

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Region, Regionalism and State
 - 14.2.1 Region
 - 14.2.2 Region and Indian Polity
 - 14.2.3 Regionalism
 - 14.2.4 State and Indian Polity
- 14.3 Regionalism in Indian Politics
- 14.4 Bases of Regional and State Politics
 - 14.4.1 Geographical Basis
 - 14.4.2 Historical and Social Bases
 - 14.4.3 Economic Basis
 - 14.4.4 Politico-administrative Basis
- 14.5 Forms of State and Regional Politics
 - 14.5.1 Demand for State Autonomy
 - 14.5.2 Supra-state Regionalism
 - 14.5.3 Inter-state Regionalism
 - 14.5.4 Intra-state Regional Politics or Sub-Regionalism
- 14.6 Significance of Regionalism for National Politics
- 14.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.8 Keywords
- 14.9 Further Reading
- 14.10 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should be able to

- state the meaning of region, regionalism and state in the context of Indian Polity
- describe the process of regionalism in Indian Politics
- examine the geographical, historical and cultural, economic and politico-administrative bases of regionalism
- explain the different forms of state and regional politics in India
- discuss the significance of regionalism for national politics.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit of this Block we looked at certain aspects of national politics. We focused mainly on the issue of nation-building. The unit on National Politics provided the framework for looking at politics at the regional and state level. In unit 14 we are going to discuss some important dimensions of state and regional politics. We begin the unit by defining the terms region, regionalism and state in section 14.2. In section 14.3 we elaborate a little more on the issue of regionalism in Indian politics. From here we move on to discuss bases of state and regional politics. The geographical, historical, cultural, economic and politico-administrative bases are examined in section 14.4. In section 14.5 we describe the various forms of state and regional politics. Significance of regionalism for national politics is outlined in section 14.6.

14.2 REGION, REGIONALISM AND STATE

Region, regionalism and state are closely interrelated concepts. Let us look at each of them separately and see how they are significant for our discussion of Indian Polity.

14.2.1 Region

The term region is difficult to define. It is understood in different ways in different contexts. However, it has been generally defined as “a homogeneous area with physical and cultural characteristics distinct from those of neighbouring areas” (IESS 1972: 377).

A region can subsume a number of nations such as Arctic region, the region of South East Asia, the Far Eastern region, and so on. A region can be used for a nation such as the sub-continent region of India. It can be used for the eastern region, western region, northern region or southern region in India. The states in India also form distinct regions. Further, there can be sub-regions within a state like the Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh, Vidarbha region in Maharashtra, etc. A village area can also be referred to as a region. Thus, region is a relative term, the meaning of which changes with its usage. When we talk of a region, what we generally imply is that it is socio-culturally distinct and that it is sufficiently unified to have a consciousness of its customs, traditions, values and ideals. Because of this consciousness the people of the region possess a sense of identity distinct from the rest of the regions be it a nation or a continent or the earth itself.

14.2.2 Region and Indian Polity

Let us now see how this concept is significant for our discussion of Indian polity. A region is characterised by a widely shared sense of togetherness among the people. This togetherness results from a wide variety of sources like geography, **topography**, religion, language, customs and mores, political and economic stage of development, way of living, commonly shared historical experiences, etc. Region provides the basis for the emergence of regional identity. It results in loyalty towards the region and ultimately takes the shape and form of regionalism. It gives way to regional politics.

The politics of regionalism in India has both positive and negative aspects. Speaking in positive terms, it implies an intense desire for concretising an identity based on such interest as ethnic, language, religion, etc. For example, the erstwhile Jharkhand movement which covered wide regions of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh, had come together as a unified group to protect and promote their socio-economic and political interests. This process involves reaffirming their identity as tribal groups. The movement finally succeeded in forcing the government in reorganising the states and the formation of Jharkhand State came about on 15th November 2000 as the 28th State of the Indian Union. It has been carved out of the State of Bihar and it largely comprises forest tracks of Chhotanagpur plateau and Santhal Paragana.

The negative aspects of regionalism is that it can threaten nation-building efforts such as, the demand for Khalistan in Punjab which is giving rise to terrorism and violence within and outside Punjab. The positive aspect has been ignored by most of the analysts of Indian political situation. Analysts of regionalism point out that this phenomenon reflects the psychology of relative deprivation on the part of people of an area. They point out that deprivation is deliberately inflicted on them by those in power, particularly when socio-economic programmes have resulted in wide economic disparities among various regions. This has led to discontentment and agitation among the backward or not so developed regions of the country.

