CHAPTER – I

1.1 THE CONCEPT OF REGIONALISM

"Politics" is a word which has attracted attention of many theoreticians and other common people of different walks of life. Broadly speaking the term "Politics" denotes the existence of two other concepts like people and society. Politics can operate properly if there is a proper harmony among these three factors. It is true that with the changes in society, attitudes, values, norms or beliefs of individuals may undergo changes. It may also vary from society to society depending upon their location or value preference. But whatever may be the nature of variation the relations among the three are determined and controlled by the harmonious interactions. All actors within this pattern pay attention to the potentialities of these elements.

Politics can be said a mechanism of achieving power, controlling it and manipulating the social relations in which they are expressed. Some of the forces may operate on the surface while others may not be visited. But whatever may be its nature, politics from the operational point of view should be looked upon as a process which influences the interaction of different factors in the society.

A closer analysis of the nature of this problem will establish the fact that there has been a shift of emphasis in analyzing the nature of Indian Politics which again is the result of "a growing skepticism of the cultural

assumptions on which the earlier models of development, economic growth and modernization were based."1 It has been very correctly observed that the debate is no longer narrowly political but 'affects broader issues of identity and high politics of the state'.2 In place of an emphasis on economic development or developmental paradigm, there has been a definite tilt towards ethnic or regional appeal, thereby changing the entire perception of politics or political exercise in the society.

If we take the concept of politics in India, it may be said that these changes are quite obvious and clear-cut. The first two decades after independence had witnessed a clear bias towards developmental and modernization process. This was mainly due to the very nature of the infant state and the task the State had to accomplish. It is interesting to note that the scholars particularly Indian Scholars, who were engaged in analyzing the role of the Indian State in the developmental affairs at the initial stage expressed hopes about the role of the state in this process. But subsequent developments – both political and social (including economic) have established the fact that the desired objectives could not be achieved through the State itself. Moreover, in difficult situations, the Indian State began to assume a character which was not expected of it.

In the present Study, while analyzing this aspect, seeks to find out roots of the problems associated with regionalism. On a very careful examination, it appears that, on a social plane, there are many contradictions and these contradictions were responsible for creating

cracks in the body politic. This phenomenon has further been aggravated by sharp disparities in the development process since independence. It may not be out of place here when one mentions that "Independent India, with its five year plans, its industrialization, its practice of democracy, has invested in change. There always was a contradiction between the archaism of national pride and the promise of the new: and the contradiction has at last cracked the civilization open. The turbulence in India this time has not come from foreign invasion or conquest; it has been generated from within .... The crisis in India is not only political or economic." It is an n all pervasive problem.

It is for this reason that the basic problem of regionalism should be traced in the broader perspective society, economy and polity. It will be too simplistic to say that regionalism or for that matter, regional demands are the results of mal-development on the economic front. It may be one of the causes, but cannot be treated as the only cause. There are other issues involved in it and these are so mutually independent and overlapping in nature that no clear cut compartmentalization is possible. In fact, such an attempt might prove to be futile.

It can be said that this is the crux of the entire problem – the problem of situating the issue of regionalism in the proper perspective. In Indian case, it appears that no straight Jacket formula can be applied or even if, applied, it would not be possible to arrive at any meaningful conclusion or any perfect decision.

It would not be impertinent to make a brief reference to the western perceptions of Indian Politics may be mentioned. At least three problems arise out of the so-called 'western' perception of Indian Politics. In the first place, the very term 'Western' gives rise to a number of problems because even the Western Scholars are not of the same opinion regarding the use of the term. Secondly, the nature of discourses in the western world is so varied and diverse that a simple categorization of them becomes almost difficult. Most of the scholars have tried to explain a particular issue from his or her own perception, ideological preference or attitude towards the issue. The third and the most important problem arise out of the fast changing scenario and essential dynamism of the political problem. In other words, any discussion on the nature of political process should not only be culture-specific but also time-specific. In this context, a comparison between the working of the western democracies and the Indian democracy in general terms would be misleading because of historical, contextual, political or economic variations among different democratic systems of the world. In the Indian context, 'the contradictions between democracy and secularism on the one hand, and mass participation and order on the other, did not reveal themselves during the early years of independence. [4] This was due to two factors namely the leadership of Nehru and others and the presence of the Indian National Congress as 'an intermediary that transposed itself between a traditional society and the modern State.[5]

These contradictions within the Political Process since independence have passed serious threats before the Indian Polity in so far as its modernization and developmental efforts were concerned. This problem has been conceptualized as a 'Stalemated modernisation' by Myron Weiner. In his own words:

"Since 1966, in all fields other than agriculture, India's attempts to modernize had been stalemated. Even the dramatic strides that India made in the late 1960s in agriculture had been halted.... Through 1974 and early 1975, there were reports from all over India reflecting the disarray in the economy. Six and a half million tribals in Bihar were said to be near starvation in late 1974.... Political and Social tensions were mounting.... Among both Indian and Western observers there was (end continued to be) a sense of foreboding : India could either more in the direction of a major political transformation....or alternatively, slide steadily into greater corruption, disorder and some form of 'war lordism', decentralized units of authority that resist central control".[6]

It is proper to pint out that the contradiction became acute during 1970s and more precisely, during the days of political turmoil that led to the declaration of Emergency. In the opinion of some observers, though short-lived, the Emergency could provide some kind of 'enduring' character to some of its 'draconian' measures[7]. But the contradictions persisted even after the return of Mrs.Indira Gandhi in 1980. The politics of the 1980s can be said to have been dominated by religion, communal and caste-conflict and attempts to regional groups to establish their authority within their

specified areas. It was in fact a battle for its mission to establish the control.

It is known to all that contemporary Indian politics has been witnessing a number of social and political movements, some of them demanding greater autonomy, while some other demanding greater assertion of regional or local identity. As a result of this social demand, the political system has been faced with serious problem – the problem of the survival of the system itself. The system is infested with multi various social, political and other problems.

We may say that there are many forces and compulsions behind the assertion of regional identity which often lead to regionalization of politics. Although most of the issues centre round the political dimension, its manifestations are different and this difference varies with varying degrees depending on local issues which are in some places peculiar in nature.

For this reason it is very difficult to formulate a uniform pattern behind the assertion of regional identity. The problem gets all the more complicated with the inclusion of other related issues like ethnicity and religious exclusiveness. At certain points the manifestations of these two factors become so hazy – that a clear line of demarcation between these two become next to impossible.

It may be said that it is important in a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society like India. It is perhaps because of this that the post-independent political scenario in India has become so complex and

delicate. Scholars are offering various explanations behind this complex nature of the Indian political process. Of course, none of them are conclusive.

It is pertinent at this point to note that regionalism, or for that matter regional tendencies may arise out of many factors. Generally speaking, a society of India's magnitude has been divided into a number of castes, sub-castes, sects and sub-sects. Geographically stated there is heavy concentration of some ethnic or religious or linguistic groups in some parts of the country while in other parts there are cases of least concentration. This wide variation in the distribution of population has been one of the causes of social tension within the fabric of the Indian polity.

This aspect can be analysed follows:

(a) Linguistic Regionalism

(b) Demand for Creation of New States

(C) Demand for State Autonomy

(d) Demand for Intra-Regional Autonomy within the States

(e) Secessionist Movement and

(f) Sons of the Soil Theory.

If we make a perfect analysis of the Indian political scenario in the proper perspective, it will reveal a trend of regional demand which appears along the line of linguistic demand. Demand for recognition arises from a feeling

of one language being dominated by the language of a dominant group. Apart from this the same problem assumes other dimensions when a small minority feels that the national government at the centre intends to impose one language policy to the detriment of the interest of the other linguistic minority.

With a view to solving this problem arising out of language issue, the reorganization of states on linguistic basis was done in 1956 on the basis of the report of the State Reorganisation Commission which was headed by Justice Fazal Ali. But this reorganization could not satisfy many social and ethnic segments. It is important to note that the commission rejected in principle the 'monistic approach of linguism' for the creation of states. But in actual practice it followed the principle except in case of Punjab and the then Bombay which were kept by lingual. [8] It is important to note that the commission rejected the claims of certain social segments for separate statehood because of their small sizes. [9] At the same time there were number of social segments in states like U.P., Bihar, M.P. and Andhra Pradesh which at one point or another received greater or lesser attention from the Commission. This created a sense of dissatisfaction among some of the small sections and also created a sense of mistrust and a climate for agitation.[10]

The agitation leading to the by-furcation of Bombay into Maharashtra and Gujrat in 1960 and by-furcation of Assam, Punjab and Haryana in subsequent years points to a new set of events which led to further regional demands.

The linguistic regionalism also calls for the announcement of official language by the Centre. The constitution provides for Hindi in Debnagri script to be the official language and it was also provided that for a period of 15 years, English would continue to be in use.[11] As a matter of fact nothing substantial has changed since then and the government has to come forward with a Three Language Formula. This arrangement also failed to satisfy the linguistic aspiration of the people in general.

It may be noted that the Three Language Formula also failed to deliver the desired goods. The widespread agitation against Hindi all over the Southern belt particularly in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh once again proved that the language problem in a country like India, unless properly tackled, may give rise to a situation where very question of national integrity may be exposed to serious and delicate situation.

With this brief theoretical exposition of the phenomenon of regionalism, a further probe may be made to explain the role of the Indian state in handling this issue and what has been the general impact of this phenomenon on the Indian political process. In other words, a study of this nature should address itself to the very nature of the state responsiveness towards the emerging patterns of demands and power configuration in contemporary Indian politics. This problem gains further importance since in India, regionalism has very often been looked upon as anti-system, anti-federal and against the basic interests of a well-integrated and well-developed polity. This negative character, as conceived by many, brings to the fore the vital role that the state is called upon to play. To some, regionalism can be understood in the broader

perspective of the ambition and assertion of what is known as the centripetal forces in India.

Viewed from this perspective, the phenomenon of regionalism may be looked upon as the outcome of interactions between central and peripheral forces with the ultimate aim of capturing authority and power. It has been suggested by many that only through a peripheral perspective that the real implications and significance of regionalism can be properly explained.

Any serious study of the nature of the Indian political process would reveal a good number of unique features – Unique from the perspectives of historical, contextual, social, and cultural and the like. India's long association with the British imperialism and the resultant unitary type of administrative structure had its profound impact on the working of the political system in general. It has been very correctly observed that "the Socio-economic and political realities in the post-colonial statehood show that the harshness of the native ruler to the native ruled is the Paradox of the day."[12] This is the manifestation of what may be termed as "Culture of conflict" if one looks at the ideological history of the Indian state. In fact, this was a necessity for the emerging ruling elite at this stage. The ruling elite (or the dominant class) were not able to organize sufficiently enough to create their own support base. On the contrary, they were forced to create conditions for some sort of undeclared policy of accommodation with the existing power structures.[13] In other words, instead of destroying the traditional centres of power, this class preferred to have a share of

politico-economic power of transforming the existing social and economic power base.

It has been claimed by many that during this formative phase of social and political development, India had to pass through some kind of "Passive revolution". But the so-called "Passive revolution" had imposed on the Indian society the burden of remaining within the old social structure without creating a new one which was, in reality, the demand of the hour.

This sort of accommodation between two trends – One, the old one and the second, the emerging new trend with the tasks of nation-building and state-building forced the Indian society to remain trapped in a framework which had the features of capitalism and pre-capitalism path of social development.

Analytically speaking, this gradually became the source and the reason for social tension – the roots of contemporary regionalism. This has been clearly revealed in the functioning of the political system during the last five decades since 1947.

There is a general agreement that it is mainly due to this reason that Indian nationalism has, to a large extent, failed to provide the necessary umbrella to cover all such conflicting demands. Although, initially, it could do so because of its anti-colonial nature when the entire nation was getting motivated towards the sole aim of achieving independence, but with the passage of time and in the absence of any such fixed target, demands from different sections, segments and regions started appearing on the surface. Some would opine that the present state of affairs is the

result of some kind of half-hearted move towards national integration when in some cases integration has very often been confused with 'absorption' or 'assimilation'. But this would not, possibly, give the total picture as the roots of regionalism or regional demands should be traced at some other levels.

For a proper assessment of the phenomenon, all the other aspects of the issue need to be examined. Broadly speaking, scholars dealing with this problem may be divided into two categories – one, favouring the idea that the roots of regionalism may be traced in the over-dose of integration where the vital issue of identity is involved, the other, pointing to the social backwardness and economic deprivation as the major causes of social tension and ultimately regional demands.

Whatever may be position one takes in this regard, it is generally admitted that regionalization or for that matter, regional demands may pose serious challenges to the very stability of the Indian democratic system. It is equally fascinating to note that some scholars have viewed 'regionalism' as an "expression of political consciousness."[14]

A look into the liberal interpretation of this issue may provide a good number of reasons behind such demands which may ultimately lead to secession. These are:

(1) Inclusion of a regional in a state by force and continuing refusal by the people in the region to give full consent to the nation.

(2) Failure of the national government to protect the basic rights and security of the citizens of the region.

(3) Failure of the democratic system to safeguard the legitimate political and economic interests of the region.

