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A Civil Services Chronicle Initiative

Post Independence Consolidation and Reorganization



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POST INDEPENDENCE CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION

**CHRONICLE
IAS ACADEMY**
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PARTITION AND PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

India and Pakistan won independence in August 1947, following a nationalist struggle lasting nearly three decades. It set a vital precedent for the negotiated winding up of European empires elsewhere. Unfortunately, it was accompanied by the largest mass migration in human history of some 10 million. As many as one million civilians died in the accompanying riots and local-level fighting, particularly in the western region of Punjab which was cut in two by the border. One explanation for the chaos in which the two nations came into being, is Britain's hurried withdrawal with the realisation it could ill-afford its over-extended empire.

Pakistan celebrated its independence on 14 August and India on 15 August 1947, the border between the two new states was not announced until 17 August. It was drawn up by a British lawyer, Cyril Radcliffe, who had little knowledge of Indian conditions and with the use of out-of-date maps and census materials. Communities, families and farms were cut in two, but by delaying the announcement the British managed to avoid responsibility for the worst fighting and the mass migration that had followed. The total population of the undivided Punjab Province was 33 million. It included territories directly administered by the British (pop. 28 million) and several princely states. The Punjab was a Muslim majority province while Hindus and Sikhs together made up a very large minority of 44-47 per cent. The principle on which India and the Punjab were divided was that Muslim-majority areas were separated from the rest of India and given to Pakistan. After partition, 90% of the subcontinent's industry, and taxable income base remained in India, including the largest cities of Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta. The economy of Pakistan was chiefly agricultural, and controlled by feudal elites. The great advantage enjoyed by the Indian National Congress was that it had worked hard for 40 years to reconcile differences and achieve some cohesion among its leaders.

The heartland of support for the Muslim League, however, lay in central north India (Uttar Pradesh) which was not included within Pakistan.

PARTITION: THE TRAGEDY

In a memorable address to the Constituent Assembly on the night of 14 August, Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking as the first Prime Minister of a free India and giving expression to the feelings of the people, said: "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge..... . At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.... . We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again."

But, this tryst with destiny started with an unforeseen blood shedding on both sides of border. The Partition of India ranks, beyond doubt, as one of the 10 greatest tragedies in human history. For the Punjab alone, the loss of life is estimated somewhere between 500,000-800,000 and 10 million people were forced to flee for their lives. More importantly, after World War II the first case of ethnic cleansing took place in the Punjab. Therefore, it bore the brunt of the partition violence. Thus at the end of 1947 all traces of a Muslim presence in the Indian East Punjab were wiped out, except for some Muslims remaining in the tiny princely state of Malerkotla. In the Pakistani West Punjab, Hindus and Sikhs became conspicuous by their absence.

Fear of an uncertain future, lack of communication between the leaders of the estranged communities, the waning authority of the British and the consequent unreliability of the state institutions and functionaries created

the social and political milieu in which suspicion and fear proliferated, generating against among the common people. In such situations reaction and overreaction led to intended and unintended consequences which aggravated and finally resulted in the biggest human tragedy in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Partition was more than a geographical mutilation of the subcontinent; it was one of those dehumanising horror stories that have sustained the 20th century's narratives on revolutions and liberation, be it the Fuhrer's Final Solution or the Pol Pot's ethnic cleansing, Mao's Cultural Revolution or Stalin's Great Terror. It is a stain on our freedom, the scar on our memory as a nation.

In January 1948, the Government of India, following a fast by Gandhiji, paid Pakistan Rs. 550 million as part of the assets of Partition, even when it feared that the money might be used to finance military action in Kashmir. The governments of the two countries differed on issues raised by evacuee property, left behind by those who migrated from the two countries, but every effort was made to resolve them through negotiations. On January 30, 1948, Mohandas Gandhi was assassinated by a young Hindu radical. Since August of 1947, India and Pakistan have fought three major wars and one minor war over territorial disputes. The boundary line in Jammu and Kashmir is particularly troubled. The partition of India is a signal event in world history, not merely in the history of the Indian subcontinent.

INTEGRATION OF PRINCELY STATES

With great skill and diplomacy and using both persuasions and pressure, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel succeeded in integrating the hundreds of princely states with the India Union. Some states have joined the Constituent Assembly in April 1947. But the majority of princely states had stayed away and a few, such as those of Travancore, Bhopal and Hyderabad, publicly announced their desire to claim an independent status. On 27, June 1947, Sardar Patel assumed charge of the newly created States, Department with V.P. Menon as its Secretary. Patel's first step was to appeal to the princess whose territories fell inside India to accede to the Indian Union in three subjects: foreign relation, defense and communications. Fearful of the rising people's movements in states, and

of Patel's reputation for firmness all but three of them – Junagadh, Jammu and Kashmir and Hyderabad—acceded to India by 15 August, 1947.

Junagadh was a small state on the coast of Saurashtra surrounded by Indian territory and therefore without any geographical continuity with Pakistani. Yet, its Nawab announced accession of his state to Pakistan on 15 August, 1947 even though the people of the state, overwhelmingly Hindu, desired to join India. Pakistan accepted Junagadh's accession. On the other hand, the people of the state were against the ruler's decision. They organized a popular movement, forced the Nawab to flee and established a provisional government. Indian troops marched into the state. A plebiscite was held in the state in February 1948 which went overwhelmingly in favour of joining India.

The state of Kashmir was bordered on both India and Pakistan. Its ruler Hari Singh was a Hindu, while nearly 75 per cent of the population was Muslim. Hari Singh did not accede either to India or Pakistan. He hoped to stay out of both and to continue as an independent ruler. On 22 October, with the onset of winter, several Pathan tribesman, led unofficially by Pakistani army officers, invaded Kashmir and rapidly pushed towards Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. In panic, on 24 October, the Maharaja appealed to India for military assistance. Within days, acting under pressure, the Maharaja acceded to India and signed the instrument of accession with India. After accession India decided to send troops to Srinagar. In order to avoid a full-scale war between India and Pakistan, the Government of India agreed, on 30 December, 1947, on Mountbatten's suggestion, to refer the Kashmir problem to the United Nations Security Council, asking for vacation of aggression by Pakistan. Nehru was to regret this decision later as the Kashmir issue became a victim of cold war politics. Security Council, guided by Britain and the United States, tended to side with Pakistan instead of declaring Pakistan an aggressor state.

The Nizam of Hyderabad was the third Indian ruler who did not accede to India before 15 August. Instead, he claimed an independent status and, encouraged by Pakistan, began to expand his armed forces. In November 1947, the Government of India signed a standstill agreement with the Nizam, hoping that while

the negotiations proceeded, the latter would introduce representative government in the state. But the Nizam hoped to prolong negotiations and in the meanwhile build up his military strength and force India to accept his sovereignty. Meanwhile, there was rapid growth of the militant Muslim communal organization, Ittihad ul Muslimin and its paramilitary wing, the Razakars with active official help by Nizam. As a result of attacks by the Razakars and repression by the state authorities, thousands of people fled the state and took shelter in temporary camps in Indian territory. The state Congress-led movement now took to arms. By then a powerful communist-led peasant struggle had developed in the Talangana region of the state from the latter half of 1946. On 13 September 1948, the Indian army moved into Hyderabad. The Nizam surrendered after three days and acceded to the Indian Union in November. The Government of India retained Nizam as formal ruler of the state or its Rajpramukh, was given a privy purse, and permitted to keep most of his wealth.

In return for their surrender of all power and authority, the rulers of major states were given privy purses in perpetuity, free of all taxes. The privy purse amounted to Rs. 4.66 crore in 1949 and were later guaranteed by the constitution. The ruler were allowed succession to the gaddi and retained certain privileges such as keeping their titles, flying their personal flags and gun salutes on ceremonial occasion. However, later Indira Gandhi abolished most of the above mentioned concessions.

After waiting patiently for international opinion to put pressure on Portugal, Nehru ordered Indian troops to march into Goa on the night of 17 December, 1961. The Governor-General of Goa immediately surrendered without a fight and the territorial and political integration of India was completed.

NATION-BUILDING IN A CONSTITUTIONAL WAY

India's independence represented for its people the start of an epoch that was imbued with a new vision. In 1947, the country commenced its long march to overcome the colonial legacy of economic underdeveloped-prevalence of disease and stark social inequality and injustice. 15 August, 1947 was only the first stop, the first break-the end of colonial political control. Centuries of backwardness were now

to be overcome, the promises of the freedom struggle to be fulfilled, and people's hope to be met.

The tasks of nation-building were taken up by the Indian people and their leaders with a certain elan and determination and with confidence in their capacity to succeed. Jawaharlal Nehru's famous 'Tryst with Destiny' speech on the eve of independence reflected this buoyant mood. India has started off with a broad social consensus on the basic contours of the India that was to be built on the values of nationalism, secularism and democracy. Rapid economic development and radical social change were other agreed on goals. These values and goals, and the road to their achievement, had been mapped over more than seventy years by the national movement.

AGREEMENT OVER BASIC GOALS

The first and the most important task was to preserve, consolidate and strengthen India's unity, to push toward the process of the making of the Indian nation, and to build up and protect the national state as an instrument of development and social transformation. Indian unity had to be strengthened by recognizing and accepting India's immense regional, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity.

It was agreed that India's revolution had to be taken beyond the merely political to include economic and social transformation. The social scene also called for rapid transformation. Despite lower-caste movements in several parts of the country and Gandhiji's campaign against untouchability society was under a severe grip of socio-economic malaises. Male domination was still nearly total and women suffered immense social oppression in the family. Economic development and a democratic political order were to be accompanied by rapid social transformation so that existing gross economic, caste and gender inequalities were rapidly eliminated, poverty was removed and the levels of living raised. The structure of Indian society was to be rapidly transformed in a broadly socialist direction.

The national movement had aroused expectations of a rapid rise in personal and societal prosperity, of social and economic equity and equality, of the good life. Indira Gandhi's slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' in 1971 further fuelled these expectations as did the process of

continuous politicization since 1950. The constantly rising aspiration and expectations had to be fulfilled as rapidly as possible and without letting too wide a gap develop between expectations and fulfillment. At the same time, political stability had to be ensured for the accomplishment of all the tasks. The political system had to combine stability with growth, social transformation and deepening of the political process. The Indian revolution had to be gradual, non-violent and based on political stability, but it had to be a revolution all the same. First act of this revolution was to be the evolution of a constitution as per India needs. Story of same is given below.

EVOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of India came into force on January 26, 1950. Since then the day is celebrated as Republic Day. The process of the evolution of the constitution began many decades before January 26, 1950 and has continued unabated since. Its origin lie deeply embedded in the struggle for independence from Britain and in the movement for responsible and constitutional government in the princely states. National movement has popularized among the people the notions of parliamentary democracy, republicanism, civil liberties, social and economic justice, which became among the essential principles of constitution.

The actual functioning of the Congress organization, especially from 1920 onwards, after Gandhiji modified the Congress constitution, was based on the elective principle. All office-bearers were chosen through election. Even more than the form, it was the spirit of democracy, on which in the last and first resort the foundations of the constitution rest, which was inculcated among the people by the national movement. This found expression in widespread mass participation. It ensured a place for adult franchise after independence. Age for the same was reduced from 21 years to 18 years during time of Rajiv Gandhi.

Elective principle was first introduced by the British in the Indian Councils Act of 1892. The Congress and its nationalist precursors and the Indian Press, had been demanding elections to the councils, elected majorities in them and greater powers to the non-official members of councils for many years before that. Nationalist demands had already far exceeded what was granted in 1892. National movement, by the end

of the second decade of the twentieth century had begun to espouse the doctrine of self-determination or the right of Indians to frame their own constitution.

Tilak and Annie Besant had launched a 'Home Rule' agitation. The Congress-Muslim League scheme for constitutional reforms emerged out of the Congress League Pact of 1916. A very prominent role was played by Motilal Nehru, who introduced resolution on February 8, 1924 in the Central Legislative Assembly which asked the government to summon, at an early date, a representative Round Table Conference to recommend with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities and the scheme of a constitution for India. This was the first time that the demand for a constitution and the procedure for its adoption were spelt out in clear terms.

This resolution, which came to be known as the 'National Demand', was passed by a large majority in the Central Legislative Assembly- 76 for and 48 against. In May 1928, Congress appointed a committee chaired by Motilal Nehru to determine the principles of the constitution for India. The Nehru Report, submitted on August 10, 1928 was in effect an outline of a draft constitution for India. Most of its features were later included in the Constitution of India. The demand for a Constituent Assembly was repeated frequently after 1934 and included in the Congress manifesto for the 1936-37. In 1937, a resolution recommending replacement of the Government of India Act, 1935 by a constitution framed by a Constituent Assembly was introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly.

The 'August Offer' made by Viceroy Linlithgow in 1940 in an attempt to secure Indian cooperation in the war effort for the first time conceded that the framing of new constitution should be primarily the responsibility of Indian themselves. The Cripps proposals were a major advance in the position of the British government. For the first time, it was clearly accepted that the constitution would be the sole responsibility of Indians alone. On February 19, 1946, the British Government declared that they were sending a Cabinet Mission to India to resolve the whole issue of freedom and constitution making. The Congress responded to the Cabinet Mission Scheme by pointing out that in its view the constituent

Assembly, once it came into being, would be sovereign. It would have the right to accept or reject the Cabinet Mission's proposal on specifics. Though an assurance on those lines was not forthcoming from the British, the Congress nevertheless decided after a great deal of debate to accept the scheme and try to work it, as there was a feeling that outright rejection would again delay the process of transfer of power. The Muslim League continued to oppose the Constituent Assembly at every stage, before as well as after it was constituted.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The Constituent Assembly was to have 389 members. Of these, 296 were to be from British India and 93 from the princely Indian states. Initially, however, the Constituent Assembly comprised only members from British India. Elections of these were held in July-August 1946. Of the 210 seats in the general category, Congress won 199. It also won 3 out of 4 Sikh seats from Punjab. The total Congress tally was 208. The Muslim League won 73 out of the 78 Muslim seats. Especially since the Constituent Assembly was not elected on the basis of universal adult franchise and was thus not as truly representative in character as the Congress had wished and demanded and also because only Muslims and Sikhs were recognized as minorities deserving special representation, special effort was made to see that the Assembly did indeed reflect the diversity of perspectives present in the country.

The Congress Working Committee in early July 1946 specifically instructed the Provincial Congress Committees to include representatives of Scheduled Castes, Parsis, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, tribals and women in the Congress list for the general category. The other important consideration in choosing names for election to the Assembly was that the very best talent available in the country must be involved in the task of the making of the constitution. The lead was given by Gandhiji himself who suggested the names of sixteen eminent persons for inclusion in the Congress list. Altogether thirty people who were not members of the Congress were thus elected on the Congress ticket. Having failed to prevent the election of the Constituent Assembly, the Muslim League now concentrated its energies on refusing to join its deliberations.

The Congress and Jawaharlal Nehru as president of the interim government continued

to make conciliatory gestures to Muslim League, but to no avail. Accordingly, on November 20, 1946, the decision to convene the first session of the Constituent Assembly on December 9, 1946 was announced. At Nehru's insistence, the oldest member of the Assembly, Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha, became the provisional President and invitations were issued in the name of the secretary of the Constituent Assembly. In doing this Nehru was establishing, for all to see, the independence of the Assembly from British control. On December 9, 1946, the Constituent Assembly of India began its first session. For all practical purposes, the chronicle of Independent India began on that historic day.

The real responsibility of deciding the constitutional framework within which the government and people of India were to function had been transferred and assumed by the Indian people with the convening of the Constituent Assembly. The first session was attended by 207 members. The Muslim League, having failed to prevent the convening of the Assembly, now refused to join its deliberations. Consequently, the Seventy Six Muslim members of the League stayed away and the four Congress Muslim members attended this session. On December 11, 1946, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected the permanent Chairman, an office later designated as President of the Assembly. On December 13, 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru moved the famous Objectives Resolution, which was debated till December 19 but its adoption was postponed to enable the representatives of the Muslim League and the princely states to join.

At the next session, which took place from January 20-22, 1947, it was decided to not wait any longer for the League, and the Objectives Resolution was passed. The third session was held from April 18 to May 2, 1947 and the League still did not join. On June 3, 1947, the Mountbatten Plan was announced which made it clear that India was to be partitioned. The completely altered the perspective of the Constituent Assembly, as the Cabinet Mission Plan, the essence of which was Compromise with the league, was no longer relevant. With India becoming independent on August 15, 1947 the Constituent Assembly became a sovereign body, and also doubled as the legislature for the new state. It was responsible for framing the constitution as well as making ordinary laws. That its function as a legislature as well as its

large size did not come in the way of its effectively performing its duties as a constitution making body is due to the enormous preparatory work as well as organizational skills and hardwork of its leading members.

The work was organized into five stages: Committees were asked to present reports on basic issues; B.N. Rau, the constitutional advisor, prepared an initial draft on the basis of the reports of these committees and his own research into the constitutions of other countries; The drafting committee, chaired by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, presented a detailed draft Constitution which was published for public discussion and comments; The draft Constitution was discussed and amendments proposal; and the constitution was adopted.

In addition, a critical role was played by Congress party. It had asked a committee of experts to prepare material and proposals for the constitution as early as July 4, 1946. The committee was chaired by Nehru and had Asaf Ali, K.T. Shah, D.R. Gadgil, K.M. Munshi, Humayun Kabir, R. Shanthanam and N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar as members. Nehru drafted the Objectives Resolution and the CWC and AICC ratified it on 20 and 21 November 1946 well in time for its introduction in the first session of the Assembly. This practice continued till the constitution was adopted with the Congressmen thoroughly discussing and examining each provision in their party forums, in addition to participating fully in the debates in the Assembly. Jawaharlal Nehru, who drafted the Objective Resolution, which spelt out the philosophy and basic features of the constitution, set a formidable example by his keen involvement in every aspect of the process. Sardar Patel's interest was second, if at all, only to Nehru's. He played the decisive part in bringing in the representatives of the erstwhile princely states into the Constituent Assembly, in seeing to it that separate electorates were eliminated and in scotching any move for reservation of seats for religious minorities. Rajendra Prasad won acclaim for his impartiality and dignity as President of the Assembly. Maulana Azad brought his formidable scholarship and philosophical mind to bear on many issues of grave importance. Informed by a strong sense of its historic role in laying the foundations of independent India, the Congress party tried hard to do its best by the people it had led to freedom.

MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

The constitution of India lays down a set of rules to which the ordinary laws of the country must conform. It provides a framework for a democratic and parliamentary form of government. The constitution also includes- List of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles- the first, a guarantee against encroachments by the state and the second a set of directives to the state to introduce reforms to make those rights effective.

The basic philosophy of the constitution, its moving spirit, is to be found in the Preamble. The Preamble itself was based on the Objectives Resolution drafted by Nehru and introduced in the Assembly in its first session on December 13, 1946 and adopted on January 22, 1947. The preamble states that the people of India in the Constituent Assembly made a solemn resolve to secure liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all, Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. It has been pointed out that the priority given to the concept of justice as compared to liberty, equality, fraternity, and to social and economic as compared to political justice, was deliberate. The order of the words indicated that the concept of social and economic justice was perhaps considered the most fundamental norm of the Constitution of India.