The concept of region is therefore, closely linked with the concept of regionalism. Now let us see what regionalism means.

14.2.3 Regionalism

Regionalism is one of the major forces shaping the nature and texture of Indian politics. It has been found operating in combination with other political forces. It is rare to come across examples of unalloyed regionalism. It occurs in real life in varying mixture with linguism and communalism. There are even examples of regionalism coexisting with casteism. In such cases it becomes difficult to decide whether a given political phenomenon should be called regionalism or some other politically relevant social force like linguism (Mathur 1990: 120-167).

So the question arises what is regionalism. Regionalism can be defined as a phenomenon in which people's political loyalties become focused upon a region. In other words, it implies people's love of a particular region in preference to the country and in certain cases in preference to the state of which the region is a part. Thus the phenomenon of regionalism is centred around the concept of region.

14.2.4 State and Indian Polity

We have already defined "state" in the previous unit on national politics. Let us look at it here in greater detail for understanding state and regional politics. State is generally understood in terms of certain common features that it exhibits. These common features generally found in all states are

- i) population
- ii) a fixed territory

- iii) government
- iv) sovereignty.

Let us look at each of them one by one.

- i) **Population:** State being a human institution population is its obvious element. The composition of a state is a significant factor as it defines the nature of that society. A population can be homogeneous, i.e. a population which shares similar language, values, customs, etc. Or it can be heterogeneous, i.e. a population which has different and varied languages, values, customs, as in the case of India.

A nation state was conventionally understood to be derived from the idea of homogeneous population. However, in modern times a nation state is not necessarily connected with a homogeneous population. In modern parliamentary democracies like India, U.S.A. etc. political parties cut across social, religious, linguistic and cultural boundaries. This interweaving of alliances and interests creates a consensus in a plural society.

- ii) **Territorial Boundary:** This is considered to be an essential feature of a state. Land, water and air space comprise the territory of state. The territory of a state may differ from place to place and there are no accepted rules about the total size of the territory of a state.
- iii) **Government:** Government and state are very often used inter-changeably. But basically government is part of the state. It is the machinery for the formulation of public policies and regulation of common affairs. It refers to the organisational aspect of the state.
- iv) **Sovereignty:** According to political scientists the most important characteristic of the state is sovereignty. It implies the supreme power of the state, which might be vested in either one person or in a body of persons. For example, in India sovereignty is vested in the office of the President.

In unit 13 we described the main features of the Indian nation state. We said that the Indian nation state is a parliamentary democratic republic which has all the associated components like a parliament, “responsible” cabinet (one which is accountable to its people), independent judiciary, electoral machinery, and so on which qualify it to be called a democratic state. Till 2000 the Indian nation comprised of 25 states and 7 union territories. In the year 2000 three more states were added to the list of states. These were Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand. An area having a distinct cultural regional identity was carved out of Madhya Pradesh and the State of Chhattisgarh was formed on 1st November 2000 as the 26th State of the Indian Union. The 27th State of the Indian Union, Uttaranchal, which was carved out of Uttar Pradesh, came into being on 9th November 2000. As mentioned earlier Jharkhand, which was formed on 15th November 2000, is the 28th State of the Indian Union. The various States of the Indian Union have been divided primarily on a linguistic basis for administrative purpose. This division and decentralisation of power makes the Indian nation a federal nation and balance of power is created between the Centre and the States.

The Indian Constitution has established a ‘dual polity’ consisting of the Union Government at the Centre and State Government at the periphery. In fact the

founding fathers of the Indian Constitution called India as “Union of States”. By this they indicated among other things, that the country and the people were divided into different states for convenience of administration and that the country was an integrated whole living under the rule derived from a single source, namely the Constitution.

In order to regulate the relationship between the centre and the states and also to preserve the identity of the centre as well as of each state, the Constitution of India has prescribed separate areas of operation and interaction for centre and states. The areas relate to legislature, administration, finance, planning and development and trade and commerce.

The Constitution has assigned certain powers to the centre and certain powers to the states. The powers have been enlisted under three headings.

