Identity Movements and Its Impact on Indian Politics

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Abstract

The identity movements a derivation of social movement that came to fore very recently, are of a different nature, these movements are mainly collective actions or efforts for demands- the defence of interests and the promotion of rights of certain groups of individuals who feel discriminated against, the search for symbolic recognition by a significant others. Some see these movements as the main source of hope for democratization and development, while others look at them with suspicion and as a destabilizing threat. Focussing on the nature of identity movement this paper is an attempt to highlight impacts that it has on India politics.

Key Words: Identity, Social Movements, Collective Actions, Recognition, Democratisation

1. Introduction:

The world history over the years have witnessed many social movements that have brought dramatitical changes in the structures of societies. There have been many failed social movements as well. These movements have varied widely in their ideologies, some have been revolutionary in their aims, some advocate for reforms within the existing system, and there are still others that have been varied in their scope as well, for example, many movements are limited to local policies, while others have been international in

their focus[1]. Despite these differences, scholars have spent a great deal of time trying to understand where they come from, who participates in them, how they succeed, and how they fail.

Looking back to the history of social movements, the term gained popularity in European language in the early 19th century (*Shah, 2002*). To the early scholars collective action was inherently oriented towards change. Some of the earliest works on social movements were attempts to understand why people got caught up in collective action or what conditions were necessary to foment social movement. One of the earliest scholar to the study of social movements processes was Herbert Blumer, who identified four stages of social movements life cycle. The four stages he described were: "*social foment*", "*popular excitement*", "*formalisation*", and "*institutionalisation*" (*De La Porta and Diani, 2006*)[2].

Defining what, exactly, social movement is can be difficult. It is not a political party, nor it is an interest group, which are stable political entities and have regular access to political power and political elites; nor it is a mass fad or trend, which are unorganised and without goals. Instead they are somewhere in between (*Freeman and Johnson, 1999*). Therefore, social movements can be characterized as those, that are "*involved in a conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; [and they] share a distinct collective identity*" (*De La Porta and Diani, 2006*). Social movement thus, can be understood as an organised yet informal social entities engaged in extra-constitutional conflict and is oriented toward certain goals or objective, which may be specific or narrow or more broadly aimed at complete change.

[1] The movements like environmental conservation, women's movements, etc., comes under the category of social movements which have international objectives and impact, while movements for the recognition of a particular community, for greater share in the political system, special privileges and rights for particular community, and so on, have a limited objective and impacts and are concerned with local issues.

[2] Since from this early works, the scholars of social movement have been replacing and renaming the four stages but the actual themes have remained unchanged. Today these four stages of social movement are known as, - Emergence, Coalescence, Bureaucratisation, and Decline (Blumer, 1969. Mauss, 1975, Tilly 1978).

According to Paul Wilkinson there are two basic elements which are essential for social movement- a minimum degree of organisation and a commitment to change (*Shah, 2002)*). Social movements arise when social conditions create dissatisfaction within the existing arrangement. People join movements for infinite variety of reasons - Idealism, compassion, political consideration, neurotic frustration and so on. There are mainly three contending theories which explain the origin of social movements- Relative Deprivation theory, the Strain theory, and the theory of Revitalisation (*Rao, 1978*).

"*Relative Deprivation*" is a concept developed by Staffer (1949) "*It holds that one 'feels' deprived according to the gap between expectations and realisations. The person who wants little and has little, feels less deprived than the one who has much but expects still more*"[3]. A point that is coincident by relative deprivation theorist is that a position of relative deprivation alone will not generate a movement. The structural conditions of relative deprivation provide necessary conditions. Sufficient conditions are provided by the perception of a situation and by the estimate of capabilities by the leaders that they can do something to remedy the situatuation (*Rao, 1978*). '*The Strain Theory*' of social movement has been propounded by Neil Smelser (1962). This theory considers structural strains as the underlying factor contributing to collective behaviour. Structural strain may occur at different level such as norms, values, mobility etc. Smelser's analysis of the genesis of social movement is very much within the structural functional framework. He considers strain as something that endangerthe relationship among the parts of a system leading to its malfunctioning (*Smelser, 1962*). It places stress on the feeling of deprivation also. The Relative Deprivation and the Strain Theory give us an impression that social movement necessarily arise out of negative conditions such as 'deprivation' and 'strain'. Wallace who championed the theory of Cultural Revitalisation assert "*that social movement develop out of a deliberate, organised and conscious effort on the part*

