PGPS S1 04

Indian Political System

SEMESTER I

POLITICAL SCIENCE

BLOCK - 2

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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MASTER OF ARTS
POLITICAL SCIENCE
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INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK-2

This is the second block of the fourth course or paper of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University's M.A. First Semester Programme in Political Science. The fourth course or paper of the MA First Semester Programme in Political Science is titled "Indian Political System". The second block of this course contains seven units- (Units 9-15).

The Ninth Unit deals with the issue of regional aspiration in Assam and discusses the Language Movement and the Assam Movement.

The Tenth Unit also discusses regionalism in India with special reference to the Dravidian Movement.

The Eleventh Unit focuses on the problem of insurgency in India, more particularly in North East India with reference to the insurgent groups like ULFA, NDFB, NSCN.

The Twelfth Unit deals with the party system of India and its recent trends.

The Thirteenth Unit discusses the electoral system of India which is considered to be the basic foundation of any democratic system. It also focuses on the various aspects associated with the voting behaviour of the people of India.

The Fourteenth Unit focuses on the concept of political economy in Indian context, right from the Nehruvian period to the present time.

The Fifteenth Unit discusses various dimensions associated with pressure groups in India.

While going through the units of the block, you will find that unit is further divided into certain sections and sub-sections, wherever necessary, for your better understanding. Again, the units carry certain *activities* after a particular section where needed. These "ACTIVITIES" will provide you the opportunity to practically apply your own thoughts based on the knowledge gained from reading the text in a particular section. Besides, in order to give you additional information on certain relevant topics, you will find a category called "LET US KNOW" after the sections in each unit. Another category that has been included at the end of each section of a particular unit is "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS". The purpose of this category is to help you to asses for yourself as to how thoroughly you have understood a particular section. You may then match your answers with "ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" given at the end of each unit. The section "FURTHER READING" in each unit contains the names of a few books which you might want to consult if you are intereted in learning more elaborately about the concepts discussed in a particular unit. Furthermore, the category called "POSSIBLE QUESTIONS" is intended to give you a hint of the type of questions you are likely to get in the examination.

UNIT 9 : REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS - IDENTITY POLITICS IN ASSAM (LANGUAGE MOVEMENT AND ASSAM MOVEMENT)

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Regional Aspirations and Identity Politics in Assam: Genesis of the Problem

9.4 Language Movement

9.5 Assam Movement

9.6 Critical Assessment

9.7 Let Us Sum Up

9.8 Further Reading

9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.10 Possible Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the roots of identity politics in Assam
- discuss the factors which led to the Language Movement
- discuss the factors which led to the Assam Movement
- critically evaluate both these movements.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Historically, Assam has been a witness to large scale influx of immigrants which contributed to its ethnic and linguistic diversity. Since

the time of British rule, a regular flow of population from outside the state has populated the otherwise sparsely inhabited region. This had led to a feeling of insecurity- both socio-cultural as well as economic- amongst the locals of the region. Added to this insecurity, was the alleged neglect by the Centre in terms of speeding up development in the state, which has, in its extreme form, propelled a tendency to even seek an independent state of its own, by a certain section of the populace. It is noteworthy that given the unique mixture of population in Assam, thanks to the immigration of outsiders, the expression of discord by the locals has often taken the shape of identity politics, in terms of protection of cultural and linguistic identity of the Assamese, rather than seeking any economic redress. Two important events which mark Assam's quest for protection of its indigenous identity are, the Language movement and the Assam movement. Though, both these movements might seem unconnected to each other at first glance to someone who is unaware of Assam's history, in reality the roots of both these movements can be traced in history to the colonial rule. Thus, before we study both the aforementioned movements, let us have a brief look at the historical background which led to these two movements.

9.3 REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN ASSAM : GENESIS OF THE PROBLEM

Conceptually, identity politics refers to social mobilisation or political activity of people who belong to the same race, religion, gender, language, culture or ethnicity, in order to secure their rights against any other dominant group. Identity politics carries with it the fear of being marginalised by the dominant group. This perceived fear of marginalisation leads a particular group to demand for recognition and protection of its identity. In the context of India, such insecurity leads to demands for creation of separate States on the basis of language, in order to protect the linguistic identity of different groups. The identity politics in Assam is also based on protecting the

linguistic identity of the Assamese population. As already mentioned, the roots of identity politics in Assam lie in colonial period.

The British rule over Assam began in the year 1826, as a part of Bengal Presidency. This arrangement continued till 1874, when it was placed under a Chief Commissioner, after attaching three of Bengal's districts with it, viz, Sylhet, Cachar, and Goalpara. In 1905, under Lord Curzon, Bengal was partitioned into two- 'West Bengal' with a majority Hindu Bengalis and 'East Bengal and Assam' which had a majority of Muslim Bengalis. This partition was strongly opposed by both the Hindu Bengalis as well as the Assamese, leading to an annulment of this partition in 1912. Under this new arrangement, Assam was once again made a province, which included the district of Sylhet and Cachar, and was placed under a Chief Commissioner. While Sylhet had a majority of Bengali Muslims, Cachar was dominated by the Bengali Hindus. Such arrangement of boundaries between provinces, done basically for administrative convenience, completely ignored the linguistic, cultural or ethnic aspects of the regions. On the contrary, it might have been done with the motive of preventing a particular section of population from uniting against the British. In fact, when Persian was replaced by Bengali as the Court language of Assam in 1831, it established the dominance of Bengali over other local languages in the region. With passage of time, the youths of the region became aware of how their language was marginalised and how the Bengali speaking population got the important government jobs; Bengali being the official language of the region. This led to opposition by the youth to recognise and replace Assamese as the official language. For instance, Anandaram Dhekiyal Phookan, in 1852 had requested Moffat Mills (Judge of the Sudder Court in Calcutta) , to stop imparting instruction in vernacular schools in Bengali(Sanjib Baruah, 1999, p. 71). Thus, Assam, under colonial rule was never an exclusive territory of the Assamese. This colonial reorganisation of Assam which had a majority of Bengali population, both Hindus and Muslims, is where the perceived threat to Assamese language has its roots.

Further, the British rule also brought with it, new industries in Assam, viz., jute and tea industry, which called for constant supply of labour. This requirement for labour was fulfilled by recruiting people from Chotanagpur, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madras leading to constant immigration in Assam. Added to this was the migration of a majority of Bengali Muslim peasants from East Bengal to Assam. Such large scale immigration continued till 1947, and changed the demography of Assam. The share of percentage of Assamese population had seen a decline as compared to the immigrants, especially the Bengali speaking population. This, as Sandhya Barua notes, had 'made the Assamese anxious about their social and political position' (Sandhya Barua, 1978, pp.70-71).

In fact, in 1937, two renowned intellectuals of the State, Ambikagiri Raichowdhury and Nilmoni Phukan, had formally stated to Nehru, that Assam would support the Congress only on the condition that the latter helped the State to deal with its problem of immigration from Bengal. They also stated that in any situation contrary to this, Assam would support secession from India. All this point towards the fact that problems between Assamese and Bengalis are rooted in history and that it is this rivalry that materialised into the Language Movement as well to a large extent even the Assam Movement, in post-independent India.

9.4 LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

As seen above, the British history of Assam projects a historic rivalry between the Assamese and the Bengali community, wherein the latter is the immigrant and considered a foreigner within the State. With independence and partition of the country in 1947, problems became more complicated. While partition reduced the number of Bengali population in Assam to a considerable degree due to Sylhet's merger East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), it also led to a huge influx of refugees from East Pakistan who were mostly Hindu Bengalis. The Indian Parliament, after many requests from Assam to solve the immigrant crisis, passed the Immigrants (Expulsion

from Assam) Act,1950. Although the Act was intended to remove the immigrants from Assam, it also had an exception which sought to protect those refugees who had fled Pakistan due to any civil disturbance or fear of it and had thereby resided in Assam. Thus, the Act did not solve the 'refugee' issue, and the fear of the Assamese about being outnumbered by the immigrants reappeared once again. Coupled with this fear was the socio-economic effects of resettling the refugees, which troubled the State.

In September 1947, the newly formed Government of the Congress Party, sought to provide some relief to the Assamese population by making Assamese a compulsory second language in those schools where Assamese cannot be made the sole language. This helped raise the number of Assamese educated middle class as well as the consciousness of Assamese nationalism. Organisations such as the Assam Jatiya Mahasabha under its President Ambikagiri Raichoudhury urged the Gopinath Bordoloi government to declare Assamese the state language as well as to make it the medium of instruction in all educational institutions. It further urged that Assamese people should be given preference in recruitment for government jobs.

Independence brought with it changes in the power equation in Assam, as the Assamese now wielded political power, which increased their political mileage over other sections of the populace. The youth demanded that the Bengali signboards in the shops should be replaced with Assamese, that there should not be separate Bengali schools for the Bengali population, and everyone should accept Assamese as their language. Such demands led to riots in 1948 and 1950.The government had also issued instructions to make arrangements for introducing Assamese as a medium of instructions in all schools of the valley. The Cachar District Committee strongly resented this government policy and wanted Bengali medium schools for their community. There was disagreement between the two communities on the question of status of their own languages, as language was intricately linked with employment as well as one's cultural identity: while the Bengalis wanted an equal status between Assamese

and Bengali, the Assamese youth wanted a higher status for their own language. With an eye on government jobs and other economic opportunities, and to counter the assumed Bengali domination, the Assamese initiated a cultural campaign in the State. The Assam Sahitya Sabha declared 16th July 1951 to be observed as 'State Language Day' and requested everyone to cooperate in introducing Assamese in the educational institutions. The day saw violence against the Hindu Bengalis in Nagaon district.

Historically, the Hindu Bengalis were seen as an obstacle and a threat to the development of the Assamese. The reason being that it was the Hindu Bengali who had bagged most of the government jobs during the colonial rule due to Bengali being the official language. Thus, under the changed scenario, the Assamese did not want to share power or economic resources with the Bengali any further. (Gohain,1982, p.165).

It is interesting to note that while the Bengali Muslims and other migrant labourers were schooled in Assamese medium institutions, it was the Hindu Bengalis which insisted on Bengali medium educational institutions.The former realised that learning Assamese would increase their acceptability in Assamese society and make it easier for them to get land. This is one reason behind the swelling of speakers of Assamese language from a mere 3 per cent in 1901 to around 62 per cent in 1951, and the decline of Bengali speakers from 69 per cent to around 17 per cent. In any case, it helped the Assamese from becoming a minority in their own land. (Census of India, 1951, p. 414) The Bengalis viewed this in negative light- as a strategy to implement the policy of making Assamese as the official language.

In 1955, problems once again emerged between the two communities, as West Bengal laid claim on Assam's Goalpara district on the basis of language. Demonstration in favour and against the merger was held by the Bengali and Assamese students respectively. However, the merger did not materialise as the State Reorganisation Commission Act, 1956 did not allow any further division of Assam.

The Official Language issue once again erupted in April 1959, when the Assam Sahitya Sabha urged the government to declare Assamese as the state language by 1960. 'State Language Day' was observed on 9 September 1959, with meetings and resolutions being passed on the issue. The Assam Assembly also debated and discussed the issue with most of the political parties supporting it with the exception of tribal organisations. The Bengal Sangram Parishad wanted that Bengali should be made the second language of the State, and the official language of Cachar district where the Bengalis are in a majority. This was followed by demonstrations and counter demonstrations as well as violence between the Assamese and Bengali speaking population. Slogans were raised, trains were stopped, shops were looted and even people were assaulted.

In the mean time, the government decided to introduce a Bill to declare Assamese as the State language, except in Cachar and other Hill districts where it would be applicable as and when they are ready for it. The decision was not welcomed by the Cachar Congress as it wanted Assam to be made a bi-lingual State with Bengali as the second language. The year 1960 and 1961 saw riots and lawlessness in most of the parts of Assam over the official language issue. However, The Assam Official Language Bill was passed and it stated that:

Assamese shall be used for all or any of the official purpose, of the State of Assam: Provided that the English language, so long as the use thereof is permissible under Article 343 of the Constitution of India, and thereafter Hindi in place of English, shall also be used for such official purposes of the Secretariat and the offices of the Heads of the Departments of the State Government. (http://www.neportal.org/northeastfiles/Assam/ActsOrdinances/Assam_Official_Language_Act_1968.asp)

Not satisfied with the provisions of the Act, the Bengali population in Cachar continued to oppose it. While the Nikhil Assam Bangla Bhasa Samiti submitted a memorandum to the President of India to recognise Bengali as a State language in Assam, the Cachar Sangram Parishad called for total strike on 19 May 1961. Problems got magnified as the Congressmen from

Assam Provincial Committee formed the Bhasa Andolan Samiti to counter the movement by the Bengali population. On the day of strike, 11 persons were killed in police firing in Silchar, while 21 got wounded.

Finally, in order to resolve the issue, the 'Shastri' formula was supposed to be enacted as a measure to bring compromise between the two communities. Among other propositions, the 'Shastri' formula categorically stated that 'Bengali language shall be used for administrative and other official purposes upto and including the district level in the district of Cachar' and that 'the Assam government may consider the release of all prisoners detained in connection with the movement, except those charged with crimes involving violence....' (Suresh K Sharma, 2006, p. 76). However, it satisfied neither of the parties; while the Sangram Parishad was unhappy about Bengali not been made an Official language of the State, the Assam Sahitya Sabha objected to the clause related to continuance of Bengali in Cachar which would affect the status of Assamese language as the sole official language. However, the State government made an amendment to the Official Languages Act, 1960 in accordance with the 'Shastri' Formula.

Riots started once again in 1972, when it was declared by Gauhati University that Assamese would be the medium of instruction in educational institutions under it, except in certain areas with non-Assamese population, viz, Cachar, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and NEFA, where English would be retained. This decision led to a demand in Cachar, to recognise Bengali along with Assamese and English as a medium of instruction in every college of the State. The demand was based on the presumption that the other two Universities would follow suit and make Assamese the medium of instruction in the colleges under them. Following the protest, the Gauhati University Academic Council issued a clarification that students would be allowed to take their examination in either of the three languages- Assamese, Bengali or English. This clarification roused the Assamese students who were completely against answering the exam questions in Bengali, especially by those Bengali students who hailed from Brahmaputra valley. This led the Academic Council to once again revise its decision to allow only Assamese

and English to used to write the examination. This encouraged the Sangram Parishad to launch an agitation once again. As a measure to resolve the crisis, the Chief Minister declared that a separate University would be established which would have under it the colleges in the district of Cachar. However, it did not meet the aspirations of the Sangram Parishad and had even upset the Assamese population in Brahmaputra valley, leading to violence is several places.

9.5 ASSAM MOVEMENT

The Assam Movement (1979-1985) was basically a movement against illegal immigration of people to Assam mostly from Bangladesh and a few from Nepal. Also known as Assam Agitation, it was a popular movement spearheaded by All Assam Students Union (AASU), a students' body, and the Assam Gana Sangram Parishad. The movement, through protests as well as demonstrations, sought to pressurise the government to throw out the illegal immigrants from Assam. The movement was mostly non-violent, expect for Nellie massacre. The movement got over in 1985 after the Assam Accord was signed. The movement can actually be located in history, as already mentioned above, in the clash between the indigenous people of the State and the immigrants from other parts of the country.

The movement started with the beginning of the process of by-election in Mangaldoi constituency, after the death of its Member of Parliament, Hiralal Patwari. The election process brought to light the swelling number of registered voters owing to inclusion of names of immigrants in the voters list. AASU immediately called for postponing of elections till the voters list was updated by deleting the illegal names. The updation was to be done on the basis of 'The National Register of Citizens, 1951'.They also demanded that the Indo-Bangladesh border be permanently sealed.

The movement began with picketing, shutting down of educational institutions and bandhs. The candidates for election were barred from filing nominations till the time their demands were fulfilled. The movement received

a very positive response from the masses and even the gazetted officers, the police as well as printing press cooperated with the leaders of the movement. The lawlessness led to the fall of the Janata Party government in the State in September 1979. An economic blockade was also imposed by refusing to supply plywood, tea as well as crude oil from upper Assam, thereby inviting President's rule in the State in December 1979. *Tez dim tel nidu* ("would give blood but not oil") was the slogan during this phase. Between 1980-1982, the State saw the formation and fall of two governments, each time followed by imposition of Presidents rule. In January 1983, it was decided to conduct elections once again, in an atmosphere which was far from being normal. The movement took a violent turn when on 18 February 1983, when the villagers of Nellie, who were mostly Bengali Muslims, were attacked by a group of tribals and Assamese. Similar attacks followed in other areas as well which included attacks on the Hindu-Bengali displaced people/ex-refugees from East Pakistan. The Central Government tried to control the situation with a strong hand, arresting the government officials who refused to obey the government orders, as well as the student leaders who had participated in the negotiations with the government.

Election was conducted with the help of polling agents from outside Assam, resulting in the formation of government under Hiteshwar Saikia led Congress (I). During the tenure of this government, the *Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act* (IM DT) was passed in October 1983, to be implemented in Assam. The Act laid down the process to detect illegal immigrants who migrated to Assam post 1971, and to deport them to Bangladesh. The Act also sought to protect the 'minorities' in the state, as many of them faced undue harassment during Assam Agitation. This Act was applicable only in Assam, as detection of foreigners' in the rest of country was done under *The Foreigners Act, 1946*. It is believed that the IM(DT) Act was faulty as detection and deportation of illegal immigrants was almost impossible under it. While under the Foreigners' Act, 1946, the onus is on the accused to prove his/her nationality, the IM(DT) Act puts the onus on the complainant to prove that the person accused is a foreigner. It

is noteworthy that the Supreme Court, in July 2005, hadfinally declared it to be unconstitutional after it was challenged in the court under a Public Interest Litigation filed by the then AGP MP Sarbananda Sonowal. The Court observed that the IM(DT) Act created difficulties in identifying and expelling the illegal migrants.

Problems continued in Assam with strikes and hartal being the order of the day throughout 1983. Once again the leaders of the movement were called for negotiations in 1984, when Rajiv Gandhi had become the Prime Minister, following the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Several rounds of negotiations took place between the Government and the AASU-AAGSP between 1984-85, which led to the signing of the Assam Accord on 15th August, 1985 putting an end to the six-year old Assam agitation.

The Assam Accord assured the following points: immigrants who had entered the State between 1951-1961 were to be considered full citizens with right to vote, while those who had entered between 1961-71 would be denied of voting rights for a period of ten years; all those immigrants who came to Assam after 1971 would be considered illegal and thereby deported; an economic package for development of the State was to be granted by the Centre along with creation of few industries, viz. paper mill, oil refinery, and an institute of technology. The Central Government also gave assurance to protect the cultural, social, and linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people. And finally, it was decided to conduct fresh elections in December 1985, after dissolving the existing Assembly.