The constitution declares India to be a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic. Even though the terms secular and socialist were added to the constitution only by the 42nd Amendment in 1976, the spirit embodying the constitution was secular. In 1973 the Supreme Court held the secular character of the constitution to be one of the basic features of the constitution. While Fundamental Rights are justiciable and Directive Principles are not, the latter are no less important for that reason. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also contains two sets of rights and the new economic and social rights. In the Indian constitution, the first kind is included under Fundamental Rights and the second under Directive Principles. The reason for the distinction between the two is very simply that while the state could straight-away guarantee political and civil liberties contained under 'Fundamental Right', it could only secure

economic and social justice over a period of time as the economy developed and social change took place. The latter set of rights could not go to a court of law in case of denial.

REORGANISATION OF STATES

After independence, the demand for the reorganisation of states on linguistic basis was raised from different regions. The Constitution Assembly appointed S.K. Dhar Commission in Nov. 1947 to study the issue of reorganisation of States on linguistic basis. The commission in its report, submitted in 1948, recommended against the organisation of states purely on linguistic basis. Instead, the commission suggested the following criteria alongwith language-Geographical contiguity, Financial self-reliance, Administrative viability and Potential for development.

The Congress, in its Jaipur session in 1948, appointed a three member committee to consider the recommendations of Dhar Commission. The Committee is popularly known as JVP Committee after the name of its three members – Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel, and Pattabhi Sitarammaiah. The committee rejected language as the basis of reorganisation of states. It suggested that the security, unity and economic prosperity of the nation as the criteria of reorganisation. The Congress Working Committee accepted its recommendation in 1949, but the demand for linguistic reorganisation of States persisted in southern states particularly in Telugu speaking areas. On 19 October, 1952, a popular freedom fighter, Patti Sriramalu, undertook a fast unto death over the demand for a separate Andhra and expired after fifty eight days. His death was followed by three days of violence all over Andhra. The government immediately gave in and conceded the demand for a separate State of Andhra, which finally came into existence in October 1953. Simultaneously, Tamil Nadu was created as a Tamil-speaking state. This incident led to appointment of the States Reorganisation Commission.

To make an exhaustive study, the Government of India setup States Reorganisation Commission in 1953 which was headed by Fazal Ali. The other members of the commission were Hriday Nath Kunzru and K.M. Panikkar.

The reorganization of the states based on language, a major aspect of national conso-

lidation and integration, came to the fore almost immediately after independence. The boundaries of provinces in pre-1947 India had been drawn in a haphazard manner as the British conquest of India had proceeded for nearly a hundred years. No heed was paid to linguistic or cultural cohesion so that most of the provinces were multi-lingual and multi-cultural. The interspersed princely states had added a further element of heterogeneity.

The case for linguistic states as administrative units was very strong. Language is closely related to culture and therefore to the customs of people. Besides, the massive spread of education and growth of mass literacy can only occur through the medium of the mother tongue. SRC was to examine 'objectively and dispassionately' the entire question of the reorganization of the states of the union. Throughout the two years of its work, the Commission was faced with meetings, demonstrations, agitations, and hunger strikes. The SRC submitted its report in October 1955. While laying down that due consideration should be given to administrative and economic factors, it recognized for the most part the linguistic principle and recommended redrawing of state boundaries on that basis. The Commission, however, opposed the splitting of Bombay and Punjab. Despite strong reaction to the report in many parts of the country, the SRC's recommendations were accepted, though with certain modifications, and were quickly implemented.

The Commission submitted its report to the government of India on September 30, 1955. Some of the important recommendations of the Commission were:

- The Indian Union was to consist of 16 States as against the existing 27 and three centrally administered territories.
- Special safeguards were recommended for linguistic minorities.
- In the interests of national unity and good administration, the Commission recommended the reconstitution of certain All India Services. It further recommended that atleast 50 per cent of the new entrants to the All India Services and atleast one third of the number of Judges in a High Court should consist of persons recruited from outside that State so that, administration

might inspire confidence and help in arresting parochial trends.

- The Commission put emphasis on the need for encouraging the study of Indian languages other than Hindi but, for some time to come, English continue to occupy an important place in the universities and institutions of higher learning.
- The Commission rejected the demand for the creation of a Punjabi Speaking State (Punjabi Suba) because “the creation of such a state will solve neither the language nor the communal problem”.

The States Reorganization Act was passed by parliament in November, 1956. It provided for fourteen states and six centrally administered territories. The Telengana area of Hyderabad state was transferred to Andhra; merging the Malabar district of the old Madras Presidency with Travancore-Cochin created Kerala. Certain Kannada-speaking areas of the states of Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Coorg were added to the Mysore state. Merging the states of Kutch and Saurashtra and the Marathi-speaking areas of Hyderabad with it enlarged Bombay state.

The State Reorganisation Act was passed by Parliament in 1956 to give effect to these recommendations. It provided for fourteen States and six Union Territory. But two of the most sensitive area, Bombay and Punjab, were not reorganised on linguistic basis. The demands for separate tribal states, including Jharkhand and Nagaland, were also bypassed.

Soon, Gujarat and Nagaland were created as separate states. In 1966, Punjab was divided into two parts, Punjab and Haryana. The hilly areas of Punjab were added to Himachal Pradesh, which itself was constituted as an independent state on January 25, 1971. The map of India has undergone further changes since 1966. In 1975, there was an addition to the territorial boundaries of India in the form of the State of Sikkim, which was till then a protectorate of India. Radical changes have been made in the map of North-Eastern region of India which now has 7 States. Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa, Daman & Diu have been elevated to statehood and Chattisgarh, Uttranchal and Jharkhand are the 3 youngest states. At present the Union of India consists of 28 States and 7 Union Territories.

From now onward we would present the process of political consolidation and maturity that unfolded in many states. First, states' political landscape will be discussed and then a brief account of national level politics will be presented.

MAHARASHTRA- issues

The strongest reaction against the SRC's report and the States Reorganization Act came from Maharashtra where widespread rioting broke out and many people were killed in Bombay city in police firings in January 1956. The opposition parties supported by a wide spectrum of public opinion organized a powerful protest movement. Under pressure, the government decided in June 1956 to divide the Bombay state into two linguistic states of Maharashtra and Gujarat with Bombay city forming a separate, centrally administered state. This move too was strongly opposed by the Maharashtrians.

Nehru reverted to the formation of bilingual, greater Bombay. This move was, however, opposed by the people both of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The broad-based Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad led the movements in the two parts of the state. In Maharashtra, even a large section of Congressmen joined the demand for a unilingual Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital; and C.D. Deshmukh, the Finance Minister in the Central Cabinet, resigned from his office on this question. The Gujaratis felt that they would be a minority in the new state. They too would not agree to give up Bombay city to Maharashtra. Violence and arson now spread to Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat.

To express resentment against the Commission's report with regard to Maharashtra there was fierce rioting and violence under the auspices of these two linguistically based organisations, namely, the Samyukta Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti and the Maha Gujarat Parishad. After three years of trouble, ultimately in 1960, the demands for reorganisation were accepted and Maharashtra and Gujarat were constituted as separate linguistic states with Bombay as part of Maharashtra.

The demand to transfer the Marathi-dominated area of Belgaum to Maharashtra from Karnataka has been a serious political issue

between two states. During United Maharashtra Movement, 11 persons were killed in police firing in Belgaum. The border dispute case is pending in the Supreme Court. Belgaum bordering Maharashtra has a sizeable Marathi-speaking population, and had for decades been a bone of contention between the two States. Earlier constituted, Mahajan Commission's recommendations have been challenged in court at present.

GOA: When India became a Republic, on 26th January, 1950, Goa was still a Portuguese colony. Twelve years later, the Indian army walked into the territory and, after the garrison there surrendered, announced that it had been reunited with the motherland. Shortly afterwards the Goans were allowed to vote for the first time in their very long history.

There is a distinction between 'integration' and 'assimilation'. The Goans are comfortable with the former. In the first decade after Liberation, the most serious threat to Goan identity came from the neighbouring state of Maharashtra. Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, vigorously campaigned for Goa to be merged into that state. In a referendum held in the late 1960s, the Goans chose not to join Maharashtra. In subsequent decades, there was a vigorous revival of a Konkani identity. After Goa was elevated from Union Territory status to full statehood in 1987, Konkani was bestowed with the title of 'official' language.

J & K: issues

Immediately after Kashmir's accession in October 1947, India had offered a plebiscite under international auspices for the people of Kashmir to take a final decision on it. But there was a condition that Pakistan's troops must vacate Kashmir before a plebiscite could be held. Till the end of 1953, the Government of India was willing to abide by the results of a plebiscite if proper conditions were created for it. But a plebiscite could not be held, mainly because Pakistan did not withdraw its forces from Pakistan-held Kashmir. Pakistan continued to take a non-conciliatory and aggressive approach. By the end of 1956, the Indian government made it clear to Pakistan and the international community that the situation in Kashmir and Indo-Pak relations had changed so completely that its earlier offer had become absolute and

Kashmir's accession to India had become a settled fact.

Under the Instrument of Accession signed in October 1947, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was granted a temporary special status in the Indian Union under Article 370 of the Indian constitution. The state ceded to the Indian Union only in defence, foreign affairs and communication, retaining autonomy in all other matters. In 1956, the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir ratified the accession of the state to India. Over the years, the state's special status has been considerably modified and the state is almost on similar footing with other states except the clauses mentioned under Article 370.

Sheikh Abdullah: As Sher-e-Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah brought Kashmir into India but spent his whole life negotiating the terms of that accession. He spent many years in jails on charges of separatism, but had an utter lack of bitterness towards Nehru-Indira. He died as the CM of the land he had fought so hard for. Pressed by communal elements in the Kashmir Valley demanding merger with Pakistan and harassed by communalists in Jammu demanding full integration with India, Abdullah began to demand separation. By the middle of July 1953, Abdullah publicly demanded that Kashmir should become independent. Abdullah was consequently dismissed and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed was installed as Prime Minister. Under Nehru's pressure, he was released on 8, January 1958 but was rearrested three months later as he continued with his separatist campaign and appeals to communal sentiments. Nehru got Abdullah released again in April 1964. Abdullah, however, continued to claim that Kashmir's accession to India was not final and that he would fight to secure for the state the right of self-determination. But at the same time, he was also against the state's merger with Pakistan. He was opposed by pro-Pakistani political groups for his independent stand.

In 1975 Abdullah again became Chief Minister and the leader of the National Conference after agreeing that he will not demand separation. In the July 1977 mid-term poll in the state he won comfortably. His son, Farooq Abdullah, succeeded him as Chief Minister, on his death in 1982. Farooq won a comfortable majority in the mid-term elections in July 1984. In a political coup against Farooq, his brother-in-law, G.M. Shah, split the national

Conference. Later, the Governor, Jagmohan, dismissed Farooq as Chief Minister and installed G.M. Shah in his place. It was alleged that he was acting at the behest of the central Government. On 2 July, 1984, Farooq Abdullah, the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, asked the governor, Jagmohan, to immediately call a session of the legislative assembly. He wanted to test his majority on the floor of the house as twelve members had deserted his party. The Governor, however, dismissed his ministry from office and installed a new man, G.M. Shah, as Chief Minister. Abdullah campaigned against his dismissal all over the country.

The incident was also cited as proof of the union government's infringement of the autonomy of the state and was thus a handy tool for stocking secessionist fires. Rajiv Gandhi entered into an alliance with Farooq Abdullah for the assembly elections in early 1987. But Farooq, though won the election, found that he was not able to manage the state. Both Hizbul Mujahideen and other fundamentalist, pro-Pakistan groups and those for independence led by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) took to violent agitations and armed insurgency. All these groups were actively financed, trained and armed by Pakistan.

V.P. Singh at the Center dismissed Farooq Abdullah's government, which had lost control over the Valley to the terrorist groups, and imposed President's Rule in the state. Farooq, however, made another political comeback by winning the long-delayed elections in 1996. In the 2002 state elections, he lost power and the state came to be ruled by an alliance of the People's Democratic Party, headed by Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, and the Congress party. At present, Omar Abdullah, son of Farooq, is Chief Minister of state.

Pakistan's Role: J & K was always the root of 3 open wars Pakistan fought with India 1948, 1965 & 1971, though to a lesser extent in case of 1971 war. In 1974 the Kashmir State Government reached an accord with the Indian Government, which affirmed its status as "a constituent unit of the union of India". Pakistan rejected this accord. The 1980s had seen some diplomatic discussions aimed at resolving outstanding differences, between India and Pakistan. In 1982, the two rivals began unsuccessful talks on a non-aggression treaty. However, in 1984 Indian troops were airlifted

to the Siachen glacier in northern Kashmir (Operation Meghdoot) which increased tension in the area. Pakistan retaliated by fortifying the glacier from its side of what has become known as the world's highest war zone.

In 1988, India and Pakistan had signed an agreement not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. But in 1989 armed insurgency against India began in the Kashmir valley. Muslim political parties complained that the 1987 elections to the state's legislative assembly were rigged against them, and they formed militant wings. Some groups demanded independence for the state of Jammu and Kashmir and others union with Pakistan. Pakistan gave its "moral and diplomatic" support to the movement, calling for the issue to be resolved via a UN-sponsored referendum. Whereas, India maintains that Pakistan's support of the insurgency consisted of training and supplying weapons to militant.

During the 1990s, several new militant groups emerged, most of which held radical Islamic views. The ideological emphasis of the movement shifted from a nationalistic and secularist one to an Islamic one. This was in part driven by the arrival in the valley of Kashmir of large numbers of Islamic "Jihadi" fighters who had fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. India and Pakistan set up meetings to defuse tension over Jammu and Kashmir. The diplomatic push became more concerted a year later and an agenda for peace talks was agreed on. In 1997, itself, Pakistan also suggested that the two sides meet to discuss restraining nuclear and missile capabilities. In 1996, Pakistani and Indian military officers met on the Line of Control to ease tension. The celebrations of 50 years of independence in 1997 in both countries coincided with a surge in diplomatic activity. During 1997, Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers met in Delhi. After rounds of talks in Islamabad, they announced an eight-point agenda for peace talks, including discussion of the Kashmir issue. Though, talks ended in a stalemate. Lahore bus service, kargil incursion, Agra Summit, attack on Parliament and Mumbai have been the latest flash points between the two nations.

The fact that the majority of Kashmiris are Muslims has nothing to do with the country which Kashmir joins. The ruler of Kashmir acceded to India and the real leaders of the people of Kashmir, Muslims themselves, have

clearly stated their desire to remain with India. Kashmir is, in fact, a part of India. The part held by Pakistan is wrongly seized by aggression and must be vacated in favour of the real government.

Despite many rounds of talks between India and Pakistan, a long term solution to problems in valley and other areas of J & K still eludes the nation. A large role for the army in Kashmir has been a necessity in view of Pakistani military threat and subversion; but this has also meant a high cost in terms of the functioning of a Civil Polity and Human Rights. Kashmir has also suffered from near-perpetual political instability. How the story unfolds in the J & K is to be seen. A new strategy of engagement with Islamabad needs to abandon the myth that nothing was achieved during the earlier peace process. Even a cursory look at the host of significant Confidence Building Measures — ranging from the Agreement on Advance Notification of Ballistic Missile Tests (signed in 2005) to the establishment of a communication link between Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency and the Indian Coast Guard, to legalising the screening of Indian films in Pakistan in 2008 — shows that tangible, positive progress was made and further progress is not impossible. The very fact that the two governments, albeit through the back-channel, had closely and seriously examined potential solutions to Kashmir demonstrates that there are enough no. of peace supporters within the two establishments who can think outside the box.

Differences are fundamental and intentions are hostile between two nations. Despite this fact there are compelling reasons why India should proactively engage with Pakistan. First, for the domestic reason that a tension-free relationship with Pakistan would help us consolidate our nationhood. Second, for the regional reason that regional terrorism can be effectively tackled only in cooperation with Pakistan and not in confrontation with it. Third, for the international reason that India will not be able to play its due role in international affairs so long as it is dragged down by its quarrels with Pakistan. As for just turning our backs on each other, Siamese twins have no option but to move together even when they are attempting to pull away from each other.

PUNJAB- issues

Punjab story starts with Patiala Muzara Movement. The 'muzara of tenants movement' that was going on the Patiala at independence had its origins in the late nineteenth century. Biswedars (the local term for landlords), who earlier had only some mafi claims or revenue-collecting rights, due to their growing influence in the administration, succeeded in claiming proprietary status and relegated the entire body of cultivating proprietors of roughly 800 villages, comprising one-sixth the area of the state, to the position of occupancy tenants and tenants at will. The new tenants regarded the new landlords as parvenus, who had no legitimate right to the land which had belonged to the tenants for generations and not in the manner in which a traditional tenantry might regard their old, established, feudal landowners, whose right to the land had acquired a certain social legitimacy by virtue of its very antiquity.

The grievance festered, but the opportunity for expression came only with the new wave of political awareness brought by the national movement and its associated movements such as the Akali and the Praja Mandal movements in the 1920s. But the repressive atmosphere in Patiala made any political activity extremely difficult, and it was only in the late 1930s with the change in the political atmosphere brought about by the formation of Congress ministries in many provinces that it became possible for a movement to emerge. From 1939, a powerful movement emerged and from 1945, it escalated into an open confrontation between muzaras and biswedars, with the state intervening mainly to institute cases of non-payment of batai (rent in kind) and criminal assault. Numerous armed clashes took place at different places, some over forcible possession of land, other over forcible realization of batai.

The Praja Mandal, which spearheaded the anti-Maharaja democratic movement, under the influence of Bhrish Bhan, who was sympathetic to the Communists and the tenants' cause, extended support. This gave strength to the tenants as the Praja Mandal had the weight of the Congress behind it. With the coming of independence, Punjab joined the Indian Union. The repression decreased after the formation of the PEPSU in July 1948, a new province comprising the erstwhile princely states of Punjab. An Agrarian Reforms Enquiry

Committee was set up to make recommendations and till such time as the legislation could be enacted, the PEPSU Tenancy (Temporary Provision) Act was promulgated in January 1952 which protected tenants against eviction. In 1953, the President of India issued the PEPSU Occupancy Tenants (Vesting of Proprietary Rights) Act. This legislation, though it did not meet fully the Communists' demand of transfer of proprietary rights without compensation, was obviously found acceptable by the tenants, and no further resistance was reported. The Communist continued, however, to condemn the new agrarian legislation as inadequate because the biswedars' lands were not being confiscated without compensation. This resulted in their growing isolation from the peasants, a process that was also furthered by their desertion of their erstwhile comrades-in-arms in the Muzara Movement and the Praja Mandal, the left wing Congress group led by Brish Bhan. In the long run, the Communists were also the losers in this game, because they were too weak to struggle effectively on their own against the gradual ascendancy of the Akalis and other communal and semi-communal and right-wing groups.

After August 1947, Hindu and Sikh communalists were pitted against each other. The Congress and the 'Hindu' Nehru, 'who ruled from Delhi', were made special targets of Akali anger for representing the Hindu and Brahminical conspiracy against Sikhs. Here also major issue was of state language. The Hindu communalists wanted this status for Hindi and the Sikh communalists for Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script. Demand for Creation of Punjabi-speaking Punjab and Hindi-speaking Haryana was not accepted. The SRC rejected the demand on the grounds that there was not much difference between Hindi and Punjabi and that the minimum measure of agreement necessary for making a change did not exist among the people of Punjab. After a great deal of haggling, an agreement was arrived at in 1956 between the Akali Dal and the Government of India leading to the merger of Punjab and Patiala and East Punjab Union (PEPSU).

