

(Chapter-16) REGIONAL ASPIRATION AND CONFLICTS

(EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL PARTIES IN INDIAN POLITICS)

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A regional party is any political party with its base in single region whatever its objectives and platforms may be regional parties specifically campaign for greater autonomy or independent in their region. Regionalists aim at increasing the political power and influence available to all or some residents of a region. The regional aspirations and demands are frequently expressed by regional parties.

The emergence of regional parties in India has a geo-political importance. India is a continental polity with wide range of socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic diversity under conditions of democratic culture, these diversities are bound to indeed aspire for political autonomy. One way of expression of political autonomy in a federation is the formation of regional parties in order to began with the centre for a better regional development many factors such as ethnic / cultural factor, Geographical factor , historical factor, Religious factor, economic factor, lust for power, reaction against centralization, regional feelings and aspirations, end of one party dominance led the emergence of regional parties. In the era of coalition govt. from 1989-2014, regional parties like Sheinoni Akali Dal, National Conference, All India Anna Drarida Munmetra , Telegudesam, Asam Gona Sangram Parrishad, Peoples Democratic Party played important role in the formation of coalition government. These parties demanded autonomy within the frame work of Indian Constitution.

REGIONAL ASPIRATION IN PANJAB

The decade of 1980 saw major development in the state of Punjab. The social composition of the state changed first with partition and later on after carving out Haryana and Himachal Pradesh in 1966. The Sikhs were now majority in the newly formed state of Punjab.

In 1967 and 1977 Akalis come to power but it was coalition government. During this period the position of Akalis remained precarious. Firstly, Akali Government was dismissed by Centre midway. Secondly, they did not enjoy support then Akalis.

It was in this content during 1970's a section of Akalis began to demand political autonomy for the region. Thus was reflected in a resolution passed at their conference at Anandpur Sahib in 1973. This resolution demanded regional autonomy and wanted to redefine centre state relationship.

This resolution was a plea for strengthening federation. But it could be interpreted as plea for separate Sikh Nation. In 1980, Akali government was once again dismissed by centre. A section of the religious leaders raised the question of Sikh identity. The more extremist elements started advocating secession from India and creation of Khalistan.

For creation of separate nation state of Khlistan, the armed insurgency approved in Punjab. The Sikhs militants made their head quarter inside the Golden Temple and turned it into an armed fortress. Since 1981, the Akali extremists have been taking hard line approach for establishing a new all sikh nation called Khalistan. In order to combat insurgency in Punjab,. In June 1984, government of India carried out operation blue star, code name for army action in the Golden Temple. Thus cycle of violence started between militants of Punjab and Indian Army. The assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 Oct, 1984 further complicated the Punjab problem. They led communal riots between Hindus and Sikhs. In Sikh riots of 1984, Sikhs were killed in large number. Thus this event further complicated the Punjab problem. The cycle of violence continued rarely for a decade.

The process of peace was started by P.M Rejiv Gandhi after the congress won 1984 election.

Rajiv Gandhi initiated a dialogue with moderate Akali leaders. In July 1985, He reached an agreement with Harchand Singh Longwall then the president of Akali Dal. This agreement is known as Rejiv Longwas accord or Punjab Accord. It was step to bring normalcy in Punjab. It was agreed that Chandigarh would be transferred in Punjab, a separate commission would be appointed to resolve the border dispute between Punjab and Haryana and to decide the sharing of water of Ravi River among Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. The agreement also provided for compensation to those who were affected by militancy and withdrawal of Armed forces special power act in Punjab. Militancy was eventually returned by Indian armed forces. Peace returned to Punjab by the middle of 1990's. Though religious identities continue to be important for the people, politics has gradually moved back along secularism.

REGIONAL ASPIRATION IN NORTH EAST

In the northeast, regional aspiration reached a turning point in 1980's. This region now consists of seven states also referred to as seven sisters. The region has witnessed a lot of change since 1947. The entire region of northeast has undergone considerable political reorganization of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were carved out of Assam and became separate Federalism states in India. Regionalism emerged in this region as the region felt that they are neglected and ignored by the centre. The issue of underdevelopment was the main reason behind regionalism. At the same time States in the region underwent demographic change due to flow of migrants from neighbouring states and countries.

The isolation of region, the social character and its backwardness have resulted in the complicated set of demands from different states of the north east. Three issues dominate politics in this region, Demands for autonomy, Movement for secession and opposition to outsiders.

At the time of independence entire region except Manipur and Tripura comprised the state of Assam. Demands for political Autonomy. There were opposition and protest riots throughout the state. Leaders of major tribal communities wanted to separate from Assam they formed the eastern tribal Union which later transformed into a more comprehensive. All party Hill leaders conference in 1960, they demanded tribal states to be carved out of Assam. The central government had then created Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland out of Assam and Tripura and Manipur were upgraded into States too. Thus reorganization of North East States was Completed in 1972.

