

UNIT 11 EVOLUTION OF MODERN KOREA

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11.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit deals with evolution of modern Korea. The unit discusses about the history, geography, civilization and modernization process of an ancient land. After going through the unit you will be able to :

- identify the geographical location and understand the geopolitical importance of Korea;
- trace the history of Korea;
- discuss the reform movements for modernization of Korean peninsula;
- asses the depth of Japanese colonial exploitation in Korea;
- study the liberation struggle of the Korean people against the foreign rule.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Korea is a peninsula and is strategically located in East Asia. Its neighbours are Russia, China and Japan. Though they are separated from the peninsular region by seas, rivers and mountains, all of them consider that a hostile Korea is a sword pointed at their hearts. Since time immemorial therefore these states (or powers) have been attempting to intervene in Korean affairs at the slightest provocation. Following the end of the Second World War (1945) the USA, a very distant country, has also got itself involved in Korean affairs because of strategical reasons.

Korea is an ancient land. Like other ancient countries it was also divided at the dawn of the civilization into several independent principalities. In course of time the country was unified under a single political authority. The political disunity however did not stand on the way of emerging an identical culture, language and civilization of all Korean people. It was perhaps due to the identical ethno-lingual genesis of the

people. All Korean peoples emanate from the same ethno-lingual stock. The Koreans developed their own culture and civilization, but they did not hesitate to borrow from their neighbours—China and Japan. The Koreans however absorbed and adapted to their conditions the best of China and Japan. Korea had been all along an independent nation till the first decade of 20th century, when Japan reduced the peninsula to a colony of its own. When the colonial rule ended after the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, the country was liberated only to be occupied by the USA and Russia. The occupation culminated in the partition of the ancient land into two independent states South Korea and North Korea.

South Korea which is officially known now as the Republic of Korea (ROK), occupies the southern region of the peninsula. To the north of the ROK lies the North Korea, to the south is the East China Sea, to the east is the sea of Japan and to the west of the ROK lies the Yellow Sea. Total land area of the ROK is 99,091 sq.km where more than 43 million people (as per the estimate of 1991) live. Korean is the language of the state. Buddhism and Christianity are the principal religions. There are also a few minor religions like Daoism Confucianism etc.

North Korea which has been named as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), is formed with the northern part of the peninsula. To the north of the DPRK is the People's Republic of China. Total land area of the DPRK is 122,400 sq.km., and its population as per the estimate of 1990 is more than 20 million. The language of the DPRK is Korean. Here also like the ROK, Buddhism and Christianity are the main religions.

11.2 PRE-MODERN CIVILIZATION OF KOREA

Situated at the northeastern edge of the Asian continents, Korea is a peninsular country endowed with enchanting natural beauty and charms. About 4th century B.C. there arose a magnificent civilization known as 'Choson' (literal meaning : morning freshness) which reached its peak of prosperity around eighth century A.D. By that time, the whole of the nation had been unified into a Kingdom by a ruling dynasty known as 'Silla'. It was during the reign of Silla that the groundworks of long lasting culture of Korea were laid. Remarkable achievements were gained in the spheres of art, literature, science and architecture. Buddhist doctrines, Confucian ethics and Chinese technologies were incorporated into the native culture which enriched the Korean civilization. Later on, during the reigns of Koryo and Yi dynasties, moveable printing type and an indigenous writing system—based on Sanskrit phonetics—were invented. All these accomplishments made the Korean Kingdom "a country of educated gentlemen" as named by T' ai-tsung, the emperor of China of T'ang dynasty. Indian and Chinese influences on the Korean society gave a humanistic touch to its culture which found its expression in the form of 'Confucian Humanism' during the rule of the most enlightened king of Korea, Sejong (r.141-50). With its vast Buddhist monasteries and temples strewn all over the land in secluded and serene surroundings, Korea also came to be known as the "Hermit Kingdom." It had grown into a pioneer civilization of the Orient long before the modern European civilization traversed Asia. "In the days when the early Briton painted himself with woad.....Korea was a powerful, orderly and civilised kingdom," says Mc Kenzie. It is a fact that even Japan learned some of the artistic and linguistic skills from Korea. But at the same time, the increasing affluence of the country made its rulers lax and complacent. The nobility of Korea became arrogant and divided into various factions who began to fight with one another over the spoils of power and wealth. Consequently, the interests of the common people were neglected who became poor and oppressed. There was also a chain of foreign invasions by the neighbouring powers and barbarian tribes which ruined the country frequently.

11.2.1 The Form of Government

During the reign of Yi dynasty in Korea, a hereditary king ruled over the country with the help of an advisory Council of State consisting of a Chief Minister and

some other ministers. The executive work was carried out by six Ministries or Boards of Personnel, Revenue, Rites, War, Justice and Public Works. Three other organs of the Government (i) the Board of Censors, (ii) the Board of Inspectors, and (iii) the Office of the Royal Lecturers also played a vital role. There was also a Royal Secretariat to perform the administrative functions. The country was divided into eight provinces ruled by governors appointed by the central government annually. Each province was divided into administrative units of prefectures, countries and districts. The recruitment of government officials was done through a national civil service examination. But only the members of the Yangban class were eligible for taking examination for high government posts.

Although, as a matter of principle, all powers of the government belonged to the monarch, but in actual practice, these were exercised by the feudal nobles who occupied all the government posts. As these officials belonging to the nobility were greedy and cruel, they often misused their powers in exploiting and oppressing the common masses. Similarly, although the Confucian ethics expected the kings to be benevolent rulers, most of them played in the hands of the feudal lords and acted in a tyrannical manner. Thus for all practical purposes, the Korean monarchy was turned into an oligarchy during the rule of the Yi dynasty. However, some of the Yi monarchs like king Sejong etc. were enlightened and benevolent who cared for the public welfare.

11.2.2 The Socio-Political Decline of Korea

Taking advantage of the laxity of their rulers, the feudal lords and aristocrats of Korea expanded their private estates and powers. These estates became virtually independent Kingdoms within the Kingdom. In order to strengthen their position against the growing influence of the landed aristocracy, the Yi dynasty rulers of Korea took some important steps which affected the entire structure of the country.

First of all, they adopted the neo-Confucianism (Propounded by Chu Hsi, the disciple of Confucius) as the state creed which emphasised hierarchical relationship between rulers and subjects. It caused a rigid stratification of the Korean society dividing it into four classes of aristocrats, middle-class, commoners and the low-born. At the highest level were the aristocrats known as 'Yangban' who dominated the political as well as economic life of the society and treated the commoners and low-borns as their slaves. The commoners who carried the burdens of the state, supplied food, labour and troops, and paid taxes, also the people who were exploited by the aristocrats and middle-class. The most oppressed and impoverished among them were the farmers who were not the owners of land. They had to till the land only as tenants. They had to pay high rents to their landlords and also the taxes imposed by the government. Secondly, the Yi rulers in order to enhance their esteem in the eyes of the local nobility (and perhaps also to pass on the responsibility of defending the country from foreign invasions) sought the diplomatic favour of the paramount power of the Chinese empire. For this purpose, they accepted the Chinese suzerainty over Korea in accordance with the Confucian precept of 'sadae' (subservience to the elder/big/great). But this undermined the sovereign status of Korea and opened the way for outside interventions in her domestic affairs. Thirdly, as Confucianism looked down upon those who engaged themselves in trade and business, there was no encouragement to the economic and industrial development of the country up to the mid-nineteenth century or so. Fourthly, the Korean rulers also followed a policy of isolation from the outside world except China for about three hundred years. They wanted to remain aloof from the international complications because of their past experience of recurring foreign invasions. Through this policy, they tried to appease China with a show of respect and pacify Japan with limited trade benefits while cutting off completely from the rest of the world. But it did not help them in safeguarding the nation. It obstructed the flow of new ideas into the Korean society. Consequent upon the above reasons, the gulf between the ruling class and the common people widened in the Yi dynasty of Korea. The oppression and impoverishment of the masses reached its extreme. The society as a whole became immobile and the age-old socio-economic and political institutions of Korea became obsolete and decadent.

11.3 THE RISE OF THE MODERNISATION QUEST IN KOREA

The creative era in ancient Korea came to an end around the middle of the 15th century (i.e. after the death of King Sejong who was the most enlightened and benevolent ruler of Korea). In the Meantime, scientific and technological advances in Europe had given tremendous economic and military powers to the Western nations. They were utilizing these powers for establishing their vast empires around the globe and the wave of western expansionism threatened the whole of Asia. But Korea was still shut in its own shell oblivious of what was happening beyond its frontiers. However, beneath the seeming tranquillity at the surface, there were pressures of change building up slowly. The abuses of the rigid social stratification and orthodox customs were bringing a gradual response in the people who were beginning to question the legitimacy of the whole of the unjust order. The main stimulation to this trend of distrust and criticism of the prevailing system came from some of the members of the Yangban class which was itself responsible for the misuse of the existing set-up. How it happened is yet another interesting story of Korea.

Although confucian precepts helped Yangban to maintain their privileges, impose social stratification and extract loyalty and obedience from the common people, their own condition became miserable with the passage of time. Every Yangban thought that the only possible role for him in the society was to serve the king so that he might acquire the privileges attached to a government position. Any other profession except the royal service was considered a disgrace on himself and his family. Therefore, those Yangban who failed to obtain government posts remained idle and became poor.