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[3] Quoted in M.S.A. Rao, "Conceptual Problems in the Study of Social Movements. In Rao (ed.) Social Movements in India. Vol. I. 2000.

of the members of the society to construct a more satisfying culture for themselves". This theory suggests that adaptive processes are employed to established equilibrium situation. These movements tend to be double edged sword. On the one side, they express dissatisfaction, dissent and protest against existing conditions, and, on the other, they offer a positive programme of action to remedy the situation (*Rao, 1978*)).

The *identity* movements a derivation of social movement that came to fore very recently are of different nature. These movements are mainly collective actions or efforts for demands- the defence of interests and the promotion of rights of certain groups of individuals who feel discriminated against, the search for symbolic recognition by a significant others. This paper will focus on what should be understood by *identity*, define the characteristics of *identity* movements, and discusses the impacts of *identity* movements on Indian states.

2. Defining Identity

The question of '*identity*' that has been able to capture a major attention among the scholar of social sciences and humanities in recent years cannot be defined in a single definition. In Political Science we find the use of the concept at the centre of debates in major sub-fields. In Comparative Politics, '*identity*' plays a central role in works on nationalism and ethnic conflict (*Horowitz, 1985; Smith, 1991; Deng, 1995; Laitin, 1999*). In International Relations, the idea of "*stateidentity*" is at the heart of constructivist critiques of realism and the analyses of state sovereignty (*Wendt, 1992; Wendt, 1999; Katzenstein, 1996; Lapid and Kratochwil, 1996; Biersteker and Weber, 1996*). In Political Theory, the question of '*identity*' marks numerous arguments on gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, and culture in relation to liberalism and its alternatives (*Young, 1990; Connoly, 1991; Kymlicka, 1995; Miller, 1995*).Compared to the works in history and humanities, political scientists lagged behind when it comes to the works on identities. Due to influences ranging from Michel Foucault to the debate on multiculturalism, the historical and cultural construction of identities of all sorts has

lately been a preoccupation for both social historians and students of literature and culture (*Brubaker and Cooper 1999*).

Despite this vastly increased and broad-ranging interest in '*identity*', the concept itself remains something of a stigma. Given the intense interest in *identity* across the broad spectrum of discipline, one might initially expect to find simple and clear statements of what people mean when they use these concepts. The dictionary meaning of the term '*identity*' according to the OED (Oxford English Dictionary), "The sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances: the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; personality." However this definition of '*identity*' does not easily capture what it seem to mean when we refer to "national *identity*" [4] or "ethnic *identity*" [5]. This means that the dictionary definition of the term '*identity*' does not only fails to capture the meaning but also can mislead the readers when we talk about *identity* in broader usage of the term in context of group or community *identity*, for example, when we talk about national *identity* we are not talking about nation in all types and context and place. The idea of national *identity* rather entails an idea of temporal and spatial continuity of a nation. It is something about the content of the differences (*Fearon, 1999*). Though I have not done extensive research on the concept of '*identity*', here for understanding purpose I have highlighted few definitions as given by different social scientists, scholars and researchers which certainly overlaps the dictionary meaning or the definition of the term *identity*.

- "*Identity is "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others*" (Hogg and Abrams, 1988).

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[4] National identity stands for a person's identity of being a member of one nation irrespective of other things (caste, creed, religion, ethnicity, etc.)

[5] Ethnic identity is the extent to which one identifies with a particular ethnic group(s). Refers to one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership. The ethnic group tends to be one in which the individual claims heritage (Phinney, 1996). Ethnic identity is separate from one's personal identity as an individual, although the two may reciprocally influence each other.

- "*Identity is used in this book to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture*" (Deng, 1995).

- *Identity* "*refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities*" (Jenkins, 1996).