Seven Sisters:-

1. Assam.
2. Manipure-1972
3. Triputa-1972
4. Nagaland-1963
5. Meghalaya-1972
6. Mizoram-1987
7. Arunachal Pradesh-1987

These are also called seven sisters.

SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IN MIZORAM AND NAGALAND.

Demand of Autonomy were easily responded but some groups demanded a separate nation state (Country) not in a momentary anger but consistently as principled position. The country face this problem at least from two states Mizoram and Nagaland.

After independence, the Mizo hill area was made an autonomous district within Assam. Some Mizo's believed they were not part of British India hence they are not part of India. In 1959 Mizo's formed the Mizo National Front (MNF). Founder and leader of MNF was laldenga who turned to a

rebel after the experience of famine in 1959 led an armed struggle against India for two decades. Laldenga demanded independence from India. Thus started two decades long battle between Mizo National Front and India Army.

At the end of two decades insurgency, Lal denga and Rajiv Gandhi signed an agreement of peace in 1986. As per this accord Mizoram was given full-fledged statehood and with special power . MNF agreed to give up secessionist struggle.

SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IN NAGALAND

The Nagaland attained State Hood on 30th November 1963 with the enactment of the State of Nagaland Act 1962 by the Parliament. The State of Nagaland was formally inaugurated on 1 Dec. 1963. The demand and aspiration of Nagaland were same as to Mizoram. Naga Nation council come into existence on 2nd February 1946. The Naga National Council began armed struggle against Indian State and demanded separate Nation State for Nagaland. It started much earlier led by Angam Zapu Phizo a section of Nagas declared independence from Indian way back in 1951. After a period of violent insurgency a section of the Nagas an agreement with government of India but it was not acceptable to other rebels. The problem of Nagaland waits for final solution.

MOVEMENT AGAINST OUTSIDERS

The large scale of migration into the north east gave rise to a special kind of problem that lifted local communists against people who were seen as outsiders or migrants. The Assam movement from 1979 to 1985 is the best example of such movements against outsiders. In 1979, All Assam students union led Anti foreigners movement. The movement was against illegal migrants, domination of Bengalis and other outsiders, against faulty voters. The movement demanded that all outsiders who had entered the State after 1951 should be sent back. The agitation follows many Novels methods in order to mobilize Assam people.

Eventually after six years of the turmoil, Rajiv Gandhi led govt. entered negotiation with the AASU (All Assam Students Union) leaders leading to the signing of an accord popularly known as Assam Accord. According to this Accord those foreign who migrated into Assam were to be identified with the successful completion of Movement, Assam Gana Sangram Parrishid emerged as Regional Political Party known as Assam Gana Parishad. It came in power in 1985. Thus Assam Accord brought peace and changed the politics in Assam but it did not solve the problem of Immigration. This issue continues in the politics of Assam and other north eastern States.

Thus to conclude, the regional aspiration in North Eastern States emerged in different forms ranging from Autonomy to complete freedom. The Movement against outsiders were also most demand of North Eastern States. Many agreements had helped to bring peace in the region but solution to many problems is still waiting.

REGIONAL ASPIRATION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Jammu and Kashmir comprised three social and political regions:- Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The heart of the Kashmir region is the Kashmir valley. The people are Kashmiri speaking and mostly Muslims with a small Kashmiri speaking Hindu Minority. Jammu region is a mix of foothills and plains of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and speakers of various languages.

The Kashmir issue is not just a dispute between India and Pakistan. The issue has external and internal dimensions. It involves the issue of Kashmir identity known as Kashmiriyat and the aspiration of the people of J&K for political autonomy.

Before 1947, J&K was a princely State, its Hindu ruler Hari Singh, did not want to merge with India and tried to negotiate with India and Pakistan to have an independent status for his state. The Pakistan leaders thought the Kashmir region belonged to Pakistan. The national conference wanted to get rid of Maharaja Hari Singh but was against joining Pakistan.

In October 1947, Pakistan sent tribal infiltrators from its side to capture Kashmir this forced the Maharaja to ask for Indian military help India's military support and drove back the infiltrators from Kashmir valley. Then Maharaja had signed an instrument of accession with govt of India. It was also agreed that once the situation normalized, the views of the people of J&K will be ascertained about their future. Sheikh Abdullah becomes Prime Minister of the state of J&K in 1948. India agreed to maintain the autonomy of J&K.

Internally there is a dispute about status of J&K within the India Union J&K was given a special status by article 270 in our constitution article 370 gives greater Autonomy to J&K, compare to other states of India. The special status have provoked two opposite reactions. There are people outside state who believe that article 370 does not allow full integralism of the state. They are in favors of abrogation of Article 370. Recently on 5th August 2019, BJP Abrogated Article 370 and reorganization of state took place by making J&K and Ladakh two different Union Territories. Thus Statehood of J&K come to an end. This generated new demands and aspiration within the UT of J&K, and Ladakh.

On the other hand Kashmiris believe that Autonomy granted by Article 370 is not enough. They demand for greater Autonomy within the frame work of constitution. There is feeling that Article 370 has been eroded in practice. They now demanded for greater state Autonomy. Most people also feel that Democracy has not been institutionalized in the State of J&K. The mainstream parties in J&K are facing new challenges.