Moreover, there were two bases of selection for the government posts: social status and success in a national examination requiring mastery of Confucian classics. As a result, a new class of Confucian literati, belonging to Yangban and aspiring for royal service, emerged in Korea. Those Confucian literati who were unable to achieve their goal also joined the ranks of impoverished aristocracy. This gave them a chance to identify their own miserable conditions with the suffering of the common masses. Gradually, they became aware of the necessity of changing and reforming the old structure of the Korean kingdom. And for this purpose, they began to propagate the ideas of human dignity, equality, freedom, public welfare and economic advancement by adopting the western science and technology.

This led to the origin of a new school of thought known as 'Sirhak' or 'Pragmatic Learning' which became the mainstream of progressive thinking in Korea.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space provided below each question to give your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What were the main features of the Yi dynasty government in Korea?

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- 2) Mention any two of the important political steps taken by the Yi dynasty rulers of Korea and their effects.

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- 3) Read the following exercises carefully and mark the correct answers or statements.

- i) Which one of the following caused the rigid social stratification in Korea during the Yi dynasty rule?
a) Buddhism.

- b) Confucianism.
 - c) Neo-Confucianism.
 - d) Western Imperialism.
- ii) Which one of the following statements is true? During the Yi dynasty reign in Korea
- a) common people could obtain the high government posts through success in a national civil examination.
 - b) a member of the Yangban class could obtain the high government post without taking the national civil examination.
 - c) a Confucian Scholar could obtain the high government post without taking the national civil examination.
 - d) a member of the Yangban class could obtain the high government post through success in a national civil examination.

11.4 THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE CONFUCIANIZED MONARCHY

Now you know how the centuries old social, political and economic structures of Korea became obsolete and oppressive during the Yi dynasty rule, and how the desire for change arose in the Korean people who were suffering under the unjust and autocratic system of government. This growing desire for change stimulated a two-fold process of modernisation in Korea. On the one hand, trend to break away from the past and throw away the Chinese shackles emerged among the Korean people. On the other, they began an effort to reform and renovate the existing political, social and economic structures by adopting the new ideas and institutions. The result was a gradual disintegration of the Confucianized monarchy as well as the emergence of a dynamic and progressive nation. However, there were some significant events and circumstances of that time which accelerated the pace of both trends.

The major events and upheavals which caused the down fall of the traditional systems as well as the rise of the new forces in Korea during the later half of the nineteenth century are western encroachments, the Kanghwa treaty, the Tonghak rebellion and the annexation of Korea by Japan.

11.4.1 Western Encroachments

You might be aware how the western powers of France, Great Britain, the United States of America, etc., compelled China and Japan to open their ports for trade during the middle of the nineteenth century. The means employed by these powers for their expansion in East Asia is known as gun-boat Diplomacy. After their success in China and Japan they turned their attention towards Korea and began to pressurise it to provide them economic concessions. Some of them also occupied certain portions of its territory. Although Koreans resisted these pressures with remarkable determination, they became aware of the internal weaknesses of their country and the need to strengthen it.

11.4.2 The Kanghwa Treaty

When the western powers found it difficult to establish direct relations with Korea due to Chinese suzerainty over her, they encouraged Japan to break the centuries old isolation of Korea. By that time, Japan had become a mighty power of Asia. She forced Korea to sign a treaty of friendship and trade in 1876 which is known as Kanghwa Treaty. Taking advantage of the Japanese success, almost all the imperialist powers of the West compelled Korea to sign the similar treaties and open her ports for international trade. This was the beginning of the enslavement of Korea by imperialist powers. Thus the Kanghwa Treaty struck a severe blow to the power and prestige of the ruling hierarchy of Korea.

11.4.3 The Tonghak Rebellion

As pointed out above the condition of the common people of Korea had become extremely miserable under the oligarchic rule of the Yi dynasty. The most wretched among them were the farmers. The foreign intervention and exploitation after the Kanghwa Treaty added to the woes of the Korean masses. Yet the government of Korea remained callous to the increasing hardship of its people. Consequently, a deepseated resentment against the corrupt and oppressive order arose and exploded in the form of a peasant's revolt in 1894 which is known as the Tonghak Rebellion. The ideological base to this revolt was provided by a new socio-religious thought 'Ch'ondogyo' meaning the religion of the heavenly way and commonly known as 'Tonghak' or 'Eastern Learning'. It was propounded by an impoverished Yangban scholar Choe Che-u who called upon his countrymen to sweep away the traditional Korean society in its entirety and to create a new era of freedom and equality. Though the rebellion was crushed by the Korean government with the help of the Chinese and Japanese troops, its message had a volitional effect on the Korean society. It broke down the barriers between Yangban and the common people and struck a severe blow to the feudal system of government. It paved the way for the evolution of an egalitarian society in Korea.

11.4.4 The Annexation of Korea by Japan

Japan was not satisfied with the partial control of Korean economy provided by the Kanghwa Treaty. It was anxious to establish monopolistic and absolute control over the Korean peninsula so as to use it as a stepping-stone for further expansion on the Asian continent. It eliminated China and Russia from the Korean scene by defeating them in the sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. Britain and the United States of America favoured the Japanese policy in Korea as a countermeasure to the Russian ambitions in the Far East. Taking advantage of the favourable international situation as well as the weakness of the Korean government, Japan annexed Korea in 1910. This was the end of the Yi dynasty reign and the Chinese suzerainty over Korea. It brought the Korean people into direct confrontation with the modern forces of imperialism, capitalism and militarism resulting in a new determination in them to meet the challenges of the modern age.

All these incidents and upheavals changed the way of thinking of the Korean people and made them eager to rebuild their nation by adopting new ideas and institutions. This set the pace for the modernising process in Korea.

11.5 EVOLUTION OF THE MODERNISING PROCESS IN KOREA

In this last section of the unit, you will study some of the progressive movements of Korea which paved the way for the transformation of the country into a modern nation. It will help you to understand how the modernising process emerged in Korea.

11.5.1 The Reform Movement of the Progressive Party

When Korea was compelled to sign the Kanghwa Treaty in 1876, some Korean intellectuals were greatly impressed and inspired by the technological, economic and military advancement of Japan. Led by a pioneer reformer of Korea, Kim Ok-kyun, they decided to transform Korea on the Japanese lines and launched a new programme of modernisation under the banner of a 'Progressive Party'. They advocated for the independence of Korea from the Chinese suzerainty and closer association with Japan. They proposed abolition of the inequality of land-holdings, improvement of agricultural technology, development of natural resources, construction of better roads, industrial and commercial advancement and reform of the governmental structure. They advised the king to establish new educational institutions, hospitals and other public utility services such as streetlights and post offices. The king accepted some of the proposals as he also became interested in the modernising process. But the reaction of the traditionalists was strong and they resisted the modernising process.

government became suspicious of the motives of the Progressives and opposed their proposals. Kim Ok-kyun and his associates attempted to usurp the government power by assassinating some of the conservative ministers on the occasion of the inaugural ceremony of the first Post office of Korea. Such kind of rashness on the part of the Progressives and the occasion chosen by them for coup d'état caused a serious setback to the modernisation movement. Yet this movement set in motion an irreversible process of modernisation in Korea.

11.5.2 The Enlightenment Movement of the Independence Club

Another step in the progressive direction was taken when a new public organisation named 'Independence club' was formed by the educated elite of Korea. The main purpose of this organisation formed in 1896, was to work for the social and political awakening of the Korean people. The members of the Club took a keen interest in the promotion of public education and helped in the establishment of commerce, medical and military colleges as well as the training workshops of foreign languages, carpentry, paper manufacturing, silk weaving and iron, glass, leather and electrical works. They advocated for the education of women, free love marriage and remarriage of widows, and raised their voice against superstition, cruelty and exploitation. The Club strove for opening up the new avenues of livelihood and raising the standard of living of the common masses. It pleaded for the equality of opportunity and the grant of equal civil rights to all citizens. It asserted that all citizens should be entitled to fair and open trial and there should be codification of civil and criminal law. The Club asked for the abolition of cruel punishments such as lynching and deforming the body. It pleaded for the protection of women and children from inhuman treatment and highlighted the need for providing relief to the farmers and other oppressed sections of the populace.

In political sphere, the club denounced subservience to China and inculcated the democratic ideals in the people. It suggested a parliamentary form of government combining the norms of monarchy and democracy for the constitutional development of Korea. The Club provided the political education to the people through the means of public debates, street meeting and mass demonstrations. But the activities of the Club were confined mostly to urban centres and its leaders did not try to expand their movement to the rural areas. Yet the enlightenment campaign launched by the Club broadened the outlook of the Korean people. It caused a change of attitude of the upper classes towards down trodden masses and brought the Korean society out of the age-old darkness, ignorance and superstition.

11.5.3 The Development of the Modern Economic Infrastructure in Korea

After the annexation of Korea, the Japanese government aimed at exploiting to the maximum the natural and agricultural resources of its colony. For this purpose, it established a strong and efficient administration in Korea and strove to modernise and industrialise the country. Consequently, there was considerable advancement in the spheres of transportation, communication, industrial undertakings, irrigation facilities, harbour improvement and agricultural development. An infrastructure of roads, railways, ports, hydro-electric power, etc. was created and the facilities for public health and sanitation were improved. A land survey was carried out on scientific lines. Although these measures, which were carried out in an unjust manner with imperialist designs, heightened the plight and misery of the Korean people, they laid down a basic infrastructure which became the foundation of the modern economic development of Korea. These measures caused a structural change in the traditional Korean economy and agriculture and brought tremendous social mobilisation. They also contributed to the growth of middle class consisting of merchants, industrialists, professionals, etc. and created a new class of industrial labourers in Korea.

