copies to Jawaharlal Nehru, the Vice President of the Interim Government, and Liaquat Ali Khan, Finance Minister of the Interim Government, demanding the formation of Gorkhasthan comprising Darjeeling District, Sikkim and Nepal.

In Independent India, the Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League (ABGL) was the first political party from the region to demand greater identity for the Gorkha (Nepali) ethnic group and economic freedom for the community, when in 1952, under the presidency of N.B. Gurung, the party met Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India in Kalimpong and submitted a memorandum demanding the separation from Bengal.

In 1980, under the presidency of Indra Bahadur Rai, the Pranta Parishad of Darjeeling wrote to the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi with the need to form a new state in Darjeeling.

The movement for a separate state of Gorkhaland gained serious momentum during the 1980s, when a violent agitation was carried out by Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) led by Subhash Ghisingh. The agitation ultimately led to the establishment of a semiautonomous body in 1988 called the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) to govern certain areas of Darjeeling district. However, in 2007, a new party called the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) raised the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland once again. In 2011, GJM signed an agreement with the state and central governments for the formation of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, a semiautonomous body that replaced the DGHC in the Darjeeling hills.

#### **2.4.3.1 AGITATION UNDER GNLF AND FORMATION OF DGHC**

In the 1980s, Subhash Ghisingh raised the demand for the creation of a state called Gorkhaland within India to be carved out of the hills of Darjeeling and areas of Dooars and Siliguri terai contiguous to Darjeeling. During the peak of the movement, which continued from 1986 till the signing of the Accord in late 1988, the hills witnessed large-scale violence, hate campaigns mainly against the Benagalis and the functionaries of the parties, particularly the CPI (M), that denounced the movement. The GNLF also lambasted the Left Front government that was in power and its policies. During the course of agitation over 1200 people died. This movement culminated with the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988. The DGHC administered the Darjeeling hills for 23 years with some degree of autonomy.

In the post-Accord period that established the DGHC, there grew resentment against the

functioning of the DGHC and the GNLF in the hills. The central allegation were mismanagement and misappropriation of funds by the leaders and absence of democracy in the functioning of the DGHC and also within the GNLF.

Several developments took place in hill politics in the post-Accord period out of which four were crucial. First, several splinter groups of the Gorkhaland movement were not only formed but also flourished in the hills that challenged the GNLF and the functioning of the DGHC. This indicated the steady erosion of the popularity of the HNLF in the post-Accord phase. The growth of these groups is revealed from the fact that in the Panchayat elections to the Gram Panchayat, several smaller organizations were able to carve out support for themselves and won seats in some of the constituencies. The second development of consequence was that of in the second and third elections to the DGHC several candidates who were denied tickets by the GNLF contested the elections mostly as independent candidates. The third development was that the Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League (ABGL) was able to regroup itself and started asserting and playing an important part in hill politics since the mid- 1990s.

In the wake of mounting criticism the GNLF, in order to regain its lost support and for its legitimacy, declared that the Council was dead and reiterated its demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland but from 2005 onwards raised the demand of Sixth Scheduled status for the region. All this ultimately resulted in the Accord that granted the Sixth Scheduled status to Darjeeling in December 2005. The second agitation by the GNLF subsided since it conserved the granting of Sixth Schedule status as a milestone towards the achievement of the state of Gorkhaland.

It was this agreement of December 2005 which produced the phenomenon of Bimal Gurang and the Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM) and was responsible for the renewed agitation for Gorkhaland. Gurang, a popular Concillor and a close aid of Subhash Ghisingh for long, was expelled from the party in 2000 for 'anti-party activities'. Shortly after his expulsion, he announced that the hills should accept nothing short of Gorkhaland and formed the GJMM. After forming it he appealed to people across political loyalties to joining the GJMM so that the hills could speak with one voice to attain Gorkhaland. Gurang declared that attainment of a separate state was their right and the GJMM would attain it peacefully.

In a short period the following of the GJMM swelled and it soon turned into a massive organisation in the hills, sidelining the GNLF that led to the fall of Subhash Ghisingh. The Morcha provided a powerful critique of the DGHC, the GNLF and also of the Sixth Schedule agreement. It criticised the DGHC as a 'small defanged institution of self-governance'. It alleged that 'the Government of West Bengal installed a satrap in the form of Subhash Ghisingh, charged with the task of quelling any dissent in the Darjeeling hills and for ensuring that the demand for a separate state would never be raised again'.

