

PREFACE

The present study is an attempt at the exploration of the changing dimensions of India's federal governance. It may be submitted that federal arrangement of any country is dependent on and the result of many factors-historical, contextual, political or economic. Federal arrangement, as structurally conceived at a particular point of time, undergoes changes, sometimes peripheral and sometimes, central, due to changes that take place in the environment within which it operates. So, the federal experience of any country, in a general way should be considered from the perspective of political dynamics of a country.

India's experience in federal governance stretches over a period of more than 50 years. But as said, like many other political issues and arrangements, federalism in India has a long historical past. The federal structure that was evolved in the Government Of India Act, 1935, is considered to be the immediate predecessor of the federal structure adopted in the Constitution of India after independence.

Viewed historically and contextually, there had been reasons to believe that there is centralizing tendency in the federal set-up of



India. The constitution has been modeled accordingly which marks a deviation from the American federal system. States or the constituent units of Indian federation cannot exercise, except in some limited area, any independent authority.

Apart from this structural arrangement, there are areas where political dynamics have enabled the states to play a very crucial role in the federal governance of the country. The emergence of coalition politics has, in a substantial way, altered the federal equation in the practical sense of the term. A look into the nature and extent of developments in the sphere of political process since late 1970S will substantiate this position.

Coalition politics, for that reason, has added new dynamics in the field of federal experiments in India. States and regional political parties are taking active part in the national politics. It has far-reaching consequences on the functioning of the India's political system. In fact, one may not be totally wrong to suggest that regionalisation of Indian politics has a direct relationship with the coalition politics in general.

Thus the present study is an analytical assessment of the nature and quantum of changes that the India's federal system has been witnessing since the late 1970S. As it is an ongoing process, no

one can draw any final conclusion on it. There might be changes in the course of political process with the emergence of new forces. But there seems to be an agreement among the scholars on the issue that there is no or little chance of returning to the pre-1977 position as there have been new political alignments among the political parties both at the national and regional levels. However tentative the conclusions may be, it can be stated that such changes signify the importance of dynamism in the political process. After all political process presupposes dynamism. And India is no exception.

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