

CHAPTER-II

Nature of Autonomy of Indian State: Theoretical Consideration

Introduction

The concept of state occupies a central place in the study of politics in India. 'India' in this context refers to the state of India ; an abstract yet powerful nation that embraces the total network of authoritative institutions which make and enforce collective decisions through out the country. The modern state is the most substantial manifestation; formalised and rationalised. The state is the medium through which political power is integrated into a comprehensive social order. The state embodies the political mission of a society, and its institutions and officials express the proper array of techniques that are used in efforts to accomplish the mission.

The project of the welfare state like India has been gradually undermined and discredited in the wake of the ideological struggle between the state and market, and the shifts in economic policy entailed by the process of globalisation. Secularism has increasingly been under threat as communal ideology and political forces have come to enjoy greater purchase in society and the polity.¹ Clearly, India since independence, the democratic project was expected to inform, inspire, and cohere, with the state's initiatives (Autonomy of

1. Jayal Nirja, Gopal, 'The state and Democracy in India or what Happened to Welfare, Secularism and Development', (eds) Vinita Damodaran and Maya Unnithan-Kumar, *Post Colonial India History, Politics and Culture*: Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, p. 94.

the Indian state) in the areas of welfare, secularism and development.² While the mutuality of the state and democracy is widely accepted, the relationship between them can be conceptualised in extreme ways. In what we might call the pessimistic view of Indian democracy, the inability of the state to effect its declared agenda, is frequently attributed to the logic of democracy which by enhancing participation, also leads to greater contestation and the multiplication of demands on the state whether for scarce resources or for the recognition of identity-based claims. Indeed, many scholars believe the travails of the Indian polity to be directly traceable to 'too much' democracy. In this view, the state, as the owner and dispenser of vast economic resources, has become the object of political competition that it is frequently unable to manage and contain.³

On the other hand, we might be in an optimistic view of Indian democracy that draws our attention to the widening in recent years of the social base.⁴ This approach suggests that the state's inability to effect its own agenda was in no small measure due to the monopolising of all resources (natural, social, economic and political) by the modernisation, developmental, but irredeemably upper-caste and upper class from chosen hands that the initiative is now finally being wrested. In this perspective, increased political assertion by

2. Ibid., pp. 96-97.

3. Jayal Nirja, Gopal, *Democracy and the State; Welfare, Secularism and Development in Contemporary India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 91-93.

4. Bardhan, Pranab, 'The dominant class', *Economic and Political weekly*, 1989, pp. 155-160

previously marginalised groups such as the historically disadvantaged backward class or a variety of social movement, which is a positive sign that democracy is proving to be an empowering and successful experiment in India.

'Stateness' in the Indian Constitution

J.P. Nettle first demonstrated the usefulness of 'Stateness' as a conceptual variable in comparative politics. He surveyed the evidence from developing countries facing the problem of establishing the legitimacy of new regimes while simultaneously dissociating themselves from their colonial past. Nettle noted that Stateness could be developed if a politically supported regime is able to transpose its own norms across the high threshold of time.⁵ The Indian National Congress though a long phase of nationalist struggle, succeeded in gaining widespread recognition and legitimacy as the Swedish alternative to the British Raj. The Congress was able to transpose its own norms and ideological goals into the constitution thereby giving India a higher degree of 'Stateness' than most other newly independent country.

However, the idea of state was not clearly articulated by the framers as they were still in quest of it, and had nearly grasped it. They were aware of Indian elements of statecraft, but they did not Indianise the constitution. Mahatma Gandhi's appeal to make directly elected village panchayats, not

5. Sudarshan, R., 'Stateness and Democracy in India's Constitution', (eds) Zoya Hasan, E. Sridharan, R. Sudarshan, *India's Living Constitution*, Permanent Black Publishers, New Dehli, 2002, p. 162.

parliamentary democracy, the foundation of the republic was not led by the constituent assembly.⁶

Traditional Indian political theory emphasised personal qualities, powers and the dharma of the ruler, and the duties, of subjects. Nothing could be further from traditional Indian ideas of statecraft than the European idea of state. Indian traditions did not emphasise the impersonality of public power and could not clearly differentiate public interest from a wide array of inscriptive based on caste and status. Hierarchy and social segmentation were inherent in Indian forms of rulership. That is why the egalitarian aspirations of the constitution are revolutionary. Even in Western European, it took a long period of revolutionary change to develop a strong disposition to recognise the state as an integrating and legitimising concept, and political authority is impersonal.

The idea of state also identifies the basic values of the political community with reference to which power and authority is to be exercised. It encompasses institutions whose purposes and actions have a prestigious character, embodying a national commitment to a substantive notion of the public interest. The state's purpose in the European tradition is to give society a sense

6. Ibid., p. 163.

of direction, and transcended partisan politicking through proper forms of political rule that establish values thought to be good for the community.⁷

The framer of India's constitution opted for the European idea of state because they were not certain that political parties could be trusted to give the newly independent nation the proper ideological orientation necessary for state and nation building. They decided to prescribe principles and substantive goals of the state in the constitution itself. They placed them above the sway of everyday politics, denying in the process the norm-setting role of the political parties in parliamentary democracies. The directive principles of state policy in part IV (borrowed from the Irish constitution that has a lineage to Europe through the Roman Catholic Church) are part of the idea of the state. They are described as the fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the state to apply these principles in making laws.⁸ These principles were meant to represent basic values of the political community with reference to which power and authority should be exercised. The idea of having constitutional norms and teleology to the constitution is important. Some of those norms have a long-term validity and are absolutely essential for proper forms of political rule.

7. Alam, Javeed, 'Dialectics of Capitalist Development and National Crystallization: Notes on the Past and Present of National Question in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 Jan. 1983, pp. 1015-1025.

8. Alam, Javeed, 'Nation: Discourse and Intervention by the Communists in Indian', (ed) T.V. Sathyamurthy, *State and Nation in the Context of Social Change*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 153-158.