- 1) **The Union List (List I):** This list gives the centre exclusive authority to act in matters of national importance. The Parliament has the power of making laws with respect to such matters like defence, foreign affairs, railways, currency etc.
- 2) **The State List (List II):** This list gives the state matters like police, local government, public health etc.
- 3) **The Concurrent List (List III):** This list consists of subjects on which the Parliament and State Legislatures can make laws. The subjects include education, agriculture, marriage, divorce, transfer of property etc. In case of a conflict between the Central law and State law with regard to subjects in List III, the Central law prevails over the State law.

By and large in the legislature sphere the centre is given a greater scope for intervening in the legislature of the state. In administrative and financial spheres too, the dominant position of the centre vis-a-vis the state can be seen. For instance, the centre exercises administrative control over the states through the All India Services like IAS and IPS. The recruitment for these services are done by the centre. Persons recruited through the All India Services hold key positions in both the central and state government administrations. Thus these services try to ensure administrative uniformity, cohesion and national integration.

Against this pattern of division of powers and responsibilities between the centre and the state prescribed by the Constitution we can examine some important issues relating to state politics in India. Many states are dissatisfied with the amount of power and autonomy given to them. They often resent the legislative, administrative and financial control the centre has over them. The role of the Governor (a post controlled by the centre), the right of the centre to impose President’s Rule in a state, the control of the mass media by the centre are some of the important factors which generate centre-state friction.

Apart from issues, which involve centre-state relations, there are other issues in state politics, which are generated by factors within a state. Caste, language, political parties tribal identities, immigration, unequal development of different sectors within a state are some of the important factors which throw light on the nature of state politics. We can cite many examples relating to politics based on intra-state issues. In Karnataka sometime ago there was a confrontation

between the Kannada speaking and Marathi speaking sections of the population. In Assam, the Bodos want to form a separate state of their own as they feel their ethnic interests are at a stake if they remain a part of the state of Assam. In Tamil Nadu, the anti-Brahmin movement challenged the socio-economically advantageous position that the Brahmins enjoyed hitherto.

When many states have similar demand or the same woes, they merge together over an issue, thus providing the ground for regional politics. When an issue transcends the boundary of a particular state, we then talk of a regional issue.

The socio-cultural and economic diversity in India gives rise to regionalism and regional politics. In the next section we will trace the development of regionalism.

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Define the concept of region in about five lines.

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- ii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Make a T or F against each statement.

- a) Region is a reality term, the meaning of which changes with its usage.
- b) A region is usually characterised by a widely shared sense of togetherness among people.
- c) Regionalism is a totally negative phenomenon.

- iii) What are the four common features found in many states? Use three lines for your answer.

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14.3 REGIONALISM IN INDIAN POLITICS

Regionalism is a pre-independence phenomenon. It became predominant in post-independence period. The politics of regionalism started with the implementation of constitutional reforms under Government of India Acts of 1909, 1919, and 1935. The establishment and role of Justice Party in Chennai, and to a lesser extent, of Akali Dal in Punjab in pre-independence period are examples of emerging regionalism in India.

After independence there are four major landmarks in the development of regional politics.

- i) After independence, democratic form of government was established. Its main aim was nation-building on the principles of democracy, **secularism** national unity and social justice. All parts of the country wanted a fair deal in nation-building. They started competing with each other for their development. Anything short of expectation led to **disenchantment** and it resulted in the emergence of regional politics.
- ii) There was integration of the Princely States. Small states were integrated with the big states. People continued to nurse loyalties to old territorial units. This was the most important factor for the success of Princes in elections. The Princes often received overwhelming support in their former territories in the newly created states and relatively much less in other parts of the same state.
- iii) Reorganisation of states on linguistic basis also played a very vital role in the development of regional politics. Twenty eight states were reshaped and reduced to 14 states along with centrally administered territories. Later new states were created, then for example Bombay was divided into Gujarat and Maharashtra, Punjab into, Punjab and Haryana. But these states were not constituted entirely on linguistic basis. Many other factors like ethnic-cum-economic considerations gave us Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Jharkhand, Haryana, Punjab and Chhattisgarh. Language-cum-culture factors created Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttaranchal; historical and political factors are responsible for U.P. and Bihar; integration of princely states in and need for viable groupings gave birth to M.P. and Rajasthan; language and social distinctiveness resulted in the creation of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Mysore, Bengal and Orissa. Thus various factors have played a decisive role in the composition of the Indian federation.