Akali Dal under the leadership of Master Tara Singh soon organized a powerful agitation around the demand for the formation of a Punjabi Suba. The Jan Sangh and the other Hindu organizations and individuals strenuously opposed this demand on the ground that it

represented an effort to impose Sikh domination and Sikh theocracy on Punjab. The Harijan Sikhs, known as Mazhabi Sikhs, who were mostly landless agricultural labourers, also opposed the demand for a Punjabi Suba because they were afraid that the new state would be dominated by the rich peasants, who as Jat Sikhs were the main supporters of the Akali Dal. Nehru refused to concede the demand for a Punjabi Suba mainly because of its communal underpinnings.

Sant Fateh Singh, who ousted Master Tara Singh from the leadership of the SGPC and the Akali Dal, declared that the demand for a Punjabi Suba was entirely language based. At the same time, a major political and social organizations in Haryana demanded a separate Hindi-speaking state and those in Kangra asked for its merger with Himachal Pradesh.

In order to widen their support base among Sikhs, the Akalis began to intensify the communal content of their politics and to continuously escalate their demands, the so-called moderate leaders keeping in step with the extremists. In 1981, the main Akali Dal, headed by Sant Longowal, submitted to the Prime Minister a memorandum of forty-five religious, political, economic and social demands and grievances, including the issue of the sharing of Punjab's river waters between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan and the question of the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, and launched a virulent campaign around them. Very soon, implemented of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution (ASR), adopted in 1973, became the most prominent demand.

The initiator of terrorism was Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who emerged in the late 1970s as a strong campaigner of Sikh orthodoxy. In this campaign he received the tacit support of the Punjab Congress led by Giani Zail Singh, who hoped to use him to undercut the Akalis. He was, however, to soon become a Frankenstein and turn against his erstwhile patrons. The terrorist campaign by Bhindranwale and the All India Sikh Students Federation, headed by Amrik Singh, began on 24 April, 1980 with the assassination of the head of the Nirankari sect. Till September 1983, terrorist killings were confined to Nirankaris, petty government officials and Sikhs who disagreed with Bhindranwale. In April 1983, A.S. Atwal, a Sikh deputy inspector-general of police, was killed just as he was coming out of the Golden Temple.

In December 1983, Bhindranwale moved into Akal Takht within the Golden Temple fearing arrest. He made it his headquarters, armoury and a sanctuary for other terrorists. The attitude of the Akali leadership towards the terrorists was ambivalent. They neither joined nor opposed them. Instead of boldly confronting the communal and separatist challenge to the Indian polity, Indira Gandhi waited and tried other ways for three years. Finally the Government of India undertook military action, code-named 'Operation Blue Star'.

On 3 June, the army surrounded the Golden Temple and entered the temple on 5 June. There it found that the terrorists were far greater in number and also far better armed than assumed. The military operation turned into a full-scale battle. The army had to deploy even tanks in the end. Over a thousand devotees and temple staff were trapped inside the temple and many of them died in the crossfire. The buildings in the temple complex including Akal Takht were severely damaged. Harmandir Sahib, the most hallowed of the Sikh shrines, was riddled with bullet marks. Among the dead were Bhindranwale and his followers also.

'Operation Blue Star' produced a deep sense of anger and outrage among Sikhs. It was seen by most of them as a sacrilege and an affront to the community. The terrorists vowed vengeance against Indira Gandhi for having desecrated the Golden Temple. On the morning of 31 October, 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two Sikh members of her security guard. Earlier she had rejected her security chief's suggestion that all Sikhs be removed from her security staff. The assassination of the popular Prime Minister led to a wave of horror, fear, anger and communal outrage among people all over the country, especially among the poor. This anger took an ugly and communal form in Delhi and some other parts of North India, where anti-Sikh riots broke out as soon as the news of the assassination spread. For three days from the evening of 31 October, mobs took over the streets of Delhi and made Sikhs targets of violence. There was complete failure of the law and order machinery in giving protection to Sikhs and their property. The three-day violence in Delhi resulted in the death of more than 2,500 Sikhs. The slums and resettlement colonies of Delhi were the main scenes of carnage.

Finally, in August 1985, Rajiv Gandhi and Longowal signed the Punjab Accord. The

government conceded the major Akali demands. It was agreed that Chandigarh would be transferred to Punjab and a commission would determine which Hindi-speaking terrorists would be transferred from Punjab to Haryana. The river water dispute was to be adjudicated by an independent tribunal. On 20 August, Longowal announced that the Akalis would participate in the elections. He was assassinated by the terrorists on same day. The Akalis secured an absolute majority in the state assembly for the first time in their history.

There was a resurgence in terrorists activities. The militant groups regrouped taking advantage of policies of the Barnala government where the state government was riven with factionalism and thus was unable to contain them. Soon, the central government dismissed the Barnala ministry and imposed President's Rule in Punjab in May, 1987. Despite this, terrorism in Punjab went on growing.

After 1985, terrorism begun to be openly funded and supported by Pakistan.

A hard policy towards terrorism was followed from mid-1991 onwards by the Narasimha Rao government. In February, 1992 elections, congress came into power led by Beant Singh in Punjab. The police became increasingly effective in its operations. By 1993, Punjab had been virtually freed of terrorism. Last political heavy weight to sacrifice his life for peace in Punjab was Beant Singh.

Former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh was assassinated in a human bomb attack. Dilawar Singh was the human bomb: A Special Police Officer (SPO) with the Punjab Police, he was assigned the task of assassinating Beant Singh. He was wearing an explosive belt underneath his uniform, reached Beant Singh when the CM had just stepped to his car outside assembly and pressed the trigger. Jagtar Singh Hawara, a member of the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terrorist group headed by Wadhawa Singh, was the mastermind behind the whole operation.

WEST BENGAL Politics

After emergency, CPM, alongwith its left allies, was able to form the government after an electoral victory in 1977. After coming to power

the CPM launched the programme called 'Operation Barga'. This reformed the tenancy system in the interests of the bargadars (sharecroppers), who constituted nearly 25 per cent of the rural households. 'Operation Barga' included politicization and mobilization of sharecroppers. The government secured legal registration of sharecroppers, thus giving them permanent lease of the land they cultivated and security of tenure. Government enforced laws regarding the share of the produce they could retain. Significantly reform of the jotedari system provided the incentive to all concerned to increase production. It became a contributory factor in the ushering in of the Green Revolution and multi-cropping.

The second major change introduced by West Bengal government was its restructuring and transformation of the Panchayati Raj institutions, through which the rural poor were empowered to participate in political power. The 'Food for Work' programme was also implemented effectively to generate jobs for the landless. The CPM government's record in containing communal violence has been praiseworthy. Despite having a high ratio of Muslims in the population and the large influx of Hindu refugees from East Bengal, West Bengal remained relatively free of communal violence. In 1984, it contained the communal fallout of Indira Gandhi's assassination and in December 1992 of the Babri Mosque's demolition.

Jyoti Basu headed West Bengal from 1977 to 2000, the longest serving CM in history who almost became PM. His tenure symbolised the mixed blessings of CPI(M)'s rule: land reform and a robustly secular politics on the one hand; industrial flight, economic stagnation and the systematic politicisation of the state's bureaucracy on the other.

Off late, Mamata Banerjee of Trinamool Congress brought the change in politics of West Bengal. "The catalysts" for the change were Singur, Nandigram and Lalgarh. These movements resurrected Mamata Banerjee's political career and essentially brought about her to the centrestage. Mamata Banerjee translated the anger against communists into votes, seats and a government that would replace a regime of 34 years.

Gorkhaland Territorial Administration

In 1986, the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) was organized under the leadership of Subhash Gheising. It started an agitation in the hill district of Darjeeling in West Bengal around the demand for a separate Gorkha state. After negotiations between GNLF and the central and state governments, a tripartite accord was signed in Calcutta in August 1988, under which the semi-autonomous Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council came into being. The Council had wide control over finance, education, health, agriculture and economic development.

Lately Bimal Gurung's GJM has emerged as the main political force in the area. A tripartite agreement paving the way for the setting up of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), an elected body for the Darjeeling hills, has been signed. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and GJM president Bimal Gurung and Central Government were 3 Parties concerned. The new set-up will have 50 members: 45 of them will be elected and the rest nominated.

As large numbers of Gorkhas sang and danced at the site to celebrate the signing of the accord, there was a complete shutdown in the nearby town of Siliguri and parts of the Dooars and Terai regions on the plains of north Bengal. Mr. Gurung has reiterated the demand for the inclusion, under the GTA, of the Terai and Dooars regions. A committee set up for the inclusion of areas in the Dooars and the Terai has recommended for meager areal inclusion and this may provide flash point in future. The government will also have to pay attention to this issue.

The long-running agitation for a Gorkhaland State in the hills was propelled by ethnic and linguistic passions. A lesson the West Bengal Government appears to have picked up from history is that these passions can often turn disruptive unless adequately addressed. Hence there is a need to amend Article 371 to provide a constitutional guarantee to the DGHC rather than continue to accept its functioning under a State Act. There is also a need to formulate an approach paper at the political level seeking to safeguard the interests of the Gorkhas as a dominant ethnic community with a distinctive social and linguistic identity.

CONUNDRUM OF TAMIL POLITICS

The DMK emerged in the 1950s as a party which thrived on strong caste, regional and even secessionist sentiments in initial phases. It was amalgamation of two strands of the Pre-independence period movements in Tamil Nadu: the non-Brahmin movement (pro-British Justice party in 1920), and the reformist anti-caste, anti-religion Self Respect movement (led by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker, popularly known as Periyar).

In 1944, Naicker and C.N. Annadurai established Dravida Kazhagam (Federation) or DK which split in 1949 when Annadurai founded the Dravida Munnetra (Progressive) Kazhagam (DMK). If Periyar launched the Dravidian movement, Annadurai gave it political form by founding the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in 1949. He fought for the upliftment of non-Brahmins, led the anti-Hindi agitation; he also gave Madras its name Tamil Nadu. His legacy still inspires politics in the state. In contrast to the Justice Party and Naicker, Annadurai had taken up a strongly anti-imperialist, pro-nationalist position before 1947.

The DMK was strongly anti-Brahmin, anti-North and anti-Aryan. Southern Brahmins and North Indians being seen as Aryans, all other South Indians were seen as Dravidas. It raised the slogan of opposition to the cultural, economic and political domination of the South by the North. Naicker and others had in 1938 organized a movement against the decision of the Congress ministry to introduce Hindi in Madras schools, labelling it to be an aspect of Brahminical North Indian domination. Its main demand, however, was for a homeland for the Dravidas in the form of a separate independent South Indian State Dravidnadu or Dravidasthan consisting of Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala.

Gradually focus was shifted from race to Tamil consciousness and Tamil Pride. However, opposition to Hindi and emphasis on radical social reforms was retained. The DMK immediately amended its constitution and gave up the demand for secession. From secessionism it shifted to the demands for greater state autonomy and more powers to the states.

DMK wanted for limiting the powers of the central government, an end to the domination and unfair treatment of the South by the Hindi-

speaking North, and allocation of greater central economic resources for the development of Tamil Nadu.

In 1967 elections DMK in alliance with other parties got 138 of the 234 seats in assembly, with Congress getting only 49. The DMK formed the government in the state with Annadurai as chief minister. After Annadurai's death in February 1969, M. Karunanidhi became the Chief Minister. In 1972 the DMK split, with MGR forming the All-India Anna DMK (AIADMK). For 25 years, Maruthur Gopala Ramachandran was the biggest star in Tamil Cinema. He turned his fan base into political power, founding the AIDMK, serving as CM for then continuous years. His greatest legacy was the mid-day meal scheme which at one stroke got kids into schools, improved literacy and addressed malnutrition. The two party system now emerged in Tamil Nadu, but operated between the two Dravida parties, with both parties alternating in power in the state.

SHADES OF ANDHRA POLITICS

First and foremost story in Andhra politics has to be related to Telangana Peasant Struggle. The Telangana or Telugu-speaking area of Hyderabad state ruled by the autocratic Nizam had been experiencing political opposition since the late 1930s under the influence of nationalist and democratic organizations such as the State Congress and the Andhra Mahasabha. From the early 1940s, the communists emerged as a major force and when the ban on the CPI was lifted by the British in 1942 due to their pro-war line, they quickly expanded their influence and established their control on the Andhra Mahasabha. The peasants in Telangana suffered extreme feudal-type oppression at the hands of Jagirdars and Deshmukhs, some of whom owned thousands of areas of land. The communists began to organize the peasants against the hated forced grain levy imposed by the government and veth begar or forced labour extracted by landlords and officials.

From 1945, helped along by a few incidents in which the Communists heroically defended the poor peasants, the peasant movement began to spread rapidly. The Communists participated actively in the anti-Nizam, pro-integration movement, and it is in this phase, August 1947 to September 1948, when they rode the anti-Nizam pro-India wave, that they registered their

greatest successes, establishing a firm base in the Nalgonda, Warangal and Khammam districts. Landlord and officials mostly ran away to the towns, leaving the field free for the Communists in the villages. Lands that had been taken over by landlords in lieu of debt claims in large numbers during the Great Depression of the 1930s were returned to the original owners, government owned uncultivated waste and forests land was distributed to the landless. As confidence grew, 'ceilings' on landlords' land were declared, first at 500 acres and then at 100 acres, and the 'surplus' land distributed to landless and small peasants. On 13 September, 1948, after having waited for more than a year for the Nizam to see the writing on the wall and once the anti-Nizam resistance movement had shown clearly what the people desired, the Indian army moved into Hyderabad. The people greeted it as an army of liberation and within days the Nizam and his troops surrendered. The government was quick to respond to the issuances raised by the movement.

The Jagiradari Abolition Regulation was laid down in 1949 itself and the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act was passed in 1950. Over 600,000 tenants covering over one quarter of the cultivated area were declared 'protected' tenants with a right to purchase the land on easy terms. Land ceiling were also introduced in the mid-1950s. Landlords who returned after the movement collapsed were not able to go back to the old ways. The movement had broken the back of landlordism in Telangana, but this had already been done as part of the anti-Nizam, pro-integration liberation struggle, when their position as leaders of popular upsurge provided Communists the opportunity to articulate radical peasant demands as well. The costly adventure thereafter was not dictated by the imperatives of the peasant movement but was entirely a consequence of misguided resolution any romanticism, of which some Indian Communists appeared to be enamoured.

Demand for separate Andhra

Andhra was created as a separate State in October 1953 and in November 1956 the Telugu speaking Telangana area of Nizam's Hyderabad state was merged with it to create Andhra Pradesh. A large unilingual state was supposed to strengthen and bond the Telugu people culturally, politically and economically.

A powerful movement for a separate state of Telangana developed in 1969 based on the belief that because the politics and administration of the state were dominated by people from the Andhra region. People alleged that the Andhra Government had neglected Telangana and had done very little to remove the regional economic imbalance. Andhrans were accused of exploiting the Telangana region.

The major issue in this context became the implementation of Mulki Rules. The Nizam's government in Hyderabad had accepted earlier that in all state services those who were born in the state or had lived there for fifteen years (i.e., (Mulki) would be given preference. At the same time restrictions would be imposed on the employment of outsiders. The discontented in Telangana accused the government of deliberately violating the agreement. To lead the movement for a separate Telangana state in an organized manner, the Telangana Praja Samiti (TPS) was soon formed. However, movement for a separate Telangana began to lose steam after the summer of 1969.

The TPS merged with Congress in September 1971 after Brahmanand Reddy, the Chief minister, resigned and was replaced by P.V. Narasimha Rao from Telangana. Now the middle classes of the Andhra region started to protest against Mulki Rules. To solve the impasse, central government put forward a six-point formula which did away with the Mulki Rules but extended preference in employment and education to all districts and regions of the state over outsiders. The 32nd Constitutional Amendment was passed to enable the implementation of the formula.

In the case of both the Telangana and Andhra regions, the central government firmly and successfully opposed the demand for bifurcation of the state as it was apprehensive of similar demands being raised in other parts of the country. But recent contours of struggle for Telangana Separation have stretched the situation to the extreme. The Home Minister Chidambaram's statement about initiating the process of forming the new state was prompted by Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) party chief K. Chandrasekhara Rao's resolve to fast unto death and violent protests in state capital Hyderabad.

Since its inception, demands for a separate Telangana state, formed out of 10 districts of

Andhra Pradesh, has seen violent protests and political power play, with more than 300 people killed between 1969 and 1972. The Congress' electoral alliance with TRS in the state in 2004 was based on promises of delivering Telangana to its leaders and was included in its Common Minimum Programme. However, Telangana supporters accused the Congress of backtracking following its two electoral wins. Though, recent developments point to the possibility that Telangana can soon become the youngest state of Indian Union. A brief account of controversial points follows.

One major issues that seem to be at the centre of the contention between the two regions of Andhra Pradesh is the future of Hyderabad after the division of the State. Hyderabad is an integral part of Telangana and a Telangana State without Hyderabad as the capital is inconceivable. However, the militant rhetoric of some political parties has made people of other areas feel unwelcome, creating an air of mistrust among the Telugu-speaking people of various regions. Rhetorical slogans such as 'Telangana waalon jaago, Andhra waalon bhago' gives the impression of an exclusionist movement. When Maharashtra and Gujarat were created from the then Bombay state on the recommendation of the States Reorganisation Commission, there was also a fear about Mumbai losing its importance as a financial nerve-centre as a lot of investment in Mumbai had been made by Gujarati business people. The creation of two separate States did not halt Mumbai's rapid development. In fact, it additionally paved the way for the development of Ahmedabad and Surat as alternative financial centres. Hyderabad can emulate the same model. The Telangana agitation is the only such movement in India that involves a capital city located in the region that is fighting for separation from the main State. This clearly reflects on the lack of governance and civic administration in this area as the benefits of having a State capital in the hinterland have not trickled down to other areas in that region.

Justice Srikrishna Committee has held wide consultations on demands for a separate State of Telangana as well as for keeping Andhra Pradesh united, and offered half-a-dozen options on which the government may take a call. The suggestions include keeping Andhra Pradesh in the present form, forming a separate Telangana, and making Hyderabad a Union Territory.

By acknowledging the merits of the longstanding grievances of the people of the Telangana region and recommending robust "constitutional/statutory measures" – centred on a Telangana Regional Council – for the "socio-economic development and political empowerment" of the region within a united Andhra Pradesh as "the best way forward," the Committee for Consultations on the Situation in Andhra Pradesh headed by retired Supreme Court judge B.N. Srikrishna has tried to find a just and equitable solution to the problem. The statutory and empowered Regional Council would be provided with "adequate transfer of funds, functions and functionaries" and would also act as "a legislative consultative mechanism" for the subjects it would deal with.

After weighing five other options, the Committee is of the opinion that this is the most workable option in the given circumstances and in the best interest of the social and economic welfare of the people of all the three regions. The core issues, the Committee emphasised, are socio-economic development and good governance. The united Andhra Pradesh option, premised on far-going and meaningful regional autonomy for Telangana, is recommended for "continuing the development momentum" of all three regions and "keeping in mind the national perspective." Crucially, it would end the uncertainty over the future of Hyderabad. The "second best option" – bifurcation of the State into Telangana and Seemandhra with their existing boundaries and with Hyderabad as the capital of the former and a new capital for Seemandhra – is clearly a distant second. The Committee's view is that this option should be exercised only if it becomes unavoidable and all three regions come to an amicable agreement on it. But Telangana has been declared as the 29th State of India.