The Morcha held and convinced the people that if the Sixth Schedule bill was passed it would disintegrate the Gorkha Community in lines of caste, colour, creed and religion. It felt that the Sixth Schedule was nothing but a 'deep rooted conspiracy to divide the hills and fragment the society into

pieces'.

#### **2.4.3.2 AGITATION UNDER GJM**

Ahead of the 2009 general elections in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party again announced its policy of having smaller states and to create two more states, Telangana and Gorkhaland, if they won the general election. GJM supported the candidature of Jaswant Singh of BJP, who won the Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat with 51.5% votes in his favour. In the July 2009 budget session of Parliament, three Parliamentarians— Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Sushma Swaraj and Jaswant Singh—strongly pleaded for creating a state of Gorkhaland.

The demand for Gorkhaland took a new turn with the assassination of Madan Tamang, leader of Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League. He was stabbed to death allegedly by Gorkha Janmukti Morcha supporters on 21 May 2010 in Darjeeling, which led to a spontaneous shutdown in the three Darjeeling hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong. After the murder of Madan Tamang, the West Bengal government threatened action against Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, whose senior leaders are named in the FIR, meanwhile hinting discontinuation of ongoing talks over interim arrangement with the Gorkha party, saying it had “lost popular support following the assassination”.

On 8 February 2011, three GJM activists were shot dead by the police as they tried to enter Jalpaiguri district on a padyatra led by Bimal Gurung from Gorubathan to Jaigaon. This led to violence in the Darjeeling hills and an indefinite strike was called by GJM that lasted 9 days.

In 2011 state Assembly elections, GJM candidates won three Darjeeling hill assembly seats, proving that the demand for Gorkhaland was still strong in Darjeeling. Wilson Champramari, an independent candidate supported by GJM, also won from Kalchini constituency in the Dooars.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the factors fueling the demand for statehood in India?

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2. What are the reasons behind the demand for separate Gorkhaland?

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3. Discuss the role of GNLF in Gorkhaland movement.

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4. Resentment against DGHC and GNLF revived the Gorkhaland movement. Comment.

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5. Trace the origin of Gorkhaland agitation under GJM.

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6. What was the impact of creation of Telangana as separate state in Gorkhaland movement?

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#### **2.4.2.3 IMPACT OF FORMATION OF TELANGANA STATE ON GORKHALAND MOVEMENT**

On 30 July 2013, the Congress Working Committee unanimously passed a resolution to recommend the formation of a separate Telangana state from Andhra Pradesh. This resulted in flaring up of demands throughout India, prominent among them were the demands for statehood for Gorkhaland in West Bengal and Bodoland in Assam. Following a 3 days bandh, GJM announced an indefinite bandh from 3 August. Largely peaceful, political development took place in the background. With the West Bengal government armed with Calcutta high court order declaring the bandh as illegal, the government toughened its stand by sending a total of 10 companies of paramilitary force to quell any violent protest and arresting prominent GJM leaders and workers. In response GJM announced a unique form of protest 'Janta Bandh', in which with no picketing or the use of force the people in the hills were asked to voluntarily stay inside on 13 and 14 August 2013. This proved to be a major success and an embarrassment for the government.

After a marathon 'all party meeting' convened by the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) on 16 August at Darjeeling, the pro Gorkhaland parties informally formed 'Gorkhaland Joint Action Committee' and jointly decided to continue the movement and exercise bandhs albeit through different names. For the first time in 106 years, all the major political parties of the hills agreed to come together and jointly take the agitation forward. With demands for Union government intervention, the GJAC announced that agitation was to continue even after 18 August, with programs like 'Ghar Bhitre Janta' (People confined to home), processions with torches and huge human chains with black bands on the national highways".

To sum up, the agitation by the Gorkha people in the future is likely to continue and also the schism between the Gorkhas and the Bengalis and the Gorkhas and the *adivasis*. We also hold that behind all the upheavals surrounding the demand for Gorkhaland by the GJMM and others in the hills lay the economy of Darjeeling, which still remains underdeveloped even after the DGHC was formed

in 1988.