11.5.4 The Growth of Modern Education

The Japanese administration also strove to build up a modern educational system in Korea with a view to making Korean people the loyal and efficient subjects of the Japanese empire. A small beginning had already been made in this sphere before the

arrival of the Japanese in Korea. By the time of annexation, there were 94 public schools in Korea with an enrollment of approximately 12,000 students. But within the twenty five years of the Japanese rule, the number of education institutions, both government and private rose to 3,771 with an enrollment of 867,562 students. The curriculum was diversified to new areas of technical, scientific, industrial, commercial and agricultural training besides those of arts and languages. However, there was racial discrimination against the Korean students in the Japanese educational system. Yet the Koreans made the best use of whatever educational opportunities were available to them under the Japanese administration.

11.5.5 The Social and Political Transformation during the Independence Struggle of Korea

Ultimately, the Korean people launched a vigorous struggle for freedom from the Japanese rule. This struggle brought unprecedented social cohesion breaking all kinds of barriers between the various segments of the Korean society. The youths, common and middle classes and industrial workers came in the forefront of the national struggle. It facilitated the spread of democratic, nationalistic and revolutionary ideas in the masses. Through their fight for freedom, the Korean people rejected the monarchic form of government and the feudal system of the society for ever.

Thus, all the upheavals and developments described above led Korea to an irreversible course of progress and modernisation through various trials and errors. Now in the next unit, you will be able to understand the patterns of political and economic development of the modern Korea.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Mention the two main trends of the modernising process in Korea.

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- 2) What was the message of the Tonghak Rebellion?

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(Read the following exercise carefully and mark the correct answer.)

- 3) Which of the following would you regard as true statements?
a) Korea was annexed by Japan in the end of the nineteenth century.
b) Korea was annexed by Japan in the beginning of the twentieth century.
c) Korean King suspected the motives of the leaders of the Progressive Party.
d) The conservative faction of the Korean government opposed the modernisation proposals of the Progressive Party.
e) The Independence Club favoured a parliamentary form of government in Korea.
f) The Independence Club suggested a republican form of democracy in Korea.
g) During their independence struggle, the Korean people decided to restore the Korean Monarchy.
h) The struggle for freedom from the Japanese rule weakened the feudal system of the Korean society.

11.6 LET US SUM UP

efforts at modernization. In ancient time, an accomplished and prosperous kingdom was established in the Korean peninsula. But during the Yi dynasty reign, its government became autocratic and the society was divided into upper and lower classes resulting in the intolerable exploitation and oppression of the common masses. People's resentment against the oppressive regime set in motion two kinds of trends there : (i) the downfall of the decayed monarchy and the feudal system, and (ii) the progressive transformation of the Korean society. The outcome of both was the evolution of an irreversible process of modernisation in Korea from the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

11.7 KEY WORDS

Autocracy : A government by a ruler who has unlimited power without any constitutional restraint.

Capitalism : The economic system in which the means of production are owned and controlled by a few.

Confucianism/Neo-Confucianism : Moral teachings of a Chinese Philosopher confucius. The later and revised form is known as neo-Confucianism.

Egalitarian : A society providing equal rights and opportunities to all.

Feudalism : The system of land-holding by land-lords, barons and nobles who also enjoy political power. The principal means of production, the land, is in monopoly ownership of the ruling class of the feudal lords, while the economy is run by the small producers, the peasants, using their own implements.

Gun-boat Diplomacy : A method by which the western powers forced the East Asian nations to sign treaties during the nineteenth century with the help of their war-ships.

Hierarchy : Organisation and distribution of authority on the basis of higher and lower ranks.

Imperialism : The policy of extending a country's rule and influence on the countries for the purpose of exploiting them.

Kingdom : A state ruled by a king or monarch.

Monarchy : A system of government in which a king rules over a country.

Modernization : Adaptation to the new ideas and advanced technology.

Oligarchy : A corrupt form of government by a few persons.

Peninsula : An area of land surrounded by sea from three sides and connected to the mainland on one side.

Social Stratification : The division of a society into upper and lower classes.

Suzerainty : The protection of a great power over a small state.

Tyranny : Autocratic, unjust or cruel rule.

Yangban : The aristocratic class of medieval Korea.

Yi Dynasty : A ruling family of Korea known as Yi or Choson.

11.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

A.C. Nahm, *Korea : 1988 : Tradition and Transformation*, Hollym, Seoul.

A.J. Grajdanzev : *1944 : Modern Korea* : John Day, New York.

B.S. Agrawal : *1992 : A Study of the Korean National Movement* : Loyal Book Depot, Gwalior.

Chong-sik Lee, : *1965. : The Politics of Korean Nationalism* : University of California Press, Berkeley.

F.A. Mckenzie : 1920 : *Korea's Fight for Freedom* : Revell, New York.

H.S. Harold : 1970 : *Korea : A Political History in Modern Times* : Longfellow,
New York.

R.R. Krishnan : 1991 : *Indo-Korean Relations* : Yonsei University, Seoul.

11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

Your answers may cover the following points :

- 1) A hereditary king ruled over the country with the help of an advisory Council. There were six Ministries and a Secretariat to perform executive and administrative functions. The country was divided into administrative units. The officials were recruited through a national civil examination.
- 2) (any two points of the following)
The adoption of neo-Confucianism resulting in a rigid social stratification. Acceptance of the Chinese suzerainty over Korea which undermined the Korean sovereignty. The adoption of the policy of isolation which obstructed the flow of new ideas into the Korean society.
- 3) (i) c (ii) d.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) i) Breaking away from the past and throwing away the Chinese influence.
ii) Reform and renovation of the existing political, social and economic institutions.
- 2) To sweep away the traditional Korean Society and to create a new era of freedom and equality.
- 3) b. d. e. h.

UNIT 12 PATTERNS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Impact of Japanese Rule
- 12.3 Partition of Korea
 - 12.3.1 UN Intervention
 - 12.3.2 Korean War
- 12.4 Political and Economic Developments in ROK (South Korea)
 - 12.4.1 Constitutional Developments
 - 12.4.2 Party System
 - 12.4.3 Political Processes
 - 12.4.4 Economic Development
- 12.5 Political and Economic Developments in DPRK (North Korea)
 - 12.5.1 Constitutional Developments
 - 12.5.2 Party System
 - 12.5.3 Political Processes
 - 12.5.4 Economic Development
- 12.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.7 Key Words
- 12.8 Some Useful Books
- 12.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

12.0 OBJECTIVES

The unit discuss the pattern of political and economic development in the Korean peninsula since the surrender of Japan at the end of Second World War in 1945.

After going through the unit you will be able to :

- understand how Korean peninsula was partitioned into South and North Korea;
- assess and compare the political systems that evolved in South and North Korea since partition;
- analyse the economic development strategies, the two halves have been pursuing; and
- examine the present economic state of affairs in both South and North Korea.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Korea is an ancient country in East Asia. It is a peninsula. It had enjoyed a long uninterrupted rule of Yi dynasty from 1392 to 1910. Korea was reduced to a colony of Japan in 1910. With the surrender of Japan in 1945 at the end of the Second World War, Korea again became independent but soon it plunged in a civil war which culminated into a full scale war with the involvement of foreign powers. The war formalised the partition of the peninsula along the 38th parallel into two states —South Korea and North Korea. Korea had been historically a developed mono-ethno lingual country. But now the people are divided into two separate states.

12.2 IMPACT OF JAPANESE RULE

Japan first reduced Korea into a protectorate in 1905 and then formally annexed it in 1910. Japanese occupation ended the 518 years old rule of Yi dynasty along with the independence of the peninsula. Japan's rule over Korea had continued for 35 years

(1910-1945). During the period Korea experienced many fundamental socio-economic changes. Old feudalistic administrative system was replaced by a colonial centralised administration. The colonial government introduced mass education, a new legal system, modernized the transport and communication systems and raised a strong police force to curb the civil liberties of the Korean people, Japan like other colonial powers, followed a development strategy to serve its own economic interests at the cost of the people of Korea. It raised a landlord class as the social base of Japanese rule and created a vast unemployed labour force who were transported to the mainland of Japan and its other colonies to man the Japanese owned mills and factories. It encouraged grain production only to export to Japan at a non-competitive protected price. Korea was also subjected to economic drain. Korean resources and wealth were transferred to Japan on different pretexts. Japan's war machinery was substantially manned and financed by Korea.

The exploitative policies and acts of Japanese rulers reacted upon Korea and soon an anti-colonial liberation movement emerged. Japanese administration in Korea faced on several occasions both peaceful and violent uprisings and demonstrations, protesting against colonial rule. The colonial administration put down such nationalist movements with a heavy hand. The emerging nationalist forces being persistently repressed found it impossible to launch any movement from within the country. The nationalists and many communists there upon took shelters in China, Russia, (then USSR) and other countries and from there they separately fought against Japanese rule. As a result there could not be organized and united national movement against Japanese rule. The Koreans, who had fought bitterly against colonial rule, however, at independence they therefore found themselves hopelessly divided. There existed sharp dissensions in the political forces on fundamental issues.