(4) Rejection by the national government of a bargain between sections of the society which was entered into to preserve the essential interests of a section that might be outvoted by a national majority. [15]

In the event of wrong handling of this phenomenon, a situation may emerge where a case of secession may take place. Whether it is morally acceptable or physically practicable depends to a large extent, on a number of objective conditions. These conditions may be of the following nature:

(a) The group which wants to secede is not sufficiently large to assume the basic responsibilities of an independent state

(b) It is not prepared to permit sub-groups within itself to secede although such secession is morally and practically possible

(c) It wants to exploit or oppress a sub-group within itself which cannot secede in turn because of territorial dispersal or other reasons

(d) It occupies an area not on the borders of the existing state so that secession would create an enclave

(e) It occupies an area which culturally, economically or militarily essential to the existing state

(f) It occupies an area which has a disproportionately high share of the economic resources of the existing state.

The problem has been sought to be analysed from another perspective also. It is a common belief among the people of the Third World countries that there has been a total failure of the conventional models of development and many negative consequences have occurred as a result of these failures. This has created a 'negative' feeling among those people living at the peripheries which in turn, have given birth to regional demands.

These demands get channelised through concerted social movements for greater autonomy and greater share in the development process. In this framework, a total integration is sought between democracy and development – a positive synthesis of ideas with praxis thereby, putting right weight ages to culture, values democracy and participation. The variety and richness of the cultural and socio-political context in which these movements and demands are emerging need to be analysed in depth. Although some form of generalization and possible but these vary at great length with the variation of the objective conditions.

In order to understand the nature and impact of these movements, these are to be placed in the right perspective – perspective of regional disparities and diversities. Two factors demand closer scrutiny: first, the nature and extent of social change and its impact on the popular mind;

second, the objective framework, the goal, the target group and the results achieved – all need to be analysed in the overall social, economic, political, intellectual and other imperative conditions.

Closely following this, comes another important issue – the problem of growth and human development. At least three aspects of the development process need to be looked into: (a) redistribution of social Justice, (b) widening the base of popular participation, and (c) a continuous process of development activities more or less on equal basis. In other words, for an all-round development, human resources along with other locally available resources should be extensively exploited. Recent studies on this phenomenon have shown that absence of proper attention to and simultaneous utilization of these forces may lead to uneven development and dissatisfaction which, in turn, may give birth to regional demands for greater social Justice, economic development and popular participation.[16]

This discussion leads one to examine the nature and extent of people's response since regional demands or for that matter regionalism may be looked upon as something like a concerted move towards a rejection of situation, either created or emerged out of mal-development. It is seen that people of late, are not prepared to accept exploitative or repressive political systems. It is equally true that in more of the cases, people are not willing to capture state power but they want to have greater 'say' in the use of state-power.

Regional demands or for that matter regionalism as expressed through concerted people's movements may arise spontaneously or be initiated and multiplied by sensitive external or local agents for change.[17] In states where there are wide contradictions crises in legitimacy and roots of instability, regional demands find it easy to get crystallized and articulated. [18] The weak state-power may be the cause [12] as well as the result of regional disparities which ultimately serve as the basis of regionalism. [19] It has been very correctly observed: "A well-articulated and coherent people-oriented strategy, even if pluralistic and rudimentary in theory, would be a progressive response to the new compulsions for social change and the crisis" that affect the very foundation of the political order. [20] Such a strategy should, it is observed recognize the contradictions and diversities of local regions while divising a long-term process of social change. [21]

In recent years, it has been observed that lack of adequate attention to local needs has given birth to a number of local demands, often regarded as the seed-bed of regionalism. In many cases, the manifestation of people's dissatisfaction has taken the shape of people's movements. These are generally led by charismatic leader, often take the form of protest movements, demanding greater power and autonomy for the region under question. Very often, these issue though the basic fabric of the cultural aspect of the society. It has been seen that in a number of cases a movement based on cultural considerations at the initial phase often turns into an economic or political movement at a particular region. These issues are so much overlapping in nature that it becomes difficult to separate them in very clear terms. The task becomes more complex

"because of both historical contradictions that have existed in these societies and the distortions in the mode of production, community spirit and consensus-making that set in as colonialism, modernization, industrialization, westernization and other external interventions and penetrations occurred."[22]

Here comes another dimension of the problem: the problem of understanding people's responses in the over-all context of state-actions. In the event of failure to measure this, there might be a total "social collapse" very often preceded by sharp contradictions and bloody conflicts. In such cases minor adjustments or alternations at the structural or functional level of the political system may be insufficient and inadequate to solve the problem.

In fact, the entire problem is to be viewed from a broader perspective, taking all related issues into consideration. A single protest movement may be insufficient to reverse the complex process of the past. There should be attempts to attain both qualitative and quantitative changes along the desired lines. At this point, the emerging theories of social change, may it be revolutionary radical, reformist or evolutionary should be applied after proper assessment of the situation and the nature of the demands of the particular region.

The need is to identify, analyse and establish linkage between macro-political movements and the micro-development experiments based on a coherent theoretical framework.

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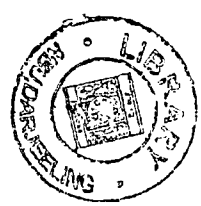

The answers to this problem may be of two types: First, instead of specialized, single issue-oriented approach should be given up and instead, a broad-based comprehensive approach may be adopted at the initial phase; second, it is necessary to identify the emerging ideological elements in the context of general regional demands. [23]

This brings to the fore the very crucial issue of the changing nature of the state. With the expansion of new horizons, newer and newer dimensions of state-activities have been taken over by the state. The multiple dimensions of state activity vis-à-vis its relationship with the civil-society have highlighted a number of inter-related issues and demanded greater coordination among them. In some cases, conflicts do take place between the old social order and the new political initiatives, even at the micro level of regional dimension.

There is a general feeling that most of the regional movements are anti-system movements. But this may not turn out to be in all cases. There may be regional movements which may have their direct impact on the day-to-day functioning of the system, instead of total replacement of the system as such. These regional movements are organized and directed to challenge the general functioning of the state apparatus.

Side by side, there may be other types of regional movements which are launched with the primary aim of overthrowing the present system by establishing a new political order. In fact, these may even challenge the very 'centre of state power.

That is why, it is generally believed that in any discussion of regional movements in India, the role and position of the state would definitely draw on the attention of the researcher. The very nature of the state reveals a good number of features which are mostly found in liberal (bourgeois) state. There is a strong belief that India since independence has been following what is known as the capitalist path of development. The explanation from the point of view historical perspective also demands through investigation. Immediately, after independence, the native bourgeoisie has been forced to come "to terms with pre-capitalist social and political forces in order to establish its domination."[24]

An interesting point deserves special mentioning in the study of regional demands in India. Because of its long association with the British imperialist power and its role as a subsidiary agency of the British bourgeoisie in the pre-independent period, the Indian bourgeoisie could gather the first hand experience about the role it would be expected to play in the independent political scenario. They experienced the same kind of 'participatory role' and gathered the capability of manipulating the situation in crisis. In spite of this, "the path of capitalist development pursued since independence, the inherent compromising and anti-people class policies of the bourgeoisic, the attempts by the Congress Party at centralization and perpetration of its rule by all undemocratic means, has, from the very beginning brought stresses and strains on the unity and integrity of the country.[25]

This is perhaps for this reason that observers of Indian politics differ sharply in their explanations of the Phenomenon. There is a strong belief

that most of the stresses arising out of regionalism are very much 'internal' in nature. Of course, it does not rule out the possibility of the existence and operation of external factors altogether. Here lies the difference between the courses of politics in India and those found in other newly liberated states of Asia and Africa. This peculiar combination of forces, mostly internal, has forced the political system to strike, what is known as "equilibrium of compromises"- Compromises among a number of set of contending forces, rural-urban, ruling elite and the mass, nationalism and sub-nationalism, secular demands and communal preferences and the like.

The foregoing discussion conclusively proves that in India regionalism and for that matter regional demands are multifaceted affair. The course of developmental processes the nature of politics, the role of the state and the imperative need for stability without destroying the regional diversities – all these have made the phenomenon a complex and delicate one.

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11. Article 343 (3).

12. Ajeya Sarkar: Regionalism, State and the Emerging Political Pattern in India. IJPS, Vol.Sl.no.4, Oct-Dec.1990.

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27. Ibid.

1.2 IMPACT OF REGIONALISM

Regionalism as a phenomenon has been playing a crucial role in the contemporary political process of India. This has influenced the concepts like federalism, autonomy and decentralization. Theoretically speaking, it is generally believed that regionalism or regional sentiments strengthen the scope of regional politics, thereby widening the scope of state politics. It is not always correct to say that regionalism and regional politics tend to sustain each other.

There may be cases of supra-state regionalism wherein the concept of regionalism crosses the boundary of the state. The best example of such a case is the reorganization of the state on linguistic basis. Only after the reorganization, some form of demands for further separation of state generated.

It may also be seen that in a particular sub-state region a sentiment is generated for the purpose of further split into some small regions. This split identity may help in making a strong case for a proposed state. The case for Jharkhand state is a good example for such a split-identity. In fact it becomes difficult to make a broad theorization for such a case.

Moreover, there may be case when regionalism mixes with state boundaries, thereby creating a sense of state-patriotism. This may be seen when linguistic sub-nationality asserts itself or where there is some kind of a feeling generated out of specific history. In this category, there may be cases where a feeling is created by the domination of a linguistically

strong group of people over a small group. The case of Assam may be cited in this respect. A strong feeling is there that Assamese identity is under threat from the linguistically dominant group of the neighbouring state.

This sentiment creates a situation where there may be agitation for mobilization for linguistic state. In fact this may, in the long run, call for a total revision of centre-state relations. Not only that, contemporary India has witnessed a new trend in this regard. There are cases of articulations of grievances on communal lines, or on caste basis or on ethnic grounds. The case of Jammu and Kashmir is an example where regionalism took the course of communal lines. The incidents in Andhra Pradesh or Maharashtra offer examples of caste basis of regionalism. That regionalism can take the form of ethnic movement may be found in the nature and course of agitations in the entire North-East.

The uneven development across the land has given birth to a concept known as "internal colony". Movements in these regions are often directed against a section of population within that region who are politically and economically dominant. Even on some sentimental issues such as "self-respect" may create sense of regionalism or regional feelings. The creation of the Telegu Desam by N.T.Rama Rao was based on this sentiment of self respect. The same feeling may be found in some regions of Orissa.

Thus one may conclude that the roots of regionalism in the Indian context are many and varied. The arguments for regionalism are based on either

perception or reality. Even the idea of relative deprivation has been helpful in some cases. In some cases it is the result of a combination of two or more factors. It is interesting to note that some years back Lok Dal in Haryana called for a separate state on the basis of what they called "Nyaya Yudha". In a similar way the Akalis in Punjab fought what they called "Dharma Yudha". In fact, some justifications were provided by the agitators for establishing their call for a separate region with separate identity supported by a separate politico-economic foundation.

In the opinion of Paul R.Brass, the style of functioning of the Congress Party during the 1980s was heavily determined by and depended on local leaders in matters of distribution of party tickets.1 This was clearly evident in the distribution of Party tickets in Uttar Pradesh. It is interesting to note that there was a tendency in the Congress Policy to make a national issue out of local issues like atrocities on Harijans in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This has resulted in a process where the Central leadership tries to establish direct contact with the local leaders, sometimes neglecting the role of the state leadership in the process of negotiation. This has, in the long run, helped in a greater way in the formation and emergence of regional parties. It may not be out of place here, to mention that Chief Minister T.Anjish's removal from the Andhra Pradesh by Mrs. Gandhi helped in a way to form the N.T.R.'s Telegu Desam Party.

The role of National issues in the General Elections needs to be analysed in greater details. It is generally admitted that in a General Election,

national issues determine the nature and course of the electoral politics. Slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' or 'Freedom and Civil liberties' influence the electoral politics of 1971 and 1977 respectively. Even issues like Ram Janmabhumi and Babri Masjid also influence the electoral process. Current issues on scams have already influenced the nature of political process in the country.

Side by side the regional parties also capitalise certain issues of national character which have their profound impact on state politics. It may be pointed out that 1988 Tamil Nadu election was found on the issue of Hindi vs. Non-Hindi in the state. The same may be found in Andhra Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. In Punjab Akalis and in Assam the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) mainly works on regional lines with some regional issues. At some points these two trends – national and regional most on certain national problems.

There is a section of opinion that the study of regionalism is helpful in understanding the nature of state politics. But that may not be true in all cases. So far as Indian Politics is concerned, sometimes the national and sometimes the very local issues play significant role. But in Indian case there is another dimension which should not be overlooked or ignored. This is the 'zonal' aspect of political process which comes very close to the nature of state politics. Each zone has specific problems of its own. Although there are wide variations in the policy formulation and policy implementation of the states in the South zone or in the North East, but there is a uniformity of goals among the states in these zones. One may

also add the role of the Hindi Zone and the dominating role it played during the first three decades of national politics. In this connection, it may be pointed out that more than 40% of the total population lives in this Hindi heart land. The issue here is mostly linguistic in nature.

Apart from the linguistic issue there are other issue like cultural domination, identity crisis, relative deprivation and the like play important role in creating a sense of regionalism in the country.