The movement which saw the death of around 855 protestors, finally ended in 1985 after the newly formed political party, AGP (Asom Gana Parishad) won the elections. The AGP was formed by the AASU leader Prafulla Kumar Mahanta and his colleagues in 1985 with the agenda of dealing with the problem of illegal immigrants. The AGP formed the government in 1985. However, till date none of the governments have been able to implement the Assam Accord or solve the problem of illegal immigration from Bangladesh to the extent desirable.

9.6 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Certain important facts emerge from the identity movements in Assam- the Language Movement as well as the Assam Movement. One, both the movements were characterised by the fear of the Assamese being reduced to a minority in their own State. Secondly, the step-motherly treatment meted out by the Central Government in ensuring growth and development in the region led to economic backwardness of the region and hence the anguish of the Assamese. This has been aptly summarised by Nani Gopal Mahanta's argument on the Assam Movement:

'While the problem of continued influx and the ever-growing pressure on land, coupled with the fear of the Assamese losing their socio-political identity, seemed to be the immediate motivating factors of the movement, it was in actuality a popular outburst against decades of economic neglect of the state by the Central government. It is significant that the immediate popular movement which preceded the Assam Movement was the one led by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) on the issue of economic backwardness of the state' (Mahanta, 2013, p.2)

Third, it is argued that, 'The Assamese people, including intellectuals, are clearly in a dilemma over the issue of language versus religion as the indicator of their identity.'(The Morung Express, 2016). The Language Movement centered around the linguistic identity of the Assamese as against the prevalence of Bengali, since the Muslim-Bengalis and other immigrants such as the tea tribes, were ready to adopt Assamese as their language. On the other hand, the Assam Movement was mostly targeted towards the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. Although the movement began as a largely peaceful one, it did witness some incidents of violence as evident from the Nellie massacre of 1983. (Fernandes, 2005)

Fourth, the role of the political parties in manipulating the situation for electoral gains is also evident. After formation of the government, the AGP could not address the issue of detection and deportation of illegal migration to extent desirable. With regard to the Assam Accord, all the

governments, both at the Centre and the State, have failed to implement its clause 6 which seeks to provide constitutional protection to the indigenous population regarding preservation and promotion of their cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : Who had in 1852 requested Moffat Mills (Judge of the Sudder Court in Calcutta) , to stop imparting instruction in vernacular schools in Bengali ?

.....

Q 2 : The Indian Parliament passed the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act in which year ?

.....

Q 3 : Who was the President of the Assam Jatiya Mahasabha ?

.....

Q 4 : The Assam Agitation was spearheaded by which two organisations?

.....

Q 5 : President's rule in Assam was imposed for the first time in which year ?

.....

Q 6 : The AGP formed the government for the first time in which year?

.....



9.7 LET US SUM UP

- We have seen that Assam has been marred by identity based movements since independence. Both the movements discussed above have their basis in the history of the region, wherein the policies

introduced by the British had created a feeling of cultural as well as economic insecurity amongst the indigenous Assamese population.

- Such feelings got a further aggravated in the post independence period with the perceived threat of Bengali domination over the government jobs as well as culture through their language, which was the official language of Assam in the colonial period.
- Assamese was sought to be made the State language, and through it, they tried to protect their identity as well as get access to the various economic opportunities, which would be unleashed henceforth, leading to a conflict with the Bengalis.
- Further, the influx of illegal immigrants, especially after creation of Bangladesh in 1971, created anxiety amongst the Assamese population owing to pressure on the economic system in general and land in particular.
- Coupled with decades of neglect by the Centre and consequent underdevelopment as well as unemployment, the illegal immigrants issue acted as a catalyst for the youth to initiate a revolution.
- While the Language Movement was more about assertion of linguistic identity of the Assamese especially against the prevalence of Bengalis, the Assam movement was an identity movement targeted mostly towards infiltrators from Bangladesh.



9.8 FURTHER READING

1) Baruah, Sanjib. (2000). *India Against Itself*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
2) Gohain, Hiren. (1984). *Assam: The Burning Question*. Gauhati: Spectrum Publications.
3) Goswami, Sandhya. (1997). *Language Politics in Assam*. New Delhi: Ajanta.
4) Hussain, Monirul. (1994). *The Assam Movement - Class, Ideology and Identity*. Delhi: Manak Publications.

9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : Anandaram Dhekiyal Phookan

Ans to Q. No. 2 : 1950.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : Ambikagiri Raichowdhury

Ans to Q. No. 4 : All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the Assam Gana Sangram Parishad

Ans to Q. No. 5 : 1979

Ans to Q. No. 6 : 1985



9.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1 : Write briefly about the the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act,1950.



Q 2 : Trace the background of regional aspirations and identity politics in Assam.

Q 3 : Discuss the Language Movement in Assam.

Q 4 : Discuss the Assam Movement.

Q 5 : Write briefly about the Shastri Formula.

Q 6 : Write about the Assam Accord.

****

UNIT 10 : REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS - DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Regionalism and Regional Aspirations

10.4 Genesis of the Dravidian Movement: Pre Independence Era

10.5 Dravidian Movement in Independent India

10.6 Critical Analysis of the Dravidian Movement

10.7 Let Us Sum Up

10.8 Further Reading

10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.10 Possible Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- comprehend the concept of regionalism and regional aspiration
- examine the background of the Dravidian Movement in pre-independence era
- discuss the reasons which led to the emergence of the Dravidian Movement
- critically analyse the Dravidian Movement.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Post- independent India had been witness to several autonomy movements, mostly to fulfil regional aspirations in different parts of the country. Such autonomy movements have taken place in different parts of the country, viz., Assam, Punjab, Kashmir. These movements often turned violent, resulting in its suppression by the Central Government. However,

after a prolonged and extensive process of dialogue and negotiation, most of the autonomy movements have been resolved within a peaceful constitutional framework. The Indian Constitution's commitment to diversity and the accommodative approach have ensured that diverse groups can flourish within the ambit of a united country. Also, the adoption of democracy has allowed everyone to express their aspirations, sometimes within the narrow ambit of regional demands, without being considered anti-national. Thus, while on the one hand, democracy helps different groups to freely express their grievances and aspirations, thereby grabbing the attention of the Central Government; on the other hand, it encourages fissiparous tendencies in the country. The problem in democratic nations with diverse languages, religions, cultures and economic conditions, is the maintenance of a healthy balance between issues of regional and national importance. It has been seen that too much attention on a regional issue draws the government away from issues of national importance and vice versa. One of the earliest regional autonomy movements is the Dravidian Movement, which was carried out in erstwhile province of Madras. But before going into the details of this movement, it would be important to find out what regionalism is and how regional aspirations lead to autonomy movements.

10.3 REGIONALISM AND REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Regionalism implies love and attachment for a specific area or region in relation to the entire country. It derives from the term 'region'. A region is a homogeneous area with a shared identity amongst its people and is distinct from the rest of the country. Regionalism can be considered to have both negative as well as a positive connotation. Seen in positive parlance, it implies love for one's area, which can be considered very natural; its negative meaning would imply excessive affection for the region as compared to the rest of the country, and which can lead to secessionist demands. In the context of the Indian union, it may be argued that positive regionalism has made federalism possible, wherein the regions have a certain degree of autonomy over its own affairs. On the other hand, negative regionalism

has led to separatist demands from areas like Kashmir, Nagaland, Punjab (for Khalistan), and Tamil Nadu for Dravidanadu.

Regionalism gives birth to regional aspirations, wherein the regions have the desire to protect their own language, religion, culture, or even their autonomy over their own affairs. They might also seek growth and development of their region. Two very important reasons which gives birth to regionalism are: first, the feeling of continued neglect by the government at the Centre, which is considered to be the reason behind their backwardness; and second, heightened political awareness of the people of the region about their distinct identity which makes it difficult for them to stay with 'others', who they feel are different from them in various aspects.

In India the phenomenon of regionalism was in practice even before independence, when the British tried to foster regional sentiments in order to pit one region against the other and rule the nation through its famous or rather infamous 'divide and rule' policy. Regionalism has remained a very powerful force even after independence and has decisively influenced Indian politics since then. One reason which leads to regionalism in India, is continuous negligence by the Centre of certain regions which leads to backwardness of that area as compared to others.

Many political parties thrive on the basis of keeping the sentiments of regionalism and regional aspirations alive. Parties like the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) in Assam, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu have always focused on regional issues in order to be in power. Political leaders, it has been observed, fuel regional sentiments in order to give shape to their personal ambition of capturing power at the state. They demand the creation of new states often highlighting the issue of protecting the region's distinct identity or to ensure economic development. But the underlying idea sometimes is much narrow, that of capturing power and forming the government in the newly created State. Another factor which accounts for increased regionalism is the creation of states on the basis of language. Linguistic chauvinism raises its head when the majority imposes its language on the minority of a particular state. This

leads to demand for more autonomy or even a separate State by a section of the population. In extreme cases it also leads to demand for secession and establishment of an independent state. For example, the Dravidian movement, discussed below, started off as an anti-Brahmin movement in the pre-independence era, became more of an anti-North Indian and anti-Hindi movement later on with the demand for secession from India. The movement is a typical example where neglect of a section of the population of a region by the dominating caste/class led to a call for a separate independent state.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : State the meaning of regionalism.

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Q 2 : Write briefly about two factors responsible for the emergence of regionalism.

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10.4 GENESIS OF THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT : PRE INDEPENDENCE ERA

The Dravidian Movement, also known as the Non-Brahmin Movement, started off in the pre-independence era, as a fight between the Brahmins and the Non-Brahmins regarding access to the benefits of English education, which indirectly meant access to government jobs and other benefits associated with it. It was an attempt by the non-Brahmins to enter an arena which was forbidden for them and was meant exclusively for the Brahmins. Initially, the movement aimed at establishing a separate state

under the British rule. In order to give shape to the goals of the movement, Dr.C. Natesa Mudaliar started the Dravidian Association in 1916. The Association declared that it would strive to create a Dravidian state with government by and for the Non-Brahmins.

However, the Association was not successful and was soon replaced by the South Indian Liberal Federation, which later on became the Justice Party in 1917. The South Indian Liberal Federation, in its manifesto highlighted the fact that although the Brahmins constituted only 3 percent of the population in erstwhile Madras Presidency, they dominated the government jobs as well as formed the majority in the Legislative Council. The movement sought to revive the non-Brahmins' self-respect.

The leadership of the Justice Party was in the hands of the elite Hindu non-Brahmins from the Madras Presidency which comprised of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and the Malabar. One of the demands of the Justice Party was separate representation of the non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency, which was fulfilled after the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. As a result of this as well as the Congress Party's boycott of the elections in 1920, the results of the elections went in favour of the Justice Party and it was able to form the government. However, the party did not gather mass base owing to its elite character.

Periyar E V Ramaswamy, one of the leaders in the Congress party, had played a very important role in this non-Brahmin movement. Between 1921-1923, he was the Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. During this period, Periyar joined the Vaikom Satyagraha in the state of Travancore (now in Kerela), in support of the rights of the backward castes to have access to temple and to all the public roads. This pitched him against the Brahmins in the Congress party. Periyar, was from the beginning, against the hierarchical social structure which bred discrimination against those at the lower level of the hierarchy. He had joined the Congress party with the hope that he could bring about social reform and establish equality in the society. He believed that education and government jobs could be

made available to the depressed section of the people, with the help of the Congress party. But he soon realised that the hatred towards the non-Brahmins within the party acted as a decisive factor in the party decisions. Therefore, the socially progressive reform measures, which sought to uplift the backward castes were never passed in the party. For instance, after repeated failed attempts of passing the resolution regarding communal representation in the government jobs, which it was believed would help the Dravidian, Periyar left Congress party in 1925 and started the Self-Respect Movement in 1926.

The aims and objectives of the Self-Respect Movement was to achieve equal rights for everyone in every sphere of life, to end the discriminatory caste system and religious practices, do away with child marriage as well as compulsory widowhood. The movement was essentially anti-Brahmin. Inspired by Robert Ingersoll, Periyar had an atheistic orientation and he denounced ritualistic religion wherein the caste system was sanctified. The atheistic side of Self-Respect Movement did not appeal to the non-Brahmin elites. However, the lower caste groups had massively supported the movement. Periyar had joined the Justice Party, after it had accepted his 'Fourteen Points Erode Programme', which was declined by the Congress. In 1938, C. Rajagopalachari proposed to introduce Hindi as a compulsory subject in schools, which led to protest amongst the Tamils as it was considered an attempt by the North Indian Aryans to dominate them. Periyar led the anti-Hindi drive and was even imprisoned. The protests, which involved marches, fasts, picketing, seminars and discussions, lasted for three years. The government responded with stern action against the protestors, and arrested many of them. It also led to of death of two protestors. These protests led the British governor, Lord Erskine, to withdraw this step in 1940 and make Hindi an optional subject.

The anti-Hindi agitation, however, did not stop but led to a call for 'Tamil Nadu for the Tamils'. This, however, did not mean an independent sovereign Tamil Nadu, but one directly under the Secretary of State in London

and not the Viceroy of India. This demand got a further up-gradation with a demand for an independent sovereign Dravidanadu, comprising of Andhra Pradesh, Kerela, Tamil Nadu and Mysore. The underlying assumption of this demand was the belief that Aryans and Dravidians belonged to different races and are not meant to be together. But, this movement did not appeal to the four Southern states and was essentially a movement of the Tamils.

In the meantime, the Justice Party was getting divided into two factions: the radicals, led by Periyar and C N Annadurai, who wanted the party to become mass based rather than being elitist, and the conservatives, who wanted to hold on to their elitist orientation and retain the privileges under the British rule. These contradictory opinions led to a split in the Justice Party, and the formation of the Dravida Kazhagam (henceforth DK) by the radicals under the leadership of Periyar, as well as Annadurai who emerged as the next most important leader after Periyar. The Justice Party had already become weak by 1940, and therefore its goal of protecting Dravidian interests was furthered by the DK. The DK vehemently attacked the unequal Hindu caste system and sought to achieve an independent Dravidanadu. It encouraged inter-caste marriages and widow re-marriage where marriages were not to be solemnized by Brahmin priests. Attempts were also made to remove sanskritic elements from Tamil language and purify it. The movement affirmed regional pride and raised slogans such as 'Dravidanadu Dravidarukke' (the land of the Dravidians belongs only to Dravidians). All these attracted the mass and created a sense of Tamil identity, especially among the youths. With the passage of time, Periyar's leadership caused dissatisfaction while Annadurai became more influential, leading to the formation of a new party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) by the latter.

10.5 DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

After attaining independence, the Jawaharlal Nehru government, in 1948, sought to make Hindi compulsory in the schools across the country.

The Congress government in Madras complied with this order and made Hindi compulsory in schools along with the requirement of securing a designated minimum marks to qualify for promotion to higher classes. This invited anti-Hindi agitation in Madras presidency once again with both Periyar and Annadurai being arrested for leading the movement. Eventually, the government made learning Hindi optional once again.

Formed in 1949, owing to the differences with Periyar, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) after independence took forward its fight against the Brahmin domination. One major point of discord between Periyar and Annadurai was with regard to making DK a political party. This was opposed by Periyar and hence Annadurai formed DMK as a political party which would carry on with the goal of forming independent Dravidanadu. The DMK represented a movement as well as a party. It was 'strongly anti-Brahmin, anti-North Indian and anti-Aryan—southern Brahmins and North Indians being seen as Aryans, all other South Indians as Dravidas' (Bipan Chandra et al, 2008, p. 393).It raised slogans such as: *'therku thaike- rathu, vadaku valarkerathu'*, i e, the South is receding and the North is marching ahead. Their hatred towards the domination of the Aryan race over the South Indians, was the common reason for hating the Brahmins as well as North Indians. The most important demand of the DMK as already mentioned, was an independent homeland for the Dravidians.

Between 1953-54, the DMK started off a three-pronged agitation against the Centre as well as the state in order to protect Tamil interests. The first agitation was against naming of Kallakudi railway station as Dalmiapuram, which honored a north Indian industrialist Dalmiya by naming the township after him. This was strongly resented by the DMK which considered it to be an insult to Dravidians. The second agitation sought to make changes in the school curricula in order to give more importance to Tamil cultural history. The third agitation was with regard to the new education scheme proposed by C Rajagopalachari's government in 1953. According to this scheme, school hours were reduced by half, so that children can spend the rest of the time to learn the craft of their parents. This was seen

by DMK as perpetuating the caste system, as Hindu society was hierarchically arranged on caste based profession. This implied that under the proposed educational scheme, a child of a carpenter can only become a carpenter. Thus, the DMK opposed this scheme and finally the government had to withdraw it in 1954.

The DMK also opposed the policy of making Hindi the official language of the country. The official language debate started since the time of framing the Constitution. After intense debate and discussion, it was agreed that Hindi would be the official language while English would be an associate official language for fifteen years. After the end of fifteen years, Hindi would become the sole official language of the country. This was unacceptable to the non-Hindi states, which demanded continuation of English. The DMK had led this movement against Hindi, which forced the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, to enact the Official Languages Act, 1963, whereby it was confirmed that English would continue to be used even beyond 1965. However, the DMK was not satisfied that the Act would be implemented by future governments. Thus, the anti-Hindi movement continued till the next Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri assured the implementation of the Official Languages Act, 1963 and continuation of English as one of the official languages. In 1967, the Indira Gandhi led Congress government amended the Act in order to provide guarantee for what was virtually assured by Lal Bahadur Shastri, i.e., use of both Hindi and English as official languages of the country for indefinite period.

The anti-Hindi agitation led to widespread popularity of the DMK and the party shot to power after the 1967 assembly elections. It is noteworthy that during the 1950s and 1960s, there was a change in the approach of the DMK. One hand, the party had toned down its anti-Brahmin stance and was now less hostile towards them, while on the other hand, the party now focussed less on race and more on arousing Tamil consciousness amongst the populace. The opposition to Hindi and the focus on social reforms, however, continued unabated. The party had also diluted its anti-secessionist agenda as it started to participate in elections while also taking part in

parliamentary politics. This was partly due to the lack of support for secessionism from other south Indian states as also due to its change in agenda, as mentioned already. This diluted anti-secessionist approach became evident when during the elections of 1962, the DMK did not highlight the issue of independent Dravidanadu during its campaign, although it was mentioned in its election manifesto. Also, the party exhibited its nationalist approach by supporting the central government during the India-China war in 1962 and dropping all anti-secessionist drive.