NORTH EAST REORGANIZATION

Soon after India's independence, vested interests started promoting sentiment in favour of separate and independent states in north-eastern India. The virtual absence of any political or cultural contact of the tribals in the North-East with the political life of the rest of India was also a striking difference. The struggle for independence had little impact among the tribals of the North-East. To quote Jawaharlal Nehru: 'the essence of our struggle for freedom was the

unleashing of a liberating force in India. This force did not even affect the frontier people in one of the most important tribal areas.' Again: 'thus, they never experienced a sensation of being in a country called India and they were hardly influenced by the struggle for freedom or other movements in India. Their chief experience of outsiders was that of British officers and Christian missionaries who generally tried to make them anti-Indian.'

Sixth Schedule of the Constitution offered a fair degree of self-government to the tribal people by providing for autonomous districts and the creation of district and regional councils, which would exercise some of the legislative and judicial functions within the overall jurisdiction of the Assam legislature and the parliament. The objective of the Sixth Schedule was to enable tribals to live according to their own ways. The Government of India also expressed its willingness to further amend the constitutional provisions relating to the tribal people if it was found necessary to do so with a view to promote further autonomy. However, this did not mean, Nehru clarified that the government would countenance secession from India or independence by any area or region, or would tolerate violence in the promotion of any demands.

Nehru's and Verrier Elwin's policies were implemented best of all in the North-East Frontier Agency or NEFA, which was created in 1948 out of the border areas of Assam. NEFA was established as a Union Territory outside the jurisdiction of Assam and placed under a special administration. From the beginning, the administration was manned by a special cadre of officers to implement specially designed developmental policies without disturbing the social and cultural pattern of the life of the people.

NEFA was named Arunachal Pradesh and granted the status of a separate state in 1987. Soon problems developed in the other tribal areas, which were part of Assam administratively. The problems arose because the hill tribes of Assam had no cultural affinity with the Assamese and Bengali residents of the plains. The tribals were afraid of losing their identities and being assimilated by what was seen to be a policy of Assamization.

The creation of Nagaland as a separate state had its own peculiarities. The Naga tribes along

the Assam-Burma border had never been fully controlled by the British and the problem was further complicated on account of the large scale conversion of the Naga tribes to Christianity by American Baptist missionaries. There was a long entrenched rebellion led by the Naga leader A.Z. Phizo, but the traditional leadership of the Naga tribes under the Naga People's Convention wanted a settlement "within the Indian Union". Ultimately in 1963, Nagaland was created as a separate State.

In the early 1980s, in Nagaland, the Naga National Council (NNC), political face of the oldest of the insurgencies in the region, was led by Angami Zapu Phizo, then in exile in Britain. Despite the challenge posed by a faction of the NNC that had split and formed itself into the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), the NNC remained the dominant voice of Naga nationalistic assertion. In Manipur, Naga insurgency was active those days in the Naga-inhabited hill districts mainly in Tamenglong, while in the Imphal Valley, several outfits, some of them fighting one another as much as the Indian state, were active: the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA), the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP). In the Union Territory of Mizo Hills, the Mizo National Front (MNF) arrived at the Talk-Talk-Fight-Fight stage, and was on the way to give up its secessionist agenda, sign a peace accord and become a legitimate party of the government. Insurgency had not become a generalised fact of life in the region including Assam, though formally the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) had been founded in April 1979.

The objectives of all these organisations, including the nascent ULFA, were broadly the same: independence and sovereignty, the restoration of sovereignty that 'lapsed' to the people these organisations claimed to represent when the British left India but which India refused to concede. The undeniable historical fact underlying this idea of restoration of sovereignty' as against the demand for sovereignty' is that beginning with the British annexation of Assam following the defeat of Burma in 1826 in the First Anglo-Burmese War, the colonial government had embarked on consolidating the boundaries of these newly acquired vast territories, progressively annexing more of these borderlands and extending its own boundaries.

NNC split that led to the formation of the NSCN in early 1980. Even though the NSCN in due course also split into two factions, and the NNC has refused to fade away, the NSCN (I and M) bearing the initials of Chairman Isak Swu and General Secretary Thuingaleng Muivah remains the dominant voice of the sovereignty aspirations of the Naga people.

However, all these insist that settlement of the “Naga political issue,” that is restoration of Naga sovereignty and independence — the resolution of what has come to be known in the Naga nationalist rhetoric as “the mother of all insurgencies” in the region — is central to resolving the other problems in the region. This perspective has been expressed several times by Muivah since the NSCN(I-M) began talking directly to the Government of India nearly 15 years ago. During this period, the NSCN(I-M) leaders have met several Prime Ministers in foreign lands and in India, and have had prolonged dialogue with, interlocutors, initially in cities in Europe and South East Asia, and later in Delhi. Peace of a kind has prevailed in Nagaland and in the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur, though the “Naga political issue” remains unresolved.

The irony in the northeast is that armed insurgencies coexist with the enthusiasm for the electoral process. The debate on the politics of the northeast has rested on the region’s alienation and marginalisation from mainstream politics. The astounding number of organised insurgencies in the region, party politics notwithstanding, gives credence to the idea that the northeast has substantial grievances against the Indian state. Yet, in recent assembly elections in the insurgency-hit States of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura, the incumbents were voted back into power and voter turnout was unprecedentedly high – Tripura had a voter turnout of 93 per cent, followed by Meghalaya at 88 per cent and Nagaland at 83.2 per cent.

Some celebrate the high voter turnout and political stability (amidst relative peace) as an indicator of northeastern people’s leap of faith in New Delhi’s politically accommodative strategies. Others lament that the northeast has continued to be peripheral in India’s national political imagination and therefore successful elections in the region should not be seen as an extension of legitimacy for the Indian state. Historically, the northeast has been thought of

by New Delhi as a region riddled with exceptions in three different areas — the people’s racial and tribal difference, their geographic isolation which enabled a perceived non-participation in the national movement and finally, the spread of Christianity as a dominant religion in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.

Assamese Story

The Assamese had a grievance that the severe underdevelopment of Assam was due to unfair treatment by the central government. It was alleged that central government had not only neglected its development but also discriminated against it in allocation of central funds. At the same time, centre was seen as having deprived Assam of its due share of revenues from its crude oil and tea and plywood industries. There were demands for a greater share for Assam in the revenues derived from tea and plywood industries and a higher royalty for its crude oil. Other demands included larger central financial grants and plan allocation and location of oil refineries in Assam, so that there is no need to send the oil to Barauni refinery. In infrastructure, demands included construction of more bridges over the Brahmaputra river and upgrading of the railway link between Assam and the rest of India.

Reservation was demanded for locals to ensure greater employment of Assamese in central government services and public sector enterprises located in the state. There was also a strong feeling among the Assamese speakers that Bengali predominance in education and middle-class jobs also posed a threat to the Assamese language and culture. The movement for a change in the official language led to the rounds of hostility between Bengali and Assamese speakers. In July 1960, language riots erupted. In 1960, the state assembly passed a law making Assamese the sole official language, though Bengali remained the additional official language in Cachar. It was done against the wishes of Bengali speakers and many tribal groups.

Later, a massive anti-foreigners movement started in 1979. Main reason was the large-scale illegal migration from Bangladesh and to some extent from Nepal. The demographic transformation of Assam created apprehension among many Assamese that the swamping of Assam by foreigners and non-Assamese Indians would lead to the Assamese being reduced to a

minority in their own land and consequently to the subordination of their culture.

At the end of 1979, the All Assam Students Union (ASSU) and the Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (Assam People's Struggle Council), a coalition of regional associations, started a massive, anti-illegal migration movement. This campaign won the support of many sections of Assamese society. The years from 1979 to 1985 witnessed political instability. Election to the state assembly in 1983 led to its large scale boycott. The Congress party did form the government, but it lacked legitimacy.

Finally, the Rajiv Gandhi government signed an accord with the leaders of the movement on 15 August, 1985. All those foreigners who had entered Assam between 1951 and 1961 were to be given full citizenship, including the right to vote; those who had done so after 1971 were to be deported; the entrants between 1961 and 1971 were to be denied voting rights for ten years but would enjoy all other rights of citizenship. A parallel package for the economic development of Assam, including a second oil refinery, a paper mill and an institute of technology, was also promised. The central government also promised to provide 'legislative and administrative safeguards' to protect the cultural, social, and linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people. Fresh elections were held in December 1985. Prafulla Mahanta, an AASU leader, became the youngest chief minister of independent India. Extreme and prolonged political turbulence in Assam ended, though fresh insurgencies came later e.g. demand of Bodo tribes for a separate state and of the secessionist United Liberation Front of Assam ULFA.

Democracy in North East

The democratic health of any country is not only indicated by robust voter turnouts, regular elections, but also by the State's ability to further the rights of people, deliver public goods and maintain peace. The strong pro-incumbent trend coupled with high voter turnouts and regular elections suggests that democracy works well in the northeast. Yet, we see the persistence of insurgent groups in all three States under discussion.

There are two distinct political processes at work in the northeast - the party political process demonstrated through electoral politics and the

non-party political process found in the form of long-running insurgencies. Both these processes mutually support each other. The non-party political process has evolved in reaction to grievances against the Indian state and in synergy with electoral politics.

Even though there were regular allegations of vote-buying in some districts of Nagaland, the Congress regularly came to power in most northeastern States until vibrant student movements allowed for regional formations like the Asom Gana Parishad and the Bodoland People's Front (Assam), Khun Hynniewtre National Awakening Movement (in Meghalaya) and the Naga People's Front (Nagaland) to emerge.

Over time, violent counterinsurgency gave way to ceasefires, negotiations and policies of surrender. This allowed many northeastern insurgent groups to scale down their political demands from outright secession to limited autonomy within the Union of India. This was granted to them under the Sixth Schedule in the form of autonomous districts. The pacts with insurgent groups have also led to former insurgents being incorporated into mainstream politics. In this manner, many former insurgents have been playing crucial political roles in the region.

However insurgencies in the northeast have also acquired a momentum of their own. In Meghalaya, Assam, Nagaland and Manipur, insurgent groups are often reported to act like mafias or cartels running extortion, drugs, kidnapping and small arms rackets. The rents extracted from these illegal activities often sustain the groups' organisational needs and create incentives for new recruits. Massive unemployment in the region makes insurgency a lucrative career amongst disaffected and marginalised tribal youths within the northeast. On top of this, the State's coercive techniques continue to add fuel to the fire.

NEED FOR SECOND SRC

In 1956, the first SRC had reorganized states along linguistic lines. However, more than 6 decades later, the idea of linguistic identity forming the basis of statehood has become outdated. Today the demand for smaller states is increasingly driven by socio-economic

aspirations. A second SRC would do well to study these factors and pronounce its verdict on the viability of the statehood demands. This would also guard against fringe movements holding the Centre and the idea of India to ransom.

Beyond Language

Nehru warned against any kind of passionate surge in demand for separate States based on an exclusive ideology of language or religion. He wanted large States to retain their cosmopolitan character. He was not fully convinced of the viability and durability of monolingual States. Whereas, Ambedkar, as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, supported the demand for reorganisation of States on a linguistic basis. He considered four basic principles such as development, efficiency, equality and democracy for ushering in the era of reorganisation of States.

Ambedkar proposed that each State may have its own language for purposes of administrative communication with the Centre and other States, but disregarded the thesis of "one language, one state". In other words, his view was that people speaking the same language need not be grouped into one State but there could be more than one State with the same language. The formula of one State, one language, he pointed out, was not to be equated with one language, one State. Instead, people speaking one language might find themselves in many States depending upon other factors such as the requirements of administrative efficiency, specific needs of particular areas and the proportion between the majority and minority communities within a State.

For Ambedkar, States in a democratic polity needed to have equitable size limits since this would ensure proportional distribution of resources among the States as well as their inhabitants. Like Nehru, he too favoured a strong Centre to ensure an equitable survival of different languages, cultures, regions and States within a broader framework of an inclusive developmental polity.

After Independence, the demand for the reorganisation of states along linguistic lines overshadowed such issues as size and economic capability. Today, the situation has undergone a substantial change. There are increasing demands for carving out smaller states out of

the large, single-language states created after Independence. In the contemporary post-Congress and post-reform era, states have emerged as important players determining national political patterns. In many states, an upsurge from below has brought the hitherto underprivileged groups to power, creating new political elites. And in the era of coalition governments, regional or state parties have become partners in central governance. The current demand for the break-up of large states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh needs to be examined seriously and dispassionately in its historical and contemporary context.

Smaller states within the same linguistic regions are desirable when history, administrative efficiency, dialect, or any other strong characteristic renders new statehood desirable. Thus, the Nizam's rule in Hyderabad has given the people of Telangana a distinct identity. Portuguese rule in Goa has set it apart from other Marathi speaking areas. To ignore such differences arising from history would be denying the affirmation of healthy local pride.

The establishment of a market economy, too, has opened the floodgates to private capital that has led to increasing regional inequalities and, thus, contributed to the rising demands for smaller states. Economic backwardness of sub-regions within large states has also emerged as an important ground on which demands for smaller states are being made. This is evident from the immediate demands for the formation of Vidharbha, Bodoland and Saurashtra, among other states. These developments have been responsible for a shift away from issues of language and culture – which had shaped the earlier process of reorganisation – to those of better governance and greater participation, administrative convenience, economic viability and similarity in the developmental needs of sub-regions.

In this situation, the move towards smaller states appears to be inevitable and would lead to more democratisation. The formation of three new states in 2000 – Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand – has provided a fillip to this process. Fresh parameters for the creation of States have to be based on holistic development on economic and social lines for better administration and management. This fact has been proven with the creation of Chhattisgarh

from Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand from Bihar and Uttaranchal from Uttar Pradesh. The case for small States can be argued with macroeconomic statistics from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Between 1999-2000, when the smaller States were created, and 2007-2008, India's overall GDP increased by 75 per cent during this time period. During the same period, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttaranchal recorded more than 100 per cent, 150 per cent and 180 per cent increase respectively.

New Demands

In the long journey of reorganisation from 14 to 28 States, the Centre changed a few principles into guidelines to deal with demands for further redrawing of existing State boundaries. These principles, according to Paul Brass are as follows: **A.** demands must stop short of secession; **B.** demands based on language and culture could be accommodated, but not those based explicitly on religious differences; **C.** demands must have clearly demonstrated public support; and **D.** division of multilingual states must have some support from different linguistic groups.

Except the major demands such as Bodoland (Assam), Gorkhaland (West Bengal), Haripradesh (Uttar Pradesh), Vidarbha (Maharashtra) and Kodagu, or Coorg (Karnataka), not much is known about the remaining 26 or so demands reportedly pending for consideration before the government. There has been a significant shift from language and culture that shaped the earlier process of reorganisation to the one driven by specific needs of the political economy of development and socio-cultural inclusion.

This whole process of rise in demands took so long. Reason lies in history. The colonial state supported commercial agriculture and industry in selected areas such as the coastal regions, deltas, river valleys and mineral-rich areas, leaving the vast hinterland underdeveloped. Such a distorted pattern of unequal development continued in the post-Independence period as well. The result has been uneven development in the big States of India: some districts that have seen rapid development are surrounded by poorer regions that remain backward and underdeveloped. E.g. Bundelkhand, Poorvanchal, Vidarbha and the inner tribal regions of Orissa have continued to remain deprived within large States. The three small States of Chhattisgarh,

Uttarakhand and Jharkhand, which came into existence in 2000, were not created on linguistic and cultural grounds. These three States are not performing badly.

There are demands for Harit Pradesh and Bundelkhand in UP, Maru Pradesh in Rajasthan, Coorg in Karnataka, Vidharbha in Maharashtra, Bodoland in Assam and Gorkhaland in West Bengal. A full-fledged exercise is needed for a federal reorganisation of the country by appointing of a Second States Reorganisation Commission.

Justified Demands or Political Demands

It is being argued that federal reorganisation of India into smaller States would not only fulfill the political aspirations of the people of the backward regions but would also ensure their rapid economic development. It would accelerate the pace of modernisation (in those States) by increasing administrative efficiency and bringing the administration closer to the people there. E.g. rapid progress was made by Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh in a short span of time after their creation on November 1, 1966. It has been further argued that the accordance of Statehood to various regions would also resolve the problem of identity-crisis in them. This would enable them to develop their language and culture. It would help them in getting rid of the feelings of internal colonialism. The reorganisation of the country into small States would also make the federation more balanced by making the representation of the present large-sized States, like UP, MP and Maharashtra, and the small States, like Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, more proportionate.

As a result of Nehru's determination to deal firmly with any secessionist movement, the 16th Constitutional Amendment was passed in 1962 declaring the advocacy of secession a crime and requiring every candidate to parliament or state assembly to swear 'allegiance to the Constitution' and to 'uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India.' But such trends are more of a past phenomenon. Today, fears of the Centre weakening due to the creation of a large number of small states are unfounded. Many small states were created after 1956 - Punjab, Haryana and some in the north-east - which strengthened rather than weakened the Union. Even as the older federal structure served the polity created

at Independence, there is a need to redraw the map of India in keeping with the new social and political order. The demand for smaller states is based on the principle that in a true democracy - which India is supposed to be - there must be grassroots representation. In other words, the people running the show in any particular administrative area must be aware of, and sympathetic to, the needs and aspirations of the general population which inhabits that area. Larger States can become hegemonic and undemocratic through their numerical strength and command over natural and physical resources, which can have a serious impact on the federal democratic structure of the country.

At the same time States Reorganisation Act, 1956 also needs a fresh look to determine whether division on linguistic lines has facilitated development or there is need to look at the whole issue from a wholistic and/or alternative view. Granting greater autonomy and empowering local bodies is one way to ensure that the fruits of development get evenly distributed, and satiate regional aspirations.

The emergence of regional parties and their importance in coalitions formed at the Centre to form governments can push demands for creating more States in the near future. This should be welcomed as the continuing process of democratization aiming to reach down to new social groups and regions hitherto excluded from the mainstream of governance.

It would not only create and increase political consciousness among the disadvantaged groups in the States, but also produce new local and regional elites with participatory and decision-making roles. Such a process, according to them, is inevitable as regional inequalities widen among the existing States under the process of globalization creating more intense competition for sharing resources in intersecting regions and sub-regions of the States.

Whereas, division of the existing States is often opposed on the grounds that it could encourage centrifugal tendencies and lead to the dismemberment of India. E.g. Arunachal Pradesh is an extraordinary story. There is no parallel between the success achieved there and anything else in any part of the world. The State is a mosaic of over 110 tribes of diverse racial and linguistic stock but coming together through to acquire a new sense of identity as Arunachalese Indians.

The grant of Statehood cannot guarantee rapid economic development of those backward regions which do not have the required material and human resources for economic growth. Moreover, some of the small States may not be having the potential for economic viability. The small States could also lead to the hegemony of the dominant community/caste/tribe over their power structures. There can develop in an aggressive regionalism leading to the growth of the sons-of-the-soil phenomenon and other ills of aggressive regionalism.

The attainment of Statehood could also lead to emergence of intra-regional rivalries among the sub-regions as has happened in Himachal Pradesh, religious communities as in Punjab and castes/tribes as in Haryana and Manipur, if the regional identity of the new States remains weak due to demographic factors or historical reasons or their cultural backwardness. The creation of small States may also lead to certain negative political consequences. The political opportunists, power-brokers and power-hungry politicians could hold the Chief Minister of a small State to ransom. The case of Jharkhand, where even an independent MLA manipulated to become the Chief Minister, may be cited as an illustration.