So, 'Stateness' is more than the sum of particular constitutional provision. It is primarily an idea that permits the entire constitution. It is intended to capture the imagination of citizens, and supply what is in fact a missing tradition in India. The idea of state was difficult to articulate clearly, when the constitution was framed because it was new and was not part of the more familiar traditional and colonial forms of rule. As it is also more abstract, in comparison to concepts from Anglo-American sources, most commentators on the Indian constitution prefer to avoid it. Conceptual untouchables are the sin of commentators. A concept can not become unimportant because it is abstract and not easy to grasp.⁹ It is more understandable that 'Stateness' has not been sufficiently emphasised and elaborated because the concept does not have historical and socio-cultural mooring in Indian society. It is gradually becoming part of the common sensibility of a people who are more accustomed to the habits of the colonial Sarkar.¹⁰

Approaches to the Study of the Autonomy of Indian State

Several serious attempts have been made to understate the post colonial state, although there are no necessary agreements on what constitutes the nature of the State. Broadly speaking the two dominant approaches regarding the Indian state are Liberal and Marxist. But the new state oriental literature alleges that Liberal and Marxist frame works inadequate for state studies because they tend to reduce politics to societal variables. In general, both

9. Nehru Jawaharlal, *Discovery of india*, Signer Press, Calcutta, 1948, p. 41.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

Liberal and Marxist theories focus on social determinants of political process, level of economic development and detract attention from the state, a significant agent in shaping and moulding political social process.¹¹ For one, the Indian state plays a paradoxical role in the life of individuals and collectivises on the one hand, it is a coercive institution; on the other it provides certain benefits and protection to its members such as access to citizenship right, social services etc. Though it represents the interests of the dominant classes, it also site adhere the general interest of the community that can be formulated. Indeed, the multi-dimensional and contradictory role played by the state, make the task of conceptualising it extremely difficult.

Theoretical Perspective by Indian Scholars: Discussion on Autonomy Thesis

The Persistence of instability since the 1970s has now shown that is indeed a larger problem of political crisis and various ideas have been developed by different political scientists to explain its exact nature. Some scholars have tried to analyse the autonomy thesis with the line of liberal idea and others also try to visualise the autonomy thesis with the Marxian ideas. The liberal-modernist perspective focuses on institutions and processes as the key to understanding the state and political power in India. Marxist theories regard political economy as the decisive factor and the principle of class analysis as the

11. Parekh, Bhiku, 'Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy in India', (ed) David Held, *Prospects for Democracy*, Polity Press Publication, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 159-165.

determining element in unpacking the state.¹² As a concept, liberal theory is both descriptive and normative.¹³ It embraces a set of political institutions (popular elections, accountable government, majoritarian decision, and a set of principles) civil liberties, legal equality, and rule of law and so on, which the institutions embody. The liberal pole is individualistic and calls for liberty; Marxian pole is collectivist and calls for equality.¹⁴

Derived from the liberal modernisation theory, early descriptions of the state concentrated on the functioning of political institution and democratic process. The establishment of a stable democracy went against conventional laws of political history that these were sceptical about the possibilities of the success of the democratic experiment in India. Rajani Kothari attributes its success to the existence of pluralistic tolerance and a culture of consensus.¹⁵ According to Rajani Kothari, development of Indian state is characterised by politicisation of a fragmented social structure through a penetration of political forms, values and ideologies operating against the background of an essentially apolitical condition of society, such a process involves the building of a political centre, the diversification. This centre through a network of benefits and

12. Hassan, Zoya, 'Introduction: The Political Career of the State in Independent India', (ed), Zoya Hassan, *Politics and State in India* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000, p. 12.

13. Thakure, Ramesh, *Government and Politics of India*, Macmillan Published, U.K., 1995, p. 326.

14. Ibid., p. 327.

15. Kothari, Rajni, *Politics in India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1970, p. 10.

obligations, and closing the gap that has traditionally divided village society from the polity.¹⁶

But, the fact is that everyone is not equally impressed with the state's agenda or capacity or its achievements. Gunnar Myrdal for instance, described it as a 'soft state' lacking the capacity to act against the vested interests. The term 'soft state' signified the limits of public power: the state's inability to enforce public policies to eradicate poverty or to enforce its own laws.¹⁷ Transformations in society effected changes in the conception of the state. The liberal institutional approach, with its focus on the formal and functional aspects in the study of the state, was unable to explain the significant changes in India since the late 1960s. Two perspectives society-centric and state-centric emerged in political science to explain these changes.¹⁸ The central feature of the society centric approach was its focus on social change hence it, highlighted the variety and range of mechanism of social change - *Zamindari* abolition, *Garibi Hatao*, mandalisation, assertion of lowers-in promoting or hampering the functioning of the state.¹⁹

16. Ibid., p. 11.

17. Myrdal, Gunnar, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Panthon Books, New York, 1965, pp. 15-18.

18. Hassan Zoya, S.N. Jha and Rasheedudlin Khan, (eds) *The State, Political Process and Identity: Reflections on Modern India*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1988, pp. 50-63.

19. Ibid., p. 65.

There has, however, been considerable dissatisfaction with society central approaches. This gave rise in the 1980s to a new state oriented literature which foregrounded the autonomy thesis of state, arguing that society-centric theories, whether of the modernisation or dependency variety were simply deficient because they reduced politics to societal variable. The persistence of instability since the 1970s has now show that there is indeed a larger problem of political crisis; and various ideas have been developed by different political scientists to explain the exact nature of the Indian state.

Atul Kohli's Analysis on the Nature of the State

For, 'Atul Kohli', the understanding of how and why the state intervenes is inadequate as long as it remains tied primarily to the conditions of the society and economy.²⁰ According to him, conflict was secondary unity of the state and its autonomy from societal and class interest was primary. According to this analysis, the state is not an agent of class or groups rather it functions independently of and in the interests of all groups and classes. Invoking the authority of Weber, the state is seen in quintessential organisational terms: an actual arrangement with distinctive interests and goals those influxes the policies of society as a whole. Atul Kohli also mentions that sooner or later it is difficult to govern all developing countries and over the past two decades, India has been moving in that direction. This trend contrasts with the situation during the 1950s and 1960s when India was widely regarded as one of the few stable democracies

20. Kohli, Atul, *State and Poverty in India; The Politics of Reform*, Orient Longman Publishers, Mumbai, 1987, p. 60.

in the non-western world. He also proclaims that India a successful democracy by defying many prevailing theories of democracy that stipulate pre-conditions developed economy. Politically vibrant middle class, homogeneous society and civic culture; for, he propounds that the Indian experience of a functioning democracy suggests that notwithstanding socio-economic unfavourable conditions, low income economy characterised by mass poverty and inequality of income and wealth, illiteracy, in-equalitarian society divided by caste and class plurality, poor civic culture and primordial loyalties guiding public behaviour-democracy can still work, as it has worked in India, if there are constitutional and political mechanism for sharing of political power states and dignity even if symbolically.²¹