In spite of all these considerations, language remained the most important factor in the reorganisation of states. It became such an important force in the context of regionalism that linguistic regionalism gained ground in Indian politics.

- iv) Another factor which gave rise to regional and parochial tendencies in the country was the personal and selfish ends of politicians. Immediately, after Independence the struggle for power started among some parties. For enhancing their own authority and prestige, the regional and state leaders did not hesitate to weaken the authority of the centre or in some cases of states. The creation of more states meant more governors, chief ministers, Members of Legislative Assembly or MLAs etc. The professional politicians explored the narrow and sectarian sentiments of ignorant masses for fulfilling their personal and selfish ends. Keeping these landmarks in mind, let us now examine the bases of regional and state politics.

14.4 BASES OF REGIONAL AND STATE POLITICS

Regionalism is a multidimensional phenomenon. Its bases are varied. Here we will discuss the geographical, historical, cultural, economic and politico-administrative bases of regionalism.

14.4.1 Geographical Basis

Usually people relate their regional identity to certain specific geographical boundaries. After independence integration of Princely States resulted in the merger of small states into new big states. The loyalties of citizens were torn between old territorial boundaries and new territorial structures. As pointed out earlier this was the major factor responsible for the success of princes in elections particularly when they contested from their former territories in the newly created states. However, it would be wrong to over estimate the importance of geographical boundaries. It is true that memories of old geographical boundaries of princely states still haunt the people and are exploited by political leaders but it can hardly be denied that they are yielding place to new and bigger territorial identities like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

14.4.2 Historical and Social Bases

Historical and social bases constitute the bedrock of the politics of regionalism. Several components in this category are not only important individually but also in conjunction with each other.

- i) **History:** It supported regionalism with cultural heritage, folklore, myths and symbolism. The most striking example is that of Dravida Kazhagam (DK) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and Telugu Desham (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh. But history cannot be considered as the most important basis of regionalism. Economic and political factors have combined with history to generate regionalism. This can again be seen in the change in the stand of DMK from secession to one of autonomy within the federal framework of the Constitution.
- ii) **Language:** Language is perhaps the most important mark of group identification. Language expresses the shared life, thought structure and value patterns of people. It has the capacity to unite the people together and make them work to improve their common destiny. In this sense linguistic homogeneity strengthens a positive movement.

As early as 1920, Congress had accepted the principle that language must be adopted as criterion for demarcating the territorial boundaries of provincial units. Establishment of State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in 1955 was the result of demand for formation of regional units based on linguistic regionalism. SRC could not completely follow the principle of one language one state. This could not be treated as the sole criteria for the demarcation of state boundaries. Bilingual states like Bombay, Punjab, etc. were created. However, splitting up of Bombay in 1960, Punjab in 1966, and Assam since mid-sixties into linguistically more homogeneous states gave further impetus to linguistic regionalism in Indian politics.

If language had been synonymous with region, the political aspiration of every linguistic group would have been satisfied by the formation of separate states. This, however, is neither a reality nor a foreseeable possibility. The first reason being that languages spoken in India run into hundreds. Even if major languages are taken into account, large groups

of linguistic minorities are bound to be left inside the state whose language cannot be enshrined in the constitution as an official language.

Secondly, Hindi speaking people are distributed over a very large territory. Their number is over 300 million at the beginning of twenty first century. One state cannot be created for them. They have been divided into six states namely, U.P, Bihar, M.P., Rajasthan, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and a couple of Union territories. There has rarely been a demand for the formation of single state of Hindi speaking people. On the contrary there have been demands for separate states comprising languages or dialects within this wider linguistic group. This can be found in the occasional demand for a Maithili or for recognition of Rajasthani, Haryanvi, etc. as scheduled languages in the Constitution.

Thus regionalism is closely associated with language but is not synonymous with linguism. Regionalism can take place inside a linguistic state (for example creation of Marathi speaking Maharashtra). The seven states of North East India refer to themselves as seven sisters. They have tried to form common bonds on the basis of their problems of development. They have also tried to develop a regional identity. These seven states include Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. In other words, language is not the sole generator of regionalism. It is one of the several bases of regionalism in India. In most cases of linguistic regionalism many interrelated factors are usually found to be working together.

Activity 1

Take a map of India which has all the States and Union Territories marked on it and identify

- a) the main language spoken in each State and Union Territory
- b) the southern states which were involved in the anti-Hindi movement in the 1960s
- c) the seven states of the northeast India which refer themselves as seven sisters.

- iii) **Caste:** An important example of the caste factor providing impetus to linguistic regionalism can be seen in the case of Tamil Nadu. Tamil regionalism gained ground as a result of non-Brahmin movement. Non-Brahmin castes of Tamil speaking region had been able to provide a powerful united thrust against Brahmins who had earlier enjoyed unquestioned dominance in economy, society and polity.
- iv) **Religion:** Religion like caste does not play a significant role except when it is combined with dominance and linguistic homogeneity as in Punjab or fed on a sense of religious orthodoxy and economic deprivation as in Jammu and Kashmir.

If casteism reinforced and propelled linguistic regionalism in cases of Tamil Nadu, the demand for the formation of Punjabi Suba though presented in linguistic garb had religious overtones. They were mainly responsible for

evoking people’s political loyalties on massive scale rather than their love for their mother tongue. It is difficult to qualify the mix of communalism and linguism in this particular case. But some studies make it very clear that demand for Punjabi language state was certainly reinforced by regular invocation of Punjabi speaking masses’ loyalty towards Sikh religion (Majeed 1984).

Taking into account these three factors i.e. language, caste and religion one can say that the study of regionalism in Punjab and Tamil Nadu makes it very clear that political movements for regional demands were carried out formally in the name of language but in reality they had substantive non-linguistic bases too.

14.4.3 Economic Basis

Economic factor is the crux of regional politics. India is a developing country. The resources are limited while the demand for resources for the development of various regions is unlimited or disproportionate to resources. Economic policies have led to regional imbalances and wide economic disparities among various regions resulting in discontentment among them. It may be recalled that most of the demands for constituting new states were primarily based on allegedly unfair and unequal distribution of development benefits and expenditure in multi-lingual states. The erstwhile movements for a separate Uttarkhand state in the hill districts of U.P., a Jharkhand state carved out of parts of Bihar and the demand for a state of Bodoland comprising a part of Assam may be counted as examples of this type. The demand for separate states in these instances are mainly on the belief that these regions have been economically deprived by their respective states. Economic factors have usually assumed prime importance in regional politics.

14.4.4 Politico-administrative Basis

The politico-administrative basis of regionalism is also important but politics as such does not create regionalism. It only accentuates regionalism. Politicians take advantage of the situation of regional discontentment and unrest. They convert it into movements for strengthening their individual and factional support bases. It is a known fact that fighting within Congress gave rise to Telangana agitation. Regional political parties like TDP (Andhra Pradesh), DMK (Tamil Nadu), Akali Dal (Punjab) have been surviving because of regional sentiments. Border dispute, like the one between Maharashtra and Karnataka, is also based on regional sentiments. Other important facts of politics of regionalism are the real or assumed charges of political discrimination among various regions by the central ruling elite.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) What were the four major landmarks in the development of regional politics in India? Use ten lines for your answer.

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ii) List the bases of regionalism. Use six lines for your answer.

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iii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.

- a) Regionalism is not synonymous with Linguism.
- b) Language and religion are the only two bases of regionalism.
- c) Perception of economic deprivation has been one of the root causes for demands for separate statehood.

14.5 FORMS OF STATE AND REGIONAL POLITICS

Regional Politics has taken mainly four forms.

- i) Demand for state autonomy
- ii) **Supra-state** regionalism
- iii) **Inter-state** regionalism and
- iv) Intra-state regionalism

Here we will be discussing in greater detail only one of the forms of regional politics, namely supra-state regionalism.

14.5.1 Demand for State Autonomy

The first and the most challenging form of regional politics was in the demand of people in certain states or regions to secede from the Indian Union and become independent sovereign states. Such demands occurred soon after independence but they are non-existent now. The important examples in this context are that of the Plebiscite Front (Kashmir), Mizo National Front (Lushei Hills of Assam), Nagaland Socialist Conference (Naga Hills District of Assam) etc.

14.5.2 Supra-state Regionalism

This implies that more than one state is involved in the issue of regionalism. It is an expression of group identity of some states. They take a common stand on the issues of mutual interest vis-a-vis another group of states. The group identity is usually in relation to certain specific issues. It does not in any way imply the total and permanent merger of identity of the states into the identity of group. Rivalries, tensions and even conflicts do take place among a few states belonging to a group. For example, the rivalry existing between south and north India on such issues as language or location of steel plants illustrates the point. The grouping of the North Eastern States for greater access to economic development is another instance. Let us refer to the language issue once again in order to illustrate how supra-state regionalism is found in India.

South India is separated from North along several differentials, Geographically south is composed of peninsular uplands or Deccan, the mountain ranges of Eastern and Western Ghats and coastal plains. In terms of political history too, south has never been incorporated into the empires of the North. This was done for the first time during the British regime. Some of the regional and state issues of regionalism are shown in figure 14.1.

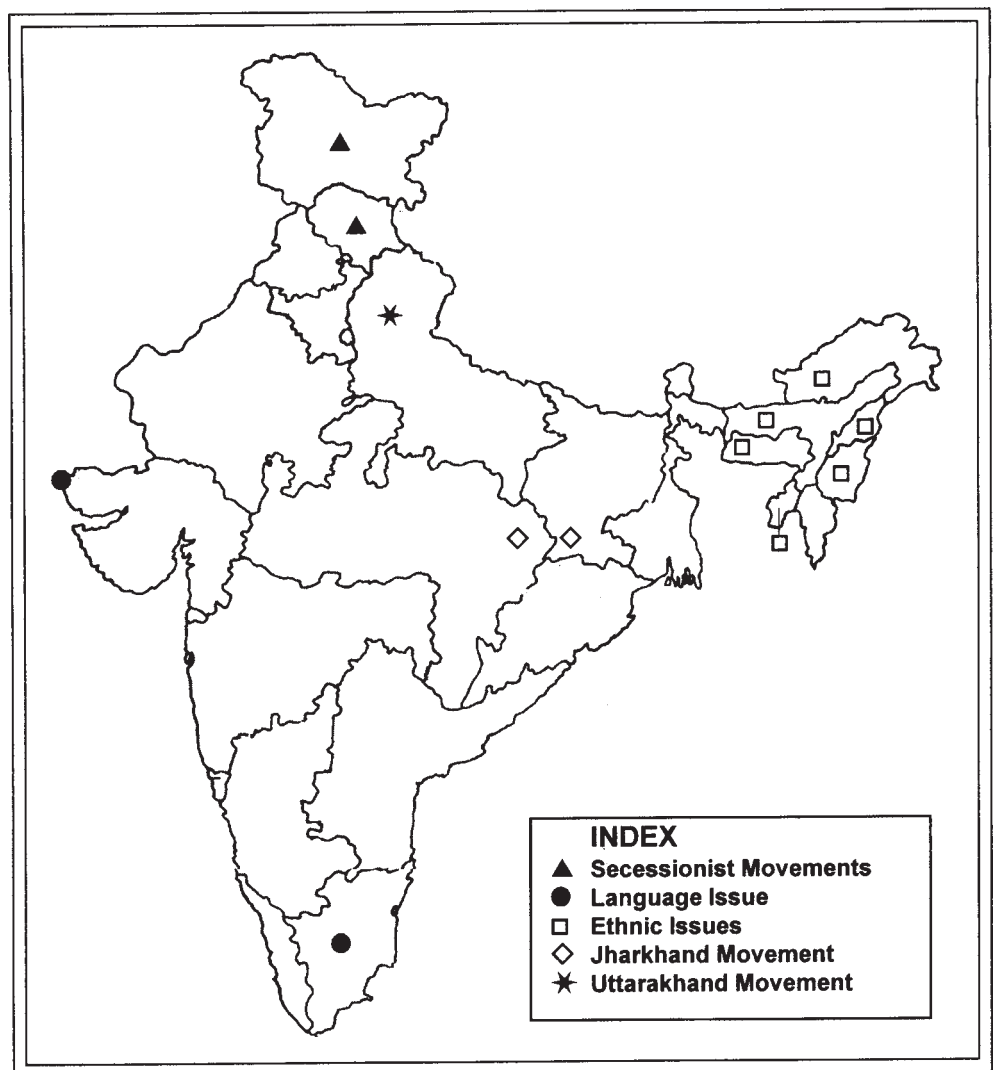


Fig. 14.1: Regional and state issues in India from 1960s to 1990s

After independence a major rift was caused over the issue of the official language for India. The Constitution envisaged the replacement of English by Hindi for official purposes of the Union as the language of communication between the centre and the states and between states. The state legislatures of Indian Union were given authority to adopt one or more languages including Hindi for use as the state language. The Constitution provides that the official language of the union should be Hindi with Devanagiri script, with international numerals for a period of 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution. However, parliament could by law extend the use of English as the link language. The attempt to introduce the provision regarding the official language has generated more intense language rivalry than unity.

The opposition to Hindi found its strongest political expression in the southern states. Most of the people in these states as well as those in the non-Hindi speaking areas of Eastern India objected to the imposition of Hindi. It was feared that their own languages would be ultimately replaced by Hindi, which they considered inferior. The adoption of Hindi as an official language and as a compulsory subject in schools was seen as imposition of a comparatively underdeveloped language upon those whose language contains a richness of thousands of years.

In the 1950's several movements to oppose the imposition of Hindi sprang up. In 1956, the Academy of Tamil Culture convened in Chennai the Union Language Convention which stated in a resolution that it would be greatly unjust to make any other language (meaning Hindi) take the place of English when a population of 100 million are totally unacquainted with that language. Significantly this Convention included representatives from different political organisations i.e., Rajagopalachari (Swatantra), Ramaswamy Naickar (D.K.), Rajan (Justice Party), Annadurai (DMK) and many others. At a National Conference held on 8th March 1958, Rajagopalachari declared that 'Hindi is as much foreign to non-Hindi speaking people as, English to protagonists of Hindi'.

Growing opposition to Hindi in south India led Nehru in 1959 to assure the people of South that (a) there will be no imposition of Hindi on them and that (b) English will be an associate regional language which can be used for official purpose so long as people require it. The decision would be left not to the Hindi speaking people but to the non-Hindi speaking people.

In late 1964 many things revived the southern fears of "Hindi Imperialism". With the death of Pt. Nehru the southern fear about imposition of Hindi had revived. The alarm grew at the expiry of 15 years when Hindi was to be used in place of English as the official language. The fears of Southern non-Hindi states could not be removed even by the Official Language Act, 1963 which made possible the continued use of English both at the centre and in the states.

On the Republic Day in 1965, in pursuance of Act 343 of Indian Constitution Hindi became the official language of India. The southern states reacted vehemently. The DMK party designated 26th January 1965 as a day of mourning. The student community started an agitation, against the imposition of Hindi. The DMK, which led this agitation, gained greater prestige. It became the ruling party in the state of Tamil Nadu when the elections took place after two years.

The DMK urged that all the fourteen languages be the official languages of the respective states with English as the link language between the states and the centre. The communists as well as Kamaraj favoured a three-language formula (viz. English, Hindi and the mother tongue). In June 1965 it was announced that proposal given by Kamaraj (the president of the Congress) has been accepted. The language policy resolution of the Government of India gave official recognition to Hindi, English as well as the regional language. The policy resolution also indicated that steps should be taken to develop Hindi. English continued to be recognised as an important link language.

The events described above show that the language became an important issue around which supra-state regionalism developed.

Activity 2

Collect a week's issue of one of the local newspapers of your State or Union territory. Cut out those columns that have reported about supra-state regionalism. Make a file of them. Note down the following from these columns.

- i) The states involved in the issue or issues
- ii) What is or what are the issues involved?

Discuss if possible, the information you have gathered with other students at the Study Centre.

14.5.3 Inter-state Regionalism

It is related with state boundaries and involves overlapping of one or more state identities, which threaten their interests. River water disputes, in general, and other issues like the Maharashtra-Karnataka border dispute in particular can be cited as examples.

14.5.4 Intra-state Regional Politics or Sub-regionalism

This refers to regionalism, which exists within a state of the Indian Union. It embodies the desire of a part of a state for the identity and self-development. It may also reflect a notion of deprivation or exploitation of a part of the state at the expense of another. This type of regionalism can be found in many parts of India. The important examples of this kind of **sub-regionalism** are a Vidharbha in Maharashtra, a Saurashtra in Gujarat, a Telangana in Andhra Pradesh, an East U.P. in Uttar Pradesh and Chattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh.

14.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF REGIONALISM FOR NATIONAL POLITICS

Regionalism is not significant merely as a disintegrating force. Regionalism is not opposed to national integration. Both can exist together in a creative partnership. Both are in favour of development. Regionalism stresses the development of a region and national integration for the development of the nation as a whole. If we want to reconcile the competing claims of regionalism and national integration the political system of the country should remain federal and democratic.

Regionalism is not disruptive of national solidarity. The important condition for national solidarity is that nationalism should be able to hold the different types of regional sub-nationalities together. In other words, there should be healthy reconciliation between regionalism and nationalism.

Regionalism can make federalism a greater success. In this aspect the accentuation of regional identities should not-become problematic. It is quite natural that regional communities, who are conscious of their distinctive culture, should interact with federal government on the basis of more equal partnership. It will reduce the centralising tendencies in a nation and power will shift from the centre to the states.

Conceived in any form, regionalism and sub-regionalism are unavoidable in a country as vast and diverse as India. Their existence is not only an important condition for the expression of genuine national sentiment, but it is logically generated because of the establishment of the nation state. Nothing is, therefore, more basic to the concept of federalism than regionalism and sub-regionalism.

Check Your Progress 3

i) What are the many forms of regional politics in India? Spell them out in about four lines.

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ii) Tick the correct answer of the following question.

What does supra-state regionalism consist of?

- a) Regionalism which is confined to a state
- b) Regionalism between one state and another
- c) Regionalism which goes beyond one or two states where interests of one group of states conflict with the interests of another group
- d) None of the above

iii) Tick the correct answer of the following question.

What does sub-regionalism comprise?

- a) Desire of one part of a state for self-identity and self-development
- b) Emotional identification of people of a state
- c) Desire for the unity and development expressed by people of a group of slate
- d) None of the above

14.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed some important aspects of regional and state politics. We began by defining the concepts of region, regionalism and state specially in the context of Indian polity. We then moved on to discuss the development of regionalism in terms of the four major landmarks since independence. Here, we talked about competition between states for a share in the development benefits; continued expression of loyalties to old territorial units, meaning the Princely States; reorganisation of state on a linguistic basis and the struggle for power, authority and prestige by political parties and individuals. Next we examined the geographical, historical, social, economic and political-administrative bases of regionalism in India. We pointed out how language and economic deprivation plays a very important role in generating regionalism. While outlining the forms of regionalism, we mentioned four forms namely demand for state autonomy, inter-state, supra-state and intra-state regionalism. We discussed supra-state regionalism in great detail. Finally, we talked of the significance of regionalism for national politics.

14.8 KEYWORDS

Disenchantment	To be disillusioned or disappointed
Intra-state Issue	Any issue which involves one region with another within a state
Inter-state Issue	Any issue which involves one state with another
Sectarian	Pertaining to a certain section of society
Secularism	An ideology which accepted religions as equal or which Separates religion from polity.
Sub-regionalism	It relates to a distinct region in terms of socio-cultural, historical, etc. feature within a state.
Supra-state	Any issue which involves more than one state
Topography	The outlining features as surface configuration of a land area

14.9 FURTHER READING

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14.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) A region has been defined as an area, which is homogeneous. It is marked by certain physical and cultural characteristics which sets it apart from those of neighbouring areas.
- ii)
 - a) T
 - b) T
 - c) F
- iii) The four common features found in many states are (a) population (b) fixed territory (c) government and (d) sovereignty.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) The four major landmarks were
 - a) competition between states for a share in national development and dissatisfaction over their allotted share in it.
 - b) continued nurturance of loyalties to old territorial units in spite of integration of Princely States.
 - c) reorganisation of states on a linguistic basis.
 - d) struggle for power, authority and prestige by parties and individuals.
- ii) The bases of regionalism are
 - a) geographical boundaries
 - b) history - cultural heritage, folklore and symbolism
 - c) social factors like language, caste, religion
 - d) economic policies and economic disparities
 - e) politico-administrative factors
- iii)
 - a) T
 - b) F
 - c) T

Check Your Progress 3

- i) Regional politics has taken mainly four forms in India. These are, demand for state autonomy, supra-state regionalism, inter-state regionalism, and intra-state regionalism.
- ii)
 - i) c
 - ii) a

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