Political demands for smaller states and bifurcation arise for multiple reasons. There are, of course, emotional considerations like culture, language, religion and a sense of economic and regional deprivation. But more importantly, politicians envision additional posts of power as chief ministers or ministers, leaders of the opposition, Assembly speakers and so on. Similarly, government servants think of becoming chief secretaries or secretaries, DGs of police, chief-engineers, directors and so on.

The more serious objection to ever-smaller states is that such demands, based on the politics of sub-regional identity, further erode India's already threatened and fragile unity. It is often said that Indians tend to be Gujaratis, or Tamils, or Punjabis, or whatever else, first and Indians second. Rabble-rousers have shown us the dangers of regional chauvinism, and a sons-of-the-soil policy. If each state, or sub-state, sprouts its own home-grown version of the son of soil policy the Indian union will soon be a disunion of disparate parts.

Alternatively, in such States, the risk of centralization of powers in the hands of few

would be rather greater. The administration of such States would tend to be highly personalised and politicized. Such a State would become a fiefdom of the Chief Minister. This type of regime has really been in existence in Haryana since its very formation on November 1, 1966—except for a few brief interludes—owing to its small size both in terms of area and population.

Too often, the demand for smaller states is not really based on genuine concerns about administrative equity but is a disguised excuse for a land-grab. The moment a new state is formed, a new capital for it has to be established, together with all the pomp and paraphernalia of statehood: a new assembly, secretariat, and so on. As a result, property prices in the newly designated capital shoot up and the land mafia hits the jackpot.

Evidence shows that both large and small states have fared well and that poor performance is not necessarily linked to size. In fact, today, technology can help make governing larger territories easier and bring even far-flung areas closer. Much more than the size of a state, it is the quality of governance and administration, the diverse talent available within the state's population, and the leadership's drive and vision that determine whether a particular state performs better than the others.

At the same time, the creation of a federation consisting of smaller states is a complex task and requires careful attention. Many critics have correctly argued that the mere creation of smaller states out of the existing bigger ones does not guarantee good governance and faster and inclusive economic development. If the administration in a large state suffers from inefficiencies, there is no guarantee that it will become competent by merely creating a smaller state.

A common notion is that a larger share of central funds would flow into a new state compared to when it is a region in a larger state. Most also believe that a new capital city would provide better living conditions. Arguments are set forth that a smaller state with less number of districts would diminish the span of control of state-level functionaries. And that reduced distances between the state capital and peripheral areas would improve the quality of governance and administrative responsiveness and accountability. However, this can easily be

achieved with strong regional administrative units in larger states.

A small state is likely to face limitations in terms of the natural (physical) and human resources available to it. Moreover, it will lack the kind of agro-climatic diversity required for economic and developmental activities. It would also be restricted in its capability to raise resources internally. All these factors would only make it more dependent on the Centre for financial transfers and centrally-sponsored schemes. Further, increasing the number of states in the country would expand the span of control of the central ministries dealing with states and of party high commands dealing with state party units.

A new small state may find itself lacking in infrastructure (administrative and industrial), which requires time, money and effort to build. Some may argue that it is with this very purpose of developing infrastructure that demands for the creation of smaller states are encouraged. But experience shows that it takes about a decade for a new state and its government and administrative institutions to become stable; for various issues of division of assets, funds and of the state civil service(s) to get fully resolved; and for links to the new state capital to stabilise. The cost of this transition is not low and the state's performance may suffer during this interim period. Smaller states are not a panacea for India's myriad problems. Neither can they resolve issues faced by various regions and sections of society. Larger states may be, in fact, more economically and financially-viable and better capable of serving people and achieving planned development.

And last but not the least, the creation of small States would lead to an appreciable increase in the inter-State water, power and boundary disputes; and apart from the strain on their limited financial resources, these would require huge funds for building new capitals and maintaining a large number of Governors, Chief Ministers, Ministers and Administrators—if the existing states are reorganised into smaller states.

Conclusion

Demand to constitute another States Reorganization Commission to consider the possibility of reorganising federal India into States on a fairly rational basis cannot be ignored for long. Second state reorganisation commission

is the need of the hour in Indian polity and all the demands for separate statehood and sub statehood are a political demand with electoral underpinnings. "Racial and cultural identity assertion, uneven development is often fraught with strong grass-root movement for separate state," (Prof. M.P. Singh). Democracy in India had now been converted into ethnocracy and delineated about various state movements in the North East and other regions. Various movements for separate states like Telangana, Gorkhaland, Vidharbha, Seemanchal and many others need urgent action on this front.

The reorganization of states throughout India would be a huge task requiring time and patience. But it should be undertaken and accepted in principle immediately. While the proposed Commission undertakes its task other measures regarding a rational division of responsibility between local, district, state and central governments should also be studied. India's political system requires reappraisal in its entirety. And announcement of a second SRC can be the starting point in this journey.

FEDERALISM IN INDIA

India is a vast country, and even neighbouring villages have different customs and traditions. Also, the people follow different faiths, speak different languages and live in many climatic zones. In such a situation, it is desired that the governance conforms to the regional conditions. Federalism is an arrangement to apportion powers between the Centre and the States, and considered a feature of the Cabinet form of governance. This means the governance should be by the people of the region, and the basic laws will have to be in line with the pattern of the social life.

This is the reason that States have a certain amount of independence in formulating policies and implementing them. However, there may be disputes between States, and in such cases the intervention of the Centre becomes necessary. The Centre should also see to it that the States accept the decision that it takes.

The time is ripe now for establishing a true federal system that will strengthen the bonds of mutual cooperation, unity, and cordiality between the Centre and the States. For proper and ideal Centre-State relations, there should be more powers for the States. To be more

appropriate and precise, there should be autonomy for the States and federalism at the Centre.

Demands for Autonomy

The demand for restructuring Centre-State relations is as old as the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950. The creation of a new structure of constitutional government for independent India deserves to be seen in historical context. In fact, political imperatives emerging out of the independence movement influenced the design of government incorporated in the Constitution. On the one hand, the framers, drawing the spirit of the independence movement, found the federal scheme appropriate for India; on the other hand, Partition created a fear of centrifugal elements in the nascent nation.

Indeed, the major part of the history of the struggle for self-rule and independence reflects efforts to find a solution to India's gigantic diversity. Even the mobilisation for the national movement was based on federal principles. The acceptance of language as the basis for redrawing the provincial boundary, for example, was a result of such a mobilisation. The history of federalism and Centre-State relations in India is marked by political mobilisation and intermittent struggle to fashion a more federal set-up. Even though such efforts have not yet resulted in any major constitutional changes towards a more federal orientation, the struggle has not been entirely fruitless.

In the phase lasting until the last 1960s, the task of nation building and development was the main concern of the nation's rulers. However, this period was not solely dominated by the trend of centralisation. One of the major democratic movements in the post-Independence period — the movement for the formation of the linguistic States – took place in the 1950s, which resulted in the formation of linguistic States in 1956. The Central government resisted this demand and but later gave in – in the face of strong popular movements. This laid the basis for the later assertion by the States for greater powers.

The second phase began with the 1967 general elections. Non-Congress State Governments came into being. The demand for restructuring of Centre-State relations picked up momentum. An important feature of the 1967 elections was the coming together of the

Opposition parties; some of them formed anti-Congress fronts in some states. In other cases, they entered into a series of electoral adjustments by sharing seats and avoiding contests. The election results were dramatic and Congress suffered a serious setback. Though it succeeded in retaining control of the Lok Sabha-it won 284 out of 520 seats-its majority was drastically reduced from 228 in 1963 to 48. In West Bengal and Kerala, the left parties gained. Congress also lost its majority in the assemblies of eight states-Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala. The Jan Sangh emerged as the main Opposition party in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, Swatantra in Orissa, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, the SSP in Bihar, and the Communists in West Bengal and Kerala.

The 1967 elections revealed certain long-term TRENDS AND ALSO HAD CERTAIN LONG-TERM consequences. Apart from general disenchantment with Congress, defection by the rich and middle peasants from the Congress camp played a major role in the Congress debacle in the northern states. The 1967 elections also initiated the dual era of short-lived coalition governments and politics of defection. Except the DMK government in Tamil Nadu and the Swatantra led government in Orissa, the coalition governments in all the other states, whether formed by Congress or the Opposition, proved to be highly unstable. In Haryana, where the defection phenomenon was first initiated, defecting legislators began to be called 'Aya Ram and Gaya Ram' (incoming Ram and outgoing Ram). The 1967 elections drastically changed the balance of power inside Congress. Its dominant leadership in the form of the syndicate received a major blow as several syndicate stalwarts, including Kamaraj (its President), Atulya Ghosh (West Bengal) and S.K. Patil (Bombay), lost political ground to regional warlords.

Government under Desai was a short lived one. Change at the top of political hierarchy did not last long and results of the 1971 elections turned out to be overwhelming personal triumph for Indira Gandhi and a rude shock to the Opposition. Congress (R) swept the polls, winning 352 of the 518 Lok Sabha seats. This gave the party a two-thirds minority required to amend the constitution. The 1971 elections restored the Congress party to its dominant position in Indian politics. By voting for Congress

the people had simultaneously voted for change and stability.

Meanwhile, in TN assembly, report of the Rajamannar Committee was received in 1971. On April 16, 1974, a historic resolution was moved in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly requesting the Central Government to accept the views and the recommendations of the Rajamannar Committee and proceed to effect immediate changes in the Constitution of India to establish a truly federal set-up.

For the first time, in 1989, a National Front Coalition Government headed by V.P. Singh, which included major regional parties like took office at the Centre. Though short-lived, this government took certain steps to strengthen the federal principle. The Inter-State Council was constituted in 1990. The entry of regional parties in coalition Governments at the Centre became a regular feature in 1996 with the formation of the United Front government and later in form of NDA and presently in the United Progressive Alliance Government. The Left parties, which supported both the National Front Government in 1989 and the United Front Government in 1996-1998 and the present UPA government, are strong supporters of the federal principle.

Attempts have been made to impose a unitary form of government in the country. The character of India as a multinational, multilingual, multi-religious state has been blatantly ignored. The relevant recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission on the restructuring of Centre-State relations have not been accepted and implemented in true spirit. As a result of which there has been a persistent trend of centralisation of economic and political powers in the country. The time is ripe now for a transformation that would strengthen the bonds of mutual cooperation, unity, and cordiality between the Centre and the States.

Financial Relations

Federal Constitutions everywhere are characterised by an imbalance between the functional responsibilities and the financial powers at different levels of government. The Indian Constitution, while expressly vesting the Centre with greater powers of taxation, also provides for an institutional mechanism — the Finance Commission — to determine the share of the States in the Central tax revenues by way of correcting this imbalance.

In deciding on the devolution of taxes and the provision of grants, the Finance Commission is required to address the vertical imbalance (between the Centre and the States) as also the horizontal imbalance, the one between the States with varying fiscal capacities but similar responsibilities in the provision of public services. The Centre gets a little over 60 per cent of the total revenues. While the States are thus left with less than 40 per cent of the revenue, their share in revenue expenditure averaged about 57 per cent. At present, about 40 per cent of Central revenues (tax and non-tax) are transferred to the States, and this includes the grants they get from the Planning Commission and the Central Ministries. Although the shareable pool has been enlarged (thanks to the 80th Constitution Amendment) to include all Central taxes, the relative revenue accruals of the Centre and the States have not seen any major change.

Nobody can deny that most of 2nd generation reforms will require a cooperative relation between 2 layers of governance. E.g. The big question is -What will be the impact of the proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) on the vertical imbalance? These reforms will have major impact on relative financial strength in future and will shape the contour the centre state relations. The subject of Centre-State financial relations in India has received much less attention than it merits in public discourse. Twelfth Finance Commission (TFC) not only ushered in an era of rule-based fiscal consolidation at the State level but also provided the basis for reforms in the management of public debt, both at the State and Central levels.

The fiscal capacities of the States as measured by the per capita income continue to vary widely even after six decades of federal financial devolution and economic planning. The disparity between the highest and the lowest is in the ratio of four-to-one. As a consequence, there is an uneven provision of public services across different States, including 'merit goods' such as education and health services.

This inter-State inequality on account of differences in fiscal capacity is further compounded by two factors. The States with low income levels have a large population. It means they have to transfer huge additional resources if there has to be any impact at all. Further, some

States have certain "cost disabilities" because of the vastness of the area or other geographical and climatic factors. An explicit equalisation methodology is yet to be developed to tackle this systemic problem.

Way Forward

A number of the govt. proposals, including the Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill 2011, Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill 2011, National Commission for Human Resources for Health (NCHRH) Bill 2011, Border Security Force (Amendment) Bill 2011, the setting up of the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC) and the issue of Central Sales Tax (CST) compensation have received flak on the grounds that the Centre is trying to destabilise the federal structure by undermining the powers and position of state governments.

The Inter-State Council (ISC), set up in 1990 following the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, is eminently qualified to make a contribution in today's scenario. Unfortunately, it has been lying dormant for many years, with its last meeting held in 2006. The full ISC did not meet even once during P.V. Narasimha Rao's tenure and it met only twice during the UPA 1 regime.

Caste-based political parties and casteist political leaders are the emerging trends in Indian politics. Mamata Banerjee, J. Jayalalithaa and Nitish Kumar, who are championing the cause of states today, are more interested in getting better grants from centre rather than emergence of true federalism. These defenders of state rights have had no qualms in using central intervention powers to suit the interests of their respective parties. As allies in the 1998-99 BJP-led coalition, the Trinamool Congress, the AIADMK and the Samata Party had pressured the Centre to dismiss the West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Bihar governments respectively. Partisan role played by governor is another area of discord between centre and states.

Only the spirit of "co-operative federalism" — and not an attitude of dominance or superiority — can preserve the balance between the Union and the States and promote the good of the people. Under our constitutional system, no single entity can claim superiority. Sovereignty does not lie in any one institution or in any one wing of the government. The power

of governance is distributed in several organs and institutions – a sine qua non for good governance. Even if we assume that the Centre has been given a certain dominance over the States, that dominance should be used strictly for the purpose intended, not for oblique purposes. An unusual and extraordinary power like the one contained in Article 356 should not be employed for furthering the prospects of a political party or to destabilise a duly elected government and a duly constituted Legislative Assembly. A dictatorial marshalling of the regions was never envisaged by the Constitution makers. The Article which allows a highly interventionist role to the Centre should be reinterpreted in order to allow the spirit of cooperative federalism to emerge.

No federal system thrives exclusively on constitutional or institutional arrangements, guaranteed rights, judicial protection and uniform and efficient bureaucracy. Because, federalism implies political accommodation of heterogeneous people. It is a sort of gregariousness, a faith in the political values and the will to live together called political culture. Federalism at the moment stands at the crossroads in India. With the regional parties at the helm, the demand for greater political autonomy for the states will keep on clashing with the desire to have a stable government at the Centre. And in this struggle will emerge the true federalism for the country in 21st century.

MAJOR ISSUES IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY

COMMUNALISM

For a long time it was held that a close link existed between the modernisation of society and the secularisation of the population. Consequently, it was argued that the influence of religion declined in post-enlightenment society. The impact of these developments in modern world, it is argued, has led to the decline of the relevance and influence of religion. Opposed to the modernisation-secularisation paradigm is the view that the influence of religion in the public sphere has not only not declined, but in fact, has increased. There are tendencies which suggest that there is a worldwide resurgence of religion. Such an impression is based on three factors: missionary expansion, fundamentalist radicalisation and the political instrumentalisation of the potential for

violence. Between these 2 possibilities India started her experiments with Secularism.

A DIFFERENT SECULARISM

The public sphere emerged in Europe in the 18th century within the society as a discursive space in which private individuals came together to discuss matters of public interest. The separation of powers of the state and the church and the enlightenment virtues of reason and humanism, and the economic changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, contributed to the formation of the public sphere and shaped the transactions within it. The existence of the public sphere was contingent upon the access of all citizens to, and protection of individual rights by the rule of law. In essence, the character of the public sphere as it evolved in Europe in the 18th century was secular and democratic.

The formation and development of the public sphere in India during the 19th and 20th centuries had a different trajectory. This was primarily because India was under colonial domination and Indian society did not have the necessary independence to shape its destiny. For a variety of reasons, the ability of the agencies which contributed to the formation of the public sphere in India — such as the media, voluntary organisations and social and religious movements — to constitute a public sphere was restricted. Unlike in Europe the public sphere in India was not the product of a free society; it took shape within the political, social and economic parameters set by the colonial government. Its social base was very weak, consisting of the nascent emerging middle class. The legacy of colonial rule imparted to the public sphere in independent India an internally contradictory character. In terms of conception and constitution the public sphere was democratic and secular, but it was not so in practice.

In India the public sphere reflected the co-existence of the secular and the religious. The media were essentially secular, but an undercurrent of religious consciousness was reflected. The public sphere has succumbed to the celebration of religiosity, based on rituals and superstitions. The official policy of equal recognition of all religions has only led to the reinforcement of this contradiction, because it has opened up more and more public space to all religions. As a result, what has become prominent in the public sphere is not secular reason but religious celebration.

The State's subsidises the Kumbh Mela. Muslims wishing to make the Haj pilgrimage receive state support; Sikhs travelling to Gurdwaras of historic importance in Pakistan also get support. The state helps underwrite dozens of pilgrimages, from Amarnath to Kailash Mansarovar.

When India became independent in 1947, a central question the new nation faced was the relation of faith to state. There was a strong movement to create India as a 'Hindu Rashtra', a mirror-image of the Islamic nation that was Pakistan. The person who stood most firmly against this idea was the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. In a letter written to Chief Ministers on October 15, 1947, he reminded them that "we have a Muslim minority who are so large in numbers that they cannot, even if they want to, go anywhere else. They have got to live in India. This is a basic fact about which there can be no argument. Whatever the provocation from Pakistan and whatever the indignities and horrors inflicted on non-Muslims there, we have got to deal with this minority in a civilised manner. We must give them security and the rights of citizens in a democratic State."

Debate on Secularism

Both Jinnah and Golwalkar appeared to believe that a Hindu is a Hindu, and a Muslim a Muslim, and never the twain shall meet. These two men claimed that their views and mentalities, their styles of worship and ways of living, were so utterly different as to not permit them to live peacefully together. The two communities, in other words, were two nations. This interpretation of Hindu-Muslim relations was vigorously contested by the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Down the ages, the interaction of Hindus and Muslims was marked by love and by hate, by conflict as well as by collaboration. There were times when Hindus and Muslims clashed and fought, and other times when they lived together, harmoniously.

Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out in October 1947, 'we have a Muslim minority who are so large in numbers that they cannot, even if they want, go anywhere else. That is a basic fact about which there can be no argument. Whatever the provocation from Pakistan and whatever the indignities and horrors inflicted on non-Muslims there, we have got to deal with this minority in a civilized manner. We must give them security

and the rights of citizens in a democratic State.' Whatever happened—or did not happen—under the rule of Akbar and Aurangzeb in the past, or in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in the present, in the Indian Republic every Indian is guaranteed the same rights.

Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel were not opponents and adversaries. This myth is promoted by advocates of a 'strong' India, by those who believe that Nehru was soft on Pakistan, soft on China, and soft on the minorities. It is usually accompanied by a subsidiary myth, namely, that Patel would have made a 'better' Prime Minister than Nehru. In truth, Nehru and Patel worked superbly as a team—who, in the first, formative years of independence, effectively united and strengthened India. Of course, they differed by temperament and ideology. But these differences were subsumed and transcended by commitment to a common ideal: namely, a free, united, secular and democratic India. There were somethings Nehru could do better than Patel—communing with the masses, relating to the world, assuring vulnerable groups (such as Muslims, Tribals, and Dalits) that they enjoyed equal rights with other Indians. There were some things Patel could do better than Nehru—dealing with the princes, nurturing the Congress party, carrying along dissidents in the Constituent Assembly. Each knew the other's gifts, each took care not to trespass on the other person's turf. That is how, together, they built India anew out of the ruins of Partition. Along with the Kashmir issue, an important sources of consent tension between the two countries was the strong sense of insecurity among Hindus in East Bengal, fuelled primarily by the communal character of Pakistan's political system. This led to the steady migrated of the persecuted Hindus from East Bengal to West Bengal to retaliatory attacks on Muslim in West Bengal, leading to their migration. On 8 April, 1950, the prime ministers of India and Pakistan signed an agreement known as the Nehru-Liaquat pact to resolve the issue of protection of the minorities. The pact met with the strong disapproval of the Hindu communalists and the two ministers from Bengal, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and K.C. Neogi, resigned from the cabinet in protest. This incident clearly demonstrates that communalism has not only led to internal problems but our relations with neighboring countries have also been effected by the scourge of communalism

Some Controversial Incidents

Use of religion for political ends has substantially increased during the last few decades. Such a development has serious implications for a secular state and society. An important feature of Indian politics and administration in the last few decades has been the growing laxity of the state apparatuses especially the police, in their treatment of communal violence. Communalism is an ideology based on the belief that Indian society is divided into religious communities, whose economic, political, social and cultural interests diverge and are even hostile to each other because of their religious differences. Like all ideologies and politics, communalism has a concrete social base or roots; it is the product of and reflects the overall socio-economic and political conditions.

This artificially created base has led to the growth of communalism since the 1960s in form of political opportunism towards communalism practised by political parties, groups and individuals. The soft approach towards communal parties and groups has had the extremely negative consequence of making them respectable and legitimizing communalism. Some of these trends are discussed below in topical framework.

Politics of Ban

The debate on multiculturalism and offensive speech is a burning topic across the world, affecting everything from politics to literature. Secularism today has reached a point where it actually means the state will encourage a cut-throat competition among all shades of religion. A strong movement of secular, democratic-minded people is the need of the hour. The censoring out of Mr. Rushdie from the Jaipur literary festival was not an isolated event. India's constitutionalism is at stake. Every religious festival is increasingly becoming a state-sponsored event. Secular-minded writers and artists find it difficult to publish their creative works for fear of being banned by the state and manhandled by vandals. Instead of making efforts to make our nation truly progressive, our elected representatives have failed us and the Constitution's ideals by bending over backwards to appease faith-based groups. 'We, the people' must ensure that the 'theocratic dystopia' does not reach the monstrous proportions and forms it is capable of.

By violently protesting, the religious fundamentalists obviously want to enforce a ban, otherwise legally unsustainable, on artistic works. The larger purpose is to criminally intimidate free-thinking artists who dare to question the authority of religion and religious scriptures. Freedom of expression is an inviolable, fundamental right in India; it cannot be held to ransom by intolerant, communal, fringe elements who invoke religious sentiments to get away with blatantly unconstitutional acts. In secular India, the right to freedom of religion is on a par with other fundamental rights. One fundamental right cannot infringe on another fundamental right.

Examples are ABOUND

Recent a play in Delhi by acclaimed dramatist K.S. Rajendran was cancelled. He was invited to stage a play at an international seminar on Dara Shikoh – Shah Jahan's heir apparent who lost the struggle of succession to his brother Aurangzeb. The play "Aurangzeb" was written in 1974 in Tamil by Indira Parthasarathy and it explores the transformation of Aurangzeb from a child interested in music and Sufism to someone perceived as a divisive character in history. He used the writings of Sir Jadunath Sarkar, then the Bible on Aurangzeb, for reference. His play came at a time when many states, including Tamil Nadu were uncomfortable with what they saw as an imposition of Hindi on them by the rulers in Delhi. The play is a critique on the one nation-one language-one faith theory.

For the ardent supporters of secularism, Salman Rushdie's censoring-out from the literary festival in Jaipur will be remembered as a milestone that marked the slow motion disintegration of India's secular state. Islamist clerics first pressured the state to stop Mr. Rushdie from entering India; on realising he could not stop, he was scared off with a dubious assassination threat. Fear turned out to be an effective censor. M. F. Hussain, Taslima Nasreen are some other well known names that have been the victim of politics of ban.

India's religious leaders, regardless of their faith, have long been intensely hostile to state regulation of religion – witness the country's failure to rid itself of the faith-based laws that govern our personal lives. In the matter of the perpetuation of their religion, though, the state is a welcome ally.

By citing law and order as the reason for the Viswaroopam ban, the Tamil Nadu government also contributed to the banning culture. All governments speak of their apprehension of law and order disturbances while appearing to appease religious fundamentalists and extremists by enforcing bans on films and other art forms. E.g. the 'Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government, while banning The Da Vinci Code' in 2006, stated that the release of the film might "lead to demonstrations and disrupt peace and tranquillity" in the State. The stone-throwing and arson in Karnataka by fanatics against the publication in a Kannada daily of an article, purportedly by Taslima Nasreen, on wearing of the burka were a nasty challenge to the freedom of expression guaranteed in the Indian Constitution.

Way Forward

"Though nobody can deny that religion survives on faith and no one has the right hurt it. But at the same time there must be a balance between the competing rights i.e. rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion. India must get rid of the exclusiveness in thought and social habit which has made life a prison to her, stunting her spirit and preventing growth" wrote Jawaharlal Nehru in 'The Discovery of India'. It took 350 years for the Church to admit that Galileo Galilei was right. Maybe, it will take longer in India but we need to keep working in that direction.

Babri Masjid Demolition

A mosque was built by a governor of Babur at Ayodhya (in Uttar Pradesh) in the early sixteenth century. Some Hindus claimed in the nineteenth century that it was built over a site which was the place where Ram was born and where a Ram temple had existed. Issue came to forefront in December 1949 when a district magistrate permitted a few Hindus to enter the mosque and instal idols of Sita and Ram there. Sardar Patel, as the Home Minister, and Jawaharlal Nehru condemned the district magistrate's action, but the Uttar Pradesh Government felt that it could not reverse the decision. However, it locked the mosque. The situation was more or less accepted by all as a temporary solution for the period of the dispute in the court.

In 1983, VHP started a public campaign demanding the 'liberation' of the Ram

Janmabhoomi, which would entail the demolition of the mosque and the erection of a Ram temple in its place. Many political parties and groups did not do anything to counter the campaign; they just ignored it. On 1 February, 1986, the district judge reopened the mosque, gave Hindu priests its possession, and permitted Hindus to worship there. The Hindu communalists demanded the demolition of the mosque and the construction of a Ram temple on its site.

In 1989, the VHP, keeping in view the impending Lok Sabha elections, organized a massive movement to start the construction of a Ram temple at the site where the Babri mosque stood. As a part of that objective, it gave a call for the collection of bricks, sanctified by water from the river Ganges, from all over the country to be taken to Ayodhya.

To popularize the objective, it organized in 1990 an All-India Rath Yatra headed by its president, L.K. Advani. The yatra aroused fierce communal passions and was followed by communal riots in large number of places. Thousands of BJP-VHP volunteers gathered at Ayodhya at the end of October 1990, despite the Uttar Pradesh government, headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav, banning the rally. To disperse the volunteers and to prevent them from harming the mosque, the police opened fire on them, killing and injuring over a hundred persons. The BJP-VHP organized a huge rally of over 200,000 volunteers at the site of the mosque on 6 December, 1992, with the major leaders of the two organizations being present.

To allay the fears of injury to the mosque, Kalyan Singh BJP Chief Minister of UP, gave an assurance to the Supreme Court that the mosque would be protected. In spite of the assurance, the volunteers set out to demolish the mosque with hammer blows, while government looked on. The entire country was shocked. Communal riots broke out in many parts of the country, the worst hit being Bombay, Calcutta and Bhopal. The riots in Bombay lasted for nearly a month. In all more than 3,000 people were killed in the riots all over India.

Recently, judicial decisions in Ayodhya case was handed down by the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court when it passed judgment on the title suits regarding ownership of the disputed land on which once stood the Babri Masjid.

What does it mean, for example, that questions of theology should have to be resolved by a court of law? Courts in other democracies are not generally called upon to adjudicate such questions as were brought before the three judges. Has it become something of a habit in India to turn to our courts for matters that cannot by a sensible person be viewed as falling under the purview of jurisprudence or legal reasoning? What does it say about civil society in India that a court should have been asked to adjudicate whether the 'disputed site' was the birthplace of Rama, and what can a court tell us on this matter that might not have been told to us by historians, archaeologists, or other scholars? Do we not have enough resources among us as a people to be able to come to some common understanding on these matters?

Babri Masjid was most likely built with the remnants of a Hindu temple. Many temples were built and destroyed, not always or even often at the hands of the Muslim conqueror; some fell to the elements, others were vandalized, and yet others bore the brunt of battle, sometimes between Indian rulers. The architects and masons picked up pieces of temple sculpture and wove them into the architecture of the new mosque and vice versa. It is instructive that not only Muslims but Hindus and Jains in India, and Christians elsewhere in the world, did exactly the same, utilizing the remains of previous religious structures to build new ones. Much of history, one might go so far as to say, is nothing but spoliation – we plunder and rob not only religious structures but the past, sometimes as the only way of making the past alive, coterminous with the present.

A lot has been said about the lack of enthusiasm for the verdict among the general public. This is because the aam aadmi has become mature enough to realise that the actual beneficiaries of the Ayodhya dispute and the like are politicians and religious leaders. Or aam aadmi is still the communal Hindu or communal Muslim? Is the main question that will decide the future of secularism in India. Since the Ayodhya issue is a matter of faith, it is not so easy to resolve through court interventions. India as a nation-in-making has been unable to evolve a consensus on it. It is ingrained in the minds of Indians and will remain thus as long as religion remains the centre of politics.

Mumbai Riots and 1993 Blasts

It is 20 years since two cataclysmic events shook Bombay now Mumbai. First, – the communal carnage spread over two months. Second, the serial blasts of March 12, 1993, with which terror came home to the city and claiming innocent lives. The Srikrishna Commission, in its final report, said the riots appeared to have been a causative factor for the bomb blasts. Supreme Court has finally disposed of appeals by death row convicts and actor Sanjay Dutt in the March 12, 1993 serial blasts case on March 21, 2013.

Godhra Train burning and Gujarat Riots

The story began on the morning of 27 February at Godhra, town in Gujarat, where a bogey of the Sabarmati Express caught fire. 58 people, including 15 women and 20 children, were burnt to death in the fire. The victims were all Hindus, Karsevaks or volunteers, returning from participating in a yagya or religious ceremony at Ayodhya.

On 28 February began a wave of communal riots that continued for almost three months. The police and administration allegedly looked the other way or even connived and helped. Many observers have remarked that what distinguished the events of 2002 was that, unlike a typical riot situation in which two groups engage in, usually spontaneous, violence, the assault was one-sided, premeditated, brutal, and supported or facilitated by the state. The Gujarat events shook the conscience of the nation. Many high profile cases are being fought in courts and it is believed by many that judiciary alongwith certain well known faces are fighting the seemingly eternal fight against the biggest enemy of State i.e. Communalism.

'Sons of the Soil' Movements

Since the 1950s an ugly kind of regionalism has been widely prevalent in the form of the 'sons of the soil' doctrine. It is based on the view that a state specifically belongs to the main linguistic group inhabiting it or that the state constitutes the exclusive, 'homeland' of its main language speakers who are the 'sons of the soil' or the 'local' residents. All others who live there or are settled there and whose mother tongue is different are 'outsiders'. Language loyalty and regionalism was used to systematically exclude the 'outsiders' from the economic life of a state or city.

The 'sons of the soil' movements have arisen, when there is actual or potential competition for industrial and middle-class jobs, between the migrants and the local middle-class youth. Economic mobility of population through migration of unskilled labour from the backward regions and of skilled labour to them can contribute to the lessening of regional disparity; and the Indian constitution guarantees this mobility. There has been a great deal of migration from one state to another. Some states Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar and Kerala—have benefited from out-migration just as Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra have benefited from in-migration. But economic rationale hardly stays in front of passion.

Most popular movement in public memory was led by the Shiv Sena, off late by MNS also which split from Shiv Sena. This appealed to extreme regional chauvinism and assumed racial proportions. This was founded in 1966, under the leadership of Bal Thackeray. The Shiv Sena demanded that preference in jobs should be given to Maharashtrians, who were defined as those whose mother tongue was Marathi. Raising the slogan of 'Maharashtra for the Maharashtrians', the Shiv Sena organized a militant, and often violent movement against South Indians, especially Tamils. Later north Indian came in the line of fire. The 'sons of the soil' movements in Assam and Telangana have also assumed serious proportions.

CASTE POLITICS

The farmers' movements, dalit mobilisation, the renewed struggles of the agrarian poor, women's discourse, and the new phase of student politics and civil rights articulation in a number of States, are all demonstrative of the vibrant politics of post-Emergency India. During the recent years, caste mobilisation has become an important factor in shaping Indian politics. Ever since the issue of Mandal Commission reservations in government jobs for the OBCs came to the national agenda in 1989, it has left an impact on the evolution of national politics. The practice of reservation has also shown that it is almost impossible to reverse. The constitution had envisaged reservations as a short-term measure lasting ten years; but it is now nearly 66 years. At the same time demands for and acceptance of reservation have only increased. Dinesh Goswami burnt himself to death to

protest the implementation of Mandal Commission, but once out of Pandora's box, genie of OBC reservation could not be negated.

Caste in Modern India

The word caste derives from the Portuguese *casta*, meaning breed, race, or kind. Among the Indian terms that are sometimes translated as caste are *varna*, *jati*, *jat*, *biradri*, and *samaj*. Many castes are traditionally associated with an occupation. There is also some correlation between ritual rank on the caste hierarchy and economic prosperity. Inequalities among castes are considered by the Hindu faithful to be part of the divinely ordained natural order and are expressed in terms of purity and pollution.

The caste stratification of our society is something that has come down to us from centuries. Despite all the refinements and changes within castes and between castes, that have taken place over the years, the basic structure, in so far as the oppression of the dalits or the backward castes is concerned remains. The main reason for this persistence of social oppression based on caste stratification is the inadequacy of the ruling classes, during the freedom struggle, in addressing themselves to this issue. The overcoming of caste differentiation was sought through proper social behaviour between individuals and castes without growing into the social roots of this phenomenon.

Ideologically Jyotiba's movement was an uncompromising attack on the ancient and feudal superstructure. However, this uncompromising attack did not go beyond to attack the basic agrarian relations based on feudal land relations which was the basis on which this superstructure existed. Similar has been the experience of Ambedkar. This most outstanding and tireless fighter, who on behalf of the dalits exposed the upper caste hypocrisies, lambasted the then Congress and its policies had to finally asked his followers to embrace Buddhism to escape the injustices of Hindu society.

Similar also has been the experience of the Dravidian movement led by Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker. Periyar did succeed in creating a great feeling against caste oppression and his voice boomed large against untouchability. But yet again, viewing this merely at the level of superstructure without attacking the socio-economic base that sustains caste stratification.

Universal adult franchise opened up new possibilities for mobilising electoral support on the basis of caste and thus prevented the consciousness of caste from dying down. Democracy was expected to efface the distinctions of caste, but its consequences have been very different from what was expected. Politics is no doubt an important part of a nation's life in a democracy, but it is not the only part of it. There are other areas of life in which the consciousness of caste has been dying down, though not very rapidly or dramatically.

The consciousness of caste is brought to the fore at the time of elections. The mobilisation of electoral support on the basis of caste is a complex phenomenon whose outcome gives scope for endless speculation. Private television channels have created a whole world in which their anchors and the experts who are regularly at their disposal vie with each other to bring out the significance of the "caste factor," meaning the rivalries and alliances among castes, sub-castes and groups of castes.

The system of parliamentary democracy that was adopted was based on an electoral system which tended to reinforce the caste consciousness. Instead of guaranteeing equality, irrespective of caste, the electoral system, itself, nurtured the perpetuation of caste consciousness in terms of choice of candidates and the appeal to the electorate.

Politics of Caste and Reservation

Govt. has come in favour of enumeration of castes in special census. The ostensible need to include enumeration of the backward castes (BCs) flows from the Mandal Commission recommendations, which mandated monitoring of their progress after 20 years from their implementation. Before the 2001 Census began, there was a demand made for such inclusion in the census. But this proposal was turned down by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which controls the census organisation. This time although the government created turbulence around the issue by referring it to the GoM, which accepted it.

The core rationale for this caste census may thus lie in the technical requirement arising from the acceptance of the Mandal Commission recommendations to extend reservations to the OBCs. Mandal recommendations and particularly their acceptance by the V.P. Singh

government in 1989 will be an ominous mark on the path of annihilation of castes. It gave a new lease of life to castes. The entire caste game was played in the name of the Constitution, which rather had reference to class and individuals. The Constitution under Articles 15 (4), 16(4), 46 and 340 refers to "socially and educationally backward classes" or "backward class citizens". In the country in which peoples' politics is stuck on the unfortunate duality of caste and class, the State as well as the judiciary interpreted class in the Constitution to be synonymous with "caste".

The intention of the recent high court order to stay caste-based rallies might have been to check politics on caste and communal lines but the political parties in the state will find ways to bypass it for caste based politics. It is extremely difficult to find the most acceptable stand on the issue of caste, when passions run high on both sides of issue. But one thing is sure that caste politics will remain a part of Indian political landscape for a long time to come.

Dalit Political Uprising

Kanshi Ram (March 15th, 1934 to October 8th, 2006) is lovingly referred and remembered as 'Saheb' (in Maharashtra) or 'Sahab' (in North India) or as 'Manyavar' among his followers. He remained most enigmatic personality throughout 1980s and 90s who played the most significant role in Indian politics after Independence. It is believed by many that he proved that politics of socially marginalized and poor people can also succeed without the help of literate, intellectuals, business houses and urban gentry. He single-handedly changed the mainstream politics of the most populated State Uttar Pradesh and thereby, the Indian polity itself.

Kanshi Ram believed in democratic values and constitutional provisions. He was convinced of power of political elections and voting rights which have been enshrined in the constitution to all. He believed that right of votes is a valuable equalizer; with 'one man-one vote and one vote-one value'. However this can help only when 'you learn to use it meticulously'. His following slogans prove his deep faith in the Indian democracy. "Vote Humara Raj Tumhara Nahi Chalega - Nahi chalega"; (Our Vote and Your Rule, No Longer, No Longer) "Vote Se Lenge PM CM- Arakshan Se Lenge SP-DM" (form votes we will have Prime Minister and Chief Minister

and from reservations Superintendent of Police and District Magistrate); 'Jiski Jitni Sankhya Bhari Uski Utmi Bhagedari' (each community should get according to the percentage of its population).