The 16th Constitutional Amendment, 1962 finally offered a death blow to all secessionist movements, as advocacy of secession was made a crime while making it mandatory for all candidates to the State Assembly and the Indian Parliament to swear an oath of 'allegiance to the Constitution' and to 'uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India.' This led the DMK to amend its party constitution and do away with the demand for an independent Dravidanadu. Its focus now was to achieve greater autonomy over the state's affairs with minimal intervention from the Centre. Thus, a strong separatist movement which had its roots in pre-independence was finally co-opted.

10.6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT

Critically seen, one major argument against the Dravidian Movement is its elitist character. Although the movement was strongly anti-Brahmin, it did not take within its fold the poor and the downtrodden. In other words, the movement failed to have a mass base and was merely confined within the elite non-Brahmins. With the passage of time, especially in post-independent India, the movement represented by the DMK, had completely ignored the goal of a casteless society which had alienated the Scheduled Caste from the movement. This is considered to be one of the important reasons that the movement is considered to have failed. With the involvement of DMK and its splinter group such as the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in electoral politics, the goal was to basically achieve reservation for the backward section of the population. This had hampered the

administrative and educational standards, thereby negatively affecting development with caste and class induced economic disparities to remain (Chandra et al, 2008, p. 396). At best what the Dravidian movement achieved in the name of an anti-Brahmin movement was 'driving out Brahmins from Tamil Nadu to the rest of India and United States, thereby affecting science and technology, and intellectual and academic life in Tamil Nadu' (Chandra et al, 2008, p.395).

The Dravida parties had also gradually toned down its anti-Hindi and anti-North Indian attitude. They were no longer interested in carving out an independent Dravidanadu or in uniting all the southern states within the framework of the Indian Constitution (Chandra et al, 2008, p. 396). There are five reasons as to why the movement was diluted from being a secessionist one to demanding more state autonomy by the Dravida parties. Firstly, it was realised that secession would not be easy as the Indian state would never agree to it and the movement would be suppressed with strong hands. Second, the contradiction, highlighted by the Dravidian parties, between the regional Dravidian identity and the overall Indian identity was more imaginary than real. Just like other States protected their regional identity within the framework of the Indian Constitution, the Dravidian States could also follow suit. Therefore, there was no immediate need for secession. Third, it was recognised that even within the democratic and federal set up of India, the state as well as individual Tamils had ample scope and freedom to explore economic opportunities as well as pursue social reforms. Fourth, cultural plurality is well accepted in India and the Indian Constitution provides mechanisms to protect this pluralism. Thus, there existed no threat to Dravidians or specifically to Tamils. Fifth, the Centre would not muddle with the rights of the states over its own culture, language and such other cultural matters. In short, cultural autonomy is guaranteed to the States. Thus, the confidence that 'unity in diversity' is possible within the framework of the Indian Constitution, made the Dravidian parties dilute their stance to resolve their problems through parliamentary and democratic means without resorting to secessionist movements.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3 : What was the aim of the Dravidian Association?

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Q 4 : Write briefly about DMK's reaction regarding the policy of making Hindi official language of the country.

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Q 5 : State two arguments against the Dravidian Movement.

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10.7 LET US SUM UP

- The Dravidian movement started off as an anti-Brahmin movement which sought to protect the rights of the non-Brahmins in securing education as well as government jobs. Later on it focussed on social reforms to establish equality in society.
- It has been seen that the movement remained confined to a few elite non-Brahmins, while the rest of their population were ignored. The movement opposed the north Indian Aryan domination over the south Indian Dravidians and had therefore opposed imposition of Hindi in the schools.
- The movement culminated in demand for a separate Dravidanadu as the Aryans and the Dravidians were different stock of population requiring separate independent countries for each. This demand made the movement a secessionist one, and one which was made illegal after the 16th Constitutional Amendment.

- The demand for Dravidanadu did not appeal to the other South Indian States and was thus basically remained a Tamil movement.
- The DMK spearheaded the movement in the post independent India but its participation in electoral politics had diluted its agenda of an independent state and was finally co-opted by the Centre.



10.8 FURHTER READING

1) Chandra, Bipan; Mukherjee, Mridula; and Mukherjee Aditya. (2008). *India Since Independence*. New Delhi: Penguin India.

2) Jayaraman, R. (1964) '*The Dravida Movement*', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Sep 26, pp.1555-1556.

3) Sadiq, T. Umar. '*Emergence of Tamil Nationalism- A Socio- Political Study' SSRG International Journal of Economics and Management Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 5 May 2017.

4) Shunmugasundaram, Manuraj. (2016). 'A Century of Reform', *The Indian Express*, Nov 22.



10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : Regionalism implies love and attachment for a specific area or region in relation to the entire country. It derives from the term 'region'. A region is a homogeneous area with a shared identity amongst its people and is distinct from the rest of the country. Regionalism can be considered to have both negative as well as a positive connotation. Seen in positive parlance, it implies love for one's area, which can be considered very natural; its negative meaning would imply excessive affection for the region as compared to the rest of the country, and which can lead to secessionist demands.

Ans to Q. No 2 : (i) The feeling of continued neglect by the government at the Centre, which is considered to be the reason behind their backwardness.

(ii) Heightened political awareness of the people of the region about their distinct identity which makes it difficult for them to stay with 'others', who they feel are different from them in various aspects.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : The aim of the Dravidian Association was to create a Dravidian state with government by and for the Non-Brahmins.

Ans to Q. No. 4 : The DMK opposed the policy of making Hindi the official language of the country. The official language debate started since the time of framing the Constitution. After intense debate and discussion, it was agreed that Hindi would be the official language while English would be an associate official language for fifteen years. After the end of fifteen years, Hindi would become the sole official language of the country. This was unacceptable to the non-Hindi states, which demanded continuation of English. The DMK had led this movement against Hindi, which forced the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, to enact the Official Languages Act, 1963, whereby it was confirmed that English would continue to be used even beyond 1965. However, the DMK was not satisfied that the Act would be implemented by future governments. Thus, the anti-Hindi movement continued till the next Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri assured the implementation of Official Languages Act, 1963 and continuation of English as one of the official languages. In 1967, the Indira Gandhi led Congress government amended the Act in order to provide guarantee for what was virtually assured by Lal Bahadur Shastri, i.e., use of both Hindi and English as official languages of the country for indefinite period.

Ans to Q. No 5 : (i) One major argument against the Dravidian movement is its elitist character. Although the movement was strongly anti-Brahmin, it did not take within its fold the poor and the downtrodden. In other words, the movement failed to have a mass base and was merely confined within the elite non-Brahmins.

(ii) The Dravida parties had gradually toned down its anti-Hindi and anti-North Indian attitude. They were no longer interested in carving out an independent Dravidanadu or in uniting all the southern states within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

10.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1 : In which year was the Dravidian Association formed?

Q 2 : State the meaning of Regionalism.

Q 3 : Write about the factors responsible for the growth of regionalism in India.

Q 4 : Write a short note on the origin of the Dravidian Movement in the pre independent period.

Q 5 : Make a note on the Dravidian Movement.

Q 6 : Critically analyse the Dravidian Movement.

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UNIT 11 : INSURGENCIES IN NORTH-EAST INDIA - ULFA, NDFB, NSCN

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Overview of Conflict in North East India

11.4 Insurgency: Meaning and Causes

- 11.4.1 Meaning of Insurgency
- 11.4.2 General causes responsible for the emergence of Insurgency in North East India
- 11.4.3 Insurgent Groups in North East India

11.5 Insurgent Groups in North East India: ULFA, NDFB, NSCN

- 11.5.1 United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)
- 11.5.2 National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)
- 11.5.3 National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)

11.6 Plausible solutions to address the problem of Insurgency in North East India

11.7 Let Us Sum Up

11.8 Further Reading

11.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.10 Possible Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the overall conflict situation in North East India
- explain the meaning and causes of insurgency in North East India

- discuss the demands and struggles of three major insurgent outfits in North East India namely, ULFA,NDFB and NSCN
- present certain plausible solutions to prevent insurgency.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

North East India is an ethnically and culturally diverse region with an abundance of natural resources. However, this resource rich region is ironically having to grapple with the problem of insurgency over a long period of time resulting in human rights violations and negation of a peaceful environment for development. In this unit, we shall discuss the issues relating to insurgency in North East India.

11.3 OVERVIEW OF CONFLICT IN NORTH EAST INDIA

India's North East region has been a land of thousand mutinies which have been taking place since pre-independence times. The insurgencies in North East are a reflection of its social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, terrain, socio-economic development, politico-economic conditions, historical evolution and changes in the environment of the area.

A look at the demographic mosaic of northeastern India would show that this region is a home to a curious amalgam of cross-cutting societies. What adds to the problem of this plurality is the fact that the tendency for ethno-political assertion is high among almost all the groups. This is primarily because the political boundaries in most cases do not coincide with the existing social boundaries. The northeastern units of the Indian federation, in spite of having several political dimensions have not been able to cater to the demands of all the ethnic categories demanding for recognition of their distinctive identities.

This is however, reflected in the pattern of conflicts, and in the stance of insurgent groups which remain divergent and ever changing. These range

from secession to autonomy, movements against foreigners and immigrants, ethnic integration, etc, still the common factor is resorting to violence in articulation and mobilization of the demands.

Conflicts in the region can be broadly grouped under the following categories :

- **National conflicts :** Involving concept of a distinct 'homeland' as a separate nation and pursuit of the realization of that goal by use of various methods both violent as well as non violent. Example: ULFA's demand for a sovereign Asom, NSCN's demand for Greater Nagaland.
- **Ethnic conflicts :** Involving assertion of numerically smaller and less dominant tribal groups against the political and cultural hold of the dominant tribal group. In Assam this also takes the form of tension between local and migrant communities.
- **Sub-regional conflicts :** Involving movements which ask for recognition of sub-regional aspirations and often come in direct conflict with the State Governments or even the autonomous Councils. Example: UPDS in Assam

11.4 INSURGENCY : MEANING AND CAUSES

11.4.1 Meaning of Insurgency

The term 'Insurgency' has been defined as the condition of revolt against the government that is less than an organised revolution. Insurgency is a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means. It is characterized by protracted, asymmetric violence, ambiguity, the use of complex terrain (jungles, mountains, urban areas), psychological warfare, and political mobilization—all designed to protect the insurgents and eventually alter the balance of power in

their favour. Insurgents may attempt to seize power and replace the existing government on one hand or they may have more limited aims such as separation, autonomy, or alteration of a particular policy on the other.

11.4.2 General causes responsible for the emergence of Insurgency in North East india

1. The Northeast region is home to a host of diverse ethnic tribes and communities. Most of the ethnic communities are largely of Tibeto-Burman/Mongoloid origin. The region is thus ethnically, linguistically and culturally very distinct from the other states of India. This sense of cultural distinctiveness on the one hand and relative economic underdevelopment of the region make the people of the region largely wary of “outsiders.”
2. As a consequence of the above mentioned point, large scale migration from other parts has created a fear in the minds of people that they will be reduced to a minority in their own states or regions. The locals look at the migrants as posing a threat to their local culture and traditions and fear that they have occupied the already limited employment opportunities.
3. Lack of economic opportunities and governance deficit have made it easier for people to feel alienated and left out and thus it has aggravated the situation for insurgency. There is a popular sentiment across the region that the Central government and “mainland” India is more keen to exploit the natural resources of the region, thus reducing the northeast region to a “colonial hinterland”.
4. Presence of porous international borders and easy availability of arms has also contributed to the proliferation of insurgent outfits in the region.
5. Lastly, sometimes incidents of human rights violation are observed to be committed by security forces during counter-insurgency operations. This evokes public outcry allowing the insurgent outfits

to mobilise public opinion in their favour. Existence of laws such as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFPSA) also contributes to the sense of alienation at times.

In north east India different tribes share the same geographical space. However, such ethnic and cultural specificities, were at times ignored during the process of delineation of state boundaries in the 1950s leading to many issues which still remain unresolved allowing militant outfits to fill in the vacuum.

11.4.3 Insurgent Groups in North East India

Nagaland :

I. National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM)

II. National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K)

Manipur :

I. People's Liberation Army (PLA)

II. People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)

Assam :

I. United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)

II. National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)

III. Kamatapur Liberation Organisations (KLO)

IV. Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF)

V. United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS)

Tripura :

I. National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)

II. All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF)

Meghalaya :

I. Achik National Volunteers Council (ANVC)

II. Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Define insurgency.

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Q 2 : Explain four general causes responsible for the emergence of insurgency in the northeast India.

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Q. 3 : Name any two insurgent outfits of Assam.

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Q. 4 : What do you understand by the term national conflict? Explain with examples.

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11.5 INSURGENT GROUPS IN NORTH EAST INDIA: ULFA, NDFB, NSCN

Let us now discuss some of the major insurgent groups of the North East region.

11.5.1 United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)

The United Liberation Front of Assam is an insurgent outfit operating in Assam, North East India. According to sources, it was founded on 7 April 1979 at Rang Ghar, a historic structure dating to the Ahom kingdom and began operations from the year 1990.

- **Demands :** The organisation's main ambition was to engage in an armed struggle to form a Socialist Assam. Basically,

the following are the demands made by the ULFA to the Government of India :

- A fresh look on the issue of sovereignty, so as to ensure that the people of Assam can assert their indisputable rights to control their own lands and resources.
- High level discussion on grounds and root causes for ULFA struggle and their genuineness.
- Status report on missing ULFA leaders and cadres including those have been missing since 2005.
- Protection and conservation of the ethnic people and their rights on all resources, with complete constitutional and political rights.
- Finance and Economy – Complete rights on all economic resources, including oil, prevention of any further exploitation and compensation to be given to Assam for all exploitations of its economic resources
- Illegal Migration – All necessary preventive and corrections including complete sealing of the international border, prevention of migration taking place through river ways and setting up of a taskforce by the locals and indigenous communities to secure this.
- Solution to all ethnic and tribal issues and problems including solution to the border dispute and land acquisition issues through constitutional amendments.
- Changes and upgradation in education and health sectors for complete prosperity and protection.
- Focus on development of agriculture and rural development schemes. Complete rights of the indigenous people on land and natural resources and facilitate complete flood control system.
- Industrial development – solution to issues on transportation and communication, facilitate more

entrepreneurship, improvement of skill set for workers, facilitation of capital for industrialization.

- Complete protection and development of all types of local culture and folklore of Assam.
- To foster better bilateral relations with neighbouring countries for boosting trade and economy.

➢ **Organisational Links :**

Soon after the process of recruitment was finished in 1984, it began to seek out training and arms procurement from other groups such as the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Nationalist Socialist Council Of Nagaland. In 1986, ULFA first established contacts with the then unified National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) of Myanmar for training and arms. ULFA linked up with the Kachins through the links of the Naga rebels. It learnt the rudiments of insurgent tactics from the Kachins.

The ULFA sought shelter in the forests on the Indo-Bhutan border from the early 1990s and over the years, it reportedly developed linkages with several officers and personnel of the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) and Police – which ensured, among other things, a steady flow of rations, logistical support as well as aid and contacts for money laundering.

The ULFA emerged as one of the most powerful and violent insurgent outfits in Southeast Asia in a very short period of time, largely because of the immense popularity it enjoyed during the first decade of its struggle as well as its economic power which in turn helped it in bolstering its military capabilities. In the early 1990s, ULFA launched an aggressive campaign with victims such as security forces, political opponents, and blasting rail links.

The ULFA also has had alleged links with many neigbouring countries of India. The Government of India (GOI) has

classified the ULFA as a terrorist organisation and had banned it under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in 1990. Concurrently, GOI started military offensives against it, namely, Operation Bajrang in November 1990, Operation Rhino in September 1991, Operation All Clear in December 2003 and Operation Rhino 2 led by the Indian Army. The anti insurgency operations still continue at present under the Unified Command Structure.

- **Divisions :**

On February 5, 2011, ULFA leaders led by ULFA 'vice chairman' Pradip Gogoi, along with 'foreign secretary' Sashadhar Choudhury and 'central publicity secretary' Mithinga Daimary announced that the outfit's general council had endorsed the resolution of the central executive council (CEC) to sit for talks with the Central Government without any precondition. However, ULFA 'commander-in-chief' Paresh Baruah-led group described the general council itself as unconstitutional, thus negating the resolution. The 'formal' split however took place in August 2012 leading to the emergence of two factions of ULFA - Anti-Talks faction of ULFA (ULFA-ATF) and ProTalks faction of ULFA (ULFA-PTF), led by Paresh Baruah and Arabinda Rajkhowa respectively.

Initially, the people of Assam supported the outfit's ambitions and assisted them. But, with passage of time, there was a growing change in the ambitions of the organisation. In the midst of an atmosphere of increasing levels of violence and incidents of human rights abuse both at the hands of insurgents and security forces, people started becoming disillusioned with entire environment. In the contemporary period, the trend is more towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict based on evolving a political solution rather than merely a military one.

In a major breakthrough, ULFA leader Anup Chetia was handed over by Bangladesh to India after several attempts over the

past two decades to secure his custody. It is hoped that Chetia's return to India will now give a boost to the Indian government's talks with the ULFA faction led by Arabinda Rajkhowa.

11.5.2 National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)

The National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) is an armed separatist outfit which seeks to obtain a sovereign Bodoland for the Bodo people in Assam, India. Its origin can be traced back to the formation of the BSF(Bodo Security Force) under the leadership of Ranjan Daimary formed on October 3,1986. On November 25,1994 the BSF rechristened itself as the National Democratic Front Of Bodoland(NDFB).

The Bodos are an ethnic community and are the largest tribal groups in the entire North East. They are found in large numbers in the Lower and Middle parts of the Brahmaputra Valley, namely in the districts of Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup and Darrang. According to the Census of India 2001, it has been discovered that the Bodos comprise 12.41 per cent of Assam's state population. But, due to dissatisfaction with the mainstream Assamese politicians as well as the society, the demand for a separate political identity and self determination was raised. The Bodo people were expecting more from their political leaders who were supposed to represent the interest of the community but they failed to solve the issues like, economic underdevelopment, unemployment, illiteracy etc. Therefore for this reason there was a growing feeling of deprivation in the minds of the youth. The increasing discontentment among the Bodos forced them to look for better political alternatives. Militant organisations such as the NDFB and BLT srung up to champion the Bodo cause for a separate homeland for the Bodo people. Many Bodo youths started to join insurgent outfits like the NDFB and formed separate political organizations in protest against the existing status-quo. However, there

were several ideological differences between the NDFB and the BLTF and as a result their rivalry resulted in fratricidal killings. The NDFB and BLTF had been crossing swords on the issue of providing leadership to the Bodo community liberation. The insurgent outfits with the passage of time indulged in various acts of violence. Eventually the NDFB also split into two factions- one led by the Ranjan Daimary and the other by I.K. Songbijit. At present, activities of the NDFB suggest that Bodo terrorism is still persisting due to co-opted leadership. The NDFB is also in collaboration with the ULFA. The NDFB, on October 8, 2004, announced a six month long unilateral ceasefire with effect from October 15. However, this move was not reciprocated by the Government and security force operations continued against the outfit, amidst threats of a pull out by the outfit. At the end of the ceasefire period, the outfit further extended the truce on April 15.