These are in short the legacies which Japan left at departure, and these legacies conditioned the future developments in the peninsula.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note : i) Use the space given below each question for your answers.
ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Comment on the Japanese rule in Korea.

12.3 PARTITION OF KOREA

Much before the surrender of Japan the allied powers started considering a plan for free Korea. Japan surrendered in August 1945 and Korea became independent. Immediately after Japan's surrender the nationalists came together and decided to form a government for whole of Korea. A committee, christened as the Committee for the Preparation of the National Construction of Korea, was formed. The repatriated freedom fighters and the political prisoners, released from the Japanese jails, supported the effort. The newly formed committee took over the reigns of the peninsula and within a short period brought almost whole of Korea within its jurisdiction. In this committee there were a number of communists and left democratic section of the nationalists.

Russian army crushed the Japanese resistance and entered Korea in early August 1945. The victorious Red Army after freeing whole of North Korea moved towards the Southern part of the peninsula. Meanwhile the committee, which was set up following the surrender of Japan, to reconstruct Korea, called a National Assembly,

declared the independence and established "People's Republic of Korea". The Republic claimed itself as the only legitimate political authority for whole of Korea. Russia (then the USSR) accepted the legitimacy of the Republic.

The Russian victory provoked the USA to send its troops to Korea, so that whole of the peninsula might not fall under the exclusive control of Russia. The US troops captured Southern part of the 38th parallel. The US however did not recognise the legitimacy of the Republic. It took steps to set up a separate government for the Southern part. The US army established a Military government in Korea. During the period the Military government allowed freedom of political activities. Many political parties were founded. The US Military government tried to unite the non-communist political forces. Being inspired by the US army the most conservative right wing forces came together and formed government in South Korea under the aegis of the USA. The US backed government in South Korea took number of measures to consolidate its power and position in that part of the peninsula. It tried to lure a section of nationalists and to establish an interim all-Korean government with their support. It attempted to raise a legislative assembly too. But the US backed regime failed to elicit any genuine support from among the Koreans. On the contrary the people protested against the US role in Korea and condemned the US manoeuvres as strategies to perpetuate US army occupation of Korea.

12.3.1 UN Intervention

In December 1945 the UK, the USA and the USSR signed an agreement in Moscow. The agreement envisaged a five-year trusteeship for Korea under the joint supervision of these countries and the Chiang Kai Shek's China. The Trustees were assigned the job to establish an independent and United State of Korea. The Korean nationalists opposed the trusteeship arrangements and organized anti-trusteeship demonstrations throughout Korea. The big powers however ignored the Korean opposition to their decision. A joint US-USSR commission was set up for the formation of an all Korean government in collaboration with the democratic forces of Korea. The commission met twice in 1946 and 1947 but failed to come to an agreement particularly on the issue of Korean participation in future political set up of the country. The commission then was dissolved.

After the dissolution of the commission and abortive US attempts to instal a civil government in Korea, the USA raised the Korean question in the UNO. The UN General Assembly constituted the UN temporary commission on Korea and authorized it to hold a general election in the peninsula and following the election to form a national government with the elected representatives of the people for the country. The UN decision was condemned as another US manoeuvre to perpetuate its influence in the region and was rejected by the people of North Korea and the erstwhile USSR. The commission failed to hold election in the North and decided to organize election in the South. Most of nationalists objected to organize election in one part of the country. They expressed their apprehension that such act might formalize the partition of Korea. Nationalists including a section of pro-US politicians demanded immediate independence of South Korea in 1948 and opposed the UN plan to hold election only in South Korea. Despite objection and noncooperation of a vast section of the South Korean people the UN Commission organised election in South Korea in 1948. The US backed media as usual claimed the election as a great success. A so-called elected national assembly came into existence and the assembly adopted a constitution. Dr. Syngman Rhee who by that time had returned from self imposed exile in America, was elected by the assembly to be the first President of South Korea and the Republic of Korea (ROK) was inaugurated on 15 August, 1948.

Meanwhile the communists and the democrats consolidated their position in North Korea. They institutionalised their position by founding the Supreme People's Assembly, the highest law making body, and the Central People's Committee, the chief executive wing of the government. The USSR transferred most of the powers to these institutions which soon gave the country an orderly administration. In August 1948 North Korea went to a poll to elect the 527 member Supreme People's Assembly. The new elected Assembly proclaimed on 9 September the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

12.3.2 Korean War

Since the surrender of Japan, Korea had been informally divided into two states — South and North. In course of time two types of political authorities emerged in two parts. In North the communists and the leftists backed by a fast growing well organized party, known as Korean Worker's Party, established a stable government. It also raised an army. The government immediately enacted and implemented popular land reforms. It also adopted development strategies to remove the age old backwardness of the people. The people all over Korea greeted these measures with enthusiasm. However in South the political authority was captured by the extreme rightists elements with the help of the US forces stationed in the country. The government was very repressive in South Korea. It formulated measures to suppress all popular movements and to root out the leftist elements spread over the country. Land reforms, withdrawal of the US occupation etc. were the popular demands. But the official response to these demands was not only negative but also harsh. The negative attitude of the government towards the popular demands gave birth to civil war in South Korea. This civil war in fact transformed into the Korean war between North and South Korea. While the South Korean government was supported by the US and its allies, the North got moral and material support from the communist bloc and the national liberation movements in the colonies and newly independent countries.

After the inauguration of the ROK in 1948, the UNO recognized it. The UNO, however did not recognize the DPRK. So when the war between the two halves broke out, the UN decided to support the member state, the ROK. It soon raised a multination military force and place the same under the command of the US military. The US commanded UN force swung into action from September 1950 against the DPRK.

Pandit Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India asked the US commanded UN force not to cross the 38th parallel. He warned that such act might provoke People's Republic of China (PRC) to intervene in favour of the DPRK and would complicate the war situation. The UN forces did not pay heed to the warning, crossed the 38th parallel and reached to the heart of the DPRK. PRC immediately intervened in October 1950 and the North-South hostilities turned into a full scale protracted war.

The war destroyed many cities, killed lakhs of Korean people and the whole of Korea was devastated. Only in South Korea there were more than 800,000 casualties. The war continued for three years and ended without any formal peace agreement between the warring sides. There was an internationally agreed armistice in 1953 and the ceasefire line was drawn roughly along the 38th parallel. This line has been the boundary of two Koreas. Along with the line a demilitarized zone (DMZ) was created. As a result of the war the partition of Korea was formalised and in the peninsula two independent states emerged. The Korean war did not solve the problem of Korean unity for which the people had been longing since the withdrawal of Japan. The war had also not solved other allied problems. On the contrary, formalizing the partition of historically developed one people and one country gave birth to many new problems which conditioned the future development in the peninsula.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note : i) Use the space given below each question for your answers.
ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) How did the partition of Korea formalise?

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12.4 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN ROK (South Korea)

Republic of Korea was formed in 1948. Since then ROK has passed through many regimes and drastic changes in constitutions for several times. Each new regime proclaims itself as a new republic. In this way there have established six republics so far. The country had remained under military rule for more than two and half decades since 1948. Military established dictatorship with indirect election system. After prolonged popular movements, the democratic system has been operating since 1988. Several constitutions were promulgated and each again were drastically amended to suit the designs of the rulers of the day. ROK has failed to develop a lasting constitution acceptable to the people. The country has also been passing through fragile party system. Praetorian parties generally enjoy powers. The parties emerged through movements or founded by the civilian political forces seldom occupy the seat of power. The political succession in the ROK also remained by an large unsMOOTH and problematic. Despite high economic developments the socio-political unrest has been endemic. The involvement of the US and its army and other conservative forces in the internal affairs of South Korea is alleged to be the basic reason for the fragility of the political system in the ROK.

12.4.1 Constitutional Developments

First constitution of South Korea was drafted and promulgated in 1948. The constitution proclaimed the country as the Republic of Korea (ROK). It provided a presidential system of government, but the president was to be elected by the national assembly. In post Korean war period the constitution was amended several times in order to perpetuate the Liberal Party rule. In July 1952 the national assembly passed an amendment to the constitution which envisaged that President would henceforth be elected by popular vote. In 1954 several amendments were passed, to make the office of the president more powerful. The people did not support these measures. They condemned the government as dictatorial regime. Popular movement gradually became strong enough to force the incumbent president Dr. Shyngman Rhee to resign in 1960. A caretaker government took over. The National Assembly passed a constitutional amendment establishing a parliamentary system of government headed by a prime minister. With this qualitative change there emerged the Second Republic of Korea. However the Parliamentary system could not survive long because of the sharp dissensions in the political forces on the fundamental political issues and due to want of legitimacy for the incumbent prime minister, president and other ministers. They had no popular mandate behind them. Popular agitations grew in support of reunification of Korea and other socio-economic demands. The government being liberal, allowed open political activities. At this juncture the military intervened and captured power. It suspended the constitution. The military regime drafted a constitutional amendment and got it passed by a national referendum in December 1962. The amendment revived the strong presidential system of government. The regime formed a political party, held elections, wore the civilian garb and established with great fanfare the third Republic (1963-72). Since the performances of the regime failed to satisfy the people, there emerged popular movements demanding parliamentary democracy. In the context of the growing political turmoil the regime headed by Gen. Park proclaimed martial law and abrogated the constitution and dissolved all constitutional bodies including the national assembly. A new constitution was framed and got approved through a nation wide referendum in November 1972. The new constitution established a strong presidential system introduced for the first time indirect elections and constituted the National Conference for Unification (NCU) as an electoral college with 2,359 member. The NCU was responsible for electing the President, national assembly etc. The rulers called it the fourth Republic of Korea (1972-79). Because of popular protests and mass movements against military dictatorial rule the republic did not survive for more than seven years. Towards the end of 1979 an interim government headed by Choi kyu ha was formed. But the popular movement continued and took a violent turn in April-May 1980. The military again took over the administration of the state. Gen. Chun emerged as the president of the country and proclaimed the Fifth Republic in early 1981. The indirect election

and the strong presidential system continued. Popular Movements changed the entire South Korea throughout 1980's. The regime agreed now to frame a new constitution. An eight member committee, consisting of official and non official members was constituted to draft a new constitution. It drafted the constitution which was finally approved by a National referendum in October 1987 and the Sixth Republic started functioning from February 1988.