#### **2.4.4 STATEHOOD DEMANDS FOR BODOLAND**

The demand for separate statehood, Bodoland, was raised by the Bodos of Assam in the North Eastern region of India. Due to substantial ethnic diversity and heterogeneity of north-eastern region of India, no region in the north-east can be so neatly carved as to completely exclude others. The presence of minorities is only inevitable. Ethnic articulation by one group of people in a region perpetually produces minorities and sets off further demands for the creation of more regions within the region. The contest is aptly illustrated in the case of the Bodo movement insofar as it made critique of what is commonly known as 'the dominant Assamese nationalism'. Insofar as the Bodoland had been successful in carving out a region for themselves in the form of the Bodo Autonomous Council in 1993, the Santhals, the Bengali-speaking Muslims as well as the other plains tribes questioned their hegemony.

#### **2.4.3.1 THE IMPACT OF ASSAMESE NATIONALISM ON BODOLAND MOVEMENT**

The Bodos, according to the dominant Assamese nationalist discourse, are regarded as an indispensable part of Assamese nationality. In their self-perception of an expanded Assamese collective self, the Bodos, by virtue of their assimilation into the Assamese language and culture, form only one of its integral parts. Indeed, dominant Assamese nationalism since its emergence in the early 20th century harps on the twin demand of assimilation and expulsion. The demand for assimilation is inspired by the urge on the part of its ideologues to create 'a world after its own image' by asking others to adopt Assamese language and culture. We must note that the plea for assimilation also implies a demand for abandonment of language and culture of other groups. Hence, when Assamese was made the official language of the state in 1960, large-scale riots broke out in Assam, particularly in the mixed areas of the Brahmaputra valley, targeting mainly the Bengalis. Dominant Assamese nationalism was also predicated on the demand for the expulsion of the non-Assamese outsiders. Assimilation and expulsion in other words serve as the means of realising the Assamese Varna-Hindu dream of turning Assam into a homogenous society.

#### **2.4.3.2 RISE OF BODO MOVEMENT**

It is in the background of the dominant Assamese nationalism that the Bodo critique gained its momentum. The Bodo resentments against their absorption in the Hindu caste hierarchy slowly culminated a process of return to their 'imagined tribal roots'. As one of Bodo scholar pointed out, the tendency to homogenise and to pass off the state's culture as one "Assamese" culture fails to recognize its multiplicity and its essential Bodo or Mongoloid character'.

The resentment may be traced back to the establishment of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in 1952 and the first thing it did after its establishment was to demand the recognition of the Bodo language as a medium of instruction in primary and higher secondary schools. The use of Bodo language was officially recognised for the primary level in 1963 and for the higher secondary level in Bodo-concentrated areas much later, in 1968. Similarly, in 1974, the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) launched an agitation with the demand for using Roman script in place of the Assamese

script. The PTCA launched a movement for a separate 'Udayachal' state for the plains tribals in 1967 and continued the movement for 23 years. The United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) led by Binay Khungur Basumtary came into being in 1984 and raised the demand for a separate Union Territory for the plains tribals to be carved out of Assam. Whether it is the PTCA or UTNLF, the proposed homeland was meant not only for the Bodos but also for all plains tribes including the Miris, Rabhas, Tiwas and others. But as the ABSU-Bodo Peoples' Action Committee (BPAC) combine tightened their grip over the movement, the idea of a composite tribal territory gradually gave way to an exclusive Bodo homeland or what they called a separate Bodoland.

The resentment of Bodos culminated when Gohpur riots took place in 1989. Not a single Bodo rendered homeless as a result took shelter in any of the relief camps of Assam the ground that they were run by the Assamese-dominated administration. The Bodos preferred to stay along the highways under the open sky than to take refuge in the camps. Some of them even fled to nearby Arunachal Pradesh. Besides, Rabi Ram Brahma, then General Secretary of the All-Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), issued a warning that all the non-Bodos living in proposed Bodoland would be expelled if they did not vacate it on their own by 15 August 1989. Besides, the ABSU resolution entitled 'Divide Assam fifty-fifty' adopted, in its Bansbari Conference (1987), otherwise regarded as the testament of subsequent Bodo militancy, underscores the social and cultural break in these terms:

...the attitude of Assamese people is anti-tribal; Assamese people are importing Assamese colonialism in tribal areas and dominating the tribals; Assamese people rare following the policy of Assamese expansionism and chauvinism; Assamese people feel that Assam is only for Assamese and not for tribals; Assam Government is nothing but only an Assamese Government and not the Government of the people of Assam; Assamese people want to assimilate others.