- **Demands of NDFB :** Demands of NDFB can be divided under three categories viz. Political Demand, Non-Political Demands and Voluntary Demands:
  - ***Political Demands :*** The NDFB was formed with the objective of securing a 'sovereign Bodoland' in the areas north of the river Brahmaputra. The main political demands as stated in their Constitution are -

    (i) To Liberate Bodoland from the Indian Expansionism and Occupation;

    (ii) To free the Bodo Nation from Exploitation, Oppression and Domination;

    (iii) To establish a Democratic Socialist society, promote Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; and

    (iv) To uphold the Integrity and Sovereignty of Bodoland.

- ❍ ***Non-Political Demands*** *:* A significant non-political demand of the NDFB was the demand for introduction of Roman script for the Bodo language.
- ❍ ***Voluntary Demands*** *:* NDFB demanded the preservation of Tribal Belt Block comprising of only bodo people. They also raised voice against the illegal migrant issues as they regarded them threatening towards the indigenous population of Assam.

➢ **Areas of Operation :** The outfit of NDFB was active in its earlier days mainly in the areas in the north and northwest of the river Brahmaputra in Assam.The NDFB was active in the areas of Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Darrang, Barpeta, Dhubri, Nalbari and Sonitpur districts. It was also known to be active in the Garo hills region of Meghalaya, close to the Assam-Meghalaya border.

Before announcing a unilateral ceasefire with the Security Forces in 2004, its activities were also reported from Nalbari, Barpeta, Dhubri, Sonitpur, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Chirang and Karbi Anglong districts.

11.5.3 National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)

The Nagas constitute an ethnic tribal society that has been involved in conflict through the ages. The entry of the British in the northeast in the early 19th century and American influence from the middle of the century provided the Nagas a semblance of a common identity. After independence, with the departure of the British from India, the Nagas feared that they would lose their distinctive autonomous existence. Moreover, the prevailing political environment in the build-up after India's independence from Britain was exploited and motivated by several external interest groups to influence the Naga National Council (NNC) to demand for, and subsequently declare, unilateral independence on

August 14, 1947. The easy availability of weapons from World War II added to the outbreak of the conflict between the Government of India and Federal Government of Nagaland. However, Government of India did not accept this proposal of the Nagas. The conflict that occurred in the mid-1950s grew in intensity till the signing of a clearly unsustainable ceasefire in 1964. Adding fuel to fire was intensified operations of the security forces after the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict contributing to the signing of the Shillong Accord in 1975.

- **Formation :**

  The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was formed on January 31, 1980 by Isak Chisi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and S.S. Khaplang opposing the 'Shillong Accord' signed by the then NNC (Naga National Council) with the Indian government. Later, differences surfaced within the outfit over the issue of commencing a dialogue process with the Indian Government and on April 30, 1988, the NSCN split into two factions, namely the NSCN(K)led by S S Khaplang, and the NSCN(IM),led by Isak Chisi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah.

  The NSCN (K) subsequently split in June 2011 to form the NSCN (K) and Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland (GPRN)/NSCN. While the NSCN (IM) is in an indefinite ceasefire with the GOI, ceasefires with the NSCN (K) and GPRN/NSCN are renewed annually. The FGN/NNC, the original protagonists of the Naga cause, have diminished in size and influence but remain relevant in limited areas of the south and east of the state.

- **Objective :**

  The outfit aims to establish a 'Greater Nagaland' ('Nagalim' or the People's Republic of Nagaland) based on Mao Tse Tung's ideology. Its manifesto is based on the principle of Socialism for economic development and a spiritual outlook – 'Nagaland for Christ'.

- **Area of Operation :**

  The NSCN (IM) primarily consists of Tangkhul Nagas who are in a majority in parts of Nagaland and the hills of Manipur. The outfit has also established its presence in Wokha, Phek, Zunebhoto, Kohima, parts of Mokokchung and Tuensang districts of Nagaland. It has also been able to extend its influence to the Naga inhabited areas of North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam and some parts of Arunanchal Pradesh.

- **Organisational Links:**

  Over the years, the NSCN(IM) has developed extensive linkages with many other countries, and has been receiving substantial assistance from them. This form of assistance ranges from supply of arms and ammunitions and other logistical support, to provision of safe havens, camping and training facilities, etc.

- **Present Scenario:**

  Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a peace accord with the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland- NSCN(IM) faction, an armed rebel group, paving the way to end the country's oldest insurgency. The Government of India has stated that it accepts the "uniqueness of the Naga history and culture" and indicated its willingness to find an amicable solution to the long-standing issue.

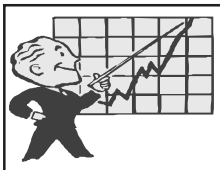
11.6 PLAUSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF INSURGENCY IN NORTH EAST INDIA

The insurgency movements have come to greatly challenge India's security and internal stability with more and more insurgent outfits with their

demands. The root causes of the present situation are to be found in areas of political, social, economic as well as historical realms.

Though, these outfits vary in their demands and methods, there is a common thread running through the insurgency inflicted north-east, which is that is of identity and development. Hence, some solutions need to be explored with some hopeful outcomes:

- To meet the political aspirations of the insurgent groups by way of implementing sixth schedule provisions in these areas will help them to preserve their identity and culture while giving them greater autonomy. This system will be able to build trust and mutual support amongst the people.
- Economic development of the area should be brought about in a sustainable and consistent manner.
- To improve the governance system and the delivery mechanisms of administration.
- To coordinate counter-insurgency operations and use of force should be resorted to only when needed.
- The rebel groups must also be more pragmatic by seeking greater autonomy within the constitutional mandate rather than making unreal demands like newer states and secession based only on ethnic and linguistic identities.
- The government both at the Centre and states should coordinate their decision making and take the people into confidence in order to avoid conflicts and confusion and to ensure greater transparency while trying to reach political settlements with the insurgent outfits .
- The state police and central forces should equally play an important role. They should cooperate with one another in matters of intelligence sharing, investigation and operations against militants so that the information received is credible and foolproof.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5 : What are the political demands of the NDFB?

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Q 6 : When was the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was formed ?

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Q 7 : In which year was the ULFA formed ?

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Q 8 : Present any two solutions to the problem of insurgency in the North East India.

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11.7 LET US SUM UP

- The insurgencies in north east India are a reflection of its social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, terrain, socio-economic development, politico-economic conditions, historical evolution and changes in the environment of the area. The term Insurgency has been defined as the condition of revolt against the government that is less than an organised revolution.
- In North East India conflict can be broadly divided into three categories- national conflict, ethnic conflict and sub-regional conflict.

- There are some general causes which are responsible for the emergence of insurgency in North East India. Some of these are- a sense of cultural distinctiveness, economic backwardness, a feeling of insecurity regarding one's cultural identity and economic and employment opportunities due to large scale migration of people from other parts of the country, presence of porous international borders and easy availability of arms, incidents of human rights violation by the state security forces.
- Major insurgent outfits of North East India are- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (IM), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (K), Peoples Liberation Army, United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Kamatapur Liberation Organisations (KLO), KLNLF, UPDS, National Liberation Front of Tripura, All Tripura Tiger Force, Achik National Volunteers Council, Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) etc.
- The United Liberation Front of Assam is an insurgent outfit operating in Assam, North East India. According to sources, it was founded on 7 April 1979 at Rang Ghar, a historic structure dating to the Ahom kingdom and began operations from the year 1990. The organisation's main ambition was to engage in an armed struggle to form a Socialist Assam.
- The NDFB is an armed separatist outfit which seeks to obtain a sovereign Bodoland for the Bodo people in Assam, India. Its origin can be traced back to the formation of the BSF(Bodo Security Force) under the leadership of Ranjan Daimary formed on October 3,1986. On November 25,1994 the BSF rechristened itself as the National Democratic Front Of Bodoland(NDFB).
- The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was formed on January 31, 1980 by Isak Chisi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and S.S. Khaplang opposing the 'Shillong Accord' signed by the then NNC (Naga National Council) with the Indian government. The outfit aims

to establish a 'Greater Nagaland' ('Nagalim' or the People's Republic of Nagaland) based on Mao Tse Tung's ideology.

- Peaceful settlement of the problem of insurgencies in North East India is the need of the time. Political dialogue and negotiation must be initiated in this regard.



11.8 FURTHER READING

1) Insurgencies in India's north-east: conflict, co-cooption and change. By Subir Bhaumik (NO.11 JUL 2007)

2) Bhattacharjee J. B. (2007). Roots of Insurgency in North East India.

3) IPCS Special Report 21 May 2006: ULFA & THE PEACE PROCESS IN ASSAM. Internal Security Problems in Northeast India : Insurgency and Counter Insurgency In 4. Assam Since 1985 (English, Hardcover, Onkar Pawar)



11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No .1 : The term 'Insurgency' has been defined as the condition of revolt against government that is less than an organised revolution. Insurgency is a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : Four general causes for insurgency in the North East are stated below:

(i) The Northeast region is home to a host of diverse ethnic tribes and communities. Most of the ethnic communities are largely of Tibeto-Burman/Mongoloid origin. The region is thus ethnically, linguistically and culturally very distinct from the other states of India. This sense of cultural distinctiveness on the one hand and

relative economic underdevelopment of the region make the people of the region largely wary of "outsiders."

(ii) As a consequence of the above mentioned point, large scale migration from other parts has created a fear in the minds of people that they will be reduced to a minority in their own states or regions. The locals look at the migrants as posing a threat to their local culture and traditions and fear that have occupied the already limited employment opportunities.

(iii) Lack of economic opportunities and governance deficit have made it easier for people to feel alienated and left out and thus it has aggravated the situation for insurgency. There is a popular sentiment across the region that the Central government and "mainland" India is more keen to exploit the natural resources of the region thus reducing the northeast region to a "colonial hinterland".

(iv) Presence of porous international borders and easy availability of arms has also contributed to the proliferation of insurgent outfits in the region.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)

Ans to Q. No. 4 : National conflicts refer to those conflicts involving concept of a distinct 'homeland' as a separate nation and pursuit of the realization of that goal by use of various methods both violent as well as non violent. Example: ULFA's demand for sovereign Asom, NSCN's demand for Greater Nagaland.

Ans to Q. No. 5 : The NDFB was formed with the objective of securing a 'sovereign Bodoland' in the areas north of the river Brahmaputra. The main political demands as stated in their Constitution as like following-

(i) To Liberate Bodoland from the Indian Expansionism and Occupation;

(ii) To free the Bodo Nation from Exploitation, Oppression and Domination ;

(iii) To establish a Democratic Socialist society, promote Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; and

(iv) To uphold the Integrity and Sovereignty of Bodoland.

Ans to Q. No. 6 : 1980

Ans to Q. No. 7 : 1979

Ans to Q. No. 8 : (a) To meet the political aspirations of the insurgent groups by way of implementing sixth schedule provisions in these areas will help them to preserve their identity and culture while giving them greater autonomy. This system will be able to build trust and mutual support amongst the people.

(b) Economic development of the area should be brought about in a sustainable and consistent manner.

11.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1 : Name the two factions of the NSCN.

Q 2 : Write briefly about the NSCN.

Q 3 : What were the demands made by the ULFA to the Government of India?

Q 4 : Write a note on the formation of NDFB.

Q 5 : Discuss the general causes responsible for the emergence of insurgency in North East India.

Q 6 : Suggest some plausible solutions to the problem of insurgency in North East India.

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UNIT 12 : PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Party System in India: Era of One-Party Dominance

12.4 Breakdown of Congress Dominance

12.5 Process of Regionalisation

12.6 Coalition Politics

12.7 Recent Trends

12.8 Let Us Sum Up

12.9 Further Reading

12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.11 Possible Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- analyse the party system in India
- describe the events which led to a transition of the party system in India
- explain the phenomenon of regionalisation as well as coalition politics in India
- discuss the current trend of the Indian Party System.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

Democracy in India has stood the test of time, despite the absence of conditions that are considered essential for it to take root. Scholars often associate certain qualities with democracy, such as a homogeneous population, a common civic culture, high level of literacy, and industrial

economy- qualities which can hardly be considered to have been present in the Indian case. Yet, except for the brief period of the emergency between 1975-77, democracy in India survived well. More or less peaceful and regular conduct of electoral process, fair level of voters' turnout and an established party system lead one to safely argue in favour of the success of Indian democracy.

An important ingredient which is considered essential for successful conduct of democracy is a vibrant party system. It is generally believed that political parties deepen democracy by representing the views of various sections of the population. Scholars and academicians have argued that even in India, political parties have played an important role in deepening of democracy by being inclusive of the marginalised section of population and thereby representing every shade of opinion. All these necessitate a study of the trends in party system and how it helped deepening of democracy in India. This Unit is an attempt towards such an understanding of the party system and its evolution in India.

The emergence of party system in any political system can be explained with the help of two theories: one, the *social cleavage theory* which states that sharp division in society leads to formation of varieties of political parties which represents the views of each section of the population; and second, the *electoral rules* theory which states that the prevalent rules of elections in the political system allures different groups to form their own political parties. (Gowda and Sridharan, 2007). For instance, the social cleavage theory would argue that the caste-based cleavage in Indian society leads to the formation of parties like Bahujan Samaj Party which claims to represent the otherwise marginalised section of the population, the Scheduled Castes. Similarly, the electoral rules theory would provide that the First-Past-the-Post system, prevalent system in India provides the incentives to form a political party in India.

However, irrespective of how party system emerged and sustained itself in India, one fact on which everyone would agree is that party system has helped bolster democracy in India. And it is indeed interesting to trace

the different phases of the Indian party system- from dominance of the Congress Party in the initial phases to a multi-party system and coalition government at a later stage, as also the rise of the regional parties in between.

12.3 PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA : ERA OF ONE-PARTY DOMINANCE

Between 1952 and 1967, the Indian party system was marked by the dominance of the Congress Party, as it was voted to power each time during this period. The Congress secured a plurality of votes from across the population and managed to form the government. It is noteworthy that although the Party did not secure a majority of votes, it was able to form the government at the Centre due to fragmentation of votes received by the divided opposition. To put in simple words, more votes were cast against the Congress than in its favour. But since the votes cast against the Congress did not go to a single political party, it led to the Congress winning more number of seats. As electoral data suggests, during the first three general elections, the Congress won 364 seats in 1952 (with 45 per cent votes), 371 seats in 1957 (47.78 per cent votes) and 361 in 1962 (44.72 per cent). As Robert Dahl observed, Indian elections are characterised by a system where one dominating political party garners close to 50 per cent votes and yet is able to pocket more number of seats, given the fragmentation of the three or more opposition parties (Robert Dahl as cited in Saxena, 1999, p. 269).

Rajni Kothari named this phase as the 'Congress System', as no other political party proved to be a formidable challenge to the Congress Party. Out of the freedom struggle, the Congress Party emerged not as a political party but as a social movement which helped the country in attaining independence from foreign rule. Representing every major shade of opinion, its representative nature and democratic credentials was proved beyond doubt. In fact, under the 'banyan tree' personality of Jawaharlal Nehru, the

Congress Party was described as an 'Umbrella' party under which everyone could be accommodated. Thus, other political parties found it extremely difficult to grow and to seek their own independent vote banks (Kothari, 1972)

Even at the State level, the Congress held power in most of the states till the fourth general elections in 1967. However, it did face stiff competition in the former princely states, in Jammu and Kashmir where the National Conference held sway, and in Kerala where the Communist Party of India formed the government in 1957.

Three major reasons helped the Congress in maintaining its dominance during this phase: First, the leadership provided by charismatic Jawaharlal Nehru helped the party to achieve massive popularity amongst the masses; second, as argued by Rajani Kothari, the Congress with the help of its grassroots organisation was in a position to better assess the requirements of its population and provide for them (Kothari, 1972); third, the fragmented opposition led to splitting of votes which in the end went in Congress Party's favour (Saxena, 1999).

12.4 BREAKDOWN OF CONGRESS DOMINANCE

The fourth general election is considered relevant as it saw a decline in the popularity of the Congress party owing to a number of factors, viz. absence of the charismatic leadership of Nehru, corruption charges against the Congress leaders, looming economic crisis faced by the country, and intra party conflict within the Congress and the consequent formation of new political parties by the dissidents. The anti-Congress wave gave the opposition parties a new fillip to form united coalitions against the Congress. However, at the end, the Congress did manage to win 283 seats (as against 361 seats in 1962) and form the government at the Centre. Nevertheless, for the first time, the Congress failed to retain power in six Indian States, especially in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu where it managed to win only 14 out of 40 seats and 3 out of 39 seats respectively. Thus, non-Congress

coalition governments were formed in few states which did leave its mark in the federal set up of the country. As argued by Rakha Sexena, 'this period was thus marked by India's transition from a dominant party system to a system of competitive sharing of power' (Saxena, 1999, p. 274). The 1967 elections saw the consolidation of rightist and the leftist political forces owing to dissatisfaction of the population with the Congress party. This signified the 'radicalisation of Indian politics' (Saxena, 1999, p. 275). It also implied that 'the Congress system was put on trial' (Kothari, 1967). However, this did not imply that the Congress could be completely written of as a political force, given it had still retained power in almost half of the Indian states.

It is noteworthy that Indira Gandhi, during the 1967 elections could not present herself as a dynamic leader and as a result, her insignificant performance led the Congress leaders to appoint Moraji Desai as the Deputy Prime Minister. Inhibited and constrained by Moraji Desai's presence, Indira Gandhi sought to reformulate and build the party in her own way. She got rid of Desai and went ahead with several drastic measures such as bank nationalisation and abolition of privy purses before calling for mid-term poll in 1971. Indira Gandhi was rewarded by the strategies which she had adopted, as her pro-poor image now appealed to the masses, who voted for her and restored the dominance of the Congress yet again. However, the Congress lost its transparency. Intra-party democracy suffered as elections became a mere formality to re-elect Ms Gandhi as the leader of the party. An era of populist politics and short term goals replaced ideological and institutionalised politics of the Nehruvian era.

By 1973, Indira Gandhi once again encountered a downfall as her popularity was at stake owing to drought, inflation, railway workers' strike as well as mass movement led by Moraji Desai and JP Narayan against corruption and authoritarianism. All of this ultimately culminated in declaration of Emergency in 1975 by Ms Gandhi which further deteriorated her popularity. Thus, in the 1977 general elections, the Congress was overthrown and the Janata Party formed the government at the Centre. This election brought forth bi-partisan model as the Congress and the Janata Party emerged as

the only two significant parties which together garnered around 80 per cent of the votes. However, this bi-party system did not last long as the Janata Party split owing to disagreements and disputes amongst its members giving Indira Gandhi another chance to come back to power in 1980.

As argued by Saxena, 'negative voting, massive expenditure on publicity and basing the campaign on shrewd caste calculations at the time of distribution of tickets contributed a great deal to the comeback of Indira Gandhi government' (Saxena, 1999, p. 283). This was a phase which restored Congress dominance for a brief period. However, this phase also marked a trend towards multi-party system as the states generally opted for non-Congress governments, given the authoritarian style of Ms Gandhi. The Congress, as a result, lost Karnataka, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Assam.

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, elections were held in which her son and heir Rajiv Gandhi got a huge mandate to form the government at the Centre. This was especially due the prevailing sympathy wave for the assassination, as well as the 'clean' image of Rajiv Gandhi. Known as the 'Scientific Man', he raised a lot of expectations especially amongst the youth to lead the country to the twenty first century. However, he failed to meet these expectations. Lack of development in the country led to anti-government feelings among the masses, which got reflected in the 1989 elections.

The 1989 elections established a trend towards multi-party system and coalition politics which holds true till date. As V.P Singh was voted to power in the Centre in 1989, his government comprised of a coalition of parties, viz., the Janata Dal (to which V P Singh himself belonged), Lok Dal, Telegu Desam Party (TDP), Congress (S), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), and Asom Gana Parishad (AGP). Known as the National Front (NF) Government, it was supported from outside by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Left Front. The government lasted for merely 11 months owing to factionalism and lack of coordination between the parties. The BJP soon withdrew its support from the government due to which V P Singh fell short

of numbers and could not survive the no-confidence motion in the House. The next government was formed by Chandra Shekhar, who left the Janata Dal and formed a new party, the Samajwadi Janata Party with 64 MPs. His government was given 'outside support' by the Congress, the BJP as well as the Left Parties. However, very soon the Congress withdrew its support on the charge of the government spying on Rajiv Gandhi. Chandra Shekhar government lasted for 7 months and resigned in March 1991. However, he continued to be in power as a caretaker government till the elections were held in May-June 1991.

This was a phase which dimmed the chances of Congress dominance while pointing towards a fractionalised multiparty system. As argued by M P Singh, the important claimants of power now seemed to be: (a) the Congress, which was still a party with a massive presence; (b) the Janata Dal which emerged as an alternative to Congress in 1989 but was weakened due to the split in 1990; (c) the BJP which survived on the agenda of Hindu revivalism; and (d) the CPI (M) and CPI which saw a constant rise in its vote share over the period of time. (M P Singh, 1992)

12.5 PROCESS OF REGIONALISATION

One of the major trends which followed the end of one party dominance of the Congress was the regionalisation of the party system in India. In other words, the country saw emergence of new regional political parties as well as consolidation of existing regional parties in the States. From the time when the regional parties tasted power as minor parts of the Janata Party Government in 1977, they came a long way to emerge as kingmakers in the era of coalition politics of the mid-1990s. Their relevance in the national politics increased manifold as in 1996, as many as 137 MPs were sent by various regional parties, which continued to increase to 161 MPs in 1998 and 188 in 1999. With neither the Congress or the BJP getting majority seats in 1996, the role of these regional political parties in formation of the Government became very crucial.

Several factors can be considered to have led to this pattern: one, the dominance of the Congress Party was the result of its appeal as a movement which led to freedom of the country. Post 1980s, this appeal was declined due to lack of democracy within the Party and many other resons. Second, owing to various reasons such as change in demography, socio-political changes, and electoral awareness, politicisation of social groups was taking place. These groups failed to find place in the already established political parties as the existing powerful groups blocked their entry. The easy way out of this situation for these newly politically conscious groups, was to either join smaller and less established parties or to form their own new political parties. In this manner, the voice of the fragments or the regions could be more easily expressed. Thus, a diversification of parties was the outcome of this process. Third, the judicial pronouncements in cases such as that of S R Bommai, (1994) expressed a new attitude of the judiciary which was more sensitive towards the regions and the federal structure of the country. In this case, the judiciary declared that the proclamation of constitutional emergency under Article 356 is open to judicial review which implied that unfair toppling of State governments by the Centre would now have to stop as it can be questioned in a court of law. This gave an impetus to other constitutional institutions such as the President, the Governor, the Election Commission as well as inter-governmental agencies to be more sensitive towards the federal set-up, encouraging the regional political parties to make their presence felt. (Saxena, 1999)

The emergence of regional parties also led to making of adjustments by the national parties in their organisations as they could not escape the 'confederalisation'. As against the regional parties which were by nature state-based, the national parties had a central command structure which underwent change due to regionalisation. Parties like the CPI (M) and Janata Dal saw their State units emerge stronger than their national units, viz., the State units of CPI (M) in Kerela and West Bengal, and the State units of Bihar, Orissa and Karnataka of the Janata Dal. Even the Congress and the BJP faced trouble from their State units so much so that it resulted in split

in the Congress and formation of Tamil Manila Congress in Tamil Nadu, and while the BJP in Gujarat faced a challenge from Shankar Singh Vaghela.

The regional parties proved their strength by forming governments in the States. For example, at various times, parties like the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in Tamil Nadu, the Telegu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh, the Akali Dal in Punjab, and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) in Assam have been in power. All these only point towards their success both at the national as well as at the state level largely in the 1990s and early 2000s.

12.6 COALITION POLITICS

The 1977 general elections may be considered to have marked the beginning of coalition politics in India but it did not establish the trend as in the next two general elections in 1980 and 1984, the Congress formed the government completely on its own under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi respectively.

In 1977, several political parties such as the Congress (O), the Socialist Party, the Jan Sangh and the Bharatiya Lok Dal, merged themselves together to form a new party called the Janata Party (JP). while other political parties such as All India Forward Block, Shiromani Akali Dal, and Communist Party of India (Marxist) decided to extend their support to the Janata Party in order to oppose the Indira Gandhi led Congress party. The result of this election went in favour of the Janata Party and a coalition government was formed for the first time in India. One major point to be noted here is that the coalition was bereft of any ideological commitment, their only goal being to defeat the Congress party. The JP led government did not last long and the country headed for elections again in 1979 in which Indira Gandhi made a comeback, putting a halt to the coalition politics. The era of coalition politics truly made it way into India politics in 1989 with the V.P Singh headed National Front Government. Since then, every government

formed till date, is a coalition government at the centre. The V.P Singh coalition government was followed by Chandra Shekher led coalition in 1990 which also collapsed calling for fresh elections in 1991. In 1991, after the death of Rajiv Gandhi, P.V Narasimha Rao falling short of majority, formed the government with support from AIADMK, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and Rashtriya Lok Dal. The trend of forming coalition governments had been firmly established by now.

Marred by corruption and scams, the Congress government faced the worst defeat in the 1996 general elections, with BJP emerging as the single largest party. Staking a claim to form the government under A B Vajpayee, the BJP fell short of the required majority to be proved in the floor of the House. Thus, it remained in power for merely 13 days. An attempt was then made by Janata Dal to form the government with the help of 14 different political parties under the name United Front. This coalition government under H D Deve Gowda was provided outside support by Congress, but only till March 1997. The Congress again extended support to the United Front after I K Gujral replaced H D Deve Gowda as the Prime Minister. The country went into elections very soon in February 1998, as the Congress again withdrew its support from the United Front Government in November 1997.

The February elections of 1998 again brought forth the BJP as the single largest party with 182 seats but yet again it was short of the majority to form the government. Thus with support extended by its pre-poll allies Shiv Sena, Samata Party, Shiromani Akali Dal, Biju Janata Dal and AIADMK, and post poll alliance with the TDP, A B Vajpayee formed the government under the banner National Democratic Alliance (NDA). After 13 months the AIADMK withdrew its support and the NDA government had to make its exit. The BJP led NDA coalition, however, made its comeback with convincing majority in 1999 general elections and completed its full term; being the first non-Congress government to have done so.

In the subsequent 2004 and 2009 general elections, the Congress party led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) formed the government while

the NDA sat in the opposition. The result of the16th general election in 2014 went in favour of the BJP led NDA coalition which garnered 336 seats to form the government.

From the above discussion it comes to light that the trend of coalition politics has established itself very firmly in the Indian soil. As has been argued by E Sridharan, in multicultural states, characterised by diversity, coalition governments become an obvious outcome. This is because representation of diverse interests by merely two political parties becomes an extremely difficult proposition to materialise (Sridharan, 2004). Thus, an important merit of coalition politics is that different shades of opinion get represented by the various political parties and thus in a way it is more democratic. At the same time coalition politics brings with it the problem of unstable governments as the allies constantly threaten to withdraw support in case the government of the day doesn't pay heed to their demands. Also, implementing sweeping measures and policies take a back seat as holding the coalition by not upsetting the allies becomes the priority of the government. Problem compounds even more because the parties lack any ideological commitment to bind the coalition together. In India, it is more often than not that political parties (baring a few such the left oriented CPI and CPI (M) and the right wing BJP) lack any ideology on the basis of which they seek election or join the coalitions. The myopic view of the parties makes them seek opportunities to share power and other short-term gains; which when unfulfilled leads to party splits, defections and unstable governments. Thus, while coalition governments are more representative, sometimes they are also unstable.

12.7 RECENT TRENDS

While it is accepted that coalition politics is an established fact in Indian politics, certain new trends have also emerged within the paradigm of coalition politics during recent times. The initial phase of coalition governments before 1999 was characterised by instability (except during

P V Narasimha Rao's regime between 1991-96 which managed to complete its full term). As already seen above, this was also a phase which saw the formation of governments, led by several political parties which lasted in power for a short period- JP in 1977-79, JD led National Front in 1989-90, SJD led National Front in 1990-91, Congress in 1991-96, BJP in 1996 (lasted for 13 days), Janata Dal led United Front in 1996-97, and BJP in 1998 (lasted for 13 months). The trend which is visible post-1999 is the emergence of coalitions centred around two major political parties- the Congress and the BJP, which led the UPA and the NDA coalitions respectively. This has also resulted in more stability as both the NDA and the UPA governments are a result of pre-electoral alliances and have been able to complete its full term. Although an occasional Third Front is also seen comprising of the non-Congress and the non-BJP parties, as in 2004, how far it would pose a challenge to the UPA and the NDA and provide a stable government, unlike in the past, is to be seen in coming times.

Following the 2014 general elections, wherein the BJP won a massive victory under Narendra Modi, securing two-thirds majority entirely on its own, questions have been raised whether this would entail in the end of coalition politics in India and a return to a one-party dominance system. With the BJP garnering 282 seats and the Congress being decimated to merely 44 seats, such questions are not unfounded, if not too early. While a return to one-party dominating system is too early to predict, the continuity of pre-electoral alliances and coalition governments would continue to remain at least in the near future as argued by Adnan Farooqui and E Sridharan. They reason that firstly, the BJP's victory in some states is certainly the outcome of its pre-poll alliances. As many as 57 seats went to BJP's kitty, thanks to its coalition partners. Second, the BJP along with its allies lack majority in the Rajya Sabha. Since the members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by the State assemblies, the BJP would need to continue to forge alliances in the States so as to get more seats in the Upper House. Third, BJP's regional presence is more evident in the north and the west. It is not a formidable party either in the east or in the south. So in order to

enter these regions, coalition with the regional parties would be an inescapable option for the BJP. Thus, 'it is premature to conclude that the era of coalition politics is over in India or that a new one-party hegemonic system dominated by the BJP is now in place. Coalition politics in government at the centre and in many states, and for party strategies in coming state assembly elections and the next general election, will remain central to Indian politics' (Farooqui and Sridharan, 2014).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : Write the two theories regarding the emergence of party system in any political system.

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Q 2 : Mention two reasons which helped to maintain the dominant role of the Congress till 1970s.

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Q 3 : Which general election may be considered as the beginning of the coalition politics in India?

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12.8 LET US SUM UP

- Indian politics and more specifically party system in India has passed through several phases and has evolved over the years to strengthen democracy. From the dominance of a single party to emergence of

multiple parties, it saw a brief period wherein emergence of a two-party system seemed plausible.

- But then instability followed with the shift towards coalition politics during the early 1990s, with governments lasting only for few months. However, the late 1990s saw stability returning to the country, with the parties getting concentrated around two major political parties- the Congress and the BJP, and formation of two major pre-electoral coalitions- the UPA and the NDA.
- The present scenario supports a scheme, which may be called, a 'bi-coalition system' wherein power shifts between the UPA and the NDA, providing the much needed steadiness, which the country craved for during the 1990s.



12.9 FURTHER READING

1) Gowda, M. V. Rajeev. and Sridharan, E. (2007). *'Parties and the Party System*. 1947-2006', in Sumit Ganguly, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner (eds) *The State of India's Democracy*, John Hopkins University: Maryland.

2) Hasan, Zoya. (ed) (2002). *Parties and Party Systems*. New Delhi : OUP.

3) Kothari, Rajani. (1972). *Politics in India.* New Delhi : Orient Longman.

12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : There are two theories regarding the emergence of party system in any political system. These are the Social Cleavage theory which states that sharp division in society leads to formation of varieties of political parties which represents the views of each section of the population.

Secondly, the Electoral Rules theory which states that the prevalent rules of elections in the political system allures different groups to form their own political parties.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : The two major reasons that helped the Congress in maintaining its dominance: first, the leadership provided by charismatic Jawaharlal Nehru helped the party gain massive popularity amongst the masses; second, as argued by Rajani Kothari, the Congress with the help of its grassroots organisation was in a position to better assess the requirements of its population and provide for them.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : 1977 General Elections of India.



12.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1 : "Regionalisation of party system ended the one party dominance of the Congress." Discuss.

Q 2 : Describe the trends of coalition politics in Indian Political System.

Q 3 : Explain the causes responsible for the decline of the dominant role of the Congress.

Q 4 : Discuss the recent trends of party system in India.

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UNIT 13 : ELECTORAL POLITICS AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Role of Elections in Democracy

13.4 Election Machinery in India

13.5 Electoral System and Process in India

13.6 Voting Pattern in India

13.7 Determinants of Electoral Behavior in India

13.8 Drawbacks of Electoral System of India

13.9 Electoral Reforms in India

- 13.9.1 Changes in the Electoral System
- 13.9.2 Restructuring the Election Commission
- 13.9.3 Eradicating the Evil Influences of Money and Muscle Power

13.10 Let Us Sum Up

13.11 Further Reading

13.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.13 Possible Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the election system of India
- describe the voting pattern of the Indian Electorate
- explain the determinants of the voting behavior in India
- discuss the drawbacks of the electoral system and its reforms.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Election is that process by which every political system tries to legitimize its existence by bringing about a sense of involvement on the part of general people. Sustainability of a political system largely depends upon a successful and genuine election system. Unless there is a free, fair, unbiased or autonomous election machinery, the public faith and confidence suffer in the long run, which is not desirable for the overall health of a political system.

In India, we have Parliamentary system of government with periodic elections revolving around a multi-party system. There is a system of regular elections for Parliament, legislative Assemblies of States and Union Territories, local government institutions and for the posts of President and Vice President. In this unit we shall discuss election system of India in details.

13.3 ROLE OF ELECTIONS IN DEMOCRACY

Election is that system by which we can choose our representatives for a particular period of time to run the government. It is one of the basic elements of a democratic system. For the general people, election provides options to select their own representatives at periodic intervals. Again the system makes the elected representative accountable to the public for their actions and policies. Regular, free and fair elections make people aware about day-to-day politics and public policies. Election is one the core elements of a democratic system, but around the world one can see its misuse and manipulation.

Over the years, electoral malpractices and manipulations are increasing around the world. Undemocratic leaders always try to manipulate elections and produce the manipulated elections as legitimate so that they can continue with their undemocratic systems of governance. However, we don't have any alternative to periodic elections to legitimize a political system and approve the major policy decisions of the government.

Thus, elections are the core element of a democratic system which must be free, fair and genuine. Unfair or rigged election is a direct violation of people's political rights. It is a form of political corruption which hampers the process of democratic norms and culture and ultimately hinders consolidation of democracy. Manipulation of elections seriously affects the nation building process.

13.4 ELECTION MACHINERY IN INDIA

In every democratic political system, there is usually one organization which is bestowed with the function of conducting elections. In India, we have the Election Commission (EC). For a sustainable democracy we must have free, fair, impartial, effective and autonomous election machinery. The Constitution under Article 324 provides for the Election Commission of India.

The Constitution of India provides for a unified organization to arrange periodic elections for Parliament, state legislatures, institutions of local self government, President and Vice President. Initially it was a single member organization, but in 1993 it was made a three member body. The President of India appoints the members of the Election Commission with the advice of a Committee which comprises with the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition (Lok Sabha) and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

With the emergence of multi-party system, coupled with issues like communalism, castism, regionalism, violence, booth capturing, misuse of government machinery, rigging etc. the Election Commission has to adapt itself to the changing developments. In response to concerns raised by people and politicians, and due to necessary intervention by the Court on several occasions, the Election Commission has initiated a series of reforms.

From 1990s onwards, the "Model Code of Conduct" has to be strictly followed by the political parties during the process of elections. Instances are there for re-polling whenever there are proof of large scale corruption and manipulation of government machinery. T N Seshan (former CEC) is regarded as the pioneer of electoral reforms in India for issues like declaration

of property details of candidates, non use of government machinery for personal matters, advertisement of government schemes or inauguration/ announcement of government schemes during Model Code of Conduct period, equal opportunities to all candidates and so on. Recent examples of measures for conducting free and fair election are the introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and video recording of sensitive areas.

13.5 ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND PROCESS IN INDIA

Electoral process is a long term process where a candidate has to go through the stages of nomination, campaign, voting, counting and result declaration. However, the electoral process is just not confined to the mere technical process. For a successful electoral system, we need a developed and cultured system among the political parties; awareness among the electorates; independent judiciary; neutral administration; unbiased media and of course the candidate himself/herself with a vision to serve the people. Although it's not possible to find all the elements in a political system, but to be a successful system we must aspire for it. Fortunately, in India, except for a brief period when National Emergency was imposed (1975-77), the democratic system in India has been largely functioning smoothly with free and fair periodic elections constituting the hallmark of the same. For example, the debate and campaign among the political parties on major socio-political and economic issues have been the centre point of electoral mobilization of the people at different points of time. Bsaed on such debates, discussions and campaigns, people select their respective candidates. Besides, people voted for a particular party based on their emphasis on different issues like: black money, unemployment, national unity, terrorism, corruption, development etc. In India people often show maturity regarding choosing their representatives through peaceful manner.