Kanshi Ram's movement was dynamic in nature. He perpetually experimented by mobilizing people and envisaging a larger goal for his movement by incorporating more and more people in it. He politically socialized them by forming different types of organizations, in his cadre camps which used to run for days and by organizing political programmes which used to run for months. From the life and struggle one can definitely establish that Manyavar was the true inheritor of Babasaheb's legacy; however Manyavar himself always argued that he is only giving a "practical shape to Baba Saheb's theoretical formulation and in turn trying to fulfil the unfinished movement of Baba Saheb".

NAME CHANGE POLITICS

The process of renaming of cities in India started after the end of the British imperial period in 1947 and continues to date. Ever since the British left India in 1947, many cities, streets, places, and buildings throughout India were assigned new "Indian names". India wanted to change the names kept by the British colonialists, & rename them according to their "Sanskritized Hindi roots" or something along those lines. Certain old names, however, continue to be popular. The states whose names have been changed are: Travancore- Cochin to Kerala, Madhya Bharat to Madhya Pradesh, Madras State to Tamil Nadu, Mysore to Karnataka and Uttaranchal to Uttarakhand. The renamed Indian union territories are Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands to Lakshadweep and Pondicherry to Puducherry.

Trend is not limited to India alone. Cities have been renamed to assert local pronunciation over foreign in many countries also. The decision to rename is said to be part of a wider trend to erase the Anglican influence in the naming of states and cities amid demands for carrying out more name changes elsewhere in the country. The reasons that have been cited for renaming cities include: to adjust the spelling in English language to the spelling in the local language. (Simla to Shimla) and to switch back to the local name from an English name derived from the original. A change in the name of a state however requires

approval of Union Cabinet and Parliament under Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitution, and the President has to refer the same to the relevant state legislature for its views.

There have been political controversies about several renaming. Not all proposed renaming were actually implemented. Every renaming of a city in India has to be approved by the central government. The trend of renaming of a state gained momentum after renaming of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. Bombay was renamed Mumbai--derived from name of Goddess Mumbadevi--in 1995 when the Shiv Sena-BJP combine won the Maharashtra Assembly elections. In the following year Madras was renamed to Chennai and in 2001 Calcutta was renamed Kolkata. While Calcutta became Kolkata, West Bengal never got a name change. Alphabetically, West Bengal which is the last in the order of states in the country also hopes to move up in the list with desired name change to Paschimbanga.

The country's Information Technology (IT) capital Bangalore was renamed Bengaluru in 2007 but the younger generation in the Silicon city did not sound too enthusiastic about the name change. It was felt that the image of the city may take a beating worldwide as the name does not sound too appealing or 'modern'. Bangalore was originally known as Benda Kaluru and then became Bengaluru following which the British renamed it as Bangalore. The name change of Orissa to Odisha is another recent change.

Besides, Mumbai, Madras, Calcutta and Bangalore, major cities that have got new names after independence include (old names in brackets): Vadodara (Baroda), Vijayawada (Bejawada) Vishakhapatnam (Waltair; before that, Vizagapatnam), Kadapa (Cuddapah), Shimla (formerly Simla), Kanpur (Cawnpore), Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum), Pune (Poona), Kochi (Cochin), Puducherry (Pondicherry), Kozhikode (Calicut), Udhagamandalam (Ootacamund), Tiruchirapalli (Trichinopoly) Thanjavur (Tanjore), Varanasi (Benares) and Tirunelveli (Tinnevely).

NAXALISM

In 1969, the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (ML) was formed under the leadership of Charu Majumdar. Similar parties and groups were formed in Andhra, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar

Pradesh, Punjab and Kerala. The CP(ML) and other Naxalite groups argued that democracy in India was a sham, the Indian state was fascist and feudal. India was politically and economically dominated by US, British and Soviet imperialisms, Indian polity and economy were still colonial, the Indian revolution was still incomplete, and protracted guerrilla warfare was the form revolution would take in India. The Naxalite groups got political and ideological support from the Chinese government.

In Naxalbari village of West Bengal, CPI(ML) and other Naxalite groups succeeded in organizing armed peasant bands in some rural areas and in attacking policemen and rival communists as agents of the ruling classes. The government, however, succeeded in suppressing them and limiting their influence to a few pockets in the country. Not able to face state repression, the Naxalites soon split into several groups. But the real reason for their failure lay in their inability to root their radicalism in Indian reality, to grasp the character of Indian society and polity.

The major Naxal group in India has been CPI, MCC, CPI(M-L) Liberation, CPI(M-L) Unity organization and Peoples war group. In 2004 PWG and MCC joined together to form Communist Party of India which is at present main organization of all Naxalites in India. It should be noted that all Naxal groups are originated from CPI(M-L) formed in 1969 by Charu Mazumdar and others. Beside violent struggle, the major characteristics of Naxal movement in India have been various splits, disintegration and reorganization and ideological backing. Many of the groups and leaders have accepted parliamentary path to social change, yet other continues to uphold revolutionary ideology.

The Naxalites are wedded to the cult of the gun. Their worship of violence is extreme. They are a grave threat to democracy and democratic values. A democratically elected State Government should tackled their challenge through a two-pronged strategy: (i) smart police work, identifying the areas where the Naxalites are active and isolating their leaders; (ii) sincerely implementing the constitutional provisions guaranteeing the land and tribal forest rights of the adivasis, and improving the delivery of health and education services to them. According to the Home ministry of India at present there are 220

districts in 20 states are affected by naxal violence and force alone can not solve the issue. What is needed is a two-pronged strategy as mentioned above.

AFSPA

AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Power Act) is a bare law with just six sections. The most controversial are those in the fourth and sixth sections: the former enables security forces to “fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death” where laws are being violated. The latter says no criminal prosecution will lie against any person who has taken action under this act. In 54 years, not a single army, or paramilitary officer or soldier has been prosecuted for murder, rape, destruction of property (including the burning of villages in the 1960s in Nagaland and Mizoram).

Some time ago, two judges of the Supreme Court, intervening in a case where the Central Bureau of Investigation was seeking to prosecute army officers accused of murdering five villagers in Jammu & Kashmir, in what is known as the Pathribal incident, declared clearly that AFSPA’s protection was limited to acts conducted in the line of duty. Army circles are worried that soldiers and officers will be dragged to civilian courts and that frivolous cases will be filed against them. This is a real matter of concern but it cannot be the rationale for blocking efforts to repeal or amend AFSPA.

We need to remember two points here about AFSPA and the place where it all began — Nagaland, in 1958. Nagaland today is peaceful. It is not free of intimidation, extortion or factional killings, but not a single Indian soldier has fallen in combat here for the past five years. The State government has been asking, since 2005, for the removal of the Disturbed Areas Act but with no results. In 2005, The Reddy Committee gave its report, which not only recommended AFSPA’s repeal but also proposed a legal mechanism by which the Army could be used in extraordinary situations involving national security

This act and numerous other that have been reportedly misused by the security forces show the important role played by the legislative bodies in facing the menace of terrorism and insurgency. A too lax law and a too rigid law-both can be counterproductive.

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE & NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Article 44 of the Constitution of India reads: 'The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India'. The objective of this article is to effect an integration of India by bringing all communities into a common platform which is at present governed by personal laws which do not form the essence of any religion. At the same time, Article 37 of the Constitution makes it very clear that the provisions contained in the Directive Principles of State Policy are not enforceable by any court of law and therefore, the courts have no jurisdiction over them.

History behind UCC

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the first Law Minister, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, were both modernists who wished to reform archaic personal laws and bring them in line with progressive notions of gender justice. They were both committed, in theory, to a Uniform Civil Code. However, faced with the bitter opposition of Muslim members in the Constituent Assembly, they decided to begin with the reform of the personal laws of the Hindus, a community whose liberal wing was both influential and articulate. All the same, it took them all of eight years to pass the laws that finally made caste irrelevant in marriage, allowed Hindu women the right to choose or divorce their marriage partners, abolished bigamy and polygamy among Hindus, and granted Hindu daughters and wives rights in the property of their fathers and husbands. The opposition to the reform of the Hindu personal laws was led by the Jana Sangh and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. The laws being drafted to allow personal choice in marriage and inheritance rights to daughters were denounced as intrusion in Hindu society. On the other side, the Socialists and Communists chastised the Government for not reforming the personal laws of all communities.

UCC generally refers to that part of law which deals with family affairs of an individual and denotes uniform law for all citizens, irrespective of his/her religion, caste or tribe. Laws relating to crime and punishment are uniform for all citizens. So are the laws relating to commerce, contracts and other economic affairs. However, family affairs such as

marriage, divorce, inheritance, guardianship and adoption are legally permitted to be governed by customs or rules applicable to the persons and their community. This has been the practise from the time of British rule (even before that), because it was considered prudent not to disturb the people's religious and community customs as far as their private affairs are concerned. The same position continued even after the independence and people were permitted to follow their respective personal laws.

Over the period, there have been attempts to codify personal laws applicable to each religious group. The codified personal laws relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance are mainly: The Indian Christian Marriage Act of 1872 (applicable to whole of India except areas of erstwhile Travancore-Cochin, Manipur and Jammu & Kashmir); Anand Marriage Act, 1909 (For Sikh marriages); Cochin Christian Civil Marriage Act of 1920 (applicable for Travancore-Cochin areas); Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 (making Shariat laws applicable to Indian Muslims); The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1937; Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (applicable to not merely Hindus, Buddhists and Jains but also to any person who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew, and who is not governed by any other law). While Indian Parliament has enacted a secular law for marriages (The Special Marriage Act, 1954) that provides a system of marriage irrespective of the religion or faith followed by either party to the marriage, the number of marriages that occurs under this system is still negligible.

The Shah Bano Case

Shah Bano case was a milestone in the Muslim women's search for justice and the beginning of the political battle over personal law. A 60-year-old woman went to court asking maintenance from her husband who had divorced her. The court ruled in her favour. Shah Bano was entitled to maintenance from her ex-husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code like any other Indian woman. The judgment was not the first granting a divorced Muslim woman maintenance under Section 125. But a voluble orthodoxy deemed the verdict an attack on Islam.

The Congress Government under the pressure of the orthodoxy enacted the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986. The most controversial provision of the Act

was that it gave a Muslim woman the right to maintenance for the period of 'iddat' (about three months) after the divorce, and shifted the onus of maintaining her to her relatives or the Wakf Board. The Act was seen as discriminatory as it denied divorced Muslim women the right to basic maintenance which women of other faiths had recourse to under secular law.

The Bharatiya Janata Party saw it as 'appeasement' of the minority community and discriminatory. The Shah Bano judgement was a landmark in our social and political history for a large number of reasons. This case was different because Shah Bano's former husband was a lawyer and could appeal to the Supreme Court against the judgements given in her favour by the lower courts. Chief Justice Y.V. Chandrachud delivered a verdict in Shah Bano's favour with certain observations that attracted wrath of hardliners. This elicited a protest from many sections of Muslims who also took to the streets against what they saw, and what they were led to believe, was an attack on their religion and their right to their own religious personal laws.

In 1984, Rajiv Gandhi led his party to victory but soon found his government faltering when his finance minister, V.P. Singh, levelled serious charges of corruption against the Congress. Faced with a situation in which a huge number of Muslims were protesting on the streets Government did not enact a law in Parliament overturning the Supreme Court judgement. Rajiv Gandhi took two political decisions which would have momentous and disastrous results: he pushed through an Act of Parliament which denied Muslim women the right to demand maintenance from their former husbands and gave the green signal to the Uttar Pradesh Government to unlock the gates to the makeshift Ram Mandir set up surreptitiously inside the Babri Masjid. Then, the premises were locked by the court while the case was sub judice. Many political commentators have argued that this attempt to appease the fundamentalists of both communities gave the BJP an issue that ensured its future electoral successes; and an immediate electoral victory to the Janata Dal which benefited from Muslim anger being converted into votes.

Road ahead

The bogey that a uniform civil code necessarily entails the repeal of personal laws

needs to be laid to rest. This is simply not so. In most probable case, if enacted, a uniform civil code will be one among many and, like 'The Special Marriage Act, an option. This is guaranteed by the constitutional provisions pertaining to the right to freedom of religion. While religious ideologues have been responsible for derailing a rational debate on a uniform code, secularists have done the nation grave disservice by opposing movement towards a uniform code or reform of personal law. A touch-me-not secularism has resulted installing the process of modernisation and social reform.

A uniform code has been wrongly posited as an assault on religion and religious identities. What it essentially aims at is secular reform of property relations in respect of which all religious traditions have grossly discriminated against women. A uniform civil code is, therefore, foremost a matter of gender justice. But male chauvinism and greed have joined with religious conservatism to forge an unholy alliance to perpetuate a major source of gender discrimination thereby impeding the modernisation of social relations and national integration.

Personal Laws and Status of Women

The most significant manner in which personal laws in civil matters affect the rights discourse is by delineating rights for women belonging to their respective religious communities. The 'family' remains one of the most contested sites of women's rights. One of biggest criticism working against personal laws is that these antiquated provisions are discriminatory towards women and seek to undermine their position within the private domain. There is a compelling need to study the personal religious laws from a human rights perspective. India has time and again pledged its commitment to upholding the normative regime of human rights, be it in the provisions of the Constitution or the terms of the various international covenants and treaties.

Principles of equality, non-discrimination and fairness which form an essential part of the human rights discourse are the subject matter of the debate regarding personal laws of India. These principles are enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution, Fundamental Right and the Directive Principles. Gender equality is a facet of equality and it is one of the basic principles of the Constitution. Moreover, the doctrine of

equality as enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution of India is not merely formal equality before the law but embodies the concept of real and substantive equality which strikes at all the inequalities arising on account of vast historical, socio-economic and customary differentiation. Thus, we see that Article 15(3) of the Constitution empowers the State to make special provisions for protection of women and children. Article 25(2) mandate that social reform and welfare can be provided irrespective of the right to freedom of religion. Article 44 which directs the state to secure for its citizens a Uniform Civil Code throughout the territory of India is the cornerstone for women's equality in the country and must be urgently implemented so as to eliminate antiquated discriminatory norms of religious laws.

A major feminist critique of the current human rights discourse is that anti-discrimination measures cannot concern themselves only with conduct of public officials, that is to say, with relations between individuals and government. Discrimination in the 'private' sphere of home, workplace and school must also be addressed, given the power vested in the institutions of family and the community to arbitrate the women's rights and freedoms.

Solution

The demand for UCC gathered pace after the Shah Bano controversy. The reform of family law has become deeply politicized, subject to the pressures of party politics rather than governed by the principles of gender justice or the ideals of the Indian Constitution. But, as Shabana Azmi has pointed out, 'for far too long women have been victimized and justice has been denied to them under the pretence of personal law'. This is true of formal Muslim law but also of customary Hindu law, as in the still powerful caste councils that ostracize women who dare marry outside their community. There is thus 'an urgent need to cull out the just and equitable laws of all religions and form a blueprint for a uniform civil code based on gender justice'.

There is a larger reason for a uniform code. With the slow but steady empowerment, modernisation and even globalisation of Indian society, the country's real diversity is becoming manifest. Today, with growing education, migration and economic and social mobility, unknown and earlier socially prohibited

relationships (for example, inter-caste, inter-regional, inter-community marriages and divorce and the acquisition and disposal of self-acquired property by women) are becoming increasingly common. In the circumstances, there could be social breakdown, heartburn and strife even among couples of the same community without a uniform civil code. Traditional personal codes do not accommodate emerging multicultural realities and aspirations. On the other hand, suppressing them could engender violence or deviant behaviour, undermining public order. 'The Special Marriage Act' fortunately provides a safety valve. But it is absurd and regressive that Muslim and Christian Indians cannot legally adopt a child for lack of a uniform code on adoption.

The country needs a twin strategy. An optional uniform civil law should be promoted by the state. Clerics, among others, should be heard but must not prevail on issues of secular life that are beyond their province. This is essential if we are to invest new meaning in India's secular ideal and rescue Muslims from malicious accusations of hindering national integration. At the same time, all religious communities must be encouraged to debate and support codification and reform of personal laws. If, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan and Indonesia have reformed Muslim personal law, there is no reason why Muslim Indians should not follow suit.

A uniform civil code will focus on rights, leaving the rituals embodied in personal law intact within the bounds of constitutional propriety. Being optional, it will provide free choice and facilitate harmonisation of social relationships across the country in keeping with the changing contours of emerging societal realities. A uniform civil code should not be constructed, as sometimes suggested, by putting together the best elements from various existing personal codes. This will invite contention. It is far better that a uniform code is framed *de novo* by somebody like the Law Commission, in consultation with relevant experts and interests, as a citizens' charter governing family relations.

A liberal, forward-looking uniform civil code may be expected to win many adherents, especially from those with cross-cultural backgrounds. This could in time induce custodians of faith to look inwards and seek to

codify and reform age-old personal laws in conformity with current modernising and integrative tendencies or risk losing their flock.

ECONOMIC CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION

Evolution of Economy

In 1947, the country was poor and shattered by the violence and economic and physical disruption involved in the partition. The economy had stagnated since the late nineteenth century, and industrial development had been restrained to preserve the area as a market for British manufacturers. At independence the economy was predominantly agrarian. Moreover, the structural economic problems inherited at independence were exacerbated by the costs associated with the partition of British India. The settlement of refugees was a considerable financial strain. Partition also divided complementary economic zones. Under the British, jute and cotton were grown in the eastern part of Bengal, the area that became East Pakistan (after 1971, Bangladesh), but processing took place mostly in the western part of Bengal, which became the Indian state of West Bengal in 1947. As a result, after independence India had to employ land previously used for food production to cultivate cotton and jute for its mills.

At Independence, the national consensus was in favour of rapid industrialization of the economy which was seen not only as the key to economic development but also to economic sovereignty. In the subsequent years, India's Industrial Policy evolved through successive Industrial Policy Resolutions and Industrial Policy Statements. Specific priorities for industrial development were also laid down in the successive Five Year Plans. After gaining independence it was necessary to give new policy for industrial development, decide priority areas and clear doubts in the minds of private entrepreneurs regarding nationalisation of existing industries.

So, First Industrial Policy Resolution announced in 1948 laid down broad contours of the strategy of industrial development. At that time the Constitution of India had not taken final shape nor was the Planning Commission constituted. Moreover, the necessary legal

framework was also not put in place. Therefore, the Resolution was somewhat broad in its scope and direction. Yet, an important distinction was made among industries to be kept under the exclusive ownership of Government, i.e., the public sector, those reserved for private sector and the joint sector. Bombay Plan prepared earlier, by leading Indian industrialists in 1944-45 had recommended government support for industrialization, including a direct role in the production of capital goods.

Subsequently, the Indian Constitution was adopted in January 1950, the Planning Commission was constituted in March 1950 and the Industrial (Department and Regulation) Act (IDR Act) was enacted in 1951 with the objective of empowering the Government to take necessary steps to regulate the pattern of industrial development through licensing. This paved the way for the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, which was the first comprehensive statement on the strategy for industrial development in India. Indian leaders introduced the five-year plans and agreed that strong economic growth and measures to increase incomes and consumption among the poorest groups were necessary goals for the new nation. Government was assigned an important role in this process, and since 1951 a series of plans have guided the country's economic development. Although there was considerable growth in the 1950s, the long-term rates of growth were less than India's politicians desired and less than those of many other Asian countries.