Hence, the Bodo discourse is permeated by a strong sense of betrayal, indeed breach of trust that the Bodos had reposed on the 'Assamese people' with all their pristine innocence. The arrival of the critique marks the end of the era of innocence.

As the Bodo movement started to gather momentum, the government entered into an agreement with the leadership of ABSU-BPAC combine. The Accord signed in February 1993 sought to provide the Bodos with some measure of 'autonomy' in areas which are 'contiguous' and in which they constitute a numerical majority consisting of 50 per cent or more of the population. Even for the sake of preserving contiguity, areas where Bodos constitute even less than 50 per cent will be the constituent parts of the Council. Defining its jurisdiction, the Memorandum of Settlement, popularly known as the Bodo Accord signed on 23 February 1993 points out: "There shall be, by an Act of Assam Legislative Assembly, a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) within the State of Assam comprising the contiguous geographical areas between river Sankosh and Mazbat/river Pansoi. The and records authority of the State will scrutinize the list of villages furnished by the ABSU-BPAC having 50 percent and more of tribal population which shall be included in the BAC".

This Accord has thrown a challenge to Bodo leadership. Never before in their history has the Bodo leadership been caught in such a quandary. Unless they could decisively prove their majority in

a space that they prefer to define as their homeland, they could not get themselves entitled to whatever political autonomy is granted to them. It's very difficult prove that they are in 50 per cent in all those areas shown in the list submitted by the leadership.

Hence, in 1996 the ABSU disowned the Bodo Accord and revived its demand for a separate Bodoland. A section of the Bodo leadership sought to resolve the circularity by way of taking to arms and resorted to the path of secessionist militancy. While the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) under the leadership of Ranjan Daimany demands complete secession from the Indian Union, such moderate organisations as the ABSU and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) have insisted on the formation of a separate Bodo state within it. The BLT has ultimately settled for Territorial Council.

Since demarcation of space is crucial to the establishment of the Bodos as a majority in their 'homeland'. This found further impetus during the Bodoland movement, particularly after the formation of the Bodo Autonomous Council in 1993. When Bodo leaders reiterated their demand for including about 1000 contiguous villages, they were curtly told by Hiteswar Saikia, then Chief Minister of Assam, that they did not constitute a majority in these villages. The Bodo leadership got the clue, went deep inside the villages and cleansed them of non-Bodos in a bid to create a Bodo majority. Ethnic cleansing resorted to by a section of the militant Bodo leadership therefore was initially characterised by their ptent desire of creating a majority of their own in order to lay hold of the villages under the jurisdiction of the Bodoland Autonomous Council.

Although the Bodo movement developed predominatnly as a critique of the dominant Assamese nationalism, Santhals and the Benagli-speaking Muslims rather than the Assamese settled in the proposed Bodoland area had to bear the brunt of violence organised intermittently by the Bodo militants. These acts lead the minorities to organise themselves and resist the dominatin of the majority Bodos. The formation of such tribal organisations as the Adivasi Cobra Force and Sanmilit Janagoshthi Sangram Samiti is illustrative of this point.

#### **2.4.3.3 CONSTITUTION OF BODOLAND TERRITORIAL COUNCIL (BTC)**

The problem was sought to be addressed by way of signing the Bodo Accord with the BLT leaders on 10 February 2003 that subsequently led to the creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The BTC was formed with the objective of 'providing Constitutional protection under the Sixth Schedule to fulfil economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of land rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos and speeding up the infrastructure of development in BTC area'. Article 4 that consists of eight clauses aims to 'safeguard' the interests and concerns of the 'non-tribals in the BTC area' by way of ensuring their special representation in the BTC and promising suitable modification in the Sixth Schedule while securing their settlement rights and transfer and inheritance property. The actual functioning of council was started on 7 December 2003 by constituting the 12 members of the Council provisionally. After the Council Election on 13 May 2005 and subsequent bye-election in November 2005, the 40-member Legislative Council has been formed to look after the development works in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts. The

remaining six members are nominated by the Governor of Assam from the unrepresented Communities. Thus there are altogether 46 members of the Council, representing all communities of BTC Area.

As per Memorandum of Settlement in the tripartite talks in the year 2003, 40 subjects have been entrusted to the BTC Authority for all round development of the people in this area. Subjects include the Tribal Research Institute, Lotteries and Theatres, Intoxicating Liquors, and Registration of Births and Deaths. The entire area covered under the BTC has been recognized with Kokrjhar as an original district and forming other new districts thus totaling four districts in the BTC Area.