Elections in India assume the nature of public ceremonies which affect political life of people in a large scale. In fact, it's like a festival for the

people where they decide who will rule over them for a particular period of time. We have examples which show that popular governments repeat their success, and governments having anti-people policies get defeated. Election is that periodical exercise, although a complex one, where people unite to defeat or elect a particular set of ideologies. No doubt, elections directly influence our social, political, economical and cultural aspects of life which in turn make us more aware about these issues.

13.6 VOTING PATTERN IN INDIA

Over the years, it is found that people have a tendency to vote in general elections. For a successful democracy, large scale voting is a necessity. Our voting pattern shows that the percentage is increasing for both males and females. More and more regional parties are excelling at the cost of national level political parties in terms of winning seats which is a sign of deepening of democratic values and multiculturalism. Upto the last general election, at the national level, we found that coalition politics is more dominant, but the present election shows that the trend is slowly changing with the emergence of BJP as a more powerful entity. But still, in some regions, regional political parties are dominant like Tamil Nadu, Orissa, J & K etc.

Election is a political process which has been evolving over the years. It is a link between our existing social system and political structure, contributing towards political development. For example, reservation of seats for SCs, STs, OBCs and women leads to social change in many parts of the country. It's a process for nation building, system maintenance, recruitment of political elites and peaceful transfer of power. Again, election is that process which brings legitimacy to a particular political system, contributes to peaceful method of conflict resolution, brings about interest aggregations, and acts as a method of socialization and political education. Ultimately, election is that process which brings accountability; the whole

process of democratization of choice and control for the stakeholders can lead to good governance.

13.7 DETERMINANTS OF ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR IN INDIA

Human beings are rational, but during the time of election it is seen that people behave in emotional terms. A number of factors determine our electoral behaviour like caste, religion, language, region, tribe, charisma etc. Almost all the political parties use these elements to mobilize voters. They try to exploit the caste factors, religious factors, linguistic factors and so on. In a number of cases, it is found that people voted for these emotional issues. However, it does not mean that the entire population is influenced or voted for it. But, to a great extent, people are being influenced which in turn determine the election results.

Among the factors which influence voting behaviour, caste is more dominant. Our social system has been dominated by the hierarchical caste system. Even after independence, caste equations are gaining importance in electoral politics. With the emergence of caste based organizations, reservation of seats in election and jobs make deprived and lower caste people more aware about their rights and privileges. Thus, those people even the illiterates started to join electoral politics more; gradually caste equation become more important determinant regarding distribution of tickets and formation of ministry. States like Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh where backward castes and Dalits form a significant part of population are examples of it. Because of caste solidarity, people vote for their respective caste candidates. Parties like BSP, DMK, RJD, RPI etc. flourish only because of caste politics that makes caste a political instrument to mobilize people and to turn that into gaining votes. Caste politics may be termed as a tool to assert identity for those lower caste or minorities. Along with caste, religion too plays a dominant role. Vote bank politics (of minorities) and appeasement of minorities along with the consolidation of the majority's feelings have been a hallmark of electoral politics in India. As we have universal adult

franchise system, the whole exercise of voting or behavior of electorates is so complex that it cannot be defined with just one factor. Multiple factors are working which are not static and keeps changing time to time. Democratic values, civil society, gender equation, regional aspirations along with structure of the party itself are some of the dominant factors that influence voting behavior. In the negative side, money and muscle power and misuse of media and government machinery too play significant role.

13.8 DRAWBACKS OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM OF INDIA

Over the years, our electoral system has undergone a number of changes; with the changes we have witnessed a number of drawbacks as well. The use of muscle power, money power, misuse of government machinery by the ruling party, exploitation of caste and religious sentiments, criminalization of politics, family loyalty, booth capturing, terrorizing and preventing people from voting, false promises in manifesto and misuse of media and so on are some of the major faults with our existing electoral system.

Today, criminalization of politics is adding to this menace where by the criminals are directly contesting elections even from the jails. The unholy nexus between criminals and politicians can be easily seen. Politicians often take the help of criminals in terms of money and muscle power. Even surrendered militants are contesting elections in some parts of the country. All these lead to an understanding among the corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and criminals. The corrupt bureaucrats always support the ruling parties to regain power; thus, the government machinery is misused both for the ruling party and existing bureaucrats against the opposition parties. Since election is a big and wide process which needs extensive use of government machinery, the importance of bureaucrats here can hardly be ignored. To minimize the negative use of bureaucracy, the Election Commission (EC) comes with a series of instructions. For example, transfers and promotions

of officers are banned once election is announced. Of late "Model Code of Conduct" is strictly adopted and enforced by the EC.

Today, contesting election has become more expensive and competitive. Every candidate wants to win election by any means since there is no consensus among the candidates. With the increasing number of voters every year and to cover a large constituency, candidates have to invest more. Thus, transportation, publicity, personal contacts, rallies, public meetings and advertisements in mass media need more and more money. But there is a ceiling on expenditure by the parties or candidates. Here donations, black money and its collection from business houses and criminal makes a vicious cycle. All these developments deprive the genuine candidate and helpless voters from the essence of democracy.

13.9 ELECTORAL REFORMS IN INDIA

In India, electoral reforms were started way back in 1970s. In 1971, a Joint Parliamentary Committee was appointed to amend the Election Law under Jagannath Rao, it submitted its report in 1972. Two years later, another Committee was appointed under Justice V M Tarkunde which submitted its report in 1975. It was about election reform, curbing money and muscle power, misuse of government machinery etc. During that period people were mobilized under J P Narayan for electoral reforms. Later on, when Janata Party came to power it constituted a Cabinet Sub-Committee for electoral reforms but it could not implement its decisions because of untimely demise of the Janata Government. After a long gap, in 1990, the Dinesh Goswami Committee submitted its report on various aspects of election and its reform, but unfortunately these could not be implemented as well. Later on two major Acts were enacted namely 83rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1994 and Representation of People (2nd Amendment) Act, 1996. These two Acts cover areas like: reduction of campaign period from 21 days to 14 days; banning candidates from contesting in more than two constituencies; increasing the amount of security deposit to discourage non- serious

candidates from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5000; and not to suspend election in case of death of a candidate (political party can nominate another candidate for the same within seven days).

13.9.1 Changes in The Electoral System

From 1990s onwards, there is a mushrooming growth of political parties. Because of that it is nearly impossible to form a government by just one political party. Hence the concept of coalition government and alliance politics is gaining ground. In India, it's not necessary to get majority of votes by a particular candidate to get elected as we have opted for the First Past the Post (FPTP) system. In that sense our system is not truly representative which is there in the Proportional Representation (PR) system. For example, a candidate gets elected even if he/she secured twenty percent of total votes polled if that percent is more than all other individual candidates. That is one of the serious drawbacks that we're facing in the FPTP system. There is a demand for changing the system to achieve a true representation system, as even the Tarkunde Committee and some former CECs too had suggested for modification of the present system. But, in a big country like India, it's just not desirable to switch over to some other complex procedure of voting where millions of people are living under below poverty line and who are illiterate having little awareness about the whole political system.

13.9.2 Restructuring the Election Commission

To make the Election Commission more responsive and democratic there were demands for making it a multi member entity. Both the Tarkunde and Goswami Committee suggested for its reconstruction. Ultimately with the Supreme Court judgement of 1995, the EC was made a three member body. However, there is

still scope for taking a majority decision by the EC sometimes which may not be impartial as the members are appointed by the ruling government. There is a possibility that the retired bureaucrats may want to please the ruling party to be a member of the EC. Today, there is demand for a total ban on post-retirement appointments of the EC members to make it more neutral and non-partisan.

13.9.3 Eradicating the Evil Influences of Money And Muscle Power

Misuse of money and muscle power for electoral gain is the most serious issue before the electoral system we are facing today. By the two elements voters can be easily influenced to get desired results. Although there is ceiling for election related expenditure but in real practice that amount is not sufficient and that is often violated by candidates or political parties. There is a proposal from the previous Committees for state funding of elections but unfortunately that has not being introduced till date. Use of money, which is collected form dubious sources, is related to criminalization of politics. Candidates having proven criminal records must be debarred from contesting elections.

More radical measures like the right to recall or reject a particular candidate may be introduced on an experimental basis. Although, we have the NOTA (None of the above) option in the EVMs, there is no clear-cut direction about what would happen if a majority of the voters polled is of NOTA. Paid news is another latest addition to influence the voter in the name of opinion poll and expert's discussion. Although lots of measures are being taken by the EC to maintain the sanctity of the elections but laws alone cannot provide us a full proof system. In the long run, it's all about the political culture and behaviour of the electorates. Examples show

that mature electorates had over thrown corrupt regimes in India in a number of occasions. However, we need political commitment and political will along with strong civil society to have a fair electoral system.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : Write briefly about the composition of the Election Commission.

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Q 2 : Which Article of the Indian Constitution provides for the election machinery?

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Q 3 : Write two drawbacks of electoral system of India.

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Q 4 : Explain two measures to reform electoral system in India.

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13.10 LET US SUM UP

- Election is that process by which the general people legitimize the rule of a particular political party or a coalition of parties.
- The process of election strengthens democracy by making the people a real part of the political system.

- The Constitution of India has provision for free and fair election under the supervision of the Election Commission for both central and state governments even up to the grass root level.
- Socio-economic or religious elements like caste, language, region, class etc. can play a very decisive role in determining electoral outcomes. Political parties try to mobilize people on the basis of these emotional issues.
- Other issues like money and muscle power are equally important. Investment of black money and criminalization of politics are a serious matter of concern for our electoral system. Although several Committees recommended measures to curb the evil menace but their influence is increasing day by day.
- Although measures like EVMs, Model Code of Conduct, declaration of property of candidates etc. are introduced, that is not sufficient if the general people are not vigilant and sensitized about issues of electoral malpractices.
- Today the elections have become a part of our democratic life by which we can change governments in a peaceful manner.



13.11 FURTHER READING

1) Zoya Hasan (ed). (2002). *Parties and Party Systems*. New Delhi: OUP.

2) Rajni Kothari. (1972). *Politics in India*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.

3) M. V Rajeev Gowda, and E. Sridharan, (2007). *'Parties and the Party System.* 1947-2006', in Sumit Ganguly, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner (eds) *The State of India's Democracy*. John Hopkins University: Maryland.

13.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1 : The Election Commission of India consists of one Chief Election Commissioner and two other members. Members of the Commission are appointed by the President of India.

Ans. to Q. No. 2 : Article 324.

Ans. to Q. No. 3 : Criminalization of politics is one of the drawbacks of electoral system in India. The unholy nexus between criminals and politicians can be easily seen. Politicians often take the help of criminals in terms of money and muscle power. Even surrendered militants are contesting elections in some parts of the country. All these lead to an understanding among the corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and criminals. The corrupt bureaucrats always support the ruling parties to regain power; thus, the government machinery is misused both for the ruling party and existing bureaucrats against the opposition parties.

Secondly, contesting election has become more expensive and competitive. Every candidate wants to win election by any means since there is no consensus among the candidates. With the increasing number of voters every year and to cover a large constituency, candidates have to invest more. Thus, transportation, publicity, personal contacts, rallies, public meetings and advertisements in mass media need more and more money. But there is a ceiling on expenditure by the parties or candidates. Here donations, black money and its collection from business houses and criminal makes a vicious cycle. All these developments deprive the genuine candidate and helpless voters from the essence of democracy.

Ans. to Q. No. 4 : (i) Restructuring the Election Commission : To make the Election Commission more responsive and democratic the Commission should be a multi member entity. Both the Tarkunde

and Goswami Committee suggested for its reconstruction. Ultimately with the Supreme Court judgement of 1995, the EC was made a three member body. However, there is still scope for taking a majority decision by the EC sometimes which may not be impartial as the members are appointed by the ruling government. There is a possibility that the retired bureaucrats may want to please the ruling party to be a member of the EC. Today, there is demand for a total ban on post-retirement appointments of the EC members to make it more neutral and non-partisan.

(ii) Eradicating the Evil Influences of Money And Muscle Power : Misuse of money and muscle power for electoral gain is the most serious issue before the electoral system we are facing today. By the two elements voters can be easily influenced to get desired results. Although there is ceiling for election related expenditure but in real practice that amount is not sufficient and that is often violated by candidates or political parties. There is a proposal from the previous Committees for state funding of elections but unfortunately that has not being introduced till date. Use of money, which is collected form dubious sources, is related to criminalization of politics. Candidates having proven criminal records must be debarred from contesting elections.



13.13 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1 : Discuss the role of elections in Democracy.

Q 2 : Analyse the major determinants of electoral behaviour in India.

Q 3 : Describe the measures which are adopted to reform the electoral system in India.

Q 4 : "Elections are the core element of Democracy." Discuss.

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UNIT 14 : POLITICAL ECONOMY - NEHRUVIAN MODEL AND MIXED ECONOMY; RECENT TRENDS

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Political Economy of Pre-independent India

14.4 Political Economy of Nehru-era

14.5 Political Economy in post Nehru era

14.6 Dawn of LPG

14.7 Beyond LPG

14.8 Let Us Sum Up

14.9 Further Reading

14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.11 Possible Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- describe political economy of India of pre-independence era, Nehru era and post Nehru era
- analyse political economy of India in the context of Liberalisation, Privatization and Globalisation.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

India, an Asian economic power, is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. It took almost 100 years to get back India's economic freedom after the Britishers started draining wealth from India. The economy of India was so devastated that after 70 years of independence also it is still regarded as a slowly progressing country. India was supposed to be facilitated through a proactive and progressive government.

14.3 POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PRE-INDEPENDENT INDIA

Political economy is all about the interplay between the economy and politics of a country. It tries to explain why a particular economic condition leads to changes in the political sphere and vice versa. It is sometime regarded as a conflict between the state and the market. India , an Asian subcontinent had to go for political independence only to free its economy from foreign clutches. A self sufficient agrarian economy where village economy was the basis of domestic income and gems and jewelries formed the export income had to go through 200 years of economic exploitation by British imperialist. This lead a group of foreign educated Indians to start for India's freedom struggle. During this period itself the blueprint of India's economy was set. The developmental aspirations of the people of India were unfolded during the freedom struggle itself. The resistance of Indian people in 1857, Peasants struggle against the land revenue system of the Britishers, revolt against Zamindars, etc had pure economic perspectives. Criticism of nationalist leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G.Ranade and R.C.Dutt on colonial economic exploitations were also been seen upsurging in the pre-nehru era itself which is a clear indication that India's freedom struggle had economic basis. However, the Indian council act 1861, initiatives by Annie Besant, All Parties Conference led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1925 (commonwealth of Indian Bill), Motilal Nehru Committee report of 1928 etc had economic basis demanding political freedom for India. However it was Gandhi who gave stress on socio-economic upliftment of Indian people to regain the status of self sufficiency that India used to enjoy. Among the earliest Gandhian efforts were his visit to Champaran in Bihar to save the peasants from the exploitation of the British indigo planters, his initiation of peasant satyagraha at Khaira in Gujrat against high revenue etc. Towards the later part of freedom movement that the demand for land reform (abolition of Zamindari system and other intermediary rights in land and grant of ownership of tillers of land) started to crop up. In fact there was demand from Congress in1893 itself for permanent settlement of land in order to protect the people against harassing extortions of the landlords in the

ryotwari areas. Interestingly, as available in a write up by S.K.Chaube after the Lahore Resolution of 1929 ; on January 30, 1930 in Yong India Gandhi laid down the 'Substance of Independence' where among all the features eight of the ten features had economic bearing which talked about –

- Reduction of pound rupee exchange from 1 shilling 6 pence to 1 shilling 4 pence,
- Reduction of land revenue by 50% and making it subjected to legislative control.
- Abolition of salt tax.
- Reduction of military expenditure by 50%.
- Reduction of salaries of the highest grade services by half or less, to suit the reduced revenue.
- Protective tariff on foreign cloth.
- Passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill.
- Issue of licenses to use fire arms for self defense, subject to popular control.

Soon after that Karachi Resolution of 1931 brought out a detailed economic reform for India. When Congress came to power in 1937 in provincial elections they partly fulfilled the promises. After 20 years of Karachi Resolution the Indian Constitution enshrined the promises made during the resolution. So, the foundation of India's political economy was structured during the pre-independence era itself which was brought to shape by the succeeding government, particularly by India's first Prime Minister Pandit Nehru in the form of planned development. Very interestingly commented by Prof. S.K.Chaube, 'The Indian national movement was a political movement which tried to avoid contentious issues so that the people does not get divided. However there exist no polity without economy and that is why to mobilize the people it was necessary to reflect on their socio-economic aspirations of the people. The broad aspirations of the people during that period was :

- A capitalist dream of an industrialized India under minimal state control and state support.
- A Gandhian view of basically rural and self –sufficient economy with minimal state control and large industry.
- A socialist view of an industrialized India under strong state control and leadership.

So during this period a consensus was arrived that there could be no development without political freedom, there must be certain amount of state control in the economy, basic natural resources should be nationalized and at the most Zamindari and other intermediary rights in agriculture should be abolished. Thus, in this way a rough blueprint of India's political economy was laid in the pre-Nehru era.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : Write two features of 'Substance of Independence'.

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Q 2 : What was the main consensus arrived in between people of India and the state during pre-nehruvian era?

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14.4 POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NEHRU-ERA

At the threshold of India's Independence in 1947, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru sworn in as India's Prime Minister. He along with fellow freedom strugglers and the mansions of India planned out a socialist pattern of development of India. The task before the leaders was to galvanize a fragmented and

pulverized economy. They decided to adopt a planned economy to alleviate the masses from the depressing quagmire of poverty, unemployment and general backwardness. In the chapter on 'Objective of Planned Development' as written by Bipan Chandra, Nehru observed that 'a high rate of economic growth sustained over a long period is the essential condition for achieving a rising level of living for all citizens, and especially for those in low income groups or lacking the opportunity to work'. Nehru told in the Avadi session of the Congress: ' We cannot have a welfare state in India with all the socialism or even communism in the world unless our national income goes up greatly. Socialism or communism might help you to divide your existing wealth, if you like, but in India there is no existing wealth for you to divide, there is only poverty to divide… How can we have a welfare State without wealth? In other words, production was essential irrespectively of the nature of society being socialist or communist'. Nehru committed to 'the establishment of a socialist pattern of society where the principal means of production are under social ownership or control'. So, it was a combined blueprint of Keynesian macroeconomics, Stalinist public investment policies and Gandhian rural development measures. It was a idealist pattern which could be implemented only if the government is potential and powerful enough. But from the first day of sovereign India till its 15- 20 years, India was over and again jolted by political instability and upheaval, which helped in bringing no desired result in the economy.