- "*National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols- have internalised the symbols of the nation…*" (Bloom, 1990).

- "*Identity is any source of action not explicable from biophysical regularities, and to which observers can attribute meaning*" (White, 1992).

- "*Indeed, identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be subjectively appropriated anly along with that world. …[A] coherent identity incorporates within itself all the various internalised roles and attitudes.*" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

- "*Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space, or an unresolved question in that space between a number of intersecting discourses…[Until recently, we have incorrectly thought that identity is] a kind of fixed point of thought and being, a ground of action…the logic of something like a 'true self.'….[But] Identity is a process, identity is split. Identity is not a fixed point but an ambivalent point. Identity is also the relationship of the other to oneself*" (Hall, 1989).

- "*By social identity, I mean the desire for group distinction, dignity, and place within historically specific discourses (or frames of understanding) about the character, structure and boundaries of the polity and the economy*" (Hertigel, 1993).

- "*Yet what identity is conceived not as a boundary to be maintained but as a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject?" (*Clifford, 1988*).

- *Identities are "relatively stable, role specific understanding and expectations about self"* (Wendt 1992).

- "*The term [identity] (by convention) references mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other*" (Katzenstein, 1996).

- "*Identities are……prescriptive representations of political actors themselves and of their relationship to each other*"(Kowert and Legro, 1996).

The range, complexity, and differences among these various definitions are remarkable. The difference to some extent reflects the multiple lineages that '*identity*' has within the academy. Some of these authors intended to stipulate a definition of '*identity*' appropriate or useful for their specific purpose. Despite of range of differences among above given definitions about the nature of *identity*, it is notable that almost all definitions evokes one common theme that is the sense of 'recognition'.

Identity thus may be understood as the distinctive characteristic belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category or group. *Identity* may be distinguished from identification; the former is a label, whereas the latter refers to the classifying act itself. *Identity* is thus best construed as being both relational and contextual.

However, the formation of one's *identity* occurs through one's identifications with significant others. These others may be of kind such that one aspires to their characteristics, values and beliefs (a process of idealistic-identification), or destructive when one wishes to dissociate from their characteristics (a process of defensive contra-identification) (*Weinreich & Saunderson, 2003*).

3. Identity Movements

The *identity* movement that came in to fore in the last third of the twentieth century are of a different nature, because they express two complementary types of collective demands: (a) the defence of interests of individual who feel discriminated against, and (b) the search for symbolic recognition by a significant other. *Identity* movements have three main and very distinctive objectives. First, they denounce injustice towards minorities. Second, they convey the idea that specific culture must be taken into consideration when public policies are elaborated so that they meet the specific needs of minorities. Third, they demand greater control of their institution- a demand that sometimes goes as far as self-government (*Smelser, 2001*).

T. K. Oommen (2011) in his edited volume-' Social Movements I – Issues of Identity', argue that, none of the founding fathers- Durkheim, Weber, and Marx- put forward any neat and tidy theories of social movements or collective actions. And yet, it is evident to the discerning eye that early explanations of collective actions are ingrained in their analysis of society. Their contribution to the analysis of society and social change today is referred to by scholars of social science and humanities as the main source of collective action theory.

Emile Durkheim lived in a European society characterised by disintegrating social life, discontented individuals, and extensive conflicts. His seminal notions of collective conscience and collective representation undergrid the idea of collective action; without the first collective action cannot be initiated and without the second the change brought about cannot be articulated. Durkheim first postulated a theory of collective action and that of social change in his "*The Division of Labour in Society*" (1883). Later in "*Elementary forms of Religious Life*" (1915), Durkheim analysed the kind of solidarity that produced, ritualised, and approved forms of collective actions. Thus he presents a society strained by a continuous struggle between forces of disintegration (rapid differentiation) and forces of integration (new and renewed commitment to shared

beliefs). From this Durkheim derives three different kinds of collective actions- routine, anomic, and restorative (*Oommen, 2011*).Routine collective action takes place when development of shared beliefs is equal to or greater than the stress imposed by differentiation. When differentiation continuously outstrips the extent of shared belief anomic collective action is the expected manifestation. Restorative collective action mediates between routine and anomic collective actions and attempts to rescue society from anomiccollective action into which it has slipped into from routine collective action. Durkheim's postulation prompts us to expect anomic and restorative collective actions to rise as differentiation accelerates. It leads us to anticipate and find segments of populations, which are newly emerging and/or displaced by differentiation engaged in collective actions. It predicts a close association among suicide, crime, violence and non-routine collective actions. It is clear that several theories of collective action, which were popular in the twentieth century, embody some version of the Durkheimian argument (*Oommen, 2011*).