It has been suggested that any study of regionalism should be based along the following points [2]:

(a) The phenomenon of regionalism does not necessarily help the process of consolidation of politics at the state level unless coinciding with state boundaries and accompanied by some strong perception of ethnic injustice;

(b) The regional parties do not necessarily lose or gain with the weakening or strengthening of the Congress Party and the raising of national or regional issues in Indian politics;

(c) A middle tier of "Zonal" politics will facilitate the study of state politics by making it more rational and comprehensive

The nature of politics that is created because of interactions between regionalism and the course of political developments in India is characterized by extreme complexity. The experience after independence during the last five decades has shown that the process of nation-building

continues to face challenges from the manifestations of regionalism. In fact, Indian state is caught between the two opposite forces of integration and disintegration. All those concerned with policy framing, integration has become the most important factor challenging the process of development. This has been summed up by Rajni Kothari when he observes that integration demands "the crystallization and consolidation of a political Centre, its outward expansion, its institutionalization, and its assimilation of diverse identities and structures into a national political community...."[3]

Although the term regionalism is of comparatively recent origin, it has penetrated deeply into the political process of contemporary India. In this connection, it has been very correctly observed " "whatever the context of parameter, 'region' may be said to connote an area, at least sufficiently large in size, which is differentiated and/or distinguishable from others by a variety of factors (or at least a combination of them) such as language, culture, religion or caste/creed, socio-economic life, political background, historical background, geographical continuity, and, certainly, group consciousness and of being neglected, deprived and/or discriminated by the 'majority' and/or those in authority."4 In a general way regionalism may be regarded as a counter movement to any excessive form of centralization. Although there is a disagreement about the actual criteria for determining a region in India, it has been observed that on the basis of at least ten criteria, a region can be recognized. In the opinion of Rasheeduddin Khan, "maximum homogeneity within and maximum

identity without where homogeneities are to be established on ten counts : (1) language dialect, (2) social composition (communities/Jatis), (3) ethnic regions, (4) demographic features, (5) area (geographic contiguity), (6) cultural pattern, (7) economy and economic life, (8) historical antecedents, (9) political backgrounds, (10) Psychological make upand felt consciousness of group identity. The main concern in this exercise is to eliminate factors contributing to heterogeneity and to coalesce factors promoting homogeneity."[5]

In India post independent political process has witnessed three important forms of regionalism, mainly supra-state regionalism, inter-state regionalism and intra-state regionalism.6 As has been noticed earlier that supra-state regionalism is an expression of group identity of several states which form a group on the basis of some common issues of mitual interest. The language issue which has divided the entire nation into south and north is the best example. The case of intra-state regionalism may arise over the question of self-identity or self-development resulting from such issues like deprivation or exploitation. Although the constitution of India has given adequate safeguard against discrimination on the basis of language and culture, the evils of regionalism resulting from such sentiments could not be avoided.

Demands for safe-guarding regional interests have exerted tremendous impact on the federal governance of India. The roots for such a change can be traced in the results of the Fourth General Elections in 1967 which brought about a new power configuration at the state level for the first

time. It may be recalled that after the 1967 elections, out of the Seventeen States, non-Congress governments were installed in eight states. Not only that in all these eight states, the parties which came to power had a regional base. Naturally these regional parties stood for regional interests. A series of steps taken either by the Committees set up for restructuring the centre-state relations or by memorandums submitted by different state governments were directed at some acceptable solutions of regional problems.

Regionalism, thus viewed, has resulted in inter-state rivalry and competition under the federal structure. With regard to the inter-state river dispute, the issues of regionalism came to the forefront. In a direct or an indirect way, "each state government ships up regionalism as such sentiment strengthens its bargaining position with the centre and its local political influence."[7] Side by side militant movements of the "Sons of the Soil" against outsiders have emerged in some states, notably in Maharashtra and Assam. The Post-1972 regional movements in these areas are primarily directed against the migrants from the Indian States and outside. These have given regionalism a new meaning and shape. The Sons of the Soil movement, "becomes politically disintegrative in so far as it fosters local at the expense of nation-wide loyalties, undermines national cohesiveness by erecting internal social and economic barriers, and ultimately, produces a cycle of retaliatory exclusions that may fragment the nation-state."[8]

The sources and causes of regionalism can be found in the concept itself. In a vast country like India with cultural and linguistic diversities, regional demands seem to be a natural outcome. Over emphasis on regional exclusiveness has provided supporting ground for regional parties and regional leaders. Historically speaking India inherited a shattered economy as a legacy of the British Colonial rule. Uneven economic development has created imbalances between states, regions and sub-regions. The big state can surface social, economic and political tensions in a number of ways. But the cases of the small states are totally different. A small agitation even in a smaller part can create serious problem for the governance of the state. Whatever may be the nature of the manifestation, it is generally agreed that economic backwardness of underdeveloped regions may act as an immediate cause for regionalism. Thus from the economic angle, "regionalism as the outcome of some real or perceived sense of internal colonialism, the result of mal-development of asymmetrical development. Regionalism is the response of unequal sharing of benefits of developmental activity."[9]

So far as the political process in India is concerned the Congress Party with its monolithic character played a very important role during the formative period after independence. At the same time, the frequent changes of leadership in the Congress – ruled states created a sense of frustration among the party leaders at the state level. It had its impact on the general feeling of the people in those states. A sense of anti-centre feeling was generated, out of which a feeling for the region grew. So in an

indirect way any change in the Congress leadership at the state level acted as a cause for generating regional feeling. It has been pointed out that the party in power at the centre should not follow a biased course or policy while giving attention to the particular problem confronting a state or a region. This is in fact a pre-condition for the successful working of a federal government. Inadequate attention to the regional problems may allow the regional parties to come forward with their regional demands. Here comes the role of the political elites or the governing elites. This class because of their very nature seeks to hold power and exercise it for their own benefit without paying least attention to the regional demands or to the protection of regional interests.

Any study of regionalism in the Indian context calls for a study of the implications of political development in India. The concept, political development can be understood with reference to three dominant features of the concept. These are (a) an attitude towards equality; (b) the capacity of a political system; and (c) differentiation and specialization of structures. The Indian model of nation-building seeks to attain unit, democracy, development, justice, and autonomy. But regionalism in its extreme form appears to be disintegrative in nature. At the same time it should be noted that regionalism is the product of the pluralistic and diversified society. Historically speaking, political federation has been practiced in India since 1935 and theoretically speaking, federation is a compromise between nationalism and regionalism. It has been observed that "political monolithism is against the genius of Indian polity: therefore,

a large degree of regional autonomy may be the minimum price required for the integrity of India." [10] Compared to many developing nations, India has achieved a certain level of national integration which acts as a binding force in India.

Not only that India's political structure allows democratic participation of the people in the governance of the country. Being an open society, India permits free expression of popular will in the formation of the government. From that perspective regionalism can act positively for the fulfillment of the aspiration of the people of a particular part of the country. Seen in this perspective regionalism cannot go against the federal structure of the country.

But the experience in India on this issue has been otherwise. The net result of uneven development has created a situation of wider dimension which is generally called "a maldevelopment syndrome." [11]

Closely following this comes the question of capacity of the political system in executing effectively the public policies. The issue of performance or non-performance is directly related to the problem of equitable distribution of goods and services to the common people. That the Indian nation suffers from "distribution crisis" is evident from the nature and extent of regional imbalances that exists even today. This has, in a greater way effected the attainment of justice and equality. In other words, regional demands and movements can be explained in terms of certain actions for implementation of distributive justice among the people

and regions which remain neglected and exploited. The attempts to solve this problem by creating smaller states have proved counter productive in many cases. Thus it is seen, regionalism in India is a multi-faceted problem. It is connected with many other aspects which are not only political but also social, economic and cultural in nature. This has led Kothari to remark "it is necessary that those in command of the framework – the 'class' – act with commitment to the people and to the binding nexus that can hold them together. This is the test of the present and the emerging generations of the Indian leadership. In the final analysis it is also the test of the Indian people." [12]

Any discussion regarding regionalism or regional movements leads to one central point; the conflict between autonomy and concentration of power. In other words it may be called a conflict between two opposite forces of centralization and decentralization. The working of India's democracy over the last four decades indicates that the civil liberties of the people get endangered when there is excessive concentration of state power. The brief spell of national emergency during Mrs.Gandhi's regime is a good pointer in this regard. In fact, the issue of emergency should not be viewed in isolation – rather it was the result of many factors, the constitutional factor being the immediate one.

There is a section of opinion that the autonomy at the state level may destroy the very foundation of the federal system in India. It is true that because of a number of constitutional provisions, the central government has become more powerful. But at the same time there are other areas

where the constitution seeks to maintain a balance between these two sets of governments. In most of the cases, this dimension of achieving a balance has been neglected.

Going beyond the formal constitutional-legal aspect of the issue, a look into the social formation in India will be of much help in understanding the complex phenomenon of centralization vs. autonomy. It may be pointed out that in India the ruling class occupies the major portion of social relations. This may be the reason for India to follow a capitalist path of development. The Specific features of this development are the development and consolidation of this class with the attempts at resolving internal differentiation and conflicts among themselves. This is perhaps one of the ways of explaining the process of centralization of political power. This is also the source of different types of demands for state autonomy. It has been very correctly observed: "most of the demands for state autonomy can, in fact be traced back to either the contradictions among the ruling classes or the efforts of the working class and the peasantry to fight for and realize a democratic economy and a democratic polity."[13]

This is why the issue of state autonomy and state rights is "more than a question of simple choice between federal and unitary preferences on a mere constitutional level."[14] It has been generally observed that the tendency towards centralization and concentration of power has been universal in any constitutional practice of a liberal democracy.

In India the situation has been different so far as the process of political centralization is concerned. One of the reasons for such a tendency has been almost uninterrupted Congress rule for more than 30 years at the centre and the states. Even when Congress was in power, there had been internal conflict within the party for greater autonomy for the local (regional) leadership for more power and effective share in the decision making process. It may not be out of place here to mention that, "the political dominance of the Congress and its hegemony over state power not only helped it to contain by repression or manipulations the recurrent political crisis but also aggravated, by the very logic of the situation, the tendency towards the centralization and concentration of political power."15 The roots of the imposition of emergency can be traced in the process of centralization of power just mentioned.

Within this contextual setting, the regional movements for greater autonomy can be situated and analysed. In fact any serious study of this phenomenon demands an analysis of the class character of these movements. Ultimately, it is the class factor and class bases which shape and determine the nature and course of such movements. This is true about the Akali movement or the Assam movement or any other movements of this nature. At the same time given the vast and complex nature of Indian society, the regional autonomy movements, although local in character, have their far-reaching implications in national politics. The situation becomes more complicated because of other social factors

namely the nature of primordial loyalties and shifting emphasis on the nature of demands.

Historically, in a complex situation like that of India, "an alliance of the ruling classes can function effectively only under the leadership of a certain class." [16] As is found everywhere, there is always a tendency among the ruling class to form alliance with the monopolist forces in order to extract maximum benefit from the society. India is no exception. There has always been a kind of understanding between the ruling elite and the big bourgeoisie in India. This can be seen in the way the ruling parties get influenced by the impact of the big industrial houses. The powers that are vested in executive or the legislature, in most cases, are used to protect the interests of the dominant class.

This brings to the fore the problem of governance with a view of setting internal conflicts or contradictions among different sections of the society. In such a situation the ruling class faces the problems of internal management of their relations and growth and consolidations of their power. This can be explained with reference to the developments which have taken place in India since the Fourth General Elections in 1967. In fact 1967 elections may be termed as a water-shed in the political history of contemporary India.

The year 1967 may be regarded as the beginning of an era when regional political parties began to dominate the regional level politics. The culmination of this process may be seen in 1977 when, for the first time, a

non-Congress government was installed at the centre. In other words, a process started wherein signs of Congress decline became visible. A look at the nature of the electoral politics will reveal the fact that in some states regional-based parties gained at the cost of the Congress party. This is evident from the party positions in different states, as for example Akalis in Pubjab, Bharatiya Kranti Dal in Uttar Pradesh, the DMK in Tamil Nadu and the like. It is interesting to note that the support bases of these parties differed fundamentally from one state to another, depending upon the nature of the configuration of the social forces. It may not be out of place here to mention that the growth and consolidation of regional parties have been generally conditioned by the interests of the locally placed ruling class groups. This wide variation may be due to the differential distribution of investment in different parts of the country. In other words in situations of economic crisis, the inability of the state becomes prominent when it fails to satisfy the desire of the economically dominant class. A peculiar situation is created when both the rich and the poor sections of the society feel this satisfied and this dissatisfaction, in the long run, leads to a situation of agitation. But the goals of these two classes are not the same – one tries to perpetuate the system, while, other ones to have greater share in the distribution, possession and governance of the country.

As a result of these changes, the decline of the Congress party brought with it some necessary socio-political conditions for the emergence and consolidation of regional parties. The period between 1967 and 1969 may

be cited as an example. Not only that the 1977-79 period also witnessed the same nature of development. In fact, the process which started in 1967 found its maturity in 1977 and even in 1996-97. It is not important to judge the process in terms of duration or period of time. What are important are the changing dimensions of the nature of the political process. Another point which deserves equal attention is the nature of changes of the social bases of political parties. Other factor which is to be noted in this connection was the split within the Congress which took place in 1969. From this period upto the year of emergency, the conflict between centralization of power and decentralization of power became sharp. Even the coalition government formed in 1977 with Morarji Desai failed to unite all the different and opposing socio-political forces. The net result was the fragmentation of the power structure both at the central and at the local level.

During the Janata rule, there emerged two main national level parties – the Congress and the Janata which represented the interests of the two broad segments of the ruling classes. At the same time there were three regional parties namely, AIA DAK (also DMK) in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab and National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir which represented interests of local nature. Not only that the left democratic forces were represented by the two communist parties – the CIP (M) and the CPI at the national and local levels. Besides these, the ultra left ideology was represented by the CPI (M-L). In addition to this there were a number of

small parties, representing both the left and the right which were essentially regional/local in character.