In an article, 'Economic Ideology of Jawaharlal Nehru' published in EPW in 1964 M.L.Dantwala commented that it was well known that it was mainly because of Nehru's insistence that the ultimate goal of the Socialist Pattern of society has been adopted. Nehru's economic ideology is an outcome of socialism which was born out of a deep attachment to the values of ethics and social justice. It was combination of free enterprises found in USA and state controlled economy found in Soviet Union. Nehru argued that India with its limited resources and under-developed economy could not adopt either of these two methods of development and had to evolve her own methods. He was of the opinion that mixed economy was the best method

because this led to equitable distribution of the wealth in the country. Nehru favoured a state controlled industries mainly concerned with defense production as well as basic heavy industries. Nehru was well conscious that India had a shattered economy with limited technical and financial resources. It was not in a position to take over heavy industrial responsibilities by its own and that is why permits to the private enterprises were given. But Nehru was concerned that the private enterprises should work in a limited sphere as because the idea of private sector does not fit into his idea of welfarism. Only because he felt that they could play important role in boosting speedy development and will lessen the burden over the state he allowed private players to invest in India. He further said that the private sectors should be immuned from the government control and must work in cooperation to the public sector. The private sector should be guided by social purpose and must be committed to common good of the public. He further suggested for curtailment of private sector and extension of public sector and gradual transfer of the field of the private sector to the public sector. He was quite clear that the public sector must generate additional resources. According to the Industrial Policy Resolution 1956, the public sector was expected to 'augment the revenues of the state and provide revenues to the state and provide resources for further development in fresh fields'. So his economy was supposed to be flexible to the extent that it is easily adjustable to the changing needs of India. That is why may be, inspite of criticisms from various parts he was quite firm with what he aimed for India. So, let us take a quick perusal of the main highlights of Nehruvian economy -

- Nehru modeled a planned economy for India way back in 1934. He set up a National Planning Committee with Jawaharlal Nehru as Chairman and Professor K.T. Shah as Secretary. He took planned economy as a strategy to achieve speedy development. It was a challenge for him to implement since every penny is to be spent by the state. The biggest challenge came from Gandhi who believed it to be a centralized statism. It was supposed to be against village

decentralization. Planning was an anathema to western democracies whose financial aid was a critical factor in the task of development. Whatever it may be, the concept of the planning commission with the Prime Minister as the chairman was an important landmark in the economic policy and development in the country.

- The adoption of Bombay Plan prepared under the leadership of G.D.Birla in 1940. The Plan envisaged the doubling of per capita income and trebling of national income in 15 years. There was specialization of industries into basic industries and consumption goods industries. This has helped in minimizing inequalities of wealth. This plan stressed on economic control rather than ownership or management by State.
- Another important economic policy of Nehru was the launching of the modern type of industrialization with its emphasis on heavy industries. Implementation of Nehru Mahalonobi's strategies and importance to development of industries in a country where the basic infrastructures and raw material for industrialization was lacking was also a challenge to Nehru to follow. Moreover it was a decision against the Gandhian philosophy of agriculturalization of India. It was also seen to have been failing in the first decade of India's development. As a result there cropped up an unknowing war in between precedence of agriculture and industries.
- Another strategy of Nehru's economy was stress on steel mills and the giant multi-purpose river- valley dams without thinking about the long run implications. What so ever, there was always the saving grace of non-insistence and flexibility.
- Another striking feature of Nehruvian economy was adoption of the Nagpur Resolution on the future pattern of the agrarian structure. He went for such change when industrialization alone could not accelerate the pace of development in India. In the words of Dantwala, the Resolution had categorically stated that the future

agrarian pattern should be that of cooperative joint farming, in which land will be pooled for joint farming. The reference was to all land and not only to land belonging to small uneconomic cultivator. At that moment, and for a considerable time thereafter, Nehru was convinced that this was the right stand. Later, partly because of the successful misrepresentation of this policy as confiscatory and anti-peasant and partly because of the practical difficulties in implementing it, the Nagpur Resolution was allowed to fade away.

- Formation of state sponsored, large sized visible units of primary cooperative credit societies: Easy and affordable credits to the farmers were made easily available to boost up agricultural sectors. However, in the long run this credit facility made the farmers over burdened with debt leading to suicidal attempt by the farmers and the succeeding government had to go with loan waiving schemes.
- Another significant feature of Nehruvian economy was the adoption of tickle down process of development which was not according to the needs of the regions and was over centralized.
- Continuation of a system of control and ration on food supply of the imperialist days which led to improvements of the system of controls rather than its abolition. Occasionally the controls were lifted and again imposed when there was inflation.
- Introduction of nationalizations of major banks and companies came as a shock to most of the Indian businessmen, socialist and radicals. He assured the industrialist and the businessman that this government by him was by no way to harm the industries but it will surely provide facilities for production (technical, scientific and power resources etc).

Nehru's model of economy was to be accomplished within the framework of democracy which promised to establish social justice, equality and rights. So, state was supposed to act as mediator or to say a neutralizer in between the logic of the market which excludes a significant number of poor populations and the aim of India to have an inclusive development. So,

efforts were made to limit the degree of openness and of integration with the world economy, in pursuit of a more autonomous, if not self reliant development. Ultimately there was huge investment creation of infrastructure which helped in building up of intermediate goods industries. That resulted in reduction of input cost and increased the demands for goods produced. There was import substitution through protection of markets for domestic capitalist for securing the future. There was a consented effort that industrialization goes with people's interest. Therefore, redistribution as a policy was not encouraged, Zamindars were excluded from the interferences in the economy, land reforms got polluted by corruption at all levels and legislative loopholes started to decay the economy that Nehru dreamt of. So, new initiatives were introduced like community development programmes, panchayat systems, reservations etc.

Above all Nehru wanted to build a self reliant economy for independence depended on economic strength and the capacity to resist economic and political domination. Emphasis on rapid industrialization and agricultural self sufficiency , planning, public sector and heavy , capital goods industry, minimal use of foreign capital and aid, science, technology and technical modernization, the training of a large technical and scientific cadre, and atomic energy was seen by Nehru as important ingredients of economic independence and development in India. Nehruvian policy was successful though it was capitalist in structure yet socialist in spirit which proved to be the right one for India as a result her economic achievement was quite substantial. However, the following can be estimated as the gains of Nehru era –

- Massive initiatives for industrial and agricultural growth through expansion of state expenditure.
- Diversification of industrial production.
- Coming up of infant industries.
- Domestic self sufficiency in food production was achieved.

With the above mentioned gain, the losses incurred were failure of land reforms, rise of a high cost industrial economy, export

pessimism, corruption in institutionalized manner, not labour intensive agriculture, negligence of dry farming land, urban - rural divide. In all fairness, there was a concerted effort to reconcile economic policies with that of the political processes. Politics of accommodation was followed with eradication of poverty and equal distribution of resources. Thus, Nehru introduced an achievable social democracy with a welfare state along the non capitalist path of development.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3 : Write a brief note on Political Economy of Nehruvian era.

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Q 4 : When was the Bombay Plan adopted?

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14.5 POLITICAL ECONOMY IN POST NEHRU ERA

Sudden demise of Nehru questioned the existence of what Nehru stated to develop in India. Indira Gandhi took over the responsibilities of her father. There was frequent changes in the power structures. Congress which carried on the Nehruvian legacy itself was not stable and was in the verge of decline. It could not balance political democracy and economic welfarism. This led to the failure of the government to keep the promises made to the people. This made India a fertile ground for political voices coming from margins of the society. They have started to make economic claims on the state. On the economic front there was grim poverty seen (34% in 1957 to 57% in 1970), ever increasing prices, food crisis, devaluation

of money (savings and investment suffered as result planning has to be suspended for three years). The consensus that people and the government arrived for development of India was totally broken.On the political front there was second democratic upsurge in the form of regionalism, ruralization, rise of castes' politics, demographic changes of the voters(more from lower strata of the society), rise of rich peasantry, decline of semi feudal lords etc which eventually altered the nature of political economy of the post Nehru era. To meet the demands the government introduced Green Revolution in the agriculturally advanced areas of India which made India self sufficient in grain production to a large extent. There was serious programmatic efforts from the government side except for populist sloganeering, nationalization of banks, abolition of privy purses etc. Land reforms were not up to the mark. The failures during this period exceeded the gains, the result was declaration of emergency. So, political and economic democracy seemed to have failed completely during this period. This has happened because of instable polity in form of coalition. In the words of S.K.Chaube, 'The failure of Janata party government reflected the limitation of the coalition politics'. There was no unity in the parties and frequent movement of members from one party to the other. By then Indira Gandhi returned with populist policy like huge subsidies resulting in increased state expenditure and loss of revenue, soft loans, loan waivers, nationalization of sick farms, cheap inputs for small capitalist. The same concept continued in the Rajib Gandhi rule also only with some changes like politics of nominations, marketisation of polity, employment generation schemes etc. But this era was not like the flourishing Nehruvian era. There was hardly any relation and interactions between polity and economy. Those who had money and muscle power won the elections and did reforms either suiting their interest or made no significant reforms. Religion, ethnicity, Identity started playing major role in Indian politics then revampation of the economy. The budgets were mostly deficit and political instability could not solve the unsolved problems of socialist India.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5 : What was the condition of Indian economy after Nehru's death?

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Q 6 : Name one employment generation scheme initiated by Rajib Gandhi.

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14.6 DAWN OF LPG

In the post 1990 India had a regime of elaborate license and regulations resulting in comprehensive corruption and red-tapism. The economy suffered to the extent that the government of India decided to close Indian economy to the outside world. The state and the planning commission decided the amount of investment necessary to boost up the economy. The market had nothing to do with the economy. The only strength was import substitution. The bureaucracy put on hundreds of procedural restrictions on foreign firms which prevented their entry into India. There was absence of consensus regarding any strong strategy of economic development. Long term vision to develop India was been replaced by short term policies. There was movement of polity and economy in different directions. The polity was more democratized and was driven by interest by people's movements centering and questioning unequal economic development, caste politics, regionalism and emergence of rich state – poor state syndrome, loss of confidence in political vitality. Religion was more important than development. In terms of economy most of the investments were in form of consumerism and hot money (seeking quick return). The withdrawal of the state from social sector has been hitting the poor people as the whole notion of welfarism was under question. Results of this were

- Huge concentration of wealth through tax evasion and licensesing by a certain section of the society.
- Losses incurred by state owned enterprises.
- Emergence of huge private sector.
- Increased inefficiency of department of taxes and customs in tax evasion.
- Public sector monopolization led to poor infrastructure investment.

These developments led India to a fixed exchange rate leaving India in a irrecoverable economic crisis. The central banks could not generate new credit. The foreign exchange reserves melted to point zero and India had to go for credit help from IMF through helps from Switzerland and England against Gold. So India had to go for economic reforms as a bailout process from the IMF. The reforms initiated earlier in 1966-67 and 1985 could not deal with the grim problem that India was facing. As per India Report of Astaire Research, ' A balance of Payments crisis in 1991 pushed India near bankruptcy. In return far an IMF bailout, gold was transferred to London as collateral, the rupee devaluated and economic reforms were forced upon India. There was an urgent need to unshackle the economy. Controls started to be dismantled, tariffs, duties and taxes progressively lowered, state monopolies broken, trade reforms were introduced, private sector enterprises were encouraged and globalization were gradually encouraged. It was open handedly accepted by all political parties though with a low pace leading to a new era in India called LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization).

The primary objective of LPG was to make the economy of India the fastest developing one and with capabilities to compete with the biggest economy of the world. It is a process of trade liberalization, privatization of businesses and globalization of Indian economy. The main motive of the process was to take India to a proficient level. Liberalization means reduction of government regulations. Privatization means participation of private

enterprises in business and services and transfer of ownership to private sector. Globalization means the process of making the world economy one. It is a process of increasing global interaction connectivity and integration between nation states, households and individuals, corporations and other organizations. India adopted this process as a recovery mechanism to the economic set back it was suffering from. The then Prime Minister of India P.V.Narashimha Rao, initiated this groundbreaking economic reorganization. It was under the aegis of then Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. The declaration of LPG came out in the form of Narashimha Rao Committee's Recommendation:

- To bring in the Security Regulations (Modified) and the SEBI Act of 1992. (to legitimize the Securities Exchange Board of India and to record and control all the mediators in the capital markets)
- To do away with the Controller of Capital matters by 1992.
- Launching of the National Stock Exchange in 1994.
- The equity markets were made available for investment through overseas corporate investors.
- The companies were allowed to raise funds from overseas markets through issuance of Global Depository Receipts.
- Promotion of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI).
  (raising the partnership cap to 51% from 40%. In high priority industries, 100% international equity was allowed)
- The Indian currency was made exchangeable currency.
- Duties have been reduced to 25% from 85%.
- There was reorganization of the methods for sanctions of FDI.
- Demarcation of boundaries for international investment was initiated.

As a result within 5-6 years it was noticed that the overall amount of overseas investment rose to 5.3 billion dollar from 132 million dollar (US) during 1990's. There were changes in industrial guide lines. Demarcation of production zone was made. Specialized economic zones were declared.

License raj was abolished (except 18 sectors). Control on industries were moderated and relaxed. So, with the dawn of LPG India went through a comprehensive and massive economic reformation. Therefore, there were certain new initiatives taken which highlights the main characteristics of this LPG regime are:

- Foreign Technology Agreements.
- Foreign Direct Investment.
- MRTP Act, 1969 (amended)
- Industrial Licensing.
- Deregulations.
- Privatization.
- Encouragement in overseas trades.
- Measures for Regulation of inflation.
- Tax reformations.
- Abolition of License- Permit Raj.
- Structural adjustment programmes and introduction of PRSP's.

14.7 BEYOND LPG

Whatever was been initiated by Narashimha Rao was halted after him. He acted as Chanakya for India with his path breaking economic reform even through a minority government. Since then the overall outcome of liberalization remained same. There no significant reforms undertaken by succeeding government and there were questions regarding inclusiveness of LPG. It was because soon after the adaptation of this process it has been observed that income inequalities have deepened in India. The consumption rate of the rich has grown manifolds with accessibility to MNCs and other avenues while the consumption of the poor remained same. As

per GDP growth rate it was in a state of flux. It was the lowest in 2012-2013 with 5.1% growth since liberalization which made the government to take new reforms to boost up the economy. However by 2015 and after it has been accelerated again to reach the highest in 2014-2015 to beyond 7%. It was accompanied by failure in addressing employment issue, nutritional values of food (food is available but quality deteriorated), export growth resulting in current account deficit. More integration with neighboring economies in the form of ASEAN, SAARC was happening but the acceleration was not as per the pace required. Indian markets started flooding with Chinese goods which had adversely affected income of a certain section. Accessibility to anything has become easy leading to a more crime driven society. Gandhian value of economy of sharing was declining and people were more interest driven. Profit making became the sole motive resulting in decline of ethics. The economy moved towards credit driven. So, the neo-liberal ideology adopted by India was been questioned on the ensuing concept of environmentalism and sustainable development. So, whatever was been taking place had a cost bearing on the population and the under-privileged sections remained with their problems of 70's in the 21st century also.

The initiatives taken over by succeeding governments in the post reform era are as follows:

- The BJP in 1998-1999 till 2004 had initiated a number of reforms which were not feasible for India. Afterwards the NDA began privatizing under-performing government owned business including hotels, VSNL, Maruti Suzuki, and airports. They begun reducing taxes. There was overall fiscal policy aimed at reducing deficits and debts and increased initiatives for public works.
- The United Front Government attempted a progressive budget that encouraged reforms after being hit by Asian Financial Crisis and political stability created economic stagnation.
- By the end of 2011, the congress led UPA 2 Coalition Government initiated the introduction of 51% Foreign Direct Investment in retain

sector. But due to pressure from fellow coalition and the opposition, the decision rolled back. However it was approved in 2012.

- In 2015, the second BJP led NDA Government opened up the insurance sector by allowing upto 49% FDI. This came seven years after the previous government attempted and failed to push through the same reforms and 16 years after the sector was first opened to foreign investors up to 26% under the first NDA government.
- It also opened up the coal industry through the passing of the coal mines (special provision) Bill of 2015. It ended the Indian central government's monopoly over the mining of coal, which existed since nationalization in 1973 through socialist controls. It has opened the path of private interference in the mining sector through investment from private parties in this field which will result in better wages for the mining workers and state too will earn at the cost of the private parties.
- In 2016 the government also moved a resolution against insolvency and bankruptcy code. The code created time bound processes for insolvency resolution of companies and individuals. If insolvency cannot be solved ,the assets of the borrowers may be sold to repay creditors. This law eased the process of doing business, according to experts and is considered by many to be the second most important reform in India since 1991.
- On July 1st 2017, the government launched the GST(Goods and Services Tax) This came after 17 years after being initiated in the year 2000 by Atal Bihari Bajpai. It is expected to be India's biggest tax reform. GST replaces a slew of indirect taxes structure and is therefore set to reshape the country's 2 trillion dollar economy. But its implications will be known only in the years to come.

But, if the general condition of the people are taken into consideration there is not much changes seen since Nehruvian era. Poverty, unemployment still remains the grim problem. The rich getting richer and the poor remained

the same. The difference of prices at the farming ground and the market is still high and middleman still remaining the main profit making body. The real profit is not percolating to the real gainer.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7 : State the meaning of LPG.

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Q 8 : Write two recommendation of Narashima Rao Committee on LPG.

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Q 9 : Write the latest initiatives of the NDA Government towards reformation of taxation system in India.

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14.8 LET US SUM UP

- The British left the economy of India in a devastated condition only to leave the state in a bankruptcy at the threshold of its independence.
- To make India free from such condition Nehru, the first PM of India adopted a socialist patterned planned development model, though a mixed economy (combination of private enterprises and welfare state).
- Pre Independent India was self sufficient agrarian economy where village economy was the basis of domestic income and gems and jewelries formed the export income had to go through 200 years of economic exploitation by British imperialist. This lead to a group of

foreign educated Indians to start for India's freedom struggle. During this period itself the blueprint of India's economy was set.

- Nehru's economic ideology is an outcome of socialism which was born out of a deep attachment to the values of ethics and social justice. It was combination of free enterprises found in USA and state controlled economy found in Soviet Union. Nehru argued that India with its limited resources and under-developed economy could not adopt either of these two methods of development and had to evolve her own methods. He was of the opinion that mixed economy was the best method because this led to equitable distribution of the wealth in the country.
- After the death of Nehru there was frequent changes in the power structures. Congress which carried on the Nehruvian legacy itself was not stable and was in the verge of decline. It could not balance political democracy and economic welfarism. This led to the failure of the government to keep the promises made to the people.
- Due to maladjustment of the society with the development pattern and continuous failure of the economy to save India from the bancrupcy, India was bound to adopt a new economic regime popularly known as LPG. So, with the dawn of LPG India went through a comprehensive and massive economic reformation. Therefore, there were certain new initiatives taken like, Foreign Technology Agreements, Foreign Direct Investment, MRTP Act, 1969 (amended),Industrial Licensing etc.
- LPG led to opening up of markets to the outside world and Indian economy was freed from unnecessary restrictions from the state. As a result MNC's were flooding Indian market and converting Indian economy to a consumerist and credit dependent one.
- Interestingly, if the general condition of the people are taken into consideration there is not much changes seen since Nehruvian era. Poverty, unemployment remained same and the rich were seen getting richer and the poor remained the same. The difference of

prices at the farming ground and the market is remained high resulting in continuous price rise. The real profit was not seen percolating to the real persons.