Max Weber portrayed collective action as the outgrowth of commitments to certain systems of belief. Weberian, like Durkheimians, tends to propose different explanations for routine and non-routine collective actions. In the non-routine form shared beliefs of the group have a strong direct impact on the groups collective actions. While action routinizes, two changes occur: organisations crystalize to mediate between the beliefs of actors and group interests play a larger and more direct role in collective action. In Weber's view, group commit themselves to collective definitions of the world and of themselves and the definitions, in turn, incorporate goals, entails standards of behaviour and include justifications of power of authorities. Constituted authorities act on behalf of the groups based on their traditional, rational legal or charismatic roles. Which of these bases that group adopts goes on to affect its organisation and its fate? In Weber's account then, the structure and action of the group as a whole spring largely from the initial commitment to a particular kind of belief system, which has its own logic and force (*Oommen, 2011*). According to Weber, religious and ideological leaders are continuously formulating new definitions of the world and of themselves. Only few of them, however, attract followers. In those cases where it happens, the followers commit themselves to the belief system, the charismatic leader and to the objects and rituals consecrated by those

beliefs and the leaders. If more people find the new definition as meaningful they join the existing group of the followers and it expands. Then the group as a whole faces the problem of routinisation of charisma (*Oomen, 2011*).Weber's discussion of routinisation of charisma fits into his general theory of social change. He postulates that traditional authority creates equilibrium of social life if no disruption occurs. But two opposing forces of disruption are perennially present- the authority of rationality and the power of charisma. Bureaucratic rationality can be a revolutionary force against the tradition, it revolitionises through techniques. Charisma works exactly in the opposite way; first transforming the inner life of people and then including people to transform their worlds. Weber thus gives us a dramatic and compelling sense of social change as a product of the eruption of charisma into history and diffusion of rationality through history (*Oommen, 2011*). Weber, like Durkheim, suggests that rapid social change will produce widespread non-routine collective actions. However, Weber changes the course of analysis by suggesting that there are two main categories of collective actions; those oriented to deviant beliefs and those oriented to beliefs, which are routinized and have won general acceptance. Weberian theory also suggests that commitment to a group is an incentive, rather than barrier to participation in collective action, including non-routine action (*Oommen, 2011*).

Karl Marx's analysis of collective action was more systematic, as compared with those of Durkheim and Weber, notwithstanding a century of acute criticism the basic argument he proposed in "*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*" (1852) and "*The Class Struggle in France 1848-50*" (1895) stood the test of time. There are two aspects to the ideas propounded by Marx in this context. Implicitly, he divides the entire population into social classes based on their relationship to the prevailing means of production. Explicitly, Marx identified the major visible actor in politics with their class bases, pronouncing judgements about their basic interests, conscious aspiration, articulated grievances and readiness for collective action. Broadly, the tenor of the argument is that individuals and institutions act on behalf of particular social classes, save the case of

those who run the state who may occasionally act in terms of their political interest ignoring class base (*Oommen, 2011*).

However the founding father of the theory of collective action, Durkheim, neglects the role of mobilisation and the institutionalisation. Similarly Weber also remains silent on the issue of mobilisation- a necessary element of social movements. Marx on the other hand gives more importance to the role of classes based on relations of the means of production as a factor of social movement and gives less importance to generalised tension, momentary impulses and disorganisation. Moreover, Marx over emphasises on collective rationality of political action and ignores collective actions can be sudden and instantaneous (*Oommen, 2011*). *Identity* movement, in its simplest meaning, thus implies collective efforts or actions for the defense of community or group rights by a group of people who feels discriminated, and this group are sometimes mobilised and articulated by the leaders against the existing arrangement of the system. It is to be noted that this collective action can occur suddenly or can be of evolutionary in its nature. Some see these movements as the main source of hope for democratization and development, while others look at them with suspicion and as a destabilizing threat (*Mirosa, nd.*). In this context India constitute an interesting case for the study of *identity* movements and its impact on Indian states. Before coming into the impact of *identity* movements on Indian states let us first familiarise ourselves with the nature of Indian states briefly.