Despite the Bodo Accord, Bodo people still claim they are neglected by the Indian Government, with no economic improvement evident in Bodo dominated areas. Lately, there have been signs of efforts to improve these situations by the Assam Government. However, there are thousands of people still languishing in refugee camps in very poor conditions, which include both Bodos and non-Bodos. Although dozen of roads have been repaired in last few years, hundreds of bridges and other infrastructures remain in somewhat neglected condition. Whether the creation of BTC (BTAD) will address the issues of Bodo self-determination remains an open question.

#### **2.4.5 OTHER DEMANDS FOR STATEHOOD**

India may have at least 50 states in future if demands for new states are to be conceded as the Home Ministry has received representations for creation of more than 20 states. The demands for separate states have come from across the country -

- for Kukiland in Manipur to Kongu Nadu in Tamil Nadu, for Kamatapur in North Bengal to Tulu Nadu in Karnataka. However, except Uttar Pradesh, which during the Mayawati-led BSP government proposed to create four states dividing the country's most populous state, no state government had given any recommendation for carving out a new state. But the demands continue to pour in.

The demands for separate states are: In Uttar Pradesh, there have been demands for Awadh Pradesh, Poorvanchal, Bundelkhand and Pachimanchal or Harit Pradesh. There is also demand for creation of a Braj Pradesh, consisting of Agra division and Aligarh division of Uttar Pradesh and districts of Bharatpur and Gwalior from Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. A demand for creation of Bhojpur comprising areas of eastern UP, Bihar and Chhattisgarh has also been received by the Home Ministry. There has been an old demand for creation of a separate Vidarbha by curving out the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. There is a demand for Mithilanchal comprising Maithili speaking regions of Bihar and Jharkhand.

The Government of India has received demand for creation of Saurashtra by curving that region out of Gujarat. The Dimasa people of Northeast have been demanding a separate state called Dimaraji or Dimaland comprising the Dimasa inhabited areas of Assam and Nagaland. There is a demand for creation of Kongu Nadu comprising parts of southwest of Tamil Nadu, southeast of Karnataka and east of Kerala. Demand for creating a Coorg state, comprising the Coorg region of Karnataka has also come to the Centre. Representation has also received for creation of separate

Kosal state comprising some districts of Odisha, parts of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. There is a demand for Tulu Nadu comprising a region on the border between Karnataka and Kerala.

The demand for separate Kukiland, comprising Kuki tribal inhabited areas in Manipur has also been raised. A demand for creation of Konkan, comprising Konkani speaking part of Western India along the Arabian Sea coastline has also been raised. There has been a demand for creation of Kamtapur comprising some districts West Bengal, including Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri. Some people from Garo regions of Meghalaya are demanding for a new state of Garoland. Besides, there is a demand for a separate Eastern Nagaland by curving out some parts of the Northeastern state. The demand for creation of an Union Territory for Ladakh has also been pending with the Home Ministry. So far, India has 28 states and seven Union Territories. Telangana will be the 29th state of the country.

## **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Analyse the impact of Assamese Nationalism on Bodoland movement.

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2. Discuss the 1993 Bodo Accord and why did ABSU disown it in 1996?

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3. Discuss the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council BTC.

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### **2.4.6 SUB-REGIONALISM IN LADAKH**

Ladakh was an independent kingdom until the invasion in 1834 by Gulab Singh's army, the Dogra ruler of Jammu, whose campaigns led to Jammu and Kashmir's creation in 1846. Since 1947 it has remained part of Jammu and Kashmir within the independent Republic of India. There are two Autonomous Hill Development Councils in Ladakh, one in Leh district and one in Kargil, each with its own Chief Executive Councilor, and both the institutions are outside the constitutional purview of the Sixth Schedule. In 2019 the Government of India proposed changing its status to a Union Territory, which came into effect on 31 October 2019.