14.9 FURTHER READING

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2) Frankel, F.R. (2005). *India's Political Economy 1947-2004*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
3) Rao, C.H.H & Linneman, H. (ed). (1996). *Economic Reforms and Poverty Alleviation in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.



14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : Reduction of pound rupee exchange from 1 shilling 6 pence to 1 shilling 4 pence and Reduction of land revenue by 50% and making it subjected to legislative control.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : No development without political freedom.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : Nehru wanted to build a self reliant economy for India depended on economic strength and the capacity to resist economic and political domination. Emphasis on rapid industrialization and agricultural self sufficiency , planning, public sector and heavy , capital goods industry, minimal use of foreign capital and aid, science, technology and technical modernization, the training of a large technical and scientific cadre, and atomic energy was seen by Nehru as important ingredients of economic independence and development in India. Massive initiatives for industrial and agricultural growth through expansion of state expenditure was made. Diversification of industrial production was made and there was coming up of infant industries. Domestic

self sufficiency in food production was achieved. With the above mentioned gain, the losses incurred were failure of land reforms, rise of a high cost industrial economy, export pessimism, corruption in institutionalized manner, not labour intensive agriculture, negligence of dry farming land, urban - rural divide. In all fairness, there was a concerted effort to reconcile economic policies with that of the political processes. Politics of accommodation was followed with eradication of poverty and equal distribution of resources. Thus, Nehru introduced an achievable social democracy with a welfare state along the non capitalist path of development.

Ans to Q. No. 4 : In 1940, under the leadership of G.D.Birla.

Ans to Q. No. 5 : Nehru's death and coming of Indira Gandhi and subsequent leaders in India could not bring any significant development. The polity was under upheaval and economy was relying on credit from IMF. The instable government could not take effective long term initiatives to boost the economy and it was continuously drawn under economies of the West. There was no other way but to adopt a neo-liberal economic policy to step up with the world.

Ans to Q. No. 6 : Rajib Gandhi Rural Employment Genaration Programme.

Ans to Q. No. 7 : Liberalization means reduction of government regulations. Privatization means participation of private enterprises in business and services and transfer of ownership to private sector. Globalization means the process of making the world economy one. It is a process of increasing global interaction connectivity and integration between nation states, households and individuals, corporations and other organizations. India adopted this process as a recovery mechanism.

Ans to Q. No. 8 : (i) To bring in the Security Regulations(Modified) and the SEBI Act of 1992.

(ii) Launching of the National Stock Exchange in 1994.

Ans to Q. No 9 : Goods and Services Tax, 2017.

14.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1 : State the meaning of LPG.

Q 2 : Write briefly about 'Substance of Independence'.

Q 3 : State four recommendations of the Narashimha Rao Committee.

Q 4 : Write a short note on Political Economy of Pre-independent India.

Q 5 : Explain the initiatives taken over by the Government in the post LPG era.

Q 6 : Discuss political economy of India with special reference to Nehru era and post Nehru era.

Q 7 : Make a note on political economy of India in the post 1990s.



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UNIT 15 : PRESSURE GROUP POLITICS IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives

15.2 Introduction

15.3 Pressure Groups

15.4 Methods used by Pressure Groups

15.5 Pressure Groups in India

15.5.1 Characteristics of Pressure Groups in India

15.5.2 Major Pressure Groups in India

15.5.3 Media as Pressure Group in India

15.5.4 Role of Pressure Group in India

15.6 Let Us Sum Up

15.7 Further Reading

15.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

15.9 Possible Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- describe the meaning of interest groups and pressure groups
- examine the characteristics and the methods used by pressure groups
- explain the types of pressure groups
- examine the role of the pressure groups in India.

15.2 INTRODUCTION

Presence of pressure groups is one of the important characteristics of any democratic society. In a democratic country these

groups act as a mediator between people and the government. These groups create awareness among people and thus make democracy more participatory. In this unit we shall discuss different dimensions associated with pressure groups.

15.3 PRESSURE GROUPS

An interest group represents the social, economic and political interests of a particular segment of the society, that segment may be farmers, teachers, miners, workers, journalist or students. The segment has to have an interest, an objective which is something particular to that segment only. Interest is always specific. Pressure groups are the interest groups which try to secure their interests by influencing the formulation and administration of public policy. They have the ability to influence, coerce, pressurise and persuade. They are referred to as civil society organisations which are non-partisan groups that attempt to influence some phases of public life. Every pressure group is an interest group, but all interest groups are not pressure groups. An interest group has an interest but abstain from using pressure tactics; a pressure group has an interest and uses pressure tactics to pursue its goals.

Some Definitions of pressure groups:

- According to Myron Weiner - “By interest or pressure group we can mean any voluntary organised group, outside the government personnel, the adoption of public policy, its administration and adjunction.”
- According to Almond and Powell- it is a”group of individuals, who are linked by particular bonds of concern or advantage, and who have some awareness of these bonds.”
- According to Zeigler it is, ‘’an organized aggregate which seeks to influence the governmental decisions without attempting to place its members in formal governmental capacities’’.

So, the chief features of pressure or interest groups may be identified as under:

a) It is an organized group of people;
b) It is non-political in nature, for it does not aim to capture power;
c) It is a group with a particular interest which binds its member together;
d) It exists to exert influence on decision-making bodies so as to change their policies in their favour to meet specific goals.

The factors which affect the functioning of interest groups and pressure groups are -

- The organizational capacity, strength and discipline to keep its members to pursue their ends.
- Its financial resources to promote public relations campaigns through media, politicians, civil servants, etc.
- Capacity to elicit peoples' support and sympathies for its cause.
- Capacity to obtain and earn access to the decision-making bodies.

Types of Pressure Groups :

Almond and Powell have divided Pressure Groups into four categories. These are :

- Institutional pressure group-These groups are formally organized . They are part of government machinery and raise their protests with constitutional means. For example bureaucracy, army, central election committee etc.
- Anomic pressure group-These are the group that have analogy with individual self-representation. They may be constitutional or unconstitutional. For example ULFA. Naxalite etc.
- Associational pressure group-These are organized specialized groups formed for interest articulation but to pursue limited goals. For example, teachers association, student association etc.
- Non-Associational pressure group-These are the informal groups which includes groups like caste group, language group, etc.

There is a vast difference between political parties and pressure groups. The distinction between political parties and pressure groups can be made as under:

- Political parties are political in the sense that they are part of the political system; pressure groups are non-political in the sense that they are part of the social system.
- Political parties stay in the midst of political arena; pressure groups stay out of the political arena.
- Political parties participate in the working of the political system; they contest the elections and form either the government or the opposition. Pressure groups do not contest elections, nor do they participate in the working of the government.
- Political parties seek political power and such their object is general; pressure groups act as attributes of political parties.
- Political parties are outward-oriented; pressure groups are inward oriented.

15.4 METHODS USED BY PRESSURE GROUPS

Pressure groups used different methods in pursuing their demand. These are-

- Lobbying – It is a method in which pressure groups send their representatives to legislators in order to exert influence on any policy matter. It is one of the popular methods used by pressure groups. In wider sense lobbying means attempts of the pressure groups to influence government departments in favour of their interests. In modern times, however lobbying is not confined only to legislature, it operates at all levels of governmental activity.
- Subscribing to any political party –The pressure groups do not hesitate to use party platforms and organisations for promoting their interests. They try to influence the party candidates and elections campaigns for fulfilling their interests.
- Demonstrations – Pressure groups use demonstrations as a means for focussing the attention of the public and the government upon their various demands. Demonstrations involve dharnas, rallies, processions, etc.

- Strikes – A strike involves a temporary stoppage of work, by which a pressure group tries to coerce those who are responsible for satisfying its interests. It has become one of the most common and frequently used methods by the pressure groups.
- Media forum – The pressure groups try to use mass media for securing public support for achieving their demands and interests. They always use propaganda and publicity through means of mass media to achieve the good- will of the public which would help them in achieving desired changes in government policies and schemes.

Besides all these methods, some other methods used by pressure groups are bandhs, gherao, electioneering, etc. The pressure groups decide which method to use based on their resources and situations at a particular time.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : Write the meaning of 'pressure groups'.

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Q 2 : Write briefly about any two methods used by the pressure groups.

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Q 3 : State two characteristics of pressure groups.

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Q 4 : Write briefly about two differences between pressure groups and political parties.

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Q 5 : What is institutional pressure group?

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15.5 PRESSURE GROUPS IN INDIA

In India pressure groups play an important role. In India various pressure groups arose even during the colonial period. All India Trade Union Congress was the first pressure group of the working class. India is a developing country where pressure groups play a significant role. The aim of the pressure groups is to secure economic and political concessions for themselves.

15.5.1Characteristics of Pressure Groups in India

- Very unstable: In India pressure groups lack commitment and stability which results in shift in loyalties according to changing social and political situations.
- Varying in span*:* Like political parties, pressure groups too tend to be big or small which have varying life spans depending on their needs and preferences.
- Dominance of single party system*:* India was under a single party dominance for a long time and the dominant party enjoyed enormous power. Such parties do not tend to be influenced by pressure groups.
- Focus on parochial interest*:* It is seen that pressure groups are more influenced by their sectional interests compared to their local common interests.
- Tendency towards mass violence: Certain pressure groups which involve mass protest create mass violence to pressurise the parties in power to fulfil their demands.
- Ineffective interest articulation: In India most of the groups are un-trained, lack competence which results in ineffective interest articulation.
- Lack of effective membership: Pressure groups lack developed infrastructure which makes it difficult to maintain effective and permanent membership.

- Threat to democratic set-up: Various pressure groups tend to use coercive means to secure their interests leading to violence and chaos in the society, which makes it a threat to any democratic set up.

15.5.2 Major Pressure Groups in India

The major pressure groups present in India are as follows-

1. **Student's Organizations**-This type of pressure group pressurizes the government on educational issues and various critical issues. For example All Bengal Student Association formed in 1928. The All India Student Federation (AISF) in 1936. Student's Federation of India, National Students Union of India, the Akhil Bhartiya Vidhyarti Parishad, All Assam Students' Union etc.

2. **Peasant's Organization**- The peasant organisations gained power in 1960's. At the central level only one organisation the All India Kisan Congress exists. On a territorial basis All Kisan Kamgar, Akhil Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, the Bhartiya Kisan Party (BKP) in western U.P are most significant.

3. **The Business Group**-These type of pressure groups are independent of political parties and influence planning bodies and economic matters. They help in budget formulation. For example the Conference of Indian Industries (CII), Associated Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

4. **Professional Groups**- The several professional interest groups like Bar Association of India, All India Medical Council, College Teachers etc. fall in this category.

5. **Community Association-**They are in existence to safeguard their respective community. For example, Schedule Caste Federation, Backward Caste Federation, Vishwa Hindu Parishad etc.

6. Tribal (regional) Groups- There are several tribal interest groups that have been active in India. For example, The Tribal Sangha of Assam, The Tribal League of Assam, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha etc.

7. Linguistic Groups- These pressure groups promote certain languages. For example- Tamil Sangh, Hindi Protection Parishad, Punjabi Sahit Sabhas etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6 : Write briefly about two characteristics of pressure groups in India.

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Q 7 : Give an example of student's organisation of India.

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Q 8 : Write about business groups in India.

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15.5.3 Media as Pressure Group in India

Mass media plays vital role in revealing the various happenings of politics and life of common people all around the world. In countries such as India, the mass media –the radio, TV, the cinema and the press are very powerful means of social change and act as pressure groups for the interest of common people and reveal the all deeds of the government. A free and fair mass media can openly

criticize the government and have right to place their views on various situations of social, political and economic importance. Further mass media helps to generate a common platform which tries to focus on core issues of the society and its needs. So media role is as much important in influencing activities of the political parties as that of other pressure groups working to achieve certain specific goals. Infact in the contemporary world, media acts as an important agent of change focusing on social development and hence the media's role of pressurizing the government gives it the nature of a pressure group which is of vital importance.

15.5.4 Role of Pressure Group in India

The capacity of pressure groups is determined by leadership, mobilization techniques, organizational abilities, mass media and economic power base. The pressure groups also use lobbying methods, strike, bandh, demonstration, funding political parties, using party platform etc.

The various role of pressure groups are as follows-

- **Role in legislature-**Pressure groups try to introduce their chosen persons into legislatures. They even help political parties on the eve of election and prepare election manifesto.
- **Role in executive-**Pressure groups try to fill high executive posts with persons of their own choice i.e. selection of cabinet, distribution of portfolios and Prime Minister selection due to prevalence of collation government. And thus influence policy implementation process.
- **Role in bureaucracy-** Bureaucrats are politically neutral and hence pressure group tries to oblige them to protect their interests. Bureaucrats have long tenures and know the interests of the pressure groups better than the political parties.

Pressure groups promote national and particular interests, and constitute a link of communication between citizen and the

government. They also provide necessary information and keeps the nation politically alive and active. Today democratic politics involves politics through consultation, negotiation and some amount of bargaining, and these cannot happen without pressure groups. The society has become highly complex, and the individuals cannot pursue their interest on their own; they need pressure groups for this. Pressure groups are vital for all countries be it developed or developing nations with any form of government.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9 : Pressure group promotes national and particular interests.(True/ False)

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Q 10 : Write about any two functions of pressure groups.

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Q 11 : A free and fair .....can openly criticize the government (Fill in the Blank)

Q 12 : Write a short note on media as a pressure group. (within 50 words)

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15.6 LET US SUM UP

- Pressure groups are the interest groups which try to secure their interests by influencing the formulation and administration of public policy.
- Almond and Powell have divided interest groups into four parts - institutional pressure group, anomic pressure group, associational pressure group, non-associational pressure group
- Political parties are political in the sense that they are part of the political system; pressure groups are non-political in the sense that they are part of the social system.
- Political parties stay in the midst of political arena; pressure groups stay out of the political arena.
- Political parties participate in the working of the political system; they contest the elections and form either the government or the opposition; pressure groups do not contest elections, nor do they participate in the working of the government.
- Political parties seek political power and as such their object is general; pressure groups act as attributes of political parties.
- The major pressure groups present in India are as follows-student's organizations, peasant's organizations, the business groups, professional groups, community associations, tribal(regional) groups, linguistic groups.
- The pressure groups play various roles in functioning of the legislature, executive and bureaucracy in India.
- Pressure groups use different methods like lobbying, subscribing to any political party, demonstration and non-violence measures and media forum in getting their demand fulfilled.
- Pressure groups promote national and particular interests, and constitute a link of communication between citizen and the government.
- Pressure groups are vital for all countries, be it a developed or developing nation or any form of government.



15.7 FURTHER READING

1) Myron, Weiner. (1962). *The Politics of Scarcity-Public Pressure and Political Response in India*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

2) Jayaprakash, Narayan. *Pressure Groups and Democratic Governance – An Indian Perspective*.



15.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No.1 : Pressure groups are the interest groups which try to secure their interests by influencing the formulation and administration of public policy. They have the ability to influence, coerce, pressurise and persuade. They are referred to as civil society organisations which are non-partisan groups that attempt to influence some phases of public life.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : (i) Lobbying – It is a method in which pressure groups send their representatives to legislators in order to exert influence on any policy matter. It is one of the popular methods used by pressure groups. In wider sense lobbying means attempts of the pressure groups to influence government departments in favour of their interests. In modern times, however lobbying is not confined only to legislature, it operates at all levels of governmental activity.

(ii) Demonstrations – Pressure groups use demonstrations as a means for focussing the attention of the public and the government upon their various demands. Demonstrations involve dharnas, rallies, processions, etc.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : (i) It is non-political in nature, for it does not aim to capture power.

(ii) It is a group with a particular interest which binds its member together.

Ans to Q. No. 4 : (i) Political parties are political in the sense that they are part of the political system; pressure groups are non-political in the sense that they are part of the social system.

(ii) Political parties participate in the working of the political system; they contest the elections and form either the government or the opposition; pressure groups do not contest elections, nor do they participate in the working of the government.

Ans to Q. No. 5 : Institutional pressure groups are formally organized which constitutes professionally employed persons. They are part of government machinery and raise their protests with constitutional means. For example bureaucracy, central election committee etc.

Ans to Q. No. 6 : (i) Very unstable: In India pressure groups lack commitment and stability which results in shift in loyalties according to changing social and political situations.

(ii) Varying in span*:* Like political parties, pressure groups too tend to be big or small which have varying life spans depending on their needs and preferences.

Ans to Q. No. 7 : Akhil Bhartiya Vidhyarti Parishad

Ans to Q. No. 8 : Business groups are independent of political parties and influence planning bodies and economic matters. They help in budget formulation. For example the Conference of Indian Industries (CII), Associated Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

Ans to Q. No. 9 : True

Ans to Q. No. 10 : (i) Role in legislature**-**Pressure groups try to introduce their chosen person into legislatures. They even help political parties on the eve of election and prepare election manifesto.

(ii) Role in executive-Pressure groups try to fill high executive posts with persons of their own choice i.e. selection of cabinet, distribution of portfolios and Prime Minister selection due to

prevalence of collation government. And thus influence policy implementation process.

Ans to Q No. 11 : mass media

Ans to Q No. 12 : Mass media plays vital role in revealing the various happenings of politics and life of common people all around the world. In countries such as India, the mass media –the radio, TV, the cinema and the press are very powerful means of social change and act as pressure groups for the interest of common people and reveal the all deeds of the government. A free and fair mass media can openly criticize the government and have right to place their views on various situations of social, political and economic importance. Further mass media helps to generate a common platform which tries to focus on core issues of the society and its needs. In the contemporary world, media acts as an important agent of change focusing on social development and hence the media's role of pressurizing the government gives it the nature of a pressure group which is of vital importance.

15.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1 : Define pressure groups.

Q 2 : Mention any two functions of pressure groups in India.

Q 3 : Write four differences between pressure groups and political parties.

Q 4 : Explain various types of pressure groups.

Q 5 : Explain the role of pressure groups in India.

Q 6 : What are interest groups? How are they different from pressure group?

Q 7 : Discuss various methods used by the pressure groups.

Q 8 : What are major pressure groups in India? Discuss.

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