4. Impact of Identity Movements on Indian Politics

The post independet India (1947-48) witnessed the country to get divided into two nations based on religious ground- India and Pakistan. The country after independence was faced with the vital problem of arranging the boundaries of Indian states which are divided on several groups- religious, caste, ethnicities, cultural, regional and linguistic ground. The major task of the newly formed government was to maintain the unity and integrity of a country which was divided into numerous ethno-cultural and linguistic groups. The post independent era the first census in 1951 listed 782 mother tongues and in 1961 it increased to 1,652. The number decreased to 1,019 in 1971, and again

increased to 1,576 in 1991(*Oommen, nd. www.sciencedirect.com*). Under such culturally and linguistically differentiated society the major task of the newly independent India was to alleviate and contain ethno-cultural conflicts and problems. The major objective of a country at that time was to promote rapid and balanced economic growth with equity and justice. In spite of the best effort of the government of India the growth and development of different regions were hardly balanced. This led to the growth, among the different groups or communities a feeling of deprivation which in turn took the form of protests and movements. Today after sixty six years of independence, India finds itself living in a midst of widespread unrest and disturbances. It has faced communal riots and a hardening of religion-based affiliation among some of the minorities like, It has witnessed class/caste based movements for the protection and reservation, to mention other such movements as worker's movements, farmers'/peasants' movement has characterises the present Indian states. The most important of all has been the serious secessionist movement in part of the country. Although the various movements in these states present a complex and diverse picture, in terms of their goals and aims, ideology and methodology, most, if not all, possess one similarity – the recognition of their distinct ethnic identities. These movements are generally for the demand of granting collective rights and privileges for the protection and recognition of group or community based on their distinct *identity* (ethnicity, caste, cultural, linguistic, regional etc.), sometimes through the creation of separate state within Indian union. Considering such range of conflicts and movements within Indian states on ground of religion, caste, region, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic, here are few generally accepted factors that has contributed to the outbreak of a serious conflicts and violence in the Indian states in the form of social movements or more precisely *identity* movements, as these movements basically rests its foundation on their distinct group identity.

- Firstly, fear of cultural assimilation or dilution and non-recognition as an Indian in Indian society[6].

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[6] The Gorkhaland Movement in the hill areas of Darjeeling in the state of West Bengal, Bodoland Movement in Assam are such movements emerged out of non-recognition as an Indian in Indian Society.

- Secondly, the large scale illegal migration activity in some parts of the country from neighbouring states[7].

- Thirdly, the unequal economic development of different region has resulted in bringing unrest and dissatisfaction among different ethnic groups[8].

- Finally, political factors such as the endemic mal-governance, rise of regional political parties and formation of weak coalition governments at the centre may also contribute significantly to the outbreak of ethno-political movements.

All this factors combined together resulted in exploitation of advanced culture over marginalised minority culture, lack of opportunity and threat to the existing group's privileges may engender strong feeling of relative deprivation among the population divided into different ethno cultural group. The feeling of deprivation and cultural strain along with economic backwardness of the community followed by the articulation of the cause by the leadership, are thus responsible for the outbreak of *identity* movements in different parts of the Indian states.

Given the nature of Indian states characterised by the presence of the populations divided into numerous ethno-cultural groups and communities, it is obvious that India after independent is left with huge and a serious task of maintaining and sustaining its unity and integrity. One of the outcomes of such diversity is the rising socio-political movement in different corner of the country. Presence of such movements has its impact on whole of Indian politics ranging from the drafting of the Indian constitution to the rise of regional political parties.