Industrial Policy Resolution-1956

The Industrial Policy Resolution - 1956 was shaped by the Mahalanobis Model of growth, which suggested that emphasis on heavy industries would lead the economy towards a long term higher growth path. The Resolution widened the scope of the public sector. The objective was to accelerate economic growth and boost the process of industrialization as a means to achieving a socialistic pattern of society. Given the scarce capital and inadequate entrepreneurial base, the Resolution accorded a predominant role to the State to assume direct responsibility for industrial development. All industries of basic and strategic importance and those in the nature of public utility services besides those requiring large scale investment were reserved for the public sector.

The Resolution classified industries into three categories. The first category comprised 17 industries exclusively under the domain of the Government. These included inter alia, railways, air transport, arms and ammunition, iron and steel and atomic energy. The second category comprised 12 industries, which were envisaged to be progressively State owned but private sector was expected to supplement the efforts of the State. The third category contained all the remaining industries and it was expected that private sector would initiate development of these industries but they would remain open for the State as well. Despite the demarcation of industries into separate categories, the Resolution was flexible enough to allow the required adjustments and modifications in the national interest.

Another objective spelt out in the Industrial Policy Resolution-1956 was the removal of regional disparities through development of regions with low industrial base. Accordingly, adequate infrastructure for industrial development of such regions was duly emphasized. Given the potential to provide large-scale employment, the Resolution reiterated the Government's determination to provide all sorts of assistance to small and cottage industries for wider dispersal of the industrial base and more equitable distribution of income. The Resolution, in fact, reflected the prevalent value system of India in the early 1950s, which was centered around self sufficiency in industrial production. The Industrial Policy Resolution 1956 – was a landmark policy statement and it formed the basis of subsequent policy announcements.

1960s and 1970s

Before independence there was a strong tendency for ownership or control of much of the large-scale private industrial economy to be concentrated in managing agencies, which became powerful under the British because they had access to London money markets. Through diversified investments and interlocking directorates, the individuals who controlled the managing agencies controlled much of the pre-independence economy. Private trading and industrial conglomerates existed under the British and continued after independence. The government viewed the conglomerates with suspicion, believing that they often manipulated markets and prices for their own profit.

After independence the government instituted licensing controls on new businesses, especially in manufacturing, and on expanding capacity in existing businesses. In the 1960s, when shortages of goods were extensive, considerable criticism was leveled at traders for manipulating markets and prices. 'Monopolies Inquiry Commission' (MIC) was set up in 1964 to review various aspects pertaining to concentration of economic power and operations of industrial licensing under the IDR Act, 1951 (Industries Development and Regulation Act). While emphasizing that the planned economy contributed to the growth of industry, the Report by MIC concluded that the industrial licensing system enabled big business houses to obtain disproportionately large share of licenses which had led to pre-emption and foreclosure of capacity.

Subsequently, the Industrial Licensing Policy Inquiry Committee (Dutt Committee), constituted in 1967, recommended that larger industrial houses should be given licenses only for setting up industry in core and heavy investment sectors, thereby necessitating reorientation of industrial licensing policy. In 1969, The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act was introduced to enable the Government to effectively control concentration of economic power. The MRTP Act, 1969 defined large business houses as those with assets of Rs. 200 million and above. Large industries were designated as MRTP companies and were not eligible to participate in industries that were reserved for the Government or the Small scale sector.

The new Industrial Licensing Policy of 1970 classified industries into four categories. First category, termed as 'Core Sector', consisted of basic, critical and strategic industries. Second category termed as 'Heavy Investment Sector', comprised projects involving investment of more than Rs. 50 million. The third category, the 'Middle Sector' consisted of projects with investment in the range of Rs. 10 million to Rs. 50 million. The fourth category was 'Delicensed Sector', in which investment was less than Rs. 10 million and was exempted from licensing requirements.

Structural deficiencies, such as the need for institutional changes in agriculture and the inefficiency of much of the industrial sector, also contributed to economic stagnation. Wars with

China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971; a flood of refugees from East Pakistan in 1971; droughts in 1965, 1966, 1971, and 1972; currency devaluation in 1966; and the first world oil crisis, in 1973-74, all jolted the economy.

Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Act 1970, which was designed to provide the government with additional information on the structure and investments of all firms that had assets of more than Rs. 200 million, to strengthen the licensing system in order to decrease the concentration of private economic power, and to place restraints on certain business practices considered contrary to the public interest. The act emphasized the government's aversion to large companies in the private sector, but critics contended that the act resulted from political motives and not from a strong case against big firms. The act and subsequent enforcement restrained private investment. The extensive controls, the large public sector, and the many government programs contributed to a substantial growth in the administrative structure of government.

The government also sought to take on many of the unemployed. The result was a swollen, inefficient bureaucracy that took inordinate amounts of time to process applications and forms. Business leaders complained that they spent more time getting government approval than running their companies. Many observers also reported extensive corruption in the huge bureaucracy. One consequence was the development of a large underground economy in small-scale enterprises and the services sector.

Industrialization occurred in a protected environment, which led to distortions that, after the mid-1960s, contributed to the sagging industrial growth rate. Tariffs and quantitative controls largely kept foreign competition out of the domestic market, and most Indian manufacturers looked on exports only as a residual possibility. Industry paid insufficient attention to the quality of products, technological development elsewhere, and economies of scale. Management was weak in many private and public plants.

80s: THE WATERSHED YEARS

Beginning in the late 1970s, successive Indian governments sought to reduce state control of the economy. Progress toward that goal was slow but steady, and many analysts attributed the

stronger growth of the 1980s to those efforts. The realization started occurring to country that a situation as usual approach might have to be changed, but country needed a shock to do the course correction, which came in early 1990s.

The rate of growth improved in the 1980s. A high rate of investment was a major factor in improved economic growth. Investment went from about 19 per cent of GDP in the early 1970s to nearly 25 per cent in the early 1980s. India, however, required a higher rate of investment to attain comparable economic growth than did most other low-income developing countries, indicating a lower rate of return on investments. Part of the adverse Indian experience was explained by investment in large, long-gestating, capital-intensive projects, such as electric power, irrigation, and infrastructure. However, delayed completions, cost overruns, and under-use of capacity were contributing factors. Private savings financed most of India's investment, but by the mid-1980s further growth in private savings was difficult because they were already at quite a high level. As a result, during the late 1980s India relied increasingly on borrowing from foreign sources

POLICIES AFTER 1991

Until 1991, India's policy makers followed misguided policies that closed the economy to international trade, erected inefficient industries under state guidance, riddled the private sector with extraordinarily cumbersome and detailed regulations, and suffocated private economic activity with controls and bureaucratic impediments. Then in 1991, the big breakthrough happened. Spurred by a balance of payments crisis, Indian policy makers turned to technocrats such as Manmohan Singh, who promptly began the process of liberalizing the economy. Trade barriers were slashed, foreign investment was welcomed, the license raj was dismantled, and privatization began. The economy started to boom, with software exports and call centers leading the way.

Foreign lending had virtually dried up, the government was forced to sell 20 tonnes of gold to the Union Bank of Switzerland in March 1991 to tide over its immediate transactions. By July 1991, foreign exchange reserves were down to a mere two weeks' import cover despite loans from the IMF. The country was at the edge of default.

New Economic Policy of 1991 was a

Structural Adjustment Program that allowed India to qualify for aid from the World Bank and IMF. In 1990, India faced an economic crisis and was on the brink of default on its debts. Within weeks of announcing the reform package, the government devalued the rupee by 23 per cent (The devaluation of the rupee had been advocated by the World Bank since October 1990, when it recommended a 20 per cent devaluation), raised interest rates, and effected sharp cuts in subsidies on food and fertilizers and transfers to public enterprises. Over the next six months, it abolished the complex system of industrial and import licensing, liberalized trade policy, and introduced measures to strengthen capital markets and institutions.

Among other measures, the new policies announced by Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in July 1991 included allowing foreign firms to own a 51 per cent stake in joint ventures in India instead of the previous 40 per cent. The government also eliminated requirements for some 7,500 licenses, eliminated financial support for in form of export subsidies, and allowed exporters to keep 30 per cent of their net foreign exchange earnings (an increase from 5-10 percent).

On December 5, 1991, the World Bank made its largest Structural Adjustment Loan to date: \$500 to India. The watershed reforms contained in the first budget the new Narasimha Rao government submitted in June excited the Bank, and fast track negotiations began. Initially, India was to receive \$300 million, followed by the remaining \$200 million a year later if the structural adjustment policies it agreed to remained in place.

Before 1991, India was a nation with political independence but no economic freedom. If the license and permit tied India down, they also stifled individual aspirations. In the early 1990s, India's post independence development pattern of strong centralized planning, regulation and control of private enterprise, state ownership of many large units of production, trade protectionism, and strict limits on foreign capital was increasingly questioned not only by policy makers but also by most of the intelligentsia. During this period, considerable progress was made in loosening government regulations, especially in the area of foreign trade. Many restrictions on private companies were lifted, and new areas were opened to private capital.

However, India remains one of the world's most tightly regulated major economies. Many powerful vested interests, including private firms that have benefited from protectionism, labor unions, and much of the bureaucracy, opposed liberalization. Besides, many analysts agree that the poor suffered most from the increased inflation rate and reduced growth rate.

India's economic performance during the first three decades since independence was christened the "Hindu" rate of growth, a term connoting a disappointing but not disastrous outcome. That cliché, of course, is gradually lapsing into disuse thanks to the remarkable transformation in India during the last two decades. Since 1980, its economic growth rate has more than doubled, rising from 1.7 per cent (in per-capita terms) in 1950-1980 to 3.8 per cent in 1980-2000. Shackled by the socialist policies and the "license-permit-quota raj" (to use Rajaji's memorable phrase) of the past, India used to serve as the exemplar of development strategies gone wrong. It has now become the latest poster child for how economic growth can be unleashed with a turn towards free markets and open trade. India has yet to catch up to China's growth rates, but thanks to its solid democratic institutions and impressive performance in information technology, the country is increasingly vying with, if not displacing, China as the country of the future in the eyes of many knowledgeable observers.

By the early 1990s, economic changes led to the growth in the number of Indians with significant economic resources. About 10 million Indians are considered upper class, and roughly 300 million are part of the rapidly increasing middle class. Typical middle-class occupations include owning a small business or being a corporate executive, lawyer, physician, white-collar worker, or land-owning farmer. In the 1980s, the growth of the middle class was reflected in the increased consumption of consumer durables, such as televisions, refrigerators, motorcycles, and automobiles. In the early 1990s, domestic and foreign businesses hoped to take advantage of India's economic liberalization to increase the range of consumer products offered to this market.

As India moved into the mid-1990s, the economic outlook was mixed. Most analysts believed that economic liberalization would continue, although there was disagreement

about the speed and scale of the measures that would be implemented. It seemed likely that India would come close to or equal the relatively impressive rate of economic growth attained in the 1980s, but that the poorest sections of the population might not benefit.

By the mid-1990s, the number of sectors reserved for public ownership was slashed, and private-sector investment was encouraged in areas such as energy, steel, oil refining and exploration, road building, air transportation, and telecommunications. An area still closed to the private sector in the mid-1990s was defense industry. Foreign-exchange regulations were liberalized, foreign investment was encouraged, and import regulations were simplified. The average import-weighted tariff was reduced.

Despite these changes, the economy remained highly regulated by international standards. Moreover, although import duties had been lowered substantially, they were still high compared to most other countries. Political successes in the mid-1990s by nationalist-oriented political parties led to some backlash against foreign investment in some parts of India. In early 1995, official charges of serving adulterated products were made against a KFC outlet in Bangalore, and Pepsi-Cola products were smashed and advertisements defaced in New Delhi. The most serious backlash occurred in Maharashtra in August 1995 when the Bharatiya Janata Party led state government halted construction of a US\$2.8 million 2,015-megawatt gas-fired electric-power plant being built near Bombay (Mumbai in the Marathi language) by another United States company, Enron Corporation. However these incidents remained more of an aberration.

It is important to characterize appropriately this attitudinal change that took place in the early 1980s. A distinction need to be made between a pro-market and a pro-business orientation. The former focuses on removing impediments to markets, and aims to achieve this through economic liberalization. It favors entrants and consumers. A pro-business orientation, on the other hand, is one that focuses on raising the profitability of the established industrial and commercial establishments. It tends to favor incumbents and producers. Easing restrictions on capacity expansion for incumbents, removing price controls, and reducing corporate taxes (all of which took place during the 1980s) are

examples of pro-business policies, while trade liberalization (which did not take place in any significant form until the 1990s) is the archetypal market-oriented policy.

Two decades of liberalization in India had a favorable impact on the overall growth rate of the economy. This is major improvement given that India's growth rate in the 1970's was very low at 3% and GDP growth in countries like Brazil, Indonesia, Korea, and Mexico was more than twice that of India. Though India's average annual growth rate almost doubled in the eighties to 5.9%, it was still lower than the growth rate in China, Korea and Indonesia. The pick up in GDP growth has helped improve India's global position. Consequently India's position in the global economy has improved from the 8th position in 1991 to 4th place in 2001; when GDP is calculated on a purchasing power parity basis. The slowdown experienced by the Indian economy in the late 1990s, partially due to the East Asian and Southeast Asian crisis and a global slowdown, continued at the turn of the century. The first few years of the new millennium were turbulent with oil price hikes, the 9/11 terrorist attack in the US and a further global slowdown. Despite this, the Ninth Plan period, 1996-97 to 2000-01, experienced an average GDP growth of 5.5 per cent per annum against the target of 6.5 per cent. This demonstrated the post-reform Indian economy's ability to ride through crisis years, maintaining growth rates well above the 'Hindu rate' of 3 to 3.5 per cent.

However, despite the low GDP growth in the first year of the Tenth Plan and the poor performance of agriculture in the Plan period, 2002-03 to 2006-07 growth rate was slightly below the Plan target of 8 per cent. It was a big achievement. A critical aspect in this connection is the savings and investment generated by the economy. Consistently increasing rate of Gross Domestic Savings and Investment as a proportion of GDP in the new millennium led to this type of growth rates. 'Demographic dividend' in the form of high savings rate was going to continue as the already high proportion of the Indian population in the working age group. To ensure fiscal responsibility in view of higher growth rates, a step was taken with the passing of the Fiscal Reforms and Budget Management Act (FRBMA) in August 2003. The Act was aimed at ensuring fiscal prudence. The rules of the Act were aimed at ensuring that

revenue deficits be reduced by half per cent or more of the GDP every year and be eliminated altogether by 31 March 2009. The fiscal deficit was to be reduced by 0.3 per cent or more of the GDP every year and by 31 March, 2009 it was to be no more than 3 per cent of GDP.

The economy growth rates were unprecedented 7.7% per year in the Tenth Plan period. However even at the end of plan, many people in the country still lacked the basic requirements for a decent living in terms of nutrition standards, access to education and basic health, and also to other public services such as water supply and sewerage. Disadvantaged groups, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the minorities had benefited less than they should have. Faster, inclusive and sustainable growth has to be the mantra of government in such conditions. Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) began in very favourable circumstances. But mid way in the plan period worst economic disaster (since 1930 recession) hit the world and Indian economy also. The government scaled down the annual average growth rate of 9 per cent envisaged in the 11th Plan to 8.1 per cent in view of the global economic meltdown that began in 2008. According to official estimates, India achieved an economic growth rate of around 8 per cent during the 11th Five Year Plan period (2007-12). Though, economic growth has slipped to decades' low of 5 per cent in 2012-13, the first year of the 12th Five-Year Plan, due to poor performance of farm, manufacturing and mining sectors, fundamentals of economy are strong and return of Indian growth story is expected sooner. Despite the global economic crisis that engulfed the whole world Indian economy only slowed down and did not go into a declining phase. That shows the resilience and inner strength of Indian Economy.

A hard landing to the discussion is being made here, because the current economic situation will need some time to settle down and only after the present turmoil is over, one would be able to give an account of present developments in a non passionate historical way.

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India's leaders believed that industrialization was the key to economic development. This belief was all the more convincing in India because of the country's large size, substantial natural

resources, and desire to develop its own industries. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 gave government a monopoly in armaments, atomic energy, and railroads, and exclusive rights to develop minerals, the iron and steel industries, aircraft manufacturing, shipbuilding, and manufacturing of telephone and telegraph equipment. Private companies operating in those fields were guaranteed at least ten years more of ownership before the government could take them over. Some still operate as private companies. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 greatly extended the preserve of government. There were seventeen industries exclusively in the public sector. The government took the lead in another twelve industries, but private companies could also engage in production. This resolution covered industries producing capital and intermediate goods. As a result, the private sector was relegated primarily to production of consumer goods.

The public sector also expanded into more services. In 1956 the life insurance business was nationalized, and in 1973 the general insurance business was also acquired by the public sector. Most large commercial banks were nationalized in 1969. Over the years, the Central and State Governments formed agencies, and companies engaged in finance, trading, mineral exploitation, manufacturing, utilities, and transportation. The public sector was extensive and influential throughout the economy, although the value of its assets was small relative to the private sector.

Controls over prices, production, and the use of foreign exchange, which were imposed by the British during World War II, were reinstated soon after independence. The Industries (Development and Regulation) Act of 1951 and the Essential Commodities Act of 1955 (with subsequent additions) provided the legal framework for the government to extend price controls that eventually included steel, cement, drugs, nonferrous metals, chemicals, fertilizer, coal, automobiles, tires and tubes, cotton textiles, food grains, bread, butter, vegetable oils, and other commodities. By the late 1950s, controls were pervasive, regulating investment in industry, prices of many commodities, imports and exports, and the flow of foreign exchange.

Export growth was long ignored. The government's extensive controls and pervasive

licensing requirements created imbalances and structural problems in many parts of the economy. Controls were usually imposed to correct specific problems but often without adequate consideration of their effect on other parts of the economy. For example, the government set low prices for basic foods, transportation, and other commodities and services, a policy designed to protect the living standards of the poor. However, the policy proved counterproductive when the government also limited the output of needed goods and services. Price ceilings were implemented during shortages, but the ceiling frequently contributed to black markets in those commodities and to tax evasion by black-market participants. Import controls and tariff policy stimulated local manufacturers toward production of import-substitution goods, but under conditions devoid of sufficient competition or pressure to be efficient.

India's current economic reforms began in 1985 when the government abolished some of its licensing regulations and other competition-inhibiting controls. Since 1991 more "new economic policies" or reforms have been introduced. Reforms include currency devaluations and making currency partially

convertible, reduced quantitative restrictions on imports, reduced import duties on capital goods, decreases in subsidies, liberalized interest rates, abolition of licenses for most industries, the sale of shares in selected public enterprises, and tax reforms. Although many observers welcomed these changes and attributed the faster growth rate of the economy in the late 1980s to them, others feared that these changes would create more problems than they solved. The growing dependence of the economy on imports, greater vulnerability of its balance of payments, reliance on debt, and the consequent susceptibility to outside pressures on economic policy directions caused concern. The increase in consumerism and the display of conspicuous wealth by the elite exacerbated these fears.

But forces of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation were not only strengthened with time, but also the horizontal spread of area under these forces increased at a faster rate. Promotion of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) by means of raising the cap, constitution of Competition Commission of India in place of MRTP Act, liberal act on foreign currency violations, easy sanction for FDI and FII (Foreign Institutional Investors) etc. point towards the above mentioned fact.