The nature and composition of the Janata Party at the centre had some peculiarities. It was the outcome of a broad-based consensus among a number of political parties which were basically anti-Congress in nature. Not only this, many of the leaders of the Janata Party were previously members of the ruling class. So it is held that the Janata Party was an alliance of some opposition groups of the former ruling class. In fact, it was the result of a set of peculiar social, economic and political circumstances which brought them together. It is interesting to note that most of these parties in certain regions represented the interests of feudal landlords. It is equally interesting to note that the Congress (O) represented like the Congress (R) the entire ruling class. This wide range of interest has become the central theme of many researches in subsequent period. At the same time these became the sources of conflicts among different social segments which ultimately led to intra-party and inter-party factional conflicts.

This unusual division of society in two different sections brought about a number of changes in the formation of social and political groups. Moreover, there was no common compromise formula for this formation. The result was inevitable. This may be the reason for the early breakdown of the Janata regime. It also made the federal process more fluid and open to bargaining among the different political parties. It has been very correctly observed that "the absence of internal cohesion as well as intra-

party consensus on vital issues or on modalities of handling 'crisis' situations made it difficult for it to impose its will or to effectively protect or guide the ruling classes."[17]

It should be pointed out that the nature of fragmentation at the party level did not make any substantial division of the masses on purely ideological grounds. Ideologically there were two main divisions of the masses – one representing the interests of the ruling classes on the national level as represented by the All India political parties; while on the other there was section of people who supported ruling class at the regional level. This brought about a substantial change in the support base of the ruling party. It was seen that there started a kind of automised and relatively small areas of support base both at the central and local levels. In fact, such situations provided conditions for assertion of mass movements, working class movements and peasant movements. These, in turn, gave birth to a number of autonomy movements in different parts of the country. These changes had their impact on the nature and character of the Indian state. The nature of internal contradictions began to be the sole determining factor in making the state more authoritarian and despotic in dealing with autonomy movements. In fact, the roots of the imposition of emergency during Mrs. Gandhi's regime can be found in it. This has led Prof.A.R.Desai to refer to what he called "expanding state lawlessness." This also brought to the fore the basic question about the very nature of the state itself. It also raised the question regarding the role of ruling class in using the state machinery for its own benefit. On these two questions scholars are

divided. While there is a section of opinion that the roots of the Indian state can be found in the very nature of the capitalist development. Others are of the view that in a developing state like India which had remained a colony of the imperialist power, such a state cannot go beyond these contradictory trends.

It may be noted that behind all the regional/autonomy movements there may be two types of causes both related to the economic factor – economic crisis and the resultant economic discontent among the masses. This further strengthens the basis of parties at the local or regional levels which support these types of regional or autonomy movements. In such a case, a peculiar situation emerges a class between the so-called regional movements and the authority of the centralized state becomes almost inevitable. In other words, from a broaden perspective, a clash begins between two opposite forces of national (Central) and the regional (local) nature.

This assumes greater significance in case of India where there is a necessity of understanding the subtle relationship between regional movements and the main stream national question. This becomes more complicated in the context of multi-linguistic, multi-religious, multi-ethnic situation of India. Even some one would raise questions relating to the basic 'unity' of the Indian nation. Historically speaking, regional demands or autonomy movements, so far hidden, came to the surface immediately after independence. Initially, these movements were not so organized but later on, with the passage of time and the forces of circumstances, they

got further compounded. The Indian state, being in its infancy, was confronted with a paradoxical situation: how to satisfy these regional demands while at the same time, preparing the ground for a strong state.

Thus, viewed, it may be said that the situation in India is quite different in all its aspects – social, political and economic. The causes behind regional demands and the state-response should be placed in a proper perspective. One cannot be understood without a proper reference to the other. This has to be situated in the context of changing socio-economic and political process. In a word, an integrated approach is necessary to comprehend this very complicated problem which, it not handled properly, might shaken the very foundation of the political system.

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1.3 REGIONALISM AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Regionalism and for that matter, regional demands have their profound impact on the democratic governance of India. India, being federal in structure, has to face this phenomenon at two levels – national (Central) and the state. For the successful governance of the country, the Central government to a large extent depends on the active participation of the State governments. Long back, in a different context, Paul H.Appleby remarked : "the nation is crucially dependent on the states for actual achievement of the chief programmatic objectives of the nation."

At least from three major perspectives, the issue of regionalism can be discussed – Political, Social and Economic. It may be noted that forces that operate at the Central or State level or beyond that mainly affect these three dimensions. Structurally speaking, states are integral parts of the Union with no right to secede. In other words, their association with the Union Government is final. Moreover, upto 1967, the very monolithic nature of the Congress Party at the Centre and the State levels provides a solid support to the some sort of unified Political Governance. Issues or demands mainly regional in nature could not come to the surface because of this 'static power structure'. A good network at the Political level existed and the issues at the local level could be resolved at the local level. The result was that their impact could not be felt at the national level. Moreover, the overwhelming role of bureaucracy in the formative period also provided the necessary support to this system. In other words, the net effect of regionalism even in that period was very marginal.

Another factor also demands greater attention. Immediately after the attainment of independence, the Indian state had to confront the serious task of development – development in all fronts. Naturally, as it happened elsewhere the people in India had great expectation from that state so far as the demands for particular regions were concerned. Mainly for this reason, the dissertation of regional demands did not get crystalised. Only after a lapse of time and with the increase degree of disillusionment that a sense of persuasion started operating which may be seen as the seedbed of regional demands, regionalism and ultimately regional movements.

This has been the experience of most of the Post-colonial democracies of the accord. With a view to achieving a substantial rate of growth and all round economic development, the State had to take gigantic steps on economic front. India is no exception. During the formative period, most of the nation's energy was spent in correcting the economic imbalances created by the British during the colonial period. One of the objectives during this period was to achieve substantial amount of resource transfer from the Centre to the State. Here the Indian State was confronted with a very peculiar paradoxical situation : On the one hand, there was need for greater concentration of economic power at the Centre; while on the other, the federal principle demands greater decentralization and devolution of financial authority. The process of development through planning "introduced not only a political complexion in the relationship between the Union and the States but enables the Union to lighten its financial grip over the state."

But during the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Plans, the dependence of the States on Central assistance for financing their plan outlays has generally declined for all states.

Any study of regionalism without a reference to regional differentiation may be meaningless in the sense that in India regionalism has been both a cause and an effect of wide regional disparities and consequently regional imbalances. At the same time it is equally true that India's development experience cannot be analysed without a reference to the Colonial experience of the country during the British rule. The strategy of the imperialist power was very clear to maintain its hold while at the same time keeping regional imbalances in tact. After independence, the ruling elite also did not pay adequate attention to this fact, the result being wide disparity in economic development all over the country.

For the purpose of understanding this Phenomenon, a broad periodisation may be made along these lines:

(a) The Colonial period until the World War

(b) Inter-War Periods and after until Independence.

(c) Post-independence period until the mid 60s.

(d) Period since mid 60s.

Of all these periods, the third and the fourth periods are important for any study of regionalism and its implications in Indian Politics. However a brief reference can be made to the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the

pre-independence period. It is known that the export-based industries during the pre-independent period were predominantly under the control of the European Capitalist. The inevitable result was the advancement of some regions at the cost of the others. It was the accepted policy of the British Power in India to create such imbalances with a view to maintaining its hold on the economy of the country.

It was expected that substantial changes would take place after the attainment of independence. However the net impact of the Colonial Period was very much there. The national leaders were confronted with one basic question: how to reduce regional imbalances while at the same time achieving desired goal through the state which was still in its infancy. That the planners were aware of this fact is evident from the emphasis they put on agriculture and industry in the first two Five Year Plans respectively. It was this realization that during the Second Plan, concerted moves were taken to build up basic industries and to locate them in their proper places. It was expected that these major industrial complexes would act as the sources for future growth of these industries. It is interesting to note that this expectation could not come to the surface as most of these industries failed to generate subsidiaries in their locality. In fact most of the heavy industries were located in the areas very close to the big cities.

As a result of this, few states around which heavy industries developed could get the maximum benefit out of the industrial production. A Study of the positions of the States will reveal some interesting features. During the

period from 1950 to 70 as many as four states like West Bengal, Punjab, Gujarat and Maharashtra could secure the highest rank in terms of per capita domestic product. It is equally interesting to note that Assam which was among the first five top states in 1950-51 and 1964-65 lost its rank to Kerala since 1967. Moreover since 1970s Punjab, Haryana, Gujrat and Maharashtra came to the frontline while West Bengal started losing its position. The position of Bihar remains the same while Rajasthan has been showing a steady rise in its position. Of all the Southern States, except Kerala, Tamil Nadu has been showing steady upward movement. So far as the state of Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, it could not show any remarkable sign of growth because of the disturbed political scenario there.

Disparities among region have also occurred in agriculture mainly due to the uneven impact of the green revolution after the mid 60s. The green revolution could not evoke same amount on enthusiasm among all sections of the people in all regions. Not only that its impact was felt only in the wheat producing areas could extract maximum amount of profit as compared to the other areas. In concrete terms the effect was felt mainly in Punjab, Haryana and some other adjoining states. In other words an artificial disparity was created between the whet producing region and the rice producing region. Even within the wheat producing region there wide disparities among the districts located at different geographical regions. That is why the growth rate in Punjab differed markedly from that of Haryana.

Thus it is seen that differentiation in development in certain regions has led to the emergence of regional disparities and out of these imbalances emerged what is known as regional movements. It is interesting to note that regional imbalances developed in the course of developmental process. This is perhaps the reason for decentralized planning at the grass root level.

It will not be out of place here to mention that the nature and patterns of regional development all over the country have led to the emergence of a number of problems – social, political and economic. It is equally interesting to note that the economic issues alone have given birth to a number of issues not essentially economic in nature. In this respect the nature and extent of ethnic identity vis-à-vis national loyalty deserve special mentioning. It is generally agreed that there is a relationship between ethnic group activities and nation building process. Of late, there has been a kind of observation that ethnic phenomenon may be helpful indirectly in the formation of the concept of nation-state.1 There is a strong belief that ethnic identity is not incompatible with national loyalty. In the contrary, ethnic movement born out of ethnic identity may could forward a case for strong state-system.

The self-identification may be determined by certain symbols which tend to vary from period to period and area to area.[2] at a particular point of time it may have many dimensions and its objects may vary from time to time and place to place.[3] This has been described and analysed by a scholars in various terms. Basically the entire discussion revolves round

these questions: (a) can there be any conformity between ethnic identity and national loyalty? (b) Can they work together in a harmonious way or do they oppose each other? (c) What will be the nature of interaction and its possible impact on the process of state-building or nation-building?

These questions have been adequately addressed by scholars from different perspectives. In one school of thought, it has been argued that with the advent of modernization process the basic incompatibility between these two will gradually disappear. At the same time there are scholars who believed that the more there will be ethnic identity, more there will be local (regional) demands and movements.

Whatever may be the nature of theoretical framework, it should be mentioned that identity does not fix on a particular value or symbol or instrument for long. It all depends on the nature of particular individual interests as well as group interest. This can be presented in a model as follows:

National identity & loyalty	Economic Interest
Human Collectivity	Social Interest
Ethnic Identity & loyalty	Political Interest

A simple model of Multiple Identity and Loyalty

Human collective efforts are organized on some common values and understanding to realize their own goals in life. Although most of the groups are organized on ethnic considerations, the important of the

concept of nation has not lost its significance. The more there will be interactions at different levels, the more there will be areas of compromise leading to the formation of a strong nation and strong state.

Side by side the importance of language and culture should be taken into consideration. In India most of the regional movements based on ethnic considerations are initially regional in character. But in course of time, due to inter-mixing with other ethnic movements some kind of a unified feeling generates. It may not be out of place here to mention that the social movements in the South; mainly the Dravidian movement was essentially a movement for social and political identity for the Tamil people. But in course of time this movement brought within its fold a number of issues which were not on the agenda at the time of initiating the movement issues like language, culture and political assertion found place in the process of the movement. The movement went to such an extent that it became necessary for the creation of a political platform through which the movement could be advanced. The policy of the DMK and ALADMK will establish the fact.

Theoretically speaking, loyalty can be seen both in attitude and in behaviour. An analysis of the electoral behaviour in India will reveal the preference of one group of people for a political party, political symbol or political personality. This does not mean that transformations are not taking place. With the changes in the political perspective at the national and state level, qualitative changes have taken place in the process of regionalization of Indian Politics. The developments in 1990s have clearly

demonstrated that regional political parties based on regional considerations can play a vital role in crystallizing various forces and factors which appeared to be opposite in nature and their activities. The recently formal Federal Front within the United Front at the national level is an example of this trend.

From whatever angle, one looks into the problem, it will be clear that in India, one of the causes behind regional assertion of interests lies in the nature and extent of conflicts and their resultant split in the group loyalties or group ties. This can be understood with reference to the destruction of old power blocks within the Congress Party. Whatever may be the general feeling, there is a consensus of opinion that the support base of the old Congress Party witnessed serious disintegration mainly due to the disintegration of the group support bases. In the words of Atul Kohli, "At the most general level of indirect consequences, power challenges within the various communities destroyed the building blocks of the old Congress Party."4

In fact, this is the reason which can explain, in a meaningful way, many contemporary political trends which seek new strategies for mobilizing electoral support. This was led to the emergence of, what Kohli has observed, 'regional nationalism'.5 This dimension has gained added value and significance in the context of fragmented political society which is the outcome of reassertion of religions, ethnic and communal politics. It may not be out of plan here to mention that in some regions, continuing reassertion of the linguistic conflict helps keep an ethnic community

together as a political power bloc. This is true in every case where some form of regional nationalism get articulated even through some established political parties.