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[7] Telengana movement and Kamtapur movement in contemporary Indian society rests its base on the question of illegal migration into their region.
[8] The unrest in the North East region in India is said to have arise out of the issue of economic underdevelopment.

The foremost impact of such movements on Indian politics after independence is the creation or declaration of federal polity and secular politics, which the founders of Indian constitution considered as the necessary condition for national integration and national development. The idea of a federal polity also had historical roots and ―was envisaged as a project to ensure reasonable national agreement across regions and communities to support and develop durable political order (*Dasgupta, 2001*). But at the same time, Indian leaders were mindful of the dangers of federalism in the form of ethnic secession and balkanization of the state. Hence, as Ambedkar stated in the Constituent Assembly, ― though India was to be a federation, the federation was not the result of an agreement by the states to join in a federation, and that the federation not being the result of an agreement no State has the right to secede from it (*Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol VII: 43, Dasgupta, 2001*). Indian federation was therefore to be a ―division for convenience of administration while the country continued to be one integrated whole (*Dasgupta, 2001*). The main benefit of India's federal design then was to be that it would allow the state to accommodate ethnic plurality and encourage cultural distinctiveness without allowing any one ethnic group to dominate at the national or federal level. It was also anticipated that cultural conflicts within each state would seldom spill over into other states. The Centre could thus compartmentalize and more effectively manage centre-state frictions and contain conflicts within states more easily (*Hardgrave, 1993*).

Along with constitutional provisions, the political party system that evolved in post-independent India was designed to manage ethnic differences and conflict. During the freedom struggle, the main political organization was the Indian National Congress. The Congress was a large democratic 'umbrella' organization that included groups, interests and opinions of various shades, colours and regions. Broadly, it espoused socialist democratic ideology and popular welfare policies. As the vanguard of the nationalist movement, the Congress naturally emerged as the dominant political party after independence. Although India adopted a multi-party system, for the first two decades after independence the Congress' hold over Indian politics was almost total. But from the mid-1960s onwards, India gradually witnessed the growth of regional parties and some

were able to challenge the Congress in state elections by tapping into ethno-linguistic, religious and regional sentiments. The Congress, under Indira Gandhi's leadership, increasingly resorted to undemocratic, illegal and draconian measures to retain its monopoly over political power at the centre and in several states. This creeping authoritarianism, which criminalized the Indian polity, politicized the bureaucracy and security agencies and rode roughshod over opponents of the Congress party, eventually resulted in a suspension of democracy in 1975 with the declaration of the Emergency [9]. Forced by popular pressure to withdraw the Emergency and hold national elections in 1977, the Congress party lost power for the first time at the centre against an opposition consisting of a coalition of smaller national and regional parties. Over the next three decades, the phenomenal rise of regional parties and leaders, the gradual weakening of the Congress both politically and organizationally, the emergence of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the formation of coalition governments at the centre and state as well, is the result of the presence of different ethno-cultural movements in different pockets in various forms within India (*Ganguly,*).

India's choice of development model after independence was also aimed to contain and mitigate ethnic problems and conflicts. The model was based —upon a system of indicative plans within a mixed economic structure in which both private capital and a state-owned public sector played a major role (*Currie, 1996*). The major objective of the model was to —promote rapid and balanced economic growth with equity and justice (*Dandekar, 1988)*. This commitment to social welfare accorded a significant role to the Indian centre in the socio-economic development of ethnic communities and allowed it to directly regulate both politics and economy in India. In practice, however, development of different ethnic groups and regions of the country was hardly balanced, thereby raising feelings of relative deprivation across communities and provinces.

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[9] In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 352 of the Constitution, then President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, by Proclamation declared National Emergency on the ground of internal disturbances on June 25, 1975, thereby suspending democracy and imposing severe restrictions on free speech, dissent and political activities across the country.With the declaration of Emergency, Indira Gandhi allowed herself to rule by decree till 1977. India made great economic strides during the two-year emergency period, but political opposition was heavily suppressed.