In post-colonial India, the ethno-religious assertion was unfolded in Ladakh in the form of union territory (UT) status to Ladakh region. The UT with legislature demand was the central point of Leh's electoral politics, with almost all Leh-based political parties vociferously support this demand. Kargil district never shared Leh's political aspiration of either separating from J&K or becoming a separate

UT, and over the period, the UT discourse has consolidated Muslim identity and Buddhist identity. Sub-regional movement in Ladakh always revolved around the separation of Ladakh from Kashmir and argues for North East Frontier Administration type administration or Union Territory status. The justification of these demands has generally been based on articulating that the Kashmiri-dominated Government has never responded to Ladakh and its people's needs, aspirations, and peculiar problems. In the 1980s, the Kargil leadership started asserting the voice and concerns of the people of Kargil district. And, from the beginning, these concerns were articulated as different from those represented by the political leaders of Leh. The core objective of leaders of Leh politics was based on the demand of the detachment of its relationship with J&K, particularly Kashmir; Kargil was opposed to this demand. Kargil district never shared Leh's political aspiration of either separating from J&K or becoming a separate UT. Kargil's inhabitants did not wish to irritate the Kashmiri leadership, although they did not support the valley's secessionist movement.

On the contrary, Leh district has been complaining about Ladakh's neglect within J&K and holding Kashmir-based political parties and leaders responsible for that; Kargil has complained about its neglect within the Ladakh region and the dominance of Leh Buddhists. Of the two districts of Ladakh, Leh has seen more development. Being the headquarters of Ladakh, it has been receiving more attention and resources. Kargil leadership has also been complaining about the district's invisibility as Leh, for all practical purposes, is seen as a synonym of Ladakh. Interestingly most Ladakhi Muslims are more tilted towards Ladakhi Buddhist in terms of language, culture, history, backwardness, etc. Despite such similarities, religion becomes the bone of contention in the Ladakh region.

After the formation of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) led by the Kargil leadership raised various concerns about the separation of Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir. These concerns mostly related to issues such as representation, land, and employment. These concerns were later also raised by the Apex Body Leh (ABL). In this context, many protests for the Statehood demand or constitutional protection under Sixth Schedule were witnessed in Leh-Ladakh. Protestors argue that Articles-370 and 35A of the Constitution had protected some rights of the Ladakhis. The abrogation of these Articles has left the land, economy, identity, and culture of the place exposed to meddling. There are apprehensions that an influx of trade, industry, commerce, and people unfamiliar with the cultural, religious, and traditional essence of the place will disrupt the quiet way of life of Ladakhi.

Common problems seen from this perspective, there are a lot of common concerns now in Ladakh. Of the many concerns, the most important one is related to the political representation of Ladakh. Unlike Jammu and Kashmir, which has a Union Territory with a legislature, the Union Territory of Ladakh is without one. As part of Jammu and Kashmir's erstwhile state, Ladakh was fairly represented in the state government. Apart from one Member of Parliament (MP), there were four Member Legislative Assembly and two Member Legislative Council and invariably a minister in the state government. And, as party members, they were also represented in various other bodies of the state. After the Union Territory formation, it is only a single MP through whom people are connected

for political decision-making. The new system provides a centralized and remote administration. Apart from the political representation issue, the separation of Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir and removing the protection provided by Article 370 and Article 35A have suddenly led to anxieties related to land, ecology and environment, and jobs. The demand for Constitutional protection under the Sixth Schedule and statehood demand comes from these anxieties.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**

**NOTE:** Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Discuss the demands raised by different groups for the creation of new states in India.

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2. Comment on the Sub-regional movement in Ladakh.

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3. The political aspiration of Leh district is different from that of Kargil. Comment.

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### **4.7 LET US SUM UP**

The functioning of democracy presupposes the existence of a divided society. A society which does not recognise the social divisions within does not seem to care for democracy and justice. The supposed homogeneity implies effective concealment of the existing social divisions and develops blindness to others. It creates a society where the 'other' does not exist. Denying divisions is the source of homogenisation and wherever there is homogenisation, the other does not seem to exist. These homogeneous tendencies lead to assertion of other identities which are feeling as victims of homogenous tendencies. These identities sometimes crystallise into organised movements if democratic space was not created to address the problems. If identities are coincided with a particular region, then these movements might move towards making demands for separate statehood. This is what happening in many states of contemporary India. Hence, 'regions within the region' are becoming vocal for statehood demands as we have seen in the two case studies of Gorkhaland and Bodoland.

### **2.4.8 EXERCISES**

1. Critically analyse reasons for various statehood demands in India.
2. Do you agree with the proposition that Gorkhaland Movement in West Bengal due to the

backwardness prevailed in Darjeeling Hills?

3. How far Assamese linguistic assertiveness is responsible for Bodoland movement?

#### **2.4.9 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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