By 1989, the state had come in the grip of militant movement mobilized around the cause of a separate Kashmir nation. The Insurgent got moral, material and military support from Pakistan. Insurgency started between Indian army and militants of J&K throughout the period from 1990, J&K experienced violence in the hands of insurgents and army action. The violence still continues in J&K.

Separatist politics which surfaced in Kashmir from 1989 has taken different forms and it made up of various strands. There is one strand who wants a separate Kashmir Nation, independent of India and Pakistan. Then there are groups who want to merge with Pakistan. Besides there is third strand which wants greater Autonomy for the people of State within India Union. The inter State Autonomy is as strong as the demand for the state Autonomy. The initial period of militancy has now given way to urge for peace. The centre has started negotiation with various separatist groups. Instead of demanding a separate nation most of the separatist in dialogue are trying to renegotiate a relationship of state with India.

Externally Pakistan has always claimed that Kashmir valley should be part of Pakistan. Pakistan sponsored a tribal invasion of the state in 1947, as a consequence of which one part of the state

come under Pakistani control. Pakistan calls it Azad Kashmir and India considers it illegal occupation. Since 1947 Kashmir remained a major issue between India and Pakistan.

Thus to conclude it is clear now that politics of accession and politics of secession continues in different forms and manifestation. Internally mainstream parties demand greater autonomy and separatist have their own demands and aspirations. Indian Union recently abrogated Article 370 for the full integration of J&K State. Reorganization of J&K state took place on 5th August 2019. Now J&K and Lakakh were made two Union Territories. Thus politics of Accession and succession still continues.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The J&K National Conference is a political party in the Indian Union Territory of J&K. Founder as the all J&K Muslim Conference by Sheikh Abdullah and Chaudhary Ghulam Abbass in 1932 in the princely state of J&K. The organization renamed itself to National Conference in 1939 in order to represent all the people of the State. It supported accession of the princely state to India in 1947 since 1947, the National Conference was in power in J&K in one form or another till 2002 and again between 2009-2014. It implemented land reforms in the state, ensured the state's Autonomy under Article 370 of Indian constitution and formulated a separate constitution of J7K in 1957. After Sheikh Abdulla's death, Farooq Abdullah and Umer Abdullah lead the National Conference in the electoral politics of J&K

National Conference believed in Socialism, Democracy and Secularism. It always supported Article 370 for Autonomy. Advocates of 1953, position in 2000 by demanding Great Autonomy. It is against Abrogation of Article 370 and reorganization of State.

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party is a State political party in Union Territory of J&K. The PDP was founded by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in 1998, his daughter Mehbooba Mufti, succeeded him as party leader and Chief Minister of J&K after his death in January 2016. It captured power in J&K in October 2002 Assembly election. In 2004, it has one member each in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. It was a member of ruling united progressive alliances until 2009 general election. In 2014 general election, three of its member were elected to Lok Sabha, its strength in the legislature was 28 and in the Rajya Sabha two (2). The party ran a coalition government in J7K with Bharatiya Janta Party until the BJP abandoned the coalition on June 2018 due to concerns about terrorism and radicalization in Kashmir. After Abrogated of Article 370 and reorganization of the state, many members of PDP left party and formed separate Party.

The People's Democratic Party has full faith in Democracy, Secularism and Security, the party believed in the dignity and security of the people of J&K. The party is against repressive members. The PDP stressed on sincere efforts to create an atmosphere for the resolution of Kashmir problem. In Assembly election held in 2002 PDP secured 16 seats and in 2008 Assembly election the party secured 21 seats. In Assembly election 2014 PDP secured 28 seats. The BJP-PDP formed coalition government after 2014 election but BJP left coalition before its tenure.

Learning Outcome

1. How coalition government dominated enter electoral and Indian political since 1989.
2. What Mandal Issue.
3. Why Mandal commission/ Commission for back ward classes.
4. What was Ayodiya dispute? How it emerged as challenge to Indias Democracy and secularism.
5. Write a short note on election 2004.
6. How BJP emerged Majority ruling party in 2014 and 2019.
7. What do you mean by coalition governments.
8. Who was chairperson of Mandal commission.
9. What do you understand by Hindutva.
10. When was national front govt. formed as coalition govt.

Suggested further readings

1. Politics in India since independence by NCERT.
2. Indian Politics and Government by F.L Fadia.
3. Politics in India since Independence by Paul Bras.
4. Constitutional History of J&K by A.G Noorani.
5. Integration of Princely States by K.P.S Menon.
6. India after Gandhi by Ram Chander Guha.

Bibliography/ Books studied for preparation of study of material

1. Politics in India since independence by NCERT.
2. Indian Politics and Government by F.L Fadia.
3. Politics in India since Independence by Paul Bras.
4. Wikipedia.
5. Constitute at work by NCERT.
6. All books of political Science and history prepared and published by NCERT.