In 1950s, in order to strengthen and to accept the demand of ethno-cultural and regional identities the administrative reorganization of the Indian state was resorted. In 1953, State Reorganisation Commission was established, which led to the enactment of the State Reorganisation Act of 1956 [10]. The Act created 14 new states and 5 Union Territories. The creation of new states in 1956, could not solve the problem of ethno cultural conflicts, rather, it was followed by numerous movements for separate statehood based on ethno-cultural, regional and linguistic ground. The Indian state was again faced with the threat to the existence of democracy. As a result in 1960, the Bombay Reorganisation Act was passed creating Maharashtra and Gujarat on linguistic ground [11]. In 1962, Nagaland was created out of Assam [12]. In 1966, Haryana was created by dividing Punjab [13]. In North East region three states were created Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura in 1971 [14]. However the demand for new state on the basis of their distinct ethnic *identity* could not stop there. There are still movements in different parts of the country demanding separate state based on their distinct *identity*.

The politics of reservation in Indian states that has captured a major attention among the leaders of political parties and the academicians is nothing but the result of *identity* politics. In pursuance of the commitment to social, economic and political justice, as enumerated in the Preamble to the constitution, an intricate system of quotas and reservations in various sectors, especially in educational institutions, government employment, and representation in legislatures, has emerged over the years to promote a more inclusive society. At the first place, the Indian constitution recognises two groups-

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[10] States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was a body constituted by the Central Government of India in 1953, to recommend the reorganizations of state boundaries. This commission led the foundation of States Reorganisation Act in 1956 creating 14 new state and 5 Union Territories.

[11] This Act provided for the reorganisation of the State of Bombay and matters connected therewith. It was enacted by the Parliament in the 11th year of the Republic of India.

[12] In the 13th year of India's Republic, the union Parliament enacted an act known as The State of Nagaland Act in 1962. This Act provided the formation of the State of Nagaland and the matters therewith.

[13] The Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966 laid down the formation of new State of Haryana out of Punjab.

[14] The North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act of 1971, created three new State of Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya, along with the formation of Union Territories of Mizoram and Arunachal.

schedule caste and schedule tribe keeping in view that these group of people are historically deprived of their rights and privileges. India since independent has set aside a reserved seats in the parliament for this historically backward people- schedule caste and schedule tribe. The policy of 'positive discrimination' has not only brought a major debate on the reservation issue in India on these historically backwards. But it has also highlighted the idea of OBC (other backward community). Such policies have at times generated political tensions within states, mainly because more group seek entry into categories that confer advantages of positive discrimination.

5. Conclusion

In spite of the best efforts of the Indian leaders to create institutions, structures and processes to deal effectively and fairly with ethnic aspirations and demands, ethnic conflicts occurred with regular frequency in India. The administrative reorganization of the Indian state that was carried out in the 1950s strengthened ethno-linguistic and regional identities by accepting the demand for the creation of new states based on broad ethno-linguistic criteria. Such demands had been voiced before independence but never acted upon by the British for the fear of strengthening ethno-nationalist sentiments. To mention few, the people of Darjeeling hill areas are voicing their desire for separate state of Gorkhaland outside West Bengal since very long time, Kamtapur movement by Rajbonshi of Cooch Behar has a long history, Bodoland movement in Assam, the Telengana movement in Andhra Pradesh, the movement to create Vidharbha in Maharashtra and demand for the creation of Jammu state are the cases that are creating a major threat to the Indian union. These movements are not only noticed for their insurgency activities but have been able to lobby their cause effectively and are therefore playing an important role in bringing change and influencing the politics of Indian states, both at the regional and national level. However, even though these movements have not affected the Indian pluralism to a substantial extent, they have made their impact felt and to be reckoned with. The provision/provisions as underlined in the indian constitution have made a fair deal to counter the claims of such groups, such as- the Fifth and Sixth Schedule of the constitution stands for spaecial administrative structures at district levels,

Article 370 a special arrangement for the state of Jammu and Kashmir by providing separate constitution, Articles like 371A, 371F and 371G, provides for special privillages for the North East states of Nagaland, Sikkim and Mizoram. Apart from these, there are provisions in the constitution for the creation of new states on the ground of distinct group identity within the Indian union.

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