Thus viewed, consolidation and subsequent reassertion of regional sentiments through common loyalties to language or any to any other factor can be considered to by one of the driving forces behind the growth and manifestation of regional demands. The early success of the DMK as a political party can be attributed to this fact. It is equally interesting to note that in India the process of centralization of political power has been another case for the emergence of regionalism. In a very interesting study, it has been revealed that in India, "the process of political centralization was facilitated by the more or less uninterrupted rule of the Congress party for the first thirty years both at the Centre and in most of the states and was necessitated by the challenges to the hegemony of the Congress rule."6 In this context, it may be pointed out that the imposition of National Emergency during 1970s can not be simply taken as "a constitutional aberration."7 The roots behind such a move can be traced far below the working of the constitutional mechanism. Although there were protests from all corners and one may not be fully wrong to suggest that the installation of the Janata Government, first non-Congress coalition government at the Centre was largely the outcome of over-centralisation of political power at the centre. It may be noticed that even after coming to power, the Janata Government could not remove, all the sources of conflicts from the body of the Constitution. It may not be out of place here

to mention that the path of capitalist development which India has been following since independence has been primarily responsible for heavy centralization of power at a single point. It has been observed "the specific features of this path of development are the main determinants of development and consolidation of classes as well as the internal differentiations and conflicts that arise among the ruling classes."8 It has further been contended that "given the nature of divisions among the ruling class parties in India, the Congress had no difficulty in converting this centralized power into authoritarian rule in the shape of Emergency."9

That is why, the demands for autonomy of particular regions have assumed central importance and these are integral links with the struggle for democratic rights of the people all over the country.

In the process of governance, these internal conflicts and contradictions have become very prominent over the years, mainly due to the internal conflicts and strifes among the ruling class both at the Centre and at the States. It may be pointed out that more there will be a closer link between the ruling class and the big bourgeoisie, the more there will be contradictions and conflicts within the ruling class itself, thereby exposing the entire governing process to a series of threats in the forms of disintegration and even destruction. But even at the initial phase, attempts were made to solve, although very temporarily, these crises by suitable adjustments and compromises, but these could not last long as newer and newer compulsions emerge and complicated the whole process of adjustment and compromises. It has been rightly commented that "the

contradictions among the ruling classes, their internal management and the perception and assessment of these by the political leadership of the ruling classes are critical in understanding the growth, consolidation and decline of the ruling class parties."10

It is interesting to note in common parlance, the two conceptions of 'autonomy' and decentralization are often used interchangeably as if both these words convey the same meaning. The concept of state autonomy should be viewed in the proper constitutional and legal framework. This is to be understood in the context of federal governance in India. It also includes financial aspect within its ambit. As against this, decentralization is a process through which the powers at the disposal of the state are flowed down to the districts and downwards. But whatever may be the line of difference between these two notions, both are interlinked and aim at the direction – sharing of power on a reasonable basis with the Centre in the total governing process of the country.

It should be pointed out here that the nature of opposition of the non-congress parties in different state followed the same path and almost demanding the same nature of power from the Centre. The support basis of these parties will reveal that in most of the cases these regional parties had to depend on the local bourgeoisie to counter the threat posed by the national bourgeoisie in cooperation with the national political parties. Any study of the support bases of the Akali Dal in Punjab, DMK in Tamil Nadu, TDP in Andhra Pradesh or even AGP in Assam will establish this fact. In many cases, these regional political parties had to exploit the local

sentiments along with other factors. This is something peculiar and should be analysed in the proper perspective of national integration and the cherished value of 'unity in diversity'. In that respect, the regional parties were also class-parties with, of course, varying degrees, depending upon the local needs, sentiments or preferences. The net result has been very important as it strikes at the very of India's governing process.

It may not be out of place here to mention that the process which started during 1967-1969 continued almost uninterrupted to 1977-1979 and barring a brief spell, reappeared in a different form during 1980s and 1990s. Any serious study on the class formations, party formations or even coalition formation would reveal that one of the major driving forces behind them had been regional demand or satisfaction of regional sentiments. The split of 1969 within the Congress Party at the Centre marked the beginning of a new phase which culminated in the proclamation of National Assembly. But, on the other side, the formation of the Janata Government at the Centre also brought to the surface a question : Is it possible to form a new power structure with a number of political parties with divergent views and replace the erstwhile one single party based on single ideology? In other words, it was a question of, once again, centralisation versus apparent decentralisation of power through the formation of one party on a coalition basis.

That this experiment did not and cannot work for a long time became evident only within a short span. Once again there was a shift towards one party rule but with marked difference. The Congress, being more

experienced after the Emergency and aware of the evils of over-centralization of power (through constitutional and extra-constitutional means), had to change its style of functioning in a substantial way just to suit the prevailing conditions. The post-emergency Congress leadership tried to accommodate different views and governing process was sought to be based on 'consensus' rather than 'confrontation'. It was true during Rajib Gandhi's regime and equality true during the Narasimha Rao regime. The Rao regime was marked by another feature : the minority government with a hung parliament. What is relevant for the purpose of the present study is the gradual disappearance of national perspective of policy making and policy planning.

Basically in a situation in India, such a discussion would naturally revolve round two primarily considerations – centralization vs. decentralization of governing power. Any deviation from the accepted norms of associating the local sentiments in the national mainstream would prove dangerous and this has been the experience in India with regard to some of the troubled areas, more particularly, the areas covered by the north-eastern part of India and that of Jammu and Kashmir. It is no matter whether these movements are called insurgent movements or separatist movements or regional movements. It all depends upon the perception of the situation, its actual location and the short term and long-term objectives with which these movements are launched. But the over-all result of these movements are very perilous and unless tackled properly would lead to disintegration of the entire political system. In fact, this is

the real perspective of understanding the regional movements, be it in North-east or in J &K. or elsewhere.

What happens if some immediate short-term arrangements are made to solve these problems is event from the types of arrangements that have been made in these areas. It may be pointed out that there have been series of 'accords' all over the country for solving the problems of regional movements. But after a lapse of few years, it is seen that these 'accords' have failed to satisfy all groups involved in these movements. In many cases, the concerned state governments feel marginalized in the way the 'accords' are made where the centre plays a 'big brother' role. This has once again put a question mark on what has been fondly propagated as 'cooperative federalism', 'consensus politics' and so on. So on both the counts, these have serious implications. Even the constitutional-political arrangements that are made, have failed to live upto the expectation of all the parties concerned. The working of all 'autonomous councils' in different parts of the country will show that even the regional leaders with whom these 'accords' were made, have later on became skeptic about the effectiveness of such accords.

The Jharkhand Accord, for example, signed by the then Bihar Chief Minister and the then Union Minister of State for International Security was hailed for providing 'an amicable solution' of the Jharkhand problem. The Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council which was created, it has been alleged, possess less powers compared to the Jharkhand Area Development Council Bill, 1991 adopted by the Bihar Assembly.[11] It has

been pointed out that while in cases of Bodoland movement and GNLF (Gorkha National Liberation Front) movement in West Bengal agreements were made directly with the leaders of the movement. [12] In such a situation there will be every scope of generating a mistrust about the actual good of such a move in the minds of the local leaders. It has been pointed out in this connection that 'there is no denying that the legitimacy of a Jharkhand accord in which Jharkhandis were not made as original party would remain open to question.[13] At the same time, it is equally encouraging to note the JAAC would be predominantly an elected body as against the Jharkhand Development Council which was to be, by and large, a nominated one.

But right from the beginning, the very existence of the Council was exposed to serious doubts. In the first instance, very little or no legislative power has been granted to it, secondly, its continuance would depend upon the discretion of the Bihar Governor and he can dissolve it without assigning any reason thereto, thirdly it has been alleged that Council will have fiscal power only in relation to some areas which have no fiscal potential as well, lastly, though a number of subjects like rural development, agriculture, minor irrigation and forests (excluding reserved and protected forests) have been placed within the jurisdiction of the Council, the bureaucracy in change of these departments will not be accountable to the JAAC. [14]

In other words, the council will not have any power over mining and industry sectors – the core areas over which disagreements still exist. The

way industrialization has been progressing in this area, it is alleged, would destroy the very regional peculiarities for which is called the 'Ruhr of India'. Moreover, it has resulted in the displacement of thousands of local people and rendered them jobless and ultimately turned them into cheap industrial labourer.

As has been pointed out at the outset the agreement relating to JAAC has evoked mixed reaction among the people and the parties. While 'the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha(s) and the Congress(I) failed it as a great achievement in the fifty-five year old movement, the JMM (Mandy) and the B.J.P. have called it a great hoax. [15]

For the purpose of this study, the basic question therefore is : Can such a move work smoothly in the face of such misgivings about its efficacy in the minds of local leaders and leaders of the national parties? In other words, the core problem certres round issue of evolving a national consensus on such issues. It is no point mentioning here the detailed provisions of the Act or it is the demand of the present study what is needed is to see where in dealing with any regional movement, the policy-planners have addressed to the problem from a broader perspective or not. It is not simply a question of one region but the problem of the whole country – as any solution for such movement would likely to have a claim reaction all over the country. Any agreement at one particular point will be made a point of reference to another area while dealing with similar problems.

This does not bear that all regional movements would be of similar types or nature. It is admitted that its nature varies with the varying nature of setting, context and purposes. But what is emphasized is kind a national perspective in dealing with such problem.

The same is equally true about the GNLF movement in the hill districts of Darjeeling in West Bengal. It is not simply a question of identity crisis not it is a question of what has popularly been called "the little nationalism". The roots of the problem should be traced in the socio-political factors and economic settling of this region. And what is more important is that the kind of agreement and the creation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), like the JAAC, has not been able to satisfy all the demands of the people in this region.16 The story can be repeated with regard to the entire movements in the north-eastern part of India.

What is urgently needed is a total perspective of the entire problem of regionalism. It is generally argued that the absence of non-developmental plans for the specific region has given birth to what is called as "retarded sub-nationalism". Nationalism broadly conceived, can accommodate 'sub-nationalism' within its ambit and upto certain point both can feed and sustain each other. But when the later becomes a 'retarded' one, it becomes impossible for the former to accept it and ultimately it runs counter to the former. In India, so far as regionalism and regional movements are concerned, it is the retarded sub-nationalism which is posing a threat to the entire concept of 'unity in diversity.'

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1.4 REGIONALISM AND FEDERAL GOVERNANCE

Regionalism, so far analysed, can be viewed in the context of federal governance in India. It may be recalled that the federal set up has largely been modeled on the basis of the Government of India Act 1935. The underlying idea behind the federal structure was the achievement of a compromise and assimilation of different forces and factors prevailing in the country. But the process of rationalization of these goals had never been an easy one. It is true the country had been under one party dominance for long time, but this could not bring about the desired level of assimilation of different forces.

As a result of this, most of the conflicts of regional and local nature could not be solved even by the national level leaders. These problems assumed more significance immediately after the attainment of independence and the partition of the country.

Since 1967 the federal process in India has taken a new form. A new power configuration has emerged with the erosion of the power-base of the Congress Party. For the first time, some non-Congress Government came to power in some of the States.

The 1967 episode may be regarded as a trend setter, the culmination of these process can be seen in the developments in 1977 and beyond 1977. These developments were primarily responsible for the emergence and growth of regional parties. These parties sought to enhance the interests

of the local or regional area same times along with the national demands and some times against the main stream of national aspirations.

It is generally believed that India is in the midst of a "Multiple Crisis Stage." The implications of regional demands can be understood in its multidimensional aspects – social, political and economic. Although certain tension areas have already been identified, there are other areas which act as potential threats to national integration and assimilation of divergent socio-economic forces.

The implications of regionalism in the context of federal governance in India offers a unique theme for deeper analysis. In fact, this is very much connected with political stability and economic development. It is equally true to mention that these are connected, at the initial stage with local level and ultimately with the national level. That is why state level politics or for that matter regional politics have their impact on the programmes and objectives of the nation as a whole.

It should be mentioned that side by side formal relationship, informal relationships also play important role in the process. A study of political variables may not be sufficient for understanding the complex character of the federal governance in India and the nature and extent of impact of regionalism on it. Among the economic variables, the level of development, nature of Centralised Planning and the flow of Central assistance to the States are important. In other words the so called feelings of "givers and receivers" relationship between the Centre and

States must be analysed in details. This was acknowledged by the ARC when it observes "In India, from the very dawn of the federal polity, the financial dependence of the State. On the Centre was as clear as anything and the Constitution here has produced consistently surpluses at the Centre and deficits in the States and the Centre has always been the 'givers' and the states the 'receivers'."1

This sense of dependence of the states or regions on the Central assistance has led to a number of conflicting situations which have their impact on the Political relationship between the regions (States) and the Centre.

This has been sought to be neutralised by suitable adjustments of financial relations between the Centre and the States. It has been rightly observed by K. Subba Rao, former Chief Justice of India, "Planning introduced not only a Political Complexion in the relationship between the Union and the States but enabled the Union to tighten its financial grip over the States."2

It points to the fact that the smooth functioning of democratic systems in a federation depends largely on a balancing of financial relationship between the Centre and the Constituent Units. This sense of dependence of the States on the Central Assistance creates a feeling of discriminatory treatment among some of the regions which are less advanced compared to the more advanced areas. Even in the field of resource transferred from the Centre to the States will show that the total state plan expenditure exceeded beyond the resources from the Centre.

It should be noted that the Centre adopted a more rational approach to evolve some broad principle for the distribution of Central assistance among the states.