The new constitution established a presidential system of administration. The president is to be elected for a single term of five years by direct popular vote. The president is not all powerful. He has the veto powers but he can be over ruled by the National Assembly. The President shall appoint the majority party leader in the National Assembly as the Prime Minister. Military has been forbidden to participate in the politics. The Constitution has provided for direct elections in accordance with the principles of adult franchise. Executive powers are vested in the State-Council consisting of the President Prime Minister and 15 to 30 members. Legislative powers are vested with the national Assembly consisting of 200 members elected on four yearly basis according to the principles of adult franchise. There is an elaborate provision for separate and independent judiciary. Citizens are guaranteed fundamental human rights.

12.4.2 Party System

President Rhee while in power formed the first political party, known as the Liberal Party in 1952. The party had majority-support in National Assembly in 1950's. The party became unpopular on account of corruption and intra party cleavages. In 1956 and 1960 presidential elections though the party candidate for the post of president won, its candidate for the post of vice-president lost. During the 1956 presidential election, a new party known as the Democratic Party was formed. The candidate of the party for the post of vice-president won the election. It performed well in 1958 national assembly election. In 1960 also its candidate for the post of vice-president won. The party fought for establishing parliamentary system of democracy. It formed government under parliamentary system in 1960 but because of intra party squabbles it failed to remain in power. Military replaced the DP government in 1961. Military rulers after legalising political activities formed its own party, called the Democratic Republican Party. The party failed to emerge as a civilian political force supported by the masses. During the last years of the military rule minor political forces got united and formed New Democratic Party (NDP) which demanded the reestablishment of parliamentary democracy. In 1978 elections to the national assembly the NDP received about 33 p.c. of the total seats in the assembly and the DRP got only 31.7 p.c. seats. The NDP members resigned from the assembly in 1980 in protest against the repressive and autocratic rule of the military backed regime. But the party soon degenerated into a stagnant force. It was, however, revitalized under the leadership of Kim Young-San who inducted in his party many veteran opposition politicians.

As a result of the pressure created by the popular movements against the continuation of martial law, imposed in 1972, the martial law had to be withdrawn in January 1981, and the political activities were allowed. Immediately several new political parties were formed. Among the new parties the Democratic Justice Party (DJP), and the Democratic Korean Party (DKP) are noteworthy. These parties won the maximum seats in the elections to the 276 member national assembly, held in March 1981. DJP and DKP won 151 and 81 seats respectively. DJP remained in power for a couple of years. Under the liberal system of president Chun several political prisoners were released and allowed to participate in the political activities in the country during the first-half of 1980s. A group of released politicians formed the New Korean Democratic Party (NKDP) in January 1985. In the election to the National Assembly held in February 1985 the DJP retained its majority, but the NKDP emerged as the major opposition party securing 67 seats in 276 member assembly. The DKP and other parties lost in the fray and were reduced to minor political forces. NKDP however faced split in 1987 and the break away faction formed the Reunification Democratic Party (RDP). It aimed at reunification of Korea. Another break away faction headed by Kim Dae-Jung formed the Peace and Democratic Party (PDP) in November 1987. It nominated Kim Dae-Jung as its candidate for the presidential election in Dec. 1987. The party got nearly 27 p.c. of the total votes cast. The PDP emerged as the main opposition party following the general election for the national

assembly, held in April 1988. Political developments in South Korea took a dramatic turn in 1990 and the DJP, RDP and the NDRP merged together to form a new party, christened as the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP). The new party became a major force in the assembly. A section of RDP had opposed the merger and formed the Democratic Party (DP). Subsequently the PDP and other smaller groups joined DP in order to strengthen the opposition. In the election to the national assembly, held in March 1992, the DLP failed to retain its majority position in the assembly. It received 149 of a total 299 seats. The DP emerged as the main opposition winning 97 seats in the assembly. In the following months there were defections from all parties over the issue of nomination of candidates in the ensuing presidential election. The defectors joined together to form New Korean Party. In the presidential election, held in December 1992 the DLP candidate Kim Young Sam won the election. Now in South Korea, there are three prominent political parties—DLP, DP and the United People's Party.

12.4.3 Political Processes

a) The Election

First ever elections to legislative body, National Assembly in South Korea were held in 1948 under the supervision of the UN. According to UN plan elections were to be held throughout Korea. But North Korea objected to such plan of holding election under the supervision of UN. Even in South Korea there were protests against such elections. However the elections were held for a National Assembly which ultimately formed the sole legislative body and elected the president for South Korea as per the provisions of the constitution which National Assembly earlier had promulgated. The National Assembly functioned uninterruptedly till 1961 when it was dissolved by the military rulers. During the period from 1948 to 1961 there had been periodical election for the National Assembly. The Assembly was revived in 1963 and elections to it were held under the supervision of the military and the military sponsored political party, the Democratic Republic Party (DRP) won the elections. In 1972 again the National Assembly was dissolved and the elections in accordance with principle of universal franchise were done away with. Instead, an electoral college, named National Conference for Unification consisting of 2,354 members was formed. The electoral college used to elect the president and the legislature. Elections in accordance with the principles of universal franchise were restored under the new constitution promulgated in 1988.

Elections for the post of President were also held indirectly and directly for several occasions. First constitution (1948) stipulated for indirect election of the president. It was however amended in 1952 and the system of election of the president by popular vote was introduced. The military captured power in 1961 and suspended the civil liberties and the constitution. Again the system of indirect election was introduced in 1972. The military backed regimes established the National Conference for Unification as an electoral college which elected president till the abrogation of the system in late 1980s. In 1988 again the election of president by popular vote was reintroduced. Besides elections, there had been referendum on several occasions also. The military administration introduced the referendum system to get approved by the people the political system designed in the cantonments. It is difficult to accept whether the elections or referendums were always free and fair. Because every time big section of national and international media complained about the irregularities, practiced by the people in power during the elections.

b) Succession

Though the people of South Korea aspired for a parliamentary system of democracy and all necessary civil liberties, the country had to continue with the strong presidential system for many decades. Succession of the government and the head of the state was not always peaceful or in accordance with provisions of the constitution. Most of the period so far there were indirect elections and restrictions on universal franchise system were imposed time to time. In addition there were military take over on several occasions and coups and counter coups. Political assassination, arrest of top political leaders for an indefinite period, and suspension of civil rights have been almost common throughout the decades. The country suffered from direct military rule for about three decades.

Dr. Syngman Rhee was the first president of the Republic of Korea (South Korea). He was indirectly elected in 1948 by the members of the National Assembly. The system of indirect election was changed and on subsequent occasions Rhee was elected as president by the direct vote of the people. Rhee was succeeded by Chang Nyun in 1960. But the succession was not smooth. Rhee was forced to resign by the pressure of the protest movements against his regime. Nyun was also deposed in 1961 as a result of the seizure of power by the military. General Park Chung-Hee staged coup and seized the political authority of the Republic, with this began the long spell of military rule. In October 1979 Park was assassinated in an abortive coup, staged by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency chief who was subsequently executed. The Prime Minister of Park's regime, Choi Kyn Hah took over as the acting president. He was regularised and continued in office till 1984, when again on account of the political unrest against his rule he had to resign. General Chun Doo-Hwan who had earlier become the army chief by deposing his predecessor, became the president of South Korea. The military leaders introduced indirect elections and strengthened the presidential system of government. The people considered the successive military regimes as undemocratic, they continued the struggle for the restoration of democracy. Due to the pressure of the movement democratic system was ultimately restored in 1988 and general Chun was succeeded by an elected civilian president Roh Tae-woo, a civil political leader. South Korea thus got a civilian popularly elected president in 25 years. Roh-Tae-Woo was replaced by Kim Young San through the presidential election held in 1992.

The succession in the political parties also remained problematic because of instability and a cleavage ridden party system.

c) Political Movements

The foundation of the Republic of Korea in the Southern region in 1948 was not supported by all people of the land. Immediately there broke out a rebellion. The rebels demanded withdrawal of the US forces, unification of Korea, progressive land reforms and to fulfil the democratic aspirations of the people. The rebellion, however was brutally crushed. Though the rebellion was crushed, anti-regime feelings of the people could not be removed. During late 1950 despite repression, opposition to the government grew. The government snatched the democratic rights of the people by repealing the local autonomy laws and passing the new national security laws. In protest against the autocratic behaviour and the rampant corruption in the government violent students movement arose in 1960. The student uprising forced the Shingnam Rhee regime to resign. An interim government headed by Ho Chong took over the administration. Parliamentary system of democracy was established. The interim government though established a liberal system, failed to solve the growing socio-economic problems and to take effective steps for reunification of Korea. Again there were popular unrests and the agitations by the students in support of the reunification of the peninsula. At this juncture in May 1961 the military intervened and captured the political powers. The military regime suspended the constitution, banned all political activities and established strong presidential system of government.