He justifies his position by referring to Indian democracy, which to him, has succeeded primarily because of its constitutional and political arrangement for and, mainly in terms of sharing of power (political) by ensuring that a delicate balance between the forces of centralisation and decentralisation be maintained and that the interests of the powerful in society be severed without fully excluding those on the margins.²² The latter part of his study seeks to describe and explain India's growing crisis of governability. Important political institutions in India have been weakened, and power conflicts have multiplied. The result is that the national leaders find it increasingly difficult to put together

21. Kohli, Atul (ed), *The Success of India's Democracy*, Princeton University, U.S.A., 2001, pp. XIV-12.

22. Ibid., p.14.

durable coalitions, to undertake major policy initiatives, and to settle political conflict without violence.²³ The concept of governability draws attention to the tasks that a government can be expected to perform. For a democratic developing country like India, governability has been defined here as the capacity of the rulers in a state to do three things: Maintain coalitional support, initiate solutions to problems perceived to be important and resolve political conflicts without force and violence. Thus, a democratic developing country is well governed if its government can simultaneously sustain legitimacy, promote socio-economic development, and maintain order without coercion. The growing incapacity in India to perform these tasks is what has been conceptualised in this study as a manifestation of a crisis of governability.²⁴

Problems of governability are common too much of the developing world. India once was considered an exception. Scholars of Indian politics had long recognised the exceptional nature of India's stable and effective democracy within the developing world. Because specialists can easily be guilty of admiring too much the subject they study, it is important to recall that those concerned with broader issues of comparative development also used to describe Indian politics as uniquely modern and well developed.²⁵

23. Kohli, Atul, 'Political Change in a Democratic Developing Country', (ed) Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Democracy in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 128.

24. Ibid., p. 129.

25. Ibid., p. 130.

Unfortunately for India, its problems of governability have grown considerably more acute over the past two decades. India is fast catching up with the rest of the third world. Instead of a strengthening of India's democratic base, we see a steadily widening gap between institutional capacities and socio-economic problem. India is still of course a functioning democracy, but increasingly it is not well governed. The evidence of eroding political order is everywhere. Personal rule has replaced party rule at all levels-national, state and district. Below the rulers the entrenched civil and police service have been politicised various social groups which have pressed new and evermore diverse political demands in demonstrations that often have led to violence. The omnipresent but feeble state, in turn has vacillated: its responses have varied over a wide range: in difference, sporadic concession, and repression such vacillation has fuelled further opposition. The ineffectiveness of repression, moreover, has highlighted the breakdown of the civil machinery intended to enforce the law and maintain order.²⁶

He also explains how Indian state is unable to overcome the pressing problems in the society. The political arrangements in the early phase (of the post independence era) were clearly dominated by educated nationalist elite. The business class was also politically influential, and the landed and cast elites were slowly brought into the ruling coalition. The new rulers enjoyed widely

26. Kohli, Atul, *Democracy and Discontent*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 3-32.

perceived legitimacy in part because of the nationalist legacy and in part because of the traditional patterns of authority in society, such as the caste structure in the villages, were still intact. The dominant political elites, moreover, practised a reconciliatory approach towards the competing elites, while professing the hope that they would be able to bring the poor and the oppressed masses into the mainstream of India's modernising political economy. The legitimacy formula that the Congress party has designed was clearly expressed in its proposed strategy for economic development. The party's five-year plans accordingly stressed a mixed economy model of development that sought economic growth, self sufficiency, and a modicum of wealth redistribution.²⁷

According to him, there were euphoric times in India as new beginnings. Although many difficult problems confronted the new government, both leaders and followers had considerable confidence in the state's capacity to deal with these problems. The Indian state sought to guide development while standing above the society. It also simultaneously expressed the preferences of important social groups and thus was widely deemed legitimate over the past two decades, however, or, since about 1967, much has changed. Most important, the state's capacity to govern (i.e. the capacity simultaneously to promote development and to accommodate diverse interests) has declined. Along with this decline order and authority have been eroding. Since the mid-sixties the surface

27. Kohli, Atul, 'Crisis of Governability', (eds) Sudipta Kaviraj, *Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p. 384.

manifestation of this process has been widespread activism outside of the established political channels that often has led to violence, a problem compounded by the state's growing capacity to deal with the pressing problems of law and order, corruption, and poverty.²⁸

Atul Kohli's analysis of crisis of governability of the Indian state explains that the concept itself is a product of the neo conservative discourse in the west on the failure of the state to meet the rising burden of expectations, obligations and responsibilities. In concrete terms; it is argued that overstretched claims on the services provided by the welfare state, and equally overstretched claims on participation in the affairs of the state are at the root of crisis. Severe competition in the political market place because of an increasing plurality of competing interests and access to a free media, are cited as the major culprits.²⁹

However Kohli has also revealed his own optimistic view about the success of the Indian democracy. He argues that in theory of democratic states, through their claim to legitimate control of the representation of various social interests, have considerable potential to determine and shape political and socio economy relationships between the state and society. Moreover, given the state's control over public resources, its capacity to mobilise interests and intervene actively through coercion, legitimating and co-opt or accommodate. It

28. Ibid., p. 385.

29. Lale, Jayant, 'Understanding Indian Politics', (ed) Rajendra Vohra and Suhash Palshikar, *Indian Democracy, Meanings and Practices*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2004, p. 188.

has the potential to enjoy a high degree of continued autonomy from any given class or interest.³⁰

Kohli is cognizant of the fact that in reality complete state autonomy is hardly the norm. He argues that ideological orientation of the state leadership, the organisation of state power or regime types, and the composition and structural relationship between the state and the dominant classes are some of important varying conditions that affect the state's capacity to act autonomously vis-à-vis society.³¹

He has also analysed the variation in the state autonomy and capacity which depend fundamentally on "the type of regime wielding state power". He argues that in the case of India, the nationalist-democratic regime that took power in 1947, was too closely tied to the dominant classes and thus did not have the political nor the organisational capacity to confront and tame, the powerful propertied interests. Specifically, as anti-colonial nationalism falls into the background, the interest groups compete for state resources, the capacity of the state governed by nationalist-democratic regimes to extricate themselves from political and socio-economic ties so as to restructure the economy and society decline.³²

30. Sharma, Shalendra D., *Development and Democracy in India*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1999, p. 44.

31. Ibid., p. 45.

32. Kohli, Atul, op.cit., p. 34.

For Kohli, the failure to achieve growth with distribution in India is rooted in the weakness of the democratic regime. He argues that only a strong autonomous developed state or a state with strong and stable leadership, a pro-poor ideology and a closed organisational structure with disciplined cadre can facilitate economic development with redistribution in India.

In the end of his analysis regarding the state's capacity, India enunciates that the Indian state not only is the agent of political order, but also is responsible for socio-economic development. India's highly interventionist state controls many of the free-floating economic resources in a very poor society. Access to power of the state is bitterly contested, not only for the political ends of exercising power and influencing policy but also as a source of livelihood and rapid upward mobility. The struggle for state power in these circumstances becomes simultaneously a struggle to influence people's life chance. Then, the conventional distinctions between the state and the market, or between the public and private spheres of activity, are not clear-cut in the case of India. The conclusion of his study is that India's democracy has itself contributed to primarily analytical aimed at exploring the cause of India's increasing political turmoil. So the extent that it has any clear normative and prescriptive implications, they are fairly general; strengthening party organisations and bringing the state's capacities in line with its commitments that are two crucial long-term actions needed for improving the quality of India's democratic government.

Rajani Kothari's Analysis of the Nature of the State

Rajani Kothari's work has moved in several stages towards a perception of the crisis of the political system. Although, his earlier analysis of Indian politics showed no sense of an impending crisis since the emergency, his work reveals that there is an atrophy to the democratic institutions of Indian state. Kothari observes a gradual establishment of monopolistic control over party and state institutions by political elite, which increasingly undermined some indispensable features of modern liberal democratic state.

The first phase of the work of Kothari explains how state had been working since independence. He also ensures that, in August, 1947, a transfer of power to identifiable and legitimised elite took place. The Congress, which had provided the leadership of the nationalist movement, now turned itself into ruling political party, and formed the government of the country. The new elite shared the ideas and experiences of many of the characteristics of the outgoing elite. Noteworthy in the change over, was this continuity in personal institutions and ideas, despite the end of British epoch in Indian history. The years that immediately followed were dominated by these ideas which were now incorporated into a legal document and translated into concrete institutional terms.³³ Important institutional developments have appeared in the structure of public undertakings soon after the independence. Various proposals for establishing agencies of economic coordination all the way down from the cabinet secretariat were implemented. The Planning Commission and its many

33. Kothari, Rajni, op.cit., p. 100.

committees and organs of investigation, on the one hand, and various developmental Ministries, on the other spearhead a whole network of department enterprises, public companies and corporations, a machinery of consultation between the centre and the states, an array of assessing and reviewing function, and new organs of decision-making with regard to mobilisation and dispersal of economic and human resources. Several developmental ministries have come to be led by politicians who are in fact technocrats and a body of specialised know-how and technical functionaries has been created in the departments. The same is taking place in the state also.³⁴ According to Rajani Kothari, it was the symbol of the democratic development of Indian state. It has also indicated that India has been fortunate in the length and continuity of its process of institutionalisation. A long colonial rule during which the broader lines of its territorial and administrative structures were laid, a fairly long nationalist movement when its goals were articulated and a broad consensus then achieved, and the unhampered rule of Congress party over two decades, when the structures and procedures adopted by the constitution were allowed to penetrate and strikeouts have all consolidated the institutional framework of Indian democracy.³⁵

In the latter phase of his work, he also analyses that, when India came of age as a nation, it was heir to powerful humanistic traditions emanating from a dynamic interaction, between the western world and a reawakened orient

34. Ibid., p. 138.

35. Ibid., p. 141.

in response to the western challenge. Dominant among the values that were imbibed as a result of this interaction were those of freedom and democracy, of national self determination and self reliance, of equality and social justice of 'service' to the poor and to society at large-together synthesised in the Gandhian concept of *swarajya*.³⁶ He also analyses that various steps taken by the first-generation leadership in order to develop the state's capacity were not undertaken by their next generation leadership.

- i) National integration of an enormously intricate and diverse social structure;
- ii) Economic development for raising the standards of living of people whose income levels had remained stagnant or had declined for over a century;
- iii) Social equality in a society that for centuries had been based on the principle of inequality;
- iv) Political democracy in a culture that had valued authority based on status, hierarchy, and concentration of power in the hands of small elite.

But fact is that, nothing like this had ever been undertaken anywhere on such a large scale. For this, Rajani Kothari, 'in his later phase of his analysis, explains, "A crisis of Democratic Institution of Indian state". Such a process of decline and erosion of institutions places too great an emphasis on personalities, their sense of personal security and their attempt to use the public

36. Kothari, Rajni, 'The Deline of the Moderate State', (ed) Zoya Hassan, *Politics and State in India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000, p. 188.

realm as an arena for resolving personal crises.³⁷ In India, the last several years have witnessed precisely this. It has been a period of rapid erosion of institutions. These have been too much stress on leadership, too little on institutions, their integrity and autonomy. This has not led too a sharp erosion of both effectiveness and morale in crucial segments of the state apparatus like the party system, the parliament, the bureaucracy, and law and order machinery, the judiciary and a corresponding increase in arbitrariness and in highly partisan and makes intervention by political upstarts. Much worse, it has led to a systematic neglect of the public realm and tendency to treat power as a means of personal aggrandisement and the state as an instrument of patronage and profit crisis of values among the leadership is one of the important factor for the erosion of Indian democratic institutions. So it creates a lot of questions about the India's autonomy capacity to handle all this rising problems. He also defines that it is going to be the greater hazardous in Indian state and atrophy to the democratic institutions.

Another Neo-liberal political scientist, Rajni Kothari devised the Indian model, though not completely distancing himself from the European agenda. In his earlier writings, Kothari emphasises the autonomy of the Indian state in dealing with the pressures and demands of a multi class, multi-caste, multi ethnic and multi religious society, supported by an elaborate institutional

37. Ibid., pp. 198-199.

edifice.³⁸ In his more recent writings, however, Kothari has mentioned that Indian state has lost its autonomy to narrow interests of the newly emerging rural neo-rich class and the urban bourgeoisie who have come to increasingly control and manipulate it, thereby affecting an institutional decline.³⁹

He has explained that in recent years there has been a massive erosion of state's autonomy. It has been occurred due to the greater centralization of the state, the federal polity and intermediate structures through which local problems and conflicts used to be sorted out. He continued to say that "independence from the lower tiers of the federal system and from party and bureaucratic institutions, has made it dependent on dominant structures of national and international power and privilege."⁴⁰

Another social scientist Gunnar Myrdan studied that mainly about India and explained "India's inability to reconcile economic development with redistribution to the emergencies of the nation's soft state". Thus, to Myrdal, the soft states of the newly emergent nations (India being the classic example) lacked the institutional capacity and political resolve to promote urgently needed economic development. However, instead of linking the state's softness to the

38. Dutta Gupta, Rupak, *Classes and Elites in the Third World*, Authors Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 166.

39. Ibid., p. 167.

40. Kothari, Rajni, 'Capitalism and The Role of the State', (ed) Ghanshyam Shah, *Capitalist Development, Critical Essays*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1990, p. 123.

political and socio economic configurations, Myrdal attributed it to the peculiarities-cum-idolism crises of India's cultural-religious traditions in particular to the obstructionist Brahminical institutions and to the inherent immobilism of the Hindu caste system. The 'Preconditions' for development that logically followed Myrdal, reasoning were that the erstwhile religious attitudes and the monopoly of cultural idiosyncrasies had to be neutralised, if not destroyed before economic modernisation and more equitable sharing of the fruits of development could take place.⁴¹

Pranab Bardhan's View on the Nature of the State

Bardhan starts off by arguing that the state should be seen as an autonomous actor which, in certain historical cases for example, Meiji Japan and India-has been for more important in shaping and moulding class power than vice-versa. Without explicitly saying so, he seems to be fare happier with stockpiles concepts of 'potential autonomy' than Miliband's or Poulantzas's concepts of relative autoncmty'. In the first decades after 1947, the personnel of the state elite in India enjoyed an independent authority and prestige that made them both the main actors in, and principal directors of, the unfolding socio-economic drama of Indian development, though class constraints existed.⁴² Over time, however, with the strengthening of the main proprietary classes (The industrial and agrarian bourgeoisies), the autonomous behaviours of the state

41. Sharma, Shalendra, op.cit., p. 40.

42. Bardhan, Pranab, *The Political Economy of Development in India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 28-39.

became confined more and more to its 'regulatory' rather than its 'developmental' functions.⁴³

He also mentions convincing factual evidence to support identification of industrial bourgeoisie as the dominant proprietary class and the principal beneficiary of state policies. This class uncovers the leadership of the top business houses, supported the government policy of encouraging import substituting industrialisation, quantitative trade restrictions providing automaticall^y protected domestic markets, and of running a large public sector providing capital goods, intermediate products and artificially low prices. Since the mid-fifties, the government has created several public lending institutions, loans from which form the predominant source of private industrial finance an elaborate scheme of industrial and import licences has been allowed to be turned to the advantage of the industrial and commercial having better 'connections' and better access, have got away with the lion share in the bureaucratic allocations of the lines thus pre-empting capacity creation and sheltering oligopolistic profits.⁴⁴

According to Bardhan in the principal conflict within the dominant coalition, the public-sector professionals line up, with the industrial bourgeoisie against the rich farmer. Furthermore, he argues, that there is a secondary conflict between these professionals and the industrial bourgeoisie which is focussed on

43. Ibid., pp. 85-95.

44. Ibid., pp. 45-49.

the licence permit quota Raj, the system of government controls over private sector investment and production. The secondary conflict between the professionals and the industrial bourgeoisie postulated by Bardhan and others assumes that his 'class' as a whole benefits through corruption and other private favour from a regime of state controls.

Rudolph's Analysis of the Nature of the State

According to Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, they recognise the idea of Stateness of the state but say the capacity of the Indian state to deal with crisis has declined. Their writings on J&K, North East, and communalism suggest that there is a crisis of autonomy of Indian state. Rudolph analyse the Indian political economy as possessing the dual characteristics of a weak-strong state, a state which has alternated between autonomous and reflective relations with society, and a policy which has alternated between being a command and demand polity. They have given two models regarding the autonomy of the Indian state; one is command polity and another is demand polity. These models allow us to raise questions about the tension between conflicting requirements of state sovereignty and popular sovereignty, which determines the degree of state autonomy on the one hand and state responsiveness on the other.⁴⁵ They also analyse demand polity just like as voter citizens are sovereign. Extractive and allocative decisions reflect citizens. Preference as they are expressed through party competition in elections and

45. Rudolph, Lloyd I. and Rudolph Susanne Hoeber, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the India state*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1987, pp. 211-219.

through representation by interests, classes, community, and movements. In the command polity, autonomous states are sovereign. Extractive and allocative decisions reflect the preferences of the elected and appointed officials who choose and implement policies.

Legitimacy in demand politics depends on the state's capacity to provide short-run equitable treatment of citizen's demands. Legitimacy in command politics depends on the credibility of the state's call for equitable sacrifice to achieve future benefits and avoid social costs. Short-term demands articulated by interest groups by large portions of society. For example, the polish workers demands in 1980 for cheaper food and the right to independent representation were widely supported. Such as the case in India when the highly advantaged Life Insurance Corporation employees and Air India pilots struck for higher wages and other benefits in the early 1970s. The efforts of Indira Gandhi's emergency regime to stop hoarding and black racketeering by punishing violators won wide support because they seemed to promote equity of sacrifice.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the regimes vasectomy programme was perceived by poor Muslims and untouchables as illegitimate, not only because it involved coercion and the violation of personal liberty but also because its implementation discriminated against them.

46. Ibid., pp. 222-244.

To the Rudolphs; "India is a political and economic paradox : a rich-poor nation with a weak-strong state, that has alternated between autonomous and reflexive relations with the society in which it is embedded. India's democratic state is simultaneously weak and strong. It is strong basically, it controls of the commanding height of economy.

Under Mrs. Gandhi, systematic 'deinstitutionalisation of the Congress party and state structures, the erosion of professional standards and procedural norms of parliament, courts, police, civil service and the federal system. It's growing weakness or incapacity "to govern wisely and well, stems from the personalisation and centralization of power that occurred during the 17 year of rules. Rudolphs agreed that the Indian state's autonomy and capacity have declined since independence. She did not at one with the views of Pranab Bardhan, that the decline and erosion of Indian state is rooted in the nature of dominant class alliance. Instead, they see the problem as stemming largely from the 'wasting of political assets and from the dismantling of Congress party institutions by self serving and unscrupulous leaders.

Francine Frankel's View on the Nature of the State

According to Francine R. Frankel's narrative views about the Indian public power as paradox of accommodative politics and radical social change' the nation state had been created without a prior confrontation between the modern leadership and authoritative traditional groups. Persistence of old power structures, belief systems rooted in religion, castes and other ascriptive identity

ensured that these were accommodated in contemporary politics giving rise to an accommodation style of politics which in turn jeopardised the agenda of radical social change of the state.⁴⁷ She also explains that Indian political system may be reformed by adjusting relations between the centre and the states to permit greater decentralisation, but in themselves such changes can not suffice to provide a new basis of legitimacy for the political community as a whole. Politicians in the states may still try to deflect attention from economic issue by blaming New Delhi for the niggardly flow of resources.⁴⁸ The upper caste blames reservation for educated unemployment. Muslims accuse of external localities sapping the strength of large section of the unprivileged and become more and more costly to national cohesion.

According to her, it is important to preserve a distinction between the public institutions of the Indian state, which represent a major continuity with British rule, and the political institutions of parliamentary democracy and division of powers that were fully elaborated only after Independence in the 1950 constitution. The analytical advantages of maintaining this distinction become clear once questions are raised about the basis of political legitimacy the dual foci of sovereignty involved in the separation of powers between the union and the states, and the autonomy of the Indian state from important social groups contending for control over the decision making process.

47. Frankel, Francine R. 'Decline of Social Order', (ed) Zoya Hassan, *Politics and State in India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 230-336.

48. Ibid., pp. 244-245.

Francine Frankel is another social scientists studied the Indian democratic developments in future perspectives. Her study revolves two key questions :

- (1) Why, the reformist and distributive efforts failed in India despite of having the strong faith by the national political leadership to guide country towards a 'socialist pattern of society'.
- (2) Is Indian state able to handle the democratic reconcile growth of economy and reduction of disparities among various elements of states.⁴⁹

Her main argument is that the state apparatus was framed in such a manner which provided the interests of the powerful and elite propertied class. In the case of rural India, the assignment of significant powers to the dominant class-controlled state Govt. over "key subjects as land reforms, agricultural credit, land revenue assessments and taxation of agricultural income put severe breaks on the possibilities on any sweeping changes of the social order by action from above."⁵⁰

She also analyses that governmental policy were being made by the political compromises and also by influential elite political leaders with the powerful interest groups and factions. At the same time such relative power of propertied classes were making negotiation and mustering votes for political

49. Frankel, Francine, *India's Political Economy, 1947-1977*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp. 123-135.

50. Ibid., p. 81.

support in order to strengthen the ruling coalition at central Govt. Also her discussion of elite decision making in terms of the organisational interests, were pursued by competing leaders, ministries, bureaucrats and other agencies within the party/state apparatus. She has viewed the Indian state as pursuing a paradoxical policy of accommodative politics and radical social change.

Partha Chatterjee's view on the Indian State

According to Partha Chatterjee, there is a certain kind of ambiguities of legitimating of the Indian state. He ensures that there is no doubt about the fundamental problems of the post-colonial state accumulation in the modern sector through a political strategy of passive revolution that has given rise to numerous ambiguities in the legitimating process. In the field of economic planning, these ambiguities have been noticed in the debates over the relative importance of market signals and state commands, over the efficiency of the private sector and the inefficiency of the state sector, over the growth potential of a relatively 'open' economy and the technological backwardness of the strategy of self-reliance and over the dynamic productive potential of a relaxation of state controls compared with the entrenchment of organised privileges within the present structure of state dominance.

He also defines the ambiguities of legitimacy that are expressed in the well known forms of 'interest groups'. These are the variety of permanent associations of businessmen, professional and trade unions as well as temporary

agitational mobilisations based as specific issues.⁵¹ He also says that indeed more profound ambiguities appear in the relations between the 'modern' sector and the rest of the people nation. On the one hand, there is the system of electoral representation on a territorial basis in the form of single-member constituency. On the other hand, competing demands may be voiced not only on the basis of permanent 'interest groups' organisation, but also as mobilisation building upon pre-existing cultural solidarities such as locality cases, tribe, religious community or ethnic identity.

For Marxists, the complexity of class formation, class configuration and class action are central elements for an understanding of the constraints on the state and capitalist transformation. Though their perceptions differ, the specificities of its relationship to imperialism occupy the central state. According to Sudipta Kaviraj, analysis of the state is understood both in terms of the long term structural compulsion of Indian politics which are determined by capitalism and the inclusion of the economy in the international capitalist system and its division of labour, and also the coalition arrangement and the changing balance in the class coalition's dominating the state.⁵² He also goes on to characterise the Indian state as a bourgeoisie state. However, according to dominance where its political predominance is systematically with its control over the productive

51. Chatterjee, Partha, *The Nation and its fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial Histories*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993, pp. 151-183.

52. Kaviraj, Sudipta, 'A Critique of the Passive Revolution', (ed) Parth Chatterjee, *State and Politics in India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 45-88.

process, the dominance of this class is not unaided. It enters into a coalition and bargaining relation with intellectual bureaucratic elites who, though not bourgeoisie in a direct productive sense, culturally and ideologically is strongly affiliated to the bourgeoisie cause. They operate more as a pressure group.

In class terms, the ruling coalition contained three elements: monopoly bourgeoisie, landed elite, and bureaucratic managerial elite.⁵³

Gramscian view on passive revolution and its impact in the Indian case

Antonio Gramsci has talked of the 'Passive Revolution' as one in which the new claimants to power, lacking the social strength to launch a full-scale assault on the old dominant class, opt for a path in which the demands of a new society are satisfied by small doses, legally in a reformist manner, in such a way that the political and economic positions of the old feudal classes are not destroyed, agrarian reform is avoided and most important the popular masses are prevented from going through the political experience of a fundamental social transformation. Gramsci, of course, treats this as a 'blocked dialectic' and exception to the paradigmatic form of bourgeoisie revolution which he takes to be that of Jacobinism.⁵⁴ It now seems more useful to argue, however, that as a historical model, passive revolution is in fact the general framework of capitalist

53. Pattnaik, Prabhat, 'Political Strategies of Economic Development', (ed) Partha Chatterjee, *Wages of Freedom: Fifty Years of the Nation-State*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 210-219.

54. Chatterjee, Parth, 'Development Planning and The Indian State', (ed) Zoya Hassan, *Politics and State in India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000, p. 130.

transition in societies where bourgeoisie hegemony has not been accomplished in the classical way. In 'passive revolution', the historical shifts in the strategic relations of forces, between capital, pre-capitalist dominant groups and the popular masses can be seen as series of contingent conjectural moments.

In the Indian case, we can look upon 'passive revolution' as a process involving a political-ideological programme by which the largest possible nationalist alliance is built-up against the colonial power. The aim is to form a politically independent nation state. The means involve the creation of a series of alliances, within the organisational structure of the national movement, between the bourgeoisie and other dominant classes and mobilisation, under the leadership, of mass support from subordinate classes. The project is a reorganisation of the political order but it is moderated in two quite fundamental ways. On one hand, it does not attempt to break up or transform in any radical way the institutional structures of rational authority set up in the period of colonial rule. On the other hand, it also does not undertake a full scale assault on all pre-capitalist dominant classes: rather, it seeks to limit their former power. Neutralise them where necessary, attack them only selectively and in general bring them around a position of subsidiary allies within a reformed state structure.

Western and all the Indian scholars have analysed that the process of formation has been a deeply contentious one. The state is still a vital agent, but it also constitutes a major terrain of political and social conflict. Some

scholars have analysed the autonomy thesis of Indian state in the line of society centric view like Marxist and neo-Marxist, Sudipta Kaviraj, Pranab Bardhan etc. But others are analysed in the line of Non-Marxist view like Atul Kohli and Rajni Kothari. Almost all the scholars have emphasised the basic problems of the autonomy of Indian state:

- a) Real problem is the process of economic development which is going ahead without benefit to majority, especially the worst off, who are not in a position to join it owing to the continuation of acute inequality and backwardness
- b) The crisis of legitimacy of state both in terms of its respect and credibility in the eyes of the people breakdown of authority and erosion in the autonomy of the state vis-à-vis civil society.
- c) The ideological and organisational pillars of the state have been destabilised like, secularism, welfarism and developmentalism, as well as the political and civil institutions, viz. the party system and civil bureaucracies etc.
- d) The main apparatus of the state civil service has been politicised by causing massive rise in corruption of government officials and politicians.
- e) Corruption and patronage have become pervasive dynamics of an economy and politics supported by a bureaucracy suborned to the influence of selfish politicians (who have turned politics into a business, capitalist and entrepreneurs).

For Francine Frankel, India witnessed by the end of 1980s, conflict that are political aspects of the social turmoil accompanying the collapse of the brahminical order and the emergence of other social and caste groups.⁵⁵ So both for Frankel and Rudolphs, class politics in India has been marginalised. Atul Kohli uses the Weberian categories in their comparative perspective, to describe the paradox as that of over centralisation and powerlessness of the state. The state as a result is unable to handle social fragmentation and political violence. The state gets attention at the political level because it is interventionist and mobilises the free floating economic resources. It is the source of social and political fragmentation. He says...spread of egalitarian values, and of competing politics within the context of India's low income democracy and interventionist state have greatly politicised social conflict in a manner that has greatly contributed to fragmentation of India's political society.⁵⁶ Rajani Kothari also ensures his position regarding the Indian state in past and contemporary times against society, especially its petty bourgeoisie in history and human rights activist and the dalits in the contemporary period. He also considers that traditionally the state and society relationship was one where the society was democratic. In contemporary period the state has long ceased to be democratic particularly with the arrival of Mrs. Gandhi on the scene and the perpetuation of terror by the state against Marxists, the terrorists, and so called dacoits i.e. any

55. Gupta, Rakesh, *State in India, Pakistan, Russia and Central Asia*, Kalpaz Publication, New Delhi, 2004, p. 42.

56. Ibid., p. 43.

one who is found unwanted for him human rights assertion in India is her democratic tradition.⁵⁷

According to Sudipta Kaviraj, the state in India is a bourgeoisie state, at least three, mutually supportive senses a) He emphasised that, when we say that state is 'bourgeoisie' this refers in some way (though this particular way can be very different in various historically concrete cases) to a state of dominance enjoyed by the capitalist class or a coalition of classes dominated by the bourgeoisie. b) The state form is bourgeoisie; i.e. the sense in which we speak of the parliamentary democratic form as being historically a bourgeoisie form of government. He said that the bourgeoisie tendency emerged through the structural connection between bourgeoisie hegemony or (domination) and his form of the state. It distributes the values of the state in a particular way in which such ways put them in an advantageous position. It means according to Kaviraj, this is the best construction of political form for the capitalist mode of production. c) The state expresses and ensures the domination of the bourgeoisie and helps in capitalist reproduction and a sub-ordinate reproduction of other types of economic relations by imposing on the economy, a deliberative order of capitalist planning. Those direct function that capital can not perform through the market (either because the market is imperfect or not powerful enough or because such

57. Ibid., p. 47.

tasks can not be performed by market pressures) the bourgeoisie state performs through the legitimised directive mechanism of the state.⁵⁸

He has also explained that Indian state is totally based on the bourgeoisie format, or all the apparatus of the Indian state is following the tendency of the dominant class structure. Just like the bourgeoisie character of its legal system, property structure and institutions of governance are clearly and undeniably evident. These are revealed in the Indian constitution in its central business of laying down some limits and prohibitions through the rights of property etc. Here, he critically explains the illusion which made the framers carry the constitutional document to an unreadable and agonising length. However, the original constitution reflected the accepted social plan or design of the ruling elite at the time of independence unlike the subsequent disingenuous insertions of ceremonial socialistic principles.⁵⁹ Secondly, he is also putting the question mark about the increasingly proliferating institutions of planning which explicitly acknowledged the role of the Indian state in the reproduction of capital and in setting economic targets in a way compatible with bourgeoisie developmental prospective.⁶⁰

Another Marxist scholar of Indian, Achin Vanaik, while explaining the bourgeoisie nature of Indian democracy, concludes that "the class force and

58. Kaviraj, Sudipta, op.cit., p. 48.

59. Ibid., p. 49.

60. Ibid., p. 50.

social segments which are likely to expand their relative political power are the agrarian bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, and the urban middle class, comprising the self-employed small businessmen and traders and the professional salaried.⁶¹ However, the assumption that these groups have a high level of cohesiveness and united to use state power to advance their common interests is far from the existing political and social realities.

The post-modernist critics of the Indian state consist of diverse groups of non-Marxist scholars, who had earlier embraced the concept of a liberal state. From the beginning, these scholars appreciated of the Nehruvian model of the Indian state and its modernisation technology. Since independence to 1967, when Nehru and his political legacy were the dominant theme of Indian politics, this period was perceived by them as “the golden” period of the post-independence Indian political history. Politics and political system of Indian state during this period had been an important tool of social transformation in the country. State was an autonomous agency, though it was dominated by the ruling class and bureaucratic elite but the state sets its own agenda. These were non-Marxist scholars held the view regarding the Indian state during the early

61. Kothari, Rajni, 'Intrepreting Indian Politics: A Personal Statement', (ed) Upendra Baxi and Bhikhu Parekh, *Crisis and Change in Contemporary India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1995, p. 151.

phase of independence that the people looked upon state as an instrument of liberation from social inequality.⁶²

In the Post-Nehru era, in the view of the non-Marxist scholars, not only was there a break down of the consensus, but the state even lost its autonomy and it has become the tool of the capitalist class. India has been reduced to a plebiscitary democracy.⁶³ These scholars are very much doubtful about the election and political participation by the people of Indian state. According to them, legitimisation of political authority through elections is only a myth. State controlled economic development has resulted in four undesirable though interrelated development:

- 1) The rise to centre stage in public life of the techno-bureaucratic elites closely linked with politicians.
- 2) The enormous increase in political bureaucratic corruption.
- 3) The enlargement of India's monopoly houses.
- 4) The unprecedented growth of what is commonly referred to as the "informal" or unorganised sector of the economy.