But even this national approach could not minimise the level of disparities among the states. This led to a widespread demand for modification from whose states which were economically backward. It was estimated that even during the 7^{th} Plan the percentage of shares from the Central pool varied from 21% - 58% and in different states. Even those states included in the high income group did not have equal share in the distribution of Central assistance.

This has serious implications in the context of federal governance in the country. In fact this has led to widespread dissatisfaction among a number of States and acted as a relying point for coming into closer ties of those states belonging to the self-region.

Here a brief reference to the role of the National Development Council may be made. In this context the NDC at its meeting held on October 11, 1990 discussed and agreed to revise the formula. Under the revised formula out of the 25% allocation on the basis of per capita income, 20% will continue to be allocated to those states whose per capita incomes are below the national average.

Politically speaking, this mal-distribution had its serious impact on the federal governance in India. It has been stated many times by the States that they do not have the necessary resources to meet the growing demands in the sphere of education, health, and power and employment generation. Even the states cannot fully depend on the Planning Commission which has in practice become an extension of a central ministry.

The conflict between national and regional (State level) goals revolve mainly in three areas, namely (1) geographical distribution (2) Centre-State financial relations and (3) mobilization of domestic resources. It is interesting to note that in some of the geographical areas political and economic demands generated out of mal-distribution has been led by chief ministers of those states. Although this does not mean that there has been a decline in the nature and extent of regional demands by other groups not holding the political office in the States.

The political factors in this context get further complicated when they come into direct contact with some social problems which are, in most

cases, Indian in character. This has an obvious reference to the dominant role played by the caste in the social system in India. Although it is admitted that Indian social structure, or for that matter, Indian society as such, has a definite swing towards modernity and there are areas where there is harmony between tradition and modernity. It is equally important to note that even in this context caste as a social factor plays dominant role in some cases, in determining the course of the political process in India. This has been very correctly observed by Rajni Kothari when he says: "It is something in which both the forms of caste and the forms of politics are brought nearer to each other in the process of changing both. By drawing the caste system into its web or organization, politics finds materiel for its articulation and modules it into its own design. Politician mobilizes caste groupings and identities in order to organise their power. They find in it an extremely well articulated and flexible basis for organization, something that has been structured in terms of a Status hierarchy, but something that is also available for political manipulation.

This is evident in the political process in some of the regions or states in India Politics of caste have become a dominant factor in the political dynamics of some of these states. It can be observed that on the basis of caste considerations, group formations are possible in some of the regions, which are dominated by a group of people belonging to a particular single caste. So, while analyzing this dimension one should take note of the fact that in India caste as a social factor may term itself into a political factor which may ultimately give rise to certain regional demands

in some areas. It is equally interesting to note that in some of the areas the movements based on caste considerations are mostly covered by one factor – the factor of backwardness generating out of the concern for relative deprivation. It may be out of place here to mention that caste demonstrations in some cases often lead to caste riots on a large scale.

A look at the regional configurations all over India will establish the fact that in most cases regional political and caste politics get mixed up. The best example is the general reaction against the recommendations of the Mandal Commission in some parts where caste tension ultimately created what is known as regional-cum-separatist movements.

Closely following the caste factor comes the language problem and issue of group identification on the basis of linguistic attachment. Here also question of domination and subordination comes up. An analysis of some regional movements, particularly those of the south, will point to the fact that initially a movement for linguistic identification may lead to a general kind of regional demand in which other factors of social, economic and political nature come in. The already known tension between Hindi and non-Hindi speaking people has created to distinct linguistic identities representing the north and the south. Even with the adoption of the Three Language Formula, the problem remains unresolved. Parties like DMK and others openly protested against the official language bill. Moreover the bifurcation of some states on the basis of language has also created problem. The splitting of Bombay into Gujrat and Maharastra led to riots in Bombay in 1956. Similarly the creation of Pubjab and Haryana could not

solve the problems of these two states. Linguistic minorities in some regions create problems and generate a feeling of being absorbed by the dominant section. It creates what is known as 'crisis of identity'. That is perhaps, why the States reorganisation could not bring about the desired result. A close examination will reveal that together with language many variables and critical factors like ethnic-cum-economic consideration (Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Darjeeling); religion, script and sentiments (Haryana and Pubjab); language-cum-culture (Maharastra and Gujrat); historical and political factors (U.P. and Bihar) integration of princely states and the need for viable grouping (Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) and of course language-cum-social distinctiveness (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Orissa, West Bengal) have played a decisive role in the composition of the Indian Federation.

Another dimension of this phenomenon also demand closer analysis. Theoretically speaking political stability and sound support base of the political parties may in the long run prevent regional demands. The more there will be in-figuring within the party in power, more there will be the chances of regional leaders coming to the forefront with their regional demands. The history behind the creation of parties like DMK and also AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Pubjab, Jharkhand Party in Bihar will substantiate this fact. Even the creation of the Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) also points to this fact. There has been a peculiar situation where the ruling party at the center once to maintain status quo while regional

parties demand for radical changes in the federal structure and support the concept of state autonomy.

This is the area where bargaining politics in India comes in. Before 1967, the Party Configuration was such that no effective politics of bargaining could work. This is because of the existence of one-dominant party system. But since 1967 both quantitative and qualitative change has taken place thereby making room for the regional political parties to take effective part in the bargaining process. This was further extended by the active participation of pressure group and Trade Union. In some cases the peaceful democratic process underwent changes and created violent situations and radical politics has taken the place of normal, evolutionary democratic process. This once again called for the intervention by the Centre and changing the federal structure into a near unitary form. This is evident from the following table covering the first four years since 1967.

The emergency of coalition politics in India created a number of peculiarities which were unknown before 1967. On one hand it brought about split within the monolithic nature of the single dominant party, on the other it brought together small parties and formed groups against the dominant position of a single party.

The emergence of coalition politics in India has created a number of peculiarities with was unknown before 1967. On the one hand it brought about split within the monolithic nature of the single dominant party, on the other it brought together small parties and formed groups against the

dominant position of a single party. The formation of the first Janata Government at the center was the result of an accommodative spirit of its constituent political groups. The power struggle within the coalition end with the election of Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister. But the kind of balance he was expected to maintain was absent and he formed the cabinet with his own supporters. The result was obvious. The Janata coalition collapsed in July 1979 mainly because of widespread defection by various group leaders.

A new coalition government was framed with Charan Singh as the Prime Minister in 1979 but it lasted only for one month. It is to be noted that the process of coalition formation which started in 1977 found its culmination in the formation of the united Front ministry in 1977. But the process of collection formation and the course of development had never been the same while in the earlier case the national level parties used to take active role and as a result of these such collection took almost a national character. But the present coalition at the center displays a number of features which were not present in the earlier case. In the resent coalition forming the regional interest has come to the fore and the regional parties are taking active part. This is evident from the dominate role played by the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister in the resent Crisis over the question of getting recent support from the Congress party. Not only that the emergence and active participation of the left parties centering round the coalition forming is equally important.

In this way, the coalition formation has also influenced the regional demands in India. The present government's attitude towards the development of regions is also worth nothing. It appears that the present coalition pattern is very much a creation of regional arrangement expressed through national level political Machinery. The dominant role played by the Chief Minister in the planning Commission and the National Development Council is equally important. It has been the declared policy of the national government, the backward regions should be given adequate financial support from the national pool. Thus the idea that regionalism was a tool used by the imperialist power to keep the country fragmented is no longer correct. It has been accepted that in a vast country like India regionalism or for that matter regional movements are very much the part of the political process. The only think that needs to be considered to what extent regionalism will be allowed to penetrate into the basic fabric of the society. Regionalism in India has assumed various forms and found expression in more than one way. It assumes three forms namely, (a) Secession from the Indian union, (b) demand for separate statehood, (c) demand for full-fledged statehood and inter-state dispute.

It is in its extreme form of regionalism that a region demands its separate existence by breaking the ties with the country as a whole. A look into the history of some of the demands made by the regional parties in their initial stage will reveal that at some points secession from India had been one of their main objectives. Although some demand are still there in some parts

of the North East India, in most of the cases regional political parties have modified their positions and agreed to remain within the Indian territory. It may be pointed out that in the South the DMK had this objective at the initial stage. But gradually it has changed its position and demanded for state autonomy. The demand for autonomy has been on the agenda of the DMK and it was further expressed in 1971 by the then chief minister N.Karunanidhi. At one point, the party also demands a separate flag for Tamil Nadu. As a regional party, the primary concern of DMK had been the protection and enhancement of local issues. It was declared that the state would reserved 80% of jobs in government and private sector for local people. Such movement reveals the nature of conflict between national and regional forces in the country.

The same was the story in Punjab. The demand for separate Khalisthan is the manifestation of such a trend. It may be noted that such a demand grew stronger after the reorganization of state on linguistic basis in 1956. The hole of Punjab came under the spell of extremist movement which categorically demanded total separation from the central government. Some compromise formula was adopted and the result was the creation of Chandigarh as the capital of both Punjab and Haryana. Even the creation of a separate Punjabi suba could not satisfy all local leaders. A demand was mad for the establishment of a socialist democratic Sikh home land in North India. Although there was factionalism within the arms groups, even it was demanded that the country should establish a socialist Shikh homeland. The rebel leaders also prepare a plan for setting up a "Rebel

Sikh Government". But gradually Akali leadership realised that it is not possible to have a separate Sikh land, and they demanded greater autonomy to the states.

In Punjab Green Revolution was also the cause of social tension, the impact of which can be felt in the agricultural sector. It has been observed that it society has created "capitalist farmers" among the Sikh-Jat population. The rise of this newly wealth farming class meant increasing competition with other communities.

A situation of Punjab became so grave that it brought a series of tension all over India. This led to a series of dialogues between the Center and the States. Even an accord between Rajiv Ghandhi and Longwal could not deliver the desired goods.5

The same story can be told about the North East India 6 and the movements have shaken the very foundation of the concept of national integration. Perpetual instability in the North Eastern India for more than two decades has threatened peace and security. The demands made by the Nagas or Mizos are of similar nature. They want to be free from the so called "Indian rule". They have put forward their argument not only on economic considerations but also on ethno-cultural considerations. The trebles claimed that neither the Hindu norms nor any traditional Indian pattern match with their ethnic position. It is interesting to note that in 1950 in a Plebiscite held under the leadership of militant leader phizo, 99% Nagas were said to be in favour of a sovereign independent State.

Even the creation of a state of Nagaland in 1963 could not satisfy the demand for separate state. Although the rate of progress in Nagaland since its formation is relatively good, the underground activities still continue. The state government has given talk priority to industrialization in its annual plan outlay.

In a similar way the Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga, demanded more autonomy and at some stages total independence. As a part of their strategy the underground Mizos establish link with the then underground nagas for achieving their common goals. Even in spite of best efforts and accords concluded by the government of India, peace in Mizoram could not be established.

Closely following Mizoram, Manipur also faces the same amount of extremist challenge from a group known as People Liberation Army (PLA), PLA's aimed its to achieve independence for Manipur. The main grievance of the local people centre round the deprivation of cultural and economic advantages and accumulation of huge fortune by the non-Manipuries.

In a same way the state of Tripura has been witnessing the same kind of socio-political tension, mostly generated between the Tripuries and non-Tripuries. The growing disparity of economic position has been the main reason of conflict between the two sections of the society. This has led to the formation of Tripura Tribal Organization which posed serious threat to the State Government. Again in the first phase of 80s, the Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) started insurgency movements in the State with a view

to establish a separate state outside India. Not only that the Tripura Upajati Samiti (TUJS) also started demanding special protection for the tribals. Even with the installation of a new left government situation have not substantially changed. Moreover a new insurgent group has come into being with the title Tribal National Liberation Front (TNLF) with the growing number of insurgent groups, the situation in Tripura is also becoming serious.

The position of Assam has become all the more serious. The State is currently confronted by insurgency from both the tribal and non-tribal groups. Even the acords at the political level could not settle the dispute. Recently the Bodo Movement in the Lower Assam has further complicated the situation. The present government has also faced a serious threat because of the withdrwal of support from the Ministry by one of its constituent partners. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) which is very active in the Brahmaputra Valley, is said to have established link with their counterparts in Nagaland and also outside India, more particularly with the militant groups in Burma, ULFA is fighting against stagnation and discrimination from which according to them Assam has long suffered. The aim of ULFA is to, as declared "Liberating Assam from Indian Colonialism."

Coming to the State of Jammu and Kashmir one comes across a different kind of situation there. Because of its historical and situational position the state has been the point of debate since 1947. Even today, there is an area under Pakistan Control which is known as PAK-occupied Kashmir

(POK). The problem between Pakistan and India has been sought to be resolved within the framework of simple Agreement. But nothing substantial has been achieved so far. Although there are different Kashmiri militant groups, their aim, in general, is the same: to make Kashmir free from Indian rule.

These are some of the examples which will establish the fact that regionalism and its manifestation in India has never been the same. These are very much condition by the particular context in which these are taking place. But whatever may be the contextual setting, one point is evident: regionalism in most cases is the outcome of a sense of economic domination or discrimination, mostly done by the Centre.

As started earlier even the reorganization of State on linguistic basis could not bring about the desired change. There are tensions between Pubjab and Haryana, Maharastra and Gujrat, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and in some other parts of the country. Even within some states, there are conflicting demands by different groups representing different sections of interests.

Added to this, there has been a new dimension of left wing extremism in some parts of India mostly represented by the Naxalite groups. Although in Strike sense this cannot be regarded as regional movement, but in a remote sense it is confined at a single place or region, may give rise to a sense of regional feeling. Even today Naxalite movement and its impact can be seen in some parts of Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

This movement gets extended to some adjoining districts of Madhyapradesh, Maharastra, Karnataka, Orissa and Bihar. Of these Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are stated to have more stronghold of left extremis than any other state. It may not be out of place here to mention that Naxalite movement, although originated in west Bengal has to a large extent, being disintegrated.

Closely following the Naxalite movement, the Jharkhand movement in some parts of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa also draws attention of the scholars. Jharkhand, the forest land is a cultural name given to the area belonging to Chotonagpur of Bihar. Culturally this is perhaps the only area in the entire country where one comes across the mixture of different kinds of cultural streams. In fact, the area represents a cultural synthesis of its own kind. But of late, the Jharkhand movement has given birth to a strong sentiment of regionalism and a demand is going on for the creation of a separate state consisting of these parts. There are four basic issues behind the Jharkhand movement (a) Land and forest alienation, (b) training and Job deprivation due to an influx of outsiders, (c) cultural submergence and (d) unbalanced development with a gradual change of focus from the pre-independence to post-independence period.

Of these four the last two that is cultural submergence and unbalanced development deserve special mentioning. Although it is true that maintenance of cultural pluralism has been one of our declared national goals, but in some areas a feeling has been generated that one particular culture is getting over shadowed by other culture. This has created what is

known as identity crisis. The same has been the case with regard to the Jharkhand area. Coupled with this is the problem of unbalanced development.

The following table of this dimension will present a realistic picture.

	Major Items	**Chotonagpur Area**
a.	Contribution to revenue by	70%
b.	Expenditure of revenue in	20%
c.	Irrigated land of the total	5%
d.	Electrification(rural)	5%
e.	Paved roads per 1000 Km.	5 Km.

This is merely an illustrative picture. Any serious study of this nature will unfold the same trend elsewhere, where regional imbalance in development has caused serious resentment and given birth to some kind of regional demands. A same is applicable the development in the hill regions of Darjeeling district where the GNLF movement started.

That is why any study of regionalism and its general impact of Indian politics must take into account multiply factors-political, economic and social which has contribute to the sense of alienation and isolation form the rest of the country. It should also focus on the causes of growing dissatisfaction among the people in a particular region. It is equally true that not all the regional movements are directed towards achieving

complete independence. But at the same time the agreements and accords that have been concluded so far have not produced optimum results. The sense of dissatisfaction and deprivation continue with the result of further intensifying the movement. The ultimate result may come only after the settlements which will be acceptable to all parties concern.

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1.5 THE PHASE OF TRANSITIONAL POLITICS

It is generally stated that India is passing through a period of transition politics and the political dynamics can be called dynamics of transitional politics. But one wonders with regard to the very nomenclature of the period of transition. Since India has been in the midst of changes since independence some sort of transition should be there. This area where studies of contradictions between tradition and modernity have already been undertaken.

It is interesting to note that some political commentators have even gone to the extent of calling India's politics "disorderly politics of a new order." There has been a grand struggle among the conflicting groups over economic and social resources continued; at the same time a new kind of politics of accommodation is being practice in order to "reconstruct the collapsed structure of accountability, but without producing-so far- a crisis of governability."

It may be true that there has been a big loses of collective national purpose mainly because of the very subtle nature of the political process in the country. More particularly since the seventies there have been attempts at making the democratic process more assertive, keeping in tune with the changing social, economic and political scenario. At the same time there has been a grand Political battle over the completion of the unfinished agenda and it called for greater understanding among the policy planners for a concerted socio-economic action.

It may be pointed out that there had been a clear-cut division in India on a psychological plane over the issues centering round caste and religion. More particularly the issues relating to Mandal and Masjid became so prominent that at one point it appeared as if all other issued facing the country are of minor significance. The political parties during this period also failed to project a broad national perspective, keeping in mind the national demand as well as regional aspirations. The much talked about a division between Hindi belt and non-Hindi belt had already been there. This division got further complicated because of some unforeseen forces which emerged because of the interaction of caste, class and religion. The new leadership that was emerging also felt to channelize the popular sentiment and India as a nation. This does not, of course, in any way, undermine the very of 'unity in diversity'.

It is equally interesting to note that even after more than four decades of democratic experience, the disparities in terms of welfare and social justice has become more marked and this has caused a widespread dissatisfaction among the people of different regions. Even within the southern belt of Kerala is best known for it's recalled of human development policies. Both Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have marginal gain by providing subsidized food gains for the poor below the poverty line. Tamil Nadu has made substantial progress in female literacy and improvement of child health.

The nature of politics in contemporary India demands took things: affirmative action and devolution of power to the regions. In other words

there is a demand for a new political order. Although there has been attempt at reconciling various conflicting claims at different regions, the results and the consequences cannot be possibly uniform. For example in the western part of India the process of well formation has been more compared to the eastern part. In fact, as a result of a number of peculiar circumstances the western regions has been able to insulate it from the rest of the country is so far its process of wealth creation is concerned. As against this, the south appears to have a process of holding the power alternatively among different political parties. The economic rise of this region, except, Kerala may be seen in the creation of the favorable political climate at the center since the creation of coalition regimes in New Delhi. The only exception has been the regions dominated by the left parties in eastern and north eastern regions. It is to be remembered that the very essence of flexibility of Indian's polity is based on its capacity to accommodate various identities.

The more there will be actions of the assertive segments of the community, the more there will be the dissolution of the dominant order in the society. In fact, this may be one of the causes which led to the break down of the "Congress System" as early as in 1967.At the same time there is the fear that in regions where the assertive forces become regionally strong, it may lead to some kind of disintegration of the old political order with a broader developmental perspective which can bring within its fold all the regional or sectional demands.

A brief look into the basic foundations of post-independent India will reveal that there have been profound changes of political, social and economic nature for the last two decades. At least four factors both domestic and international can be identified in this context: (a) the political mobilization of the lower caste (b) challenge before the secular political order (c) the gradual decline of the so-called democratic socialist principle, (d) on the international seen the end of cold war and dissolution of Soviet Union. All these four factors have, in a greater way changed the fundamentals of the contemporary.

It may be pointed out that compared to the past, India today appears to be fewer statists, less secular, and less dominated by upper caste, yet more democratic. This is the greatest paradox in Indian politics. It is observed that with the exception on secularism, other factors and trends are likely to consolidate and penetrate in coming years. Secularism is likely to survive not because the attitude of the Hindu Nationalist but because of the assertive character of the lower caste groups and their platform for social justice.

At the social level, the nature of caste-conflict has been defined with reference to a single formulation: there is an inherent difference of attitude between the lower caster politics and Hindu (upper caste) nationalism. The mobilization pattern follows a straight line – mobilization of the castes at the lower level is for attaining social justice. Here comes the role of different political parties in mobilizing and enlisting support from all sections of the society around the general demand for social

justice and this is an area where most of the leading political parties could not deliver the goods necessary for achieving and distributing social justice on a very wider scale.

This is also the point where contradictions at the social plane become very much evident. The history of the post-independent India has been a record of such contradictions at all levels social, political and economic. Immediately after independence, it was the general belief that the Congress as a broad-based political party with its past involvement in the freedom movement would be able not only to ensure social justice but also to generate conditions which are very much conductive for this purpose. But it should be maintained at the outset that the Congress had been successful at least in a limited scope, in creating a secular democratic process at the initial place. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that the Congress itself was a body based on numerous compromises – compromises of attitudes, values goals and even policies.

A study of the leadership issue in the Congress party would reveal that in the initial phase, i.e., during Nehru-period, it was mainly due to Nehru's preference for some kind of socialism (largely based on the Western concept) that the country could generate some degree of secularist socialist politics. But even during his period, there were divergent views even among the front-ranking leaders about the actual nature and meaning of secularist politics and its proper setting in the Indian perspective.

It is important to note that there was a structural support to this effort by the constitutional arrangement. That is something unique. The adopted model of constitutional scheme which was a deliberate action on the part of the framers of the constitution did really wonderful job in providing necessary support to this idea. But even then, the question remains: was the society ready for such a step? Perhaps not. Had it been so, there would not have such segmented cleavages, primordial loyalties and the presence of disintegrative forces within the social set-up.

The entire problem can be explained with reference to three issues which have been dominating the entire social condition political dynamic and economic imperatives during the first three decades after independence. These are secular nationalism, religious nationalism and caste as a basic of social justice. It has been very correctly observed that the linguistic regionalism of the '50's was satiated by the linguistic reorganisation of Indian Federalism."6 A situation was created in which there appeared to be a contradiction between Bharat versus India. Although it originally appeared at the psychological level but gradually the idea or feeling got concretized and the history of '80s or '90s bear testimony to this phenomenon. These two decades witnessed sectional demands from different regions primarily on caste and regional basis. Caste-tension went to such a height that the entire country was exposed to a serious threat of disintegration firstly on the basis of reservation policies and secondly on the basis of religious fundamentalism.

Taking in a broader perspective, the net effect of both these tensions were nearly the same – a serious blow to the very concept of federal and secular governance in India. In fact, an uneven and even undesired competition appeared between secular nationalism and religious fundamentalism which was never visualised in India, at least, India after independence.

This is the real problem in understanding or conceptualizing the phenomenon of regionalism in contemporary India. Since the attainment of independence in the late '40a' the limits of a formal electoral and representative democracy which fails to fulfill people's aspirations for the betterment of their living conditions and to provide a sense of justice and fair play are already becoming clear."7 The limits of our democratic practice have been highlighted by kothari when he says : "An electoral democracy uninformed by a commitment to justice and a decentralised political order in which the people are themselves allowed to make decisions that affect them is bound to produce manipulative politics and the phenomenon of criminalization of not just the polity but of society as a whole, including the poor and unemployed (or the heavily under employed) strata who themeselves get inducted into the politicization of the criminal and violent type."8

This is another aspect of the nature of politics in India which demands closer examination. The vices that are there in the body politics came to the surface immediately after independence. The prevailing socio-economic conditions and socio-political capabilities of the Indian state

should be taken into consideration during this phase. After a prolonged struggle for independence, a stupendous task was imposed on a very weak, infant state in India. The State, at that period, was primarily concerned with the task of arranging the polity and preparing and setting the agenda for the future. It may be pointed out that economy at that time was essentially shattered and a specific time-frame became necessary for bringing about immediate socio-economic development. But the nature of the Indian state and the democratic ethos and spirit created by and through the freedom movement was not conductive for any hard-line on the part of the state. This was a very critical stage in the history of Indian political process: On the one hand, the high expectation of the people from the state for more equitable social justice exerted pressure on the State itself, on the other, the very weak and disintegrating nature of the society demanded greater state interference, state-direction and state-guidance. The history of India's independence and the developments immediately after independence will establish the fact that a somewhat working balance or equilibrium between these two extremes was sought to be maintained.

But the balance that was created was definitely of short-term nature; it was essentially meant for meeting the immediate needs of the hour. But the problem arose, when afterwards, the same kind of balance was sought to be created and maintained. Since the time was different, context was different, demands were different, so naturally, responses or arrangements ought to be different. But unfortunately that did not happen

or even if it had happened, not on a larger scale so as to bring all the people within its effective net.

One may not be entirely wrong in suggesting that the roots of regionalism in contemporary India can be traced back to the nature of half-hearted, short-lined compromise the country made in the early phase and expected it to serve the subsequent periods. Naturally a question and a very relevant too, arise: How is it that even in the face of these limitations, the country is still united and the federal governance is in operation? The answer to this question may be found in the very nature of the Indian polity itself. The polity has its inherent dynamism and a heavy amount of flexibility within itself. These two elements dynamism and flexibility – provide the necessary support in its existence and working. In other words, Indian polity has developed a superb degree of shock-absorbing capacity. That is perhaps the reason why even in the face of so many challenges, the political-constitutional arrangement is still working. One may even go to the extent of suggesting that most of the dangers coming out of regionalism are of very temporary nature and hence will within the capacity of the state to tackle. But at the same, one would fail to grasp the problem if one does not take into account the political developments that have taken place during the last four decades after independence.

One of the reasons for the continuance of the system can be found in the arrangements through which difference kinds of interests have been accommodated. In other words, the emergence and growth of coalition-politics or coalition-making have definitely worked as a safety-value

through extra-pressure on the political process has been neutralised. This mechanism has, to a large extent, developed a new power-structure and new political arrangement both at the national and local (regional level).

Thus viewed, coalition politics may be considered to be a mechanism through which some sort of accommodation of different interests is possible. In other words, coalition-formation may be regarded as the basis for what is known as accommodative politics. In fact, right from the days of India's freedom struggle, the nature of politics that India sought to develop and retain was nothing but accommodation of different views, attitudes and interests keeping in mind the broad national perspective. In fact, all the social, political and economic institutions that were developed were designed and oriented towards this goal.

A look into the framing of the India's basic document – the constitution – conclusively proves that right from the beginning, attempts were made to arrive at some form of compromise of interests, values and attitudes. The net result of such activities was the creation of the document which is based on, what Austin has said, accommodation and compromise.

It has been seen that regional problems may arise where there will be combination of two or more factors such as geographical isolation, exclusivist historical tradition, ethnic or religious peculiarities and above all, localised economic or class interests. This problem becomes acute in a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious situation like that of India. Moreover, India has developed a model for achieving modernization –

modernization at all levels – social, economic and political. But this has to be achieved in a general framework of a plural society. This has created a number of problems which has very correctly been described by Palmer as a multiple crisis. The crisis is of many types and nature: crisis of identity, crisis of legitimacy, crisis of penetration, crisis of integration and above all, crisis of distributions.

The crisis of distribution (of welfare and social justice) generally arises out of economic cleavages among people of different regions resulting from inequality and uneven economic development. Broadly viewed, these crises may pose serious threat to the very existence and integrity of the Indian polity. This aspect has been clearly summed in the following observation.

"If the promise of economic progress is the main premise of freedom for the dispossessed, then it is natural for a scramble to ensure, when the rate of economic development fails to bring a new world...".[9]

One may, at the very outset, point to the failures of economic planning in India in this regard. It has been alleged that planning in India has done little or no justice towards the smaller states or economically backward regions. Moreover, in many states, the fruits of economic development did not reach the target groups, mostly due to weak policy implementation. It is commonly believed that failure of economic planning creates economic imbalances between states, regions and sub-regions.

It will be pertinent or relevant here to mention some of the developments in some parts of India. The Telengana agitation, the language and cultural dimension of the Assam movement, the socio-economic demands of the hill region of U.P. or the sentiment of the people of the Jharkhand regions are some of the examples of these trends. The problem in Telengana region is a combination of a number of factors: economic backwardness of the region and a sense of bring dominated by the people of other parts of Andhra Pradesh. In a letter to the Editor, The Hindu, this point was highlighted by one observer and that too in the context of emerging trends of the Telengana movement. [10]

Similarly economic and historical consideration divided Maharashtra into four regions viz. Vidharbha, Marathawada, Konkan and Western Maharashra. [11]

The problems in Assam and for that matter the entire north-east is very complicated and demands a careful handling on the parts of both the central and local leadership. Vast literature on this theme has already been brought out covering different dimensions – linguistic, ethnic, economic, cultural and political. The growing number of extremist actions in this region still proves that the signal that the policy-makers want to send has neither reached the targeted groups or accepted by them at all. If one goes by the newspaper reports, one may come across the subtle and peculiar way the agitating groups are increasing their numbers. At times, it becomes even unclear for an observer to identify these groups on the basis of local or regional foundations. In many cases, they overlap with

each other thereby making the task more complicated. Even within one state boundary or regional demarcation, there may sub-regional or sub-state ethnic groups and at some point, their demands may appear to be the same.

But the same framework cannot be applied in cases of the Gorkha National Liberation Front movement (GNLF) in Darjeeling in West Bengal or the Jharkhand movement in Bihar. Although, primarily the roots of these movements may be traced in some form of socio-economic negligence on the part of national (or sometimes, the state-level) policy planners, their genesis and subsequent developments did not follow the same courses. In other words, although these two are essentially regional movements, but their support bases and long-term and short-term perspectives are different. That is, perhaps, the reasons why even after the formation some of forms of autonomous bodies, the people of these regions still appear to be unhappy. The reason is not too far to understand: creation of formation of such political arrangement may be their immediate goal but not the ultimate goal. The seeds of discontent could not be eliminated from the minds of the people of these regions. This may be the reason why in spite of so many "Accords" which has been made with a view to ending the regional conflicts failed to deliver the goods. This is true with respect to any regional movement in any part of the country.

All these problems have been, in a different context, described as "the crisis of National Interest." The entire problem of regionalism is to be

discussed in the general background of national interest. More precisely, the problem is to be placed in the proper perspective of institutional framework and its efficacy of the institutional arrangement in bringing about all-round economic development.

This context, the author has referred to three institutional frameworks which are very relevant in understanding the nature of the Indian political process. These are:

(a) the federal structure of government and the parliamentary democratic institutions of decision-making.

(b) The institutional pattern of socio-economic growth and the consequent participation of people belonging to all sections of the community in the democratic governing process; and

(c) Political pluralism operating in a competitive political system. [13]

These institutional arrangements are necessary for an all-embracing accommodation of all sections of interests. This is important in a situation like India where forces of disruptive and disintegrative nature are always at work to throw serious challenges before the unifying forces. The dichotomy between national interest and the local pressures still persists and acts as a cause for further disintegration of the entire body – politic, on the theoretical plane it is question of reconciling between two extremes – centralizations versus decentralization, direction versus inducement, consolidation versus greater devolution of powers.

For all these reasons, the process has acquired such a complex nature and at times, it words at cross-purposes, thereby threatening the existence of the very balance on which a plural rests. These three dimensions would indicate the problem of reconciling divergent views and interests and if the principle of federal governance in India is to be made operational in the trust sense of the term, the urgent needs of a developing economy should be given proper and adequate attention.

Scholars who are engaged in analyzing the causes of the crises in Indian politics have, at least, identified one reason for the apparent disintegration of the political process. This is mainly due to the collapse of the "Congress System" since the late 1960's. More particularly, the one-dominant party system (ODPS) was very helpful at the initial stage to provide the necessary support to the political arrangement that India could develop at the initial phase. Since the late 1960s, the authority sphere of the congress party was very much abridged and it exerted tremendous pressure on the working arrangement at all levels –social, economic and political. This has led to a situation where local/regional interests could find greater opportunities in raising their heads, of course, after making necessary consolidation of their powers. This has been identified as the major dilemma of the dysfunctional political process through which India is currently passing and this indeed is the parameter of the crisis.[14]

It should be borne in mind that the party was expected to go beyond mere adaptation by maintaining its own autonomy in accelerating the pace of development. As the capability of the party to adapt itself dwindled, its

innovative capacity have created considerable problem for the party and the political system as well. [15]

Thus, the failure of the government to solve the problem of the common people had led to the present turmoil and prompted collective action. This has created situation where different kinds of pressures institutional or otherwise came to the surface and influenced the political process to a very great extent. [16]

In reality, the Indian experiment with democratic governance has been greatly marked by decades of problems and prospects, periods of vagueness and uncertainty, ages of challenges and systemic conflicts within the political process.[17]

In a very interesting and thought proving study, Rasheeduddin Khan has pointed out the mosaic of India's federal governance which is composed of segments constituting languages, groups, religious groups, regional and sub-regional configurations, ethnic formations and defined culture-patterns. [18] A happy compromise among all these consideration is considered to be the hallmark of an authentic plural society. For the purpose of attaining unity within the broad pluralist framework a pattern of unity is urgently necessary wherein all differentiations of religion, language, region, culture, class and social stratification can be accommodated. [19]

In a different context, dealing with the crisis of India's governability, Atul Kohli has identified four major factors that have influenced the nature of political change in India. [20] These are:

(i) the deinstitutionalizing role of national and regional leaders ;

(ii) the impact of weak political parties;

(iii) the nature of political mobilization of various castes, ethnic, religious and other types of groups; and

(iv) the increasing conflicts between the haves and have-nots in the civil society. [21]

From a different perspective, it has been observed that as a transitional society, India is involved in a dynamic relationship of change and stability. In this complex relationship, politics reflects social forces and processes and it intervenes in changing controlling and managing the social forces. [22] It has been very correctly observed that delinking of politics from the social reality reduces politics from the social reality reduces politics to the level of passivity. In this process, society may have to make many adjustments for accommodating politics; on the other hand, politics also makes a great deal of compromises with the social milieu for its own effectiveness. In certain cases, they also come into conflict with each other because powerful social forces may challenge the very basis of controlling power of politics.[23]

Dealing with such reality, one may find it easy to identify the roots of regionalism in Indian politics. The nature of assertive politics and the

extent of its influence in Indian politics have become evident from 1960s or slightly even before that period. Assertive politics may take different forms, e.g., caste-assertive politics, communal assertive politics or even secular-assertive politics. In a different context, Rudolph and Rudolph while analyzing the state of political economy in India have developed two concepts like command politics and demand politics which are very relevant for analysing the nature and implications of assertive politics in India. [24] In the very first sentence of the work, Rudolphs have come out with the assertion that "India is a political and economic paradox: a rich-poor nation with a weak-strong state. [25] The authors have even gone to the extent of saying at the time of conceptualizing the pattern of politics and nature of cleavages: "Among the Indian state's source of strength has been a centrist pattern of partisan politics that minimizes the political silence of major challenges. [26] It has been very correctly pointed out in this context that in society as in politics, social pluralism prevails over class solidarity. [27] It is at the same time important to note that India's relatively stable democratic governance during the first two decades after independence can be attributed to a number of exceptional situations. So far as the issue of state formation is concerned, India had the advantage of a historical background and the independent state in India could derive much from its historical past. Of course, this does not mean India did not put her effort to develop a state of its own choice.

But in the process of state formation, there developed a peculiar situation which India could not avoid at all. Apart from the historical setting "India's

cultural diversity and social pluralism, reinforced and compounded by its federal system", further motivated the parties seeking to achieve national power, to adopt centrist ideologies and policies. 26 This social pluralism may be regarded, what has been described, as "exceptionalism" and this is the feature which distinguishes India's socio-political bases from other political systems of the world.29

The adoption of such a 'centrist' policy on the part of the national political parties served as the basis for future dissatisfaction among the regional power structures. A feeling of negative nature developed which ultimately laid the foundation of a sense of alienation – the seed-bed of regionalism.

It may be pointed out in this connection that "the interest and ideology of the political class formed by bullock capitalism and backward castes strengthens centrist politics in India."30 The circumstances created new atmosphere which can be termed as "new agrarianism" and this condition influenced the socio-political and economic process during the 1980s. From the point of view of regionalism, this acted indirectly in the formation of regional economic groups in different parts of the country. At the same time, this new condition about which no section of the community was sufficiently prepared, led to the creation of mobilization of heterogeneous forces for achieving immediate goal both at the national and regional levels.

The formation of coalition of regional interests at different levels seemed to be the only answer for overcoming the difficulties created by the

fragmentation of political parties. In fact, coalition-formation became the only way of consolidating the heterogeneous and even conflicting socio-economic interests. Even within the local power-structure, factionalism and leadership conflict became evident and it has gone a long way in weakening the erstwhile power-structure essentially created on a large scale national perspective.

In most of the cases, these were motivated by short term calculations, but in other cases, these became almost a permanent feature and with the passage of time, other factors, not visible so far, began to form a closer belt around the core force. This is very important dimension for the study of the phenomenon of regionalism in contemporary Indian politics.

The failure of the national level political parties in articulating the local interests became clear at this point. It was the imperative duty of the national parties to adopt ideologies and policies that could articulate and represent the formidable range of economic, cultural and social differences that were in existence in different parts of the country. The apparent failure on their part brought about charges in the local power-structures, which in their turn, created conditions mostly favourable for the regional demands to grow and consolidate.

This had a chain reaction on the state and its policies. Any study of the nature and changing dimensions of politics in India would reveal that barring the initial phase when there had been some kind of consensus for economic reconstruction, there had been widespread divergence of views

regarding the role of the state and the effectiveness of state as a machinery for socio-economic development. It has been generally believed that since 1980s there has an erosion of state institutions. This was mainly due to the absence of a brand of 'professional' politicians. It has been the experience of most of the newly liberated countries of the world and there is a specific reason behind it. In most of the colonies, the leadership that grows, work with a specific aim – aim of liberation. But after achieving that goal, a set of agenda is to be fixed and priority is to be set. A new kind of skill and ethos become necessary on the part of leaders to put those agenda into practice. Here a conflict arises between the old school of nationalist leadership and the newly emerged professional leaders. This group of new leaders is seen mostly engaged in setting house in order and working on the agenda for national reconstruction. In a vast country like India, during this phase, more emphasis was put on national item, sometimes it did not take into account the needs and aspirations of people belonging to a particular region marked by language, geography, culture ethnicity and so on.

In a vast country like India, for all round development people's participation in the development projects is necessary. In the initial phase, it was felt necessary to have a faster rate of development process through a powerful state. As has been observed: "India's dominant elites and policy intellectuals since independence have tended to favour command politics as a faster and surer means of creating a self-reliant economy and a powerful state."31 But the net outcome of such command politics has

not been very happy as the dominant mood of the people was in favour of 'demand politics'. That is why it has been very correctly observed that "the links between command and demand politics and economic policy and performance have to be understood in the context of changing conceptions and the goals for development and the ways to achieve them."32

The more there had been the crises, the more the state in India became authoritarian in nature. This, in stead of solving the problem of conflicting situation between regional and national, complicated the entire process of development. That the State in India had to intervene and direct the course of development has been beautifully observed in these lines: "The working of liberal democracy in India is as real as the growth of authoritarianism – a dimension of dualism of the state process. Over the past two decades or so, we have seen how the institutions of liberal democracy have been eroded in order to meet the demands of the power maintenance strategy of the State leadership."33

This has led Rajni Kothari to think in terms of alternative democracy and human development. In his opinion, only through an 'alternative' approach to democracy and development, the state-centric system of governance can be turned into people-centric governance. What he is emphasizing is another name for "alternative movement" through people's action. According to Kothari, post-Nehru era of Indian politics has been facing an economic crisis and a deep contradiction between the democratic aspiration of the masses and the growing centralization and

authoritarianism of the State. This has created a situation where forces at the bottom or regional level look for platform from which they can exert their pressure on the mainstream political process to get their due. Actually, here lies Kothari's argument for a total restructuring of India's development policies. Unless it is done at all levels, forces at local or regional levels are bound to get consolidated, thereby threatening the very democratic fibre of the Indian society.

This appears to be real perspective in the background of which the issue of regionalism needs to be discussed. What is urgently needed is a kind of re-evaluation of our national policies for democracy and development. A broad based consensus is needed where all segments of the society with their varied interests can be suitably accommodated.

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