In 1963 General Park took over the supreme power from General Chang. Park legalised the political activities. South Korea during the rule of Park achieved remarkable economic development. But the undemocratic rule and the predominance of army in the political field created unrest in the people. In October 1979 there were wide spread student movements. The hard core section of the regime made the liberal policies of Park responsible for the unrest. The Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) Chief killed Park. The assassination of Park plunged whole of South Korea in an unprecedented political crisis. Martial law was proclaimed and the Prime Minister of Park regime, Choi Kyn had become the head of the government. He released many political prisoners and cancelled the Emergency Decrees. The killer of Park was executed. But politico-constitutional reforms which were being demanded by the people, had not yet been enacted. As a result in mid-1980 there were wide spread unrest and vigorous student movements. They demanded the immediate end of Martial Law, promulgation of new constitution and the dismissal of the hard liner General Chun. Lakhs of students marched into the streets and there were skirmishes between the agitating people and the police. The regime in order to crush the movement adopted several repressive measures. Martial Law was extended throughout the country, leaders and activists were arrested in thousands, political activities were

banned, colleges were closed, public meetings and rallies were banned. Despite the restrictions the movement spread throughout the country, and the agitating people captured a few cities. Now in order to quell the movements the army was deployed and the administration was totally taken over by the army. General Chun emerged the real ruler of South Korea. Chun soon became the president also. However protest movements continued. The movement was further strengthened because of the growing economic crisis. Thousands of politicians were arrested and many were deprived of political rights. General Chun resigned from the active service and adopted measures to civilianize the administration. He talked about the reunification of Korea and invited North Korean leaders to visit South Korea. He also declared several measures to root out corruption from the administration. All these actions increased the popularity of Chun who now got himself elected as president for a seven year term. South Korean economy, however could not be brought out from the woods. Growing economic crisis increased the miseries of the people. In this context again the students and the working people launched agitations in the last quarter of 1981. Chun in order to calm down the temper made many rosy promises but did not take any immediate measures to ease the situation. The movement continued. In response to the growing political movements demanding full democratisation of the government and the establishment of parliamentary system, the regime implemented measures to fulfil the people's demands and from 1987 civilianization of the government was started piece by piece. The people's movements and students unrest continued in 1980 and in subsequent years in support of reunification of Korea and in support of the demand for the withdrawal of US army, stationed in South Korea.

12.4.4 Economic Development

South Korea occupies about 45 p.c. of the total land area of the Korean peninsula. It is mountainous, only 22 p.c. of the land is arable and is tilled. Nearly 66 p.c. of the total land area is marked as forest land. South Korea is richer than North Korea in rice cultivation. Climate of the country is most suitable for extensive farming. The land is endowed with both fishing and forest resources. Although there had been indiscriminate felling of trees during the last year of Japanese rule, due to the existence of potentialities the country has again developed good forest. It exports a good quantity of wood. South Korea has a vast coastline which provides opportunities for developing fisheries. The country earns good amount of foreign capital by exporting fish. In 1985 South Korea exported huge amount of fish, the cost of which was \$960m.

The country however is not endowed with much mineral and mining resources. It does not have any reserve of petroleum, but South Korea has in possession of about 50 varieties of minerals. Its industries therefore heavily depend upon imported minerals and ores including iron, copper, zinc, aluminium etc. Coal is available in South Korea but in order to meet the growing domestic demand the country goes for importing coal to keep its iron and steel industries functioning.

South Korea has opted for capitalist system of economy. The state's participation basically has remained confined to provide infrastructural support to the private enterprises. The government has developed an institution of planning, framed financial policies and instruments of regulating market and to guide the socio-cultural issues which have direct bearing upon the economic development of the country.

The basic thrust in the economic development of South Korea has been maximization of income through export. It has made the economic development in the country export oriented and dependent upon the market behaviour of the other countries. The policy of export led growth was initiated in 1962 and since then the ROK has been following the same policy. Earlier the ROK had been pursuing the policy of import-substitution, the emergence of a well qualified work force and the availability of cheap labour have helped the implementation of the policy of the outward orientation of the economy. However the strategy has made the economy of the land largely dependent upon the developed capitalist country. South Korea is not endowed with much resources and raw material, required for a high economy. So it had to go for large scale import of raw materials, to keep its factories and workshops running. The reliance upon the import of raw materials has further made the economy dependent upon others.

During the early years, the country suffered from severe economic crisis, partly due to the damages and destructions during the three year old Korean War and largely owing to the conservative policies of Dr. Rhee's government. The rate of inflation was very high and the growth rate declined to zero level. The new policy formulated after the military takeover paid good dividends. The growth rate for the period from 1963 to 1983 was nearly 8.4 p.c. per annum. However the new policy has been an outward orientation, the growth rate fails to become stable. The rate soon declined to 5.4 p.c. again of course it rose as high as 12.5 p.c. in 1986. Again the crisis has started brewing since 1990. The economic growth rate fell from 8.4 p.c. in 1979 to 5 p.c. in 1992. The industrial production fell in 1993 and it is feared that the country may in near future be thrown into full-blown recession. Another weakness of the South Korean economy is that the policy has created a wide gap in the income levels. The average Korean in general and the rural people in particular suffer from inequality of income. They get very low wages. There has also been unemployment problem, more than 2.6 p.c. of the total work force of 17.5 million as per the estimate of 1989, is unemployed. The frequent popular movements and the stirrings among the working people bear the testimony that the economic policies pursued by successive governments have failed to develop an egalitarian democratic society.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space provided below each question for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the hints given at end of the unit.

- 1) Point out the basic features in the political development of the ROK.

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- 2) Critically examine the economic policy of ROK.

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12.5 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN DPRK (NORTH KOREA)

The political system as developed in the DPRK by contrast with the ROK's political System is more stable. The country was ruled till 1972 according to the provisions of a constitution, framed in 1948. In 1972 a new constitution was framed and the same has been continuing with certain consequential changes. The DPRK though has been wedded to one party system, the party has organizational network spread over the country. Though in the top leadership Kim II Sung has still been continuing since the beginning, there have been periodical changes of leadership in the middle order and other ranks of the state. Elections are periodically held. But in the DPRK there has been little scope for open politics. Dissensions are generally not permitted. For all these reasons the critics often call the DPRK a totalitarian state.

12.5.1 Constitutional Developments

The constitutional developments in North Korea was initiated in 1947 when a

legislative body, the Supreme People's Assembly was established. The election for the Assembly was first held in 1948. The newly elected Supreme People's Assembly declared North Korea as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The rudimentary constitution which was introduced in 1947-48 continued to provide administrative infrastructures of North Korea till 1972, when a new constitution was framed and proclaimed. The constitution was framed to adapt it to the changes that had taken place since 1947. The same constitution has been in vogue with consequential changes. In 1992 there had been some important amendments to the constitution to adapt it into the postcold war international situation. The amendments were enacted to give the country a new ideological orientation and promote economic openness. The principle of self-reliance has been added as a guiding principle to the state. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is an independent socialist state. The sovereignty of state rest on the working people. They exercise the power through their chosen representatives. The citizens are guaranteed with basic human rights. Right to work is one of the fundamental rights.

The head of the state is the President. The President is the effective executive head. He has many powers but he is responsible to the Supreme People's Assembly. The Supreme People's Assembly is the highest law making body. It elects the President for a four year term in accordance with the principles of universal franchise through secret ballot. The number of members is flexible. At present there are 687 members in the Assembly. Next important institution is the Central People's Committee. It consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and members chosen by the Supreme People's Assembly. It is an executive council of the Assembly and supervises the functions of all other organs of the state. It appoints the prime minister, vice-president and other ministers, executes the legislations passed by the Assembly. It functions as the chief organ of the state during the intervening period of two sessions of the Assembly. There is provision for a council of ministers, which is known as the Administrative Council. It functions under the supervision of the Central People's Committee. There is provision for autonomous local self governments. They are known as the People's Assemblies. There is also the provision for independent judiciary headed by the Central Court. There are local courts, the people's courts and the special courts. Judges are elected by the Supreme People's Assembly. The judiciary protects the people and the different state organs from arbitrary actions. The state bears the expenses of all judicial activities including that of the ordinary citizens.

12.5.2 Party System

In North Korea there are several active political parties and pressure groups. Many of them are legal organizations. But the functioning of the system shows that there has been in DPRK single party system. The members of the Assembly are elected unopposed. The political dissent is not generally tolerated. Though there has been the provision for democratic centralism, the principle has been in course of time eroded as a result of continuation in power by a single person for such a long period. The opposition movements are crushed by force. As a result the dissident political forces function both from underground and from foreign lands and the news of abortive coups are frequently heard. Besides there has been periodical purging of members from the ruling party.