This group of scholars seems to have an ambivalent attitude towards the role of the state in economic planning and development.⁶⁴

62. Kothari, Rajani, 'The Non-Party Political Process', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Feb. 4, 1984, p. 214.

63. Ibid., p. 215.

64. Shakir, Moin, 'Class Character of India State', (ed) Virendra Grover, *Political System in India*, Deep and Deep Publication, New Delhi, 1989, vol.7, pp. 11-32.

According to Marxist and Neo-Marxist interpretations, Indian state are that following the orthodox Marxist line of argument, some scholars assert that it was the exploiting classes which dominated the independence movement. As a result of this historic reality, they believe that the post-colonial state in India essentially became a class instrument and that in order to eliminate the economic and political distortions introduced by the colonial rulers, the dominant class was compelled to use large scale state intervention for economic and social reconstruction. Citing the example of the former Soviet Union, they hold that "only the state could perform the multiple and complex tasks involved in the capitalist modernisation of an underdeveloped economy which have been distorted by colonial intervention."⁶⁵ While it has expanded the social bases of capitalism, it has also resulted in strengthening the hold of "indigenous monopoly capitalism."⁶⁶ This capitalism of Indian state emerged as a dominant alliance between the rural rich and the urban bourgeoisie, leading to the consolidation of the exploiting classes over the state.

Above analysis describes that conflicts and the repressive use of state power as systemic feature of Indian politics. Sudipta Kaviraj's view is one of the best examples of this genre of Marxist on Indian politics. He emphatically

65. Bhambhri, C.P., 'The Indian State: Conflict and Contradictions', (eds) Zoya Hassan, S.N. Jha and Rasheedudin Khan, *The State Political Process and Identity: Reflections on Modern India*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1989, p. 76.

66. Ibid , p. 77.

focuses on the state in tune with the Marxist principles. He analyses and takes the state as a site over which several dominant classes try both to outmanoeuvre one another and to work out coalitional arrangements in order to preserve their dominance as whole. That means, nature and autonomy thesis of the Indian state can be described in terms of changing balances in the ruling class coalition.

Rudolph and Rudolph in their latter work (in Pursuit of Lakshmi:- The Political Economy of the Indian State, 1987), which envisages that Indian state is based upon the organised interest groups as the principal actors in the system that have tried to periodise Indian politics in terms of tussle between a 'demand politics' in which societal demands expressed as electoral pressure dominate over the state and a 'command politics' where state hegemony prevails over society.

Rao and Frankel in their two-volume edited collection, "Dominance and state power in Modern India" (1990), have made a distinction between higher caste, elite classes on one side and lower caste, lower classes on the other in the public institutions in India such as bureaucracy, and organised industry and political institutions such as legislatures and political parties. How the upper caste and middle class groups to protect their privileges in the public institutions.

Rajani Kothari in the recent writings, has attempted less as an explanatory views but more as a critique of the present political system. He

basically criticises the party politics in Indian state. How single party system worked in society as a repressive and increasingly unrepresentative state. So, his argument is that there is a need now to assert through grass-roots movement and non-party political formations of the state.

These discussions ensure that the need for a state is almost universally accepted by the majority of political theorists. So, conceptualisation of the state are almost always critiques of existing states. The Indian political theorists, deeply conscious of the capacity and power of the state to inscribe social relations, have been profoundly wary of existing states. Therefore, the liberals have insisted that the state should be limited and circumscribed, and Marxist have argued that the state should be transformed through political action. At the same time, political theory has been constantly preoccupied with, thinking about a desired state; a state which would be of realising conditions conducive to human nature.

These analyses of different scholars consider the autonomy thesis of Indian state as enjoyed by the constitution that has to bring about social justice with equity. It is a concept that in class societies, there is an underpinning of inequality from Bentham to Rawls. All the scholars have suggested from their interpretation that reorganisation of society for bringing about justice which would be facilitated by the removal of social institutional and economic hindrances. Autonomy of Indian state needs a new strategy that would disseminate and

spread the liberal economy, secular consciousness and social justice through a democratic policy in a society, and then the theory of autonomy thesis of India may be justified and well developed.

The discussion of the state in India from different prospective suggests that two axis around which can be examined: structural, functional, Marxian-Gramscian, i.e. organisation versus democracy and organisation versus society. In the later category, it would also fall the gender critique of the Indian State that critique takes one back to the Weberian concept of patrimonial state applied to Sultanism. Either way of issues of autonomy vis-à-vis democratic institutions, social classes and issues of female gender have been raised and critiqued. Skocpol's position has taken us further in the direction of the operationalisation of the autonomy thesis. In this, one notices functional flexibility to the relative autonomy, which is more didactic and available in the Gramscian critiques predominantly⁶⁷. The word function is used not to denote the State's function of the system of perpetuation but to denote a process in which the States itself is a significant part of the process of achieving the secular, modernist and capitalist agenda incrementally without any blue prints of social engineering. In this functionality, we notice a continuum in external and internal terms. In the external terms, it implies strengthening of the State and internally to lead industrial development and preserving a secularist ideologist. The position

67. Gupta, Rakesh, *State in India, Pakistan, Russia and Central Asia*, Kalpaz Publications, Delhi, 2004, p. 33.

of the historians is closer to ours here. As we noted earlier the position of the capitalist class at the time of independence played a crucial factor in favour of people and the State. Since independence the state ^hwas played a vital role in the growth of democratic institutions, development of infrastructure, small scale, public sector and big private sector industries, the Green Revolution and generally further growth on capitalist lines with the State being significant actor and not the market. It was the State which intervened in the market on prices labour legislation. In the 1980s e.g., it intervened in the wake of the peasant agitation for increased procurement prices. Not only the reach farmers but the entire peasantry benefited from this. Here this concept of functional flexibility is rooted in the specific Indian reality.