The political parties in Korea owe their origin to the anti imperialist movements against Japanese colonialism. The anti imperialist movement started emerging almost with the beginning of Japanese rule in Korea in 1910. Several parties were formed to launch the freedom movement in the early 1920's. Communist Party of Korea was also founded during the same time. Since the Japanese rule was brutal and most repressive, Korean political activists had to take shelters in foreign lands. Most of the communists, however remained in the country and continued the struggle from underground. At the withdrawal of Japan from Korea, the communists first formed the independent government. Subsequently the communists in cooperation with other political activists who now returned from exile, formed the North Korean Workers Party. In 1948 the leftists from Southern region joined the North Korean Workers Party to form the Korean Worker's Party. The KWP has been ruling the DPRK since its inception and Kim Il Sung has been holding the supreme position since 1946. The party has rebuilt North Korea after the devastating Korean war. The party is a

monolithic political organization, believes in Marxism-Leninism. It has elaborate organizational structure. There is little difference between the party and the governmental infrastructure. Among other political parties mention can be made of the Chondoist Chongha Party and the Social Democratic Party. They are very old parties but now almost ceased of independent functioning. They in alliance with the KWP formed in 1946 the democratic front for the reunification of the fatherland. The front since then has been propagating the idea of reunification of Korea. The dissident political forces formed in 1990 the Salvation Front which wants to establish multi-party democratic system and unification of Korea through democratic means. In North Korea the trade union movements are permitted, but the movement can be launched under the banner of ruling party's frontal organizations. Multiplicity of pressure groups are not permitted.

12.5.3 Political Processes

In North Korea elections for the Supreme People's Assembly and for the post of President are held periodically and smoothly as per the provisions of the constitution. First elections were held in 1947 and there have been elections periodically since then. In the elections for Supreme People's Assembly the members were elected unopposed. The citizens who are 17 years old and above have the right to vote.

Succession to the post of President, the highest executive head of the state, have remained so far smooth and as per the provisions of the constitution. Kim Il Sung is being elected periodically as the president and the Chief executive head of the country. Successions to the other important posts however are not smooth. Due to purging of members from the KWP there have been regular changes of persons in other important posts like the Vice-President, Premier etc. Though opposition political activities are not permitted, the KWP maintains links with the people and mobilized them to elicit public support to its socio-political programmes. The people are also mobilized on international political issues. The US presence in South Korea is projected as a threat to the DPRK. The people are organized against such threat. They are also mobilized occasionally in support of the demand for reunification of Korea. Opposition political activities also continue. Their underground activities at times create pressure on the ruling party also. As a result the KWP recently has adopted measures to open the country and to liberalise the political system. It had opted for the conservative Marxist-Leninist principles. It now talks about Korean nationalism, self-reliance etc. which are collectively called in Korean as the principles of 'Juche'.

12.5.4 Economic Development

In North Korea plain lands are limited to 20 per cent of the total land area. The country is not endowed with rich agricultural resources. In the southern and northern parts of the state cropping seasons last for four and two months respectively. The DPRK however has increased the area of arable land through afforestation, water conservation and the programme for reclamation. North Korea is relatively richer than South Korea in mining and mineral resources. Coal, iron ore, lead, zinc, tungsten and fluoride are available in good quantity. The country does not have mineral oil resources.

Though the climate is favourable for the growth of forest, better quality-trees are not available in good quantity. North Korea has both marine and sweetwater fish resources. While water conservation provides opportunities for on-shore fishing, Japan sea and yellow sea offer great facilities for deep sea fishing.

Nearly 55 per cent of the total area of the peninsula falls within jurisdiction of DPRK. Total land area is 120, 538 sq.km. The country is not densely populated. In fact it suffers from shortage of man power.

North Korea has opted for a highly centralized and planned economic development strategy. The control of the state on the economy has been almost total. There is a nominal private sector. From departmental store to big industries, all sectors of the economy fall within the state sector. The goal set by the political authority of the DPRK is of achieving self-sufficiency. The economy has been developed with an inward orientation. However from the middle of 1980's the government has started

opening the country for the foreign investors. Joint ventures with foreign companies are being encouraged. The DPRK has embarked upon large scale modernization programmes. It has been seeking help from the West to make them successful.

The DPRK opted for planned development. Immediately after the Korean war, it formulated a 3 year reconstruction plan, then it framed a 5 year plan. After the 5 year plan it started framing seven year plans. Now the country has been under the third 7 year plan (1987-93). Achievement of self-reliance in all fields remains the basic thrust of the planning. Immediately after forming the government in 1946 the ruling party embarked upon enacting land reforms with a view to distributing land to tillers. Initially the private farming was encouraged. After the conclusion of the Korean war collective farming was introduced. By the end of 1958, private farming was totally abolished. Now the farming is conducted either by the cooperatives or by the state farms.

The DPRK achieved a tremendous success in the 1950's. First two plans were fully implemented and the targets were achieved well in advance. But there were problems during the third plan. The plan period was extended up to ten years instead of seven years. The first plan (i.e. 3 year plan) completed the reconstruction of North Korean economy which had suffered heavily during the three year long war (1950-53). The second plan was devoted to lay firm foundations for industries and scientific developments. The third plan set the industries into motion. Subsequent plans stressed upon the development of new technologies, achieving the self-sufficiency in new technologies, achieving the self-sufficiency in industrial products, the creation of new energy sources, improvement of quality of products, restoration of regional balances and modernization.

Korean economy was kept by the Japanese ruler dependent upon land lord dominated agriculture. The DPRK government within a decade or so transformed the agriculture dominated economy into a highly developed industrialized, economy. Now industry contributes about 80 per cent of the GDP to the country. Agriculture has been mechanised, and production has been increased many folds as compared to the situation in early 1950's. Since the country is not very rich in agricultural resources, the DPRK has developed wide heavy industries which now produce steel, iron, non-ferrous metals, machinery and equipment, fertilizers, plastics, and cement. The country has also encouraged medium, light and small scale industries which mainly produce consumer articles. Since petroleum is not available in Korea, the DPRK placed added emphasis on the development of hydroelectric power generation and coal mines. It also has developed the mining sector with sophisticated technology. The DPRK has claimed that by the middle of 1980's it achieved an average 8.8 p.c. annual growth rate in National Material product and 12.2 p.c. in industrial output. The current plan sets the target of achieving annual growth of 8 p.c. in GNP.

North Korea though has been successful in raising an independent industrial base and laid the strong foundation of self-reliant economy and the economy is comparatively less dependent upon foreign assistance, the country faces at times economic crisis. In 1990 the DPRK experienced many setbacks. In order to overcome the setbacks it partially opened the economy. Now foreign investment in joint ventures are encouraged. North Korea in fact is now trying hard to persuade the foreign investors. It has also diversified its international trade. Now the country is encouraging trade with Western countries, Japan and many third world countries.

Check Your Progress 4

- Note : i) Use the space given below each question to give your answer.
 ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Write an essay on the party system in the DPRK.

- 2) Analyse the economic development strategy in the DPRK.

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12.6 LET US SUM UP

Korea had been one country. It has been partitioned due to the machinations of the foreign powers. The people have not yet wholly accepted the partition, demand for reunification has still remained fundamental issue in the Korean politics.

ROK has achieved tremendous economic growth, but it is dependent development. Moreover the kind of development which ROK has achieved, has increased inequalities in the society, widened the rich-poor and the rural-urban gaps. Consequently the country faces periodically socio-political unrest.

The DPRK has achieved a stable political system and also has developed comparatively self-reliant economy and the base of socialist system. But high ideals of socialist democracy have remained missing, as a result the state structure appears to the people as totalitarian.

12.7 KEY WORDS

Peninsula : It is an area of land which is almost surrounded by water.

12.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Henthorn, William E. : 1971 : *A History of Korea*, New York, The Free Press.

Hulbert, Hamer B. : 1962 : *History of Korea* : London, Routledge.

Wright, Edward R. (ed.) : 1975 : *Korean Politics in Transition*, Seattle, Wash, University of Washington Press.

Chung, Joseph Sang-Hoon : 1974 : *The North Korean Economy Structure and Development* : Hoover Institution Press Stanford University.

Knznets, Paul W. : 1977 : *Economic Growth and Structure in Republic of Korea* : New Haven, Conn, Yale University Press.

Kibl, Young Whan : 1984 : *Politics and Policies in Divided Korea : Regimes in Contrast* : Boulder, Colo, and London, Westview Press.

12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Japanese rule was colonial, repressive and exploitative.
- 2) Japan introduced centralized administration expanded socio-economic infrastructures.
- 3) Japan used Korean people and material to augment Japan's imperialist interests.
- 4) Japan did not allow any kind of political activity in Korea.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Due to the occupation of South Korea by the US army and North Korea by the USSR the dividing line between North and South was drawn. The Korean war formalised the partition.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) 1) Frequent promulgation of new constitutions, drastic amendments to the constitutions and abrogation of constitutions.
2) Fragile party system.
3) Frequent referendums.
4) Military's participation in politics.
5) Political succession was not smooth
6) Controversial elections.
7) Persistent political unrest
8) Reunification has been the cry of the people.
- 2) 1) Capitalist system of economy.
2) Outward and export oriented economy.
3) Reliance on import of raw materials.
4) High rate of growth.
5) Inequalities, rich-poor and rural-urban gaps increased.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) 1) Single party system
2) There is no constitutional ban on forming political parties but dissident activities are not permitted.
3) The ruling party Korean Worker's Party follows creative Marxism.
- 2) 1) State controlled economy.
2) Centralized planning system.
3) Private ownership is not encouraged.
4) Main goal is to achieve self reliance.
5) Dominance of heavy and basic industries.
6) Collective, State and cooperative farming have taken over the whole agriculture.

UNIT 13 FOREIGN POLICY

Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Foreign Policies of South (ROK) and North (DPRK) Korea
 - 13.2.1 Determinants
 - 13.2.2 Development of the Foreign Policies
- 13.3 ROK (South Korea's) Foreign Relations
 - 13.3.1 ROK-USA Relations
 - 13.3.2 ROK-Japanese Relations
 - 13.3.3 South Korea and Other Countries
- 13.4 DPRK (North Korea's) Foreign Relations
 - 13.4.1 DPRK-China Relations
 - 13.4.2 DPRK-Russia (erstwhile USSR)
 - 13.4.3 DPRK and Japanese Relations
 - 13.4.4 DPRK and the US Relations
 - 13.4.5 DPRK and Other Countries
- 13.5 North-South Relations
- 13.6 Nuclear (NPT) Issue
- 13.7 Indo-Korean Relations
- 13.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.9 Key Words
- 13.10 Some Useful Books
- 13.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

13.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit discusses the foreign policies of South (ROK) and North (DPRK) Korea. After going through the unit you will be able to:

- identify the determinants of the foreign policies of both ROK and DPRK;
- trace the development of the foreign policies of the two states;
- understand the relations of the two states with other countries of the world including;
- know the historical ties between India and Korea; and
- analyse the Nuclear (NPT) Issue.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Korea is an ancient country in East Asia. Since the second half of 19th century, the country has experienced the presence of Western World powers. The presence of the western powers provoked Japan to reduce Korea into its colony. Japan's withdrawal from the peninsula was followed by the occupation of the USA and the erstwhile USSR. Korea thus became the victim of big power rivalry. A full scale war was fought on the soil and at the end of the war, partition of Korea was formalised. These developments conditioned the foreign policies of both South and North Korea.

13.2 FOREIGN POLICIES OF SOUTH (ROK) AND NORTH (DPRK) KOREA

Foreign policy of a country is a composite response to domestic and external factors. In the external realm, operation of a country's foreign policy is facilitated at three levels, global, regional and bilateral framing and implementation of any country's

foreign policy does not take place in a void or vacuum. Rather it is the tangible outcome of certain basic factors like geopolitical realities of the region where that country is located, its scramble for security, its domestic requirements and quest for economic development and its commitment to ideology.

13.2.1 Determinants

In the wake of the withdrawal of Japan from Korea, the peninsula was occupied by the US and the USSR. The occupation by the foreign powers culminated into the division of the peninsula into two zones : the territories located south of 38th parallel formed South Korea — a zone controlled by the USA, and the areas situated north of 38th parallel formed North Korea — another zone controlled by the USSR. Several formulas were suggested by the UN and others to reunite the two halves but none of them was found to be acceptable by all interested parties. Ultimately war broke out in 1950. In the war South Korea was backed by the joint forces of the 16 nations, raised by the UNO and commanded by the USA. North Korea got support from the USSR and People's Republic of China. War ended after heavy loss and casualties of life and properties and the partition of Korea was formalised. South remained with the western bloc and North developed itself into a socialist state. Two different systems of polity and economy emerged in two states. The partition and the development of two different systems have conditioned the evolution of foreign policies of the two states. While South Korea has sought close cooperation with the western bloc, North has built up friendly ties with China and other erstwhile socialist countries.

South Korea does not have land border with any country other than North Korea. Outside the peninsula, its closest neighbour is Japan. It is also strategically located. It is easier to reach China via South Korea. The location thus created interest in the US dominated western bloc to keep South Korea within its sphere of influence.

The states of Korean peninsula inherited a backward economy and were suffering from shortage of essential commodities. While UN agencies and the USA helped overcome the immediate economic crisis in South Korea, North Korea got full backing from the socialist bloc. South Korea from the very beginning has remained a stronghold of the conservative and right wing political leaders. President Dr. Syngman Rhee was an US trained politician. He was succeeded by the military which was raised with the close cooperation of the US. The successive leadership suffered from red-phobia. The leaders, therefore did not hesitate to build up strong ties with the USA and the western bloc. The right wing leadership opted for development strategy as prescribed by the UN agencies and the USA. So the country had to follow a pro-western foreign policy.

North Korea on the other hand has always been dominated by the communists and nationalists. They cultivated good relations with socialist bloc China and the countries grouped under the Non Aligned Movement (NAM). North Korean leadership opted for a type of development for which also it had to seek help and aid largely from the socialist countries. On dissolution of the socialist bloc, the country became isolated. It is now gradually coming out from the isolation. The NPT issue established the fact that North Korea is no longer isolated.

13.2.2 Development of the Foreign Policies

The foreign policies of the two countries—the DPRK and the ROK developed in three phases. The first phase was spread over the period from the Korean war to the beginning of the normalisation of the relation between the People's Republic of China and the USA. The second phase covers the period from the establishment of the normal relations between China and the USA to the end of Cold War (or dissolution of the USSR), and the third phase is the current post cold war period. During the first phase South Korea (or ROK) maintained diplomatic, economic and other relations basically with the countries belonging to the western bloc and Japan, and North Korea (or DPRK) remained confined to the socialist bloc. The normalization of relations and establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the USA introduced a qualitative change in the foreign policies of both—DPRK and the ROK. While the DPRK started searching friends in the NAM countries and initiated the process to

establish relations with the pro-western bloc countries and the USA, the ROK took initiative to establish ties with China, the USSR and other non western bloc countries. The end of cold war has introduced another type of development in the world stage. The erstwhile socialist bloc disintegrated. In this period America has emerged as the only super power in the world. Russia due to acute economic crisis and also political instability has been displaced from the position of super power. Thus the super power rivalry in the peninsula ended. South Korea has become more friendly to China and Russia. But despite repeated attempts North Korea has so far failed to be friendly to the USA and Japan. China is one of the big powers in the world—without its concurrence none can take any major decision vis-a-vis the Korean peninsula. Consequently when the peninsula was drifting towards war recently over the NPT issue, China's opposition to any harsh measure against North Korea has restrained the USA and its allies. The peninsula has perhaps been saved from another holocaust.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below each question to give your answer.

ii) Check your answer with hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the determinants of the foreign policies of the states of the Korean peninsula.

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13.3 ROK (SOUTH KOREA'S) FOREIGN RELATIONS

Korean war conditioned the future development of ROK's foreign relations. The country was tied to the Western bloc for a long time. The normalization of US-China relations, and the end of cold war introduced new elements in the foreign policy and relations of the ROK.

13.3.1 ROK-USA Relations

ROK-US relationship is quite different from the relationship which normally exists between two independent sovereign states. The US army occupied the south Korea at the fag end of the second world war. Since then a strong contingent of US military establishment has been stationed in South Korea, which largely depends upon the USA for its security and defence. After occupying the region in 1945, the USA got itself deeply involved in the politico-economic developments of the region. First ever regime installed in South Korea in 1948, was headed by an American trained conservative politician, Dr. Syngman Rhee who was succeeded by a long spell of military rule. South Korean military was raised by America, trained in America and it has been equipped with American weapons. The military, therefore, has a marked US influence. The US dominated international funding agencies, the economic development strategy and aided the economic development of South Korea. The development strategy, followed by the successive regimes, have made the economy outward, export oriented and largely depended upon the US and its allies markets.

As the situation thus exists, there are little chances of tension in the relationship between the two countries. Non irritant relations continued though anti US demonstrations by the people in South Korea had been the regular feature. ROK had been periodically rocked by popular unrest and protest movements. Protesters demanded the withdrawal of US army from the Korean soil, the reunification of the peninsula and the establishment of egalitarian socio-economic system. These movement were being brutally suppressed. The Human Right activists and the democratic forces in America had been vocal against the suppression of people's

movements in the ROK. The activists considered the repression as the suppression of human rights. The public protest in the USA reached to climax when an opposition political leader in the ROK, Kim Dae-Jung was kidnapped in 1973 allegedly by the pro-government forces. The ROK-US relation went down to a low ebb. US President Gerald Ford however undertook a visit to the ROK and reassured the ROK leadership of continuing US support.

Following the election of President Carter in 1976 again the relation between the USA and South Korea became tension ridden. US decision to withdraw all American ground forces from South Korea and the discovery of the scandal involving Korean ambassadors to America as Korean rice dealer vitiated the relations. The USA was overtaken by anti Korean agitation. The tension further became acute on account of the establishment of diplomatic relation between the USA and China and the participation of US tennis team in a tournament in North Korea. The crisis was partially over with the visit of Mr. Carter to South Korea and the suspension of troop withdrawal from Korea by the US. However the criticism in the USA against the suppression of human rights in ROK continued. Again there was discord in 1985 when some of the visiting US citizens were manhandled in the Korean airport by the security forces. With the restoration of free democracy in the late 1980's—the relation between the USA and South Korea has become again normal.

Economic relations between the two countries grew over the years. In mid-1980's ROK emerged as seventh largest trading partner of the US in the world. More than 40 p.c. of ROK's exports go to the USA and only 20 p.c. of US exports come to the ROK.

Since Korea imports less and exports more to the USA, there has been USA's trade deficit with South Korea. The USA now has started exerting pressure for greater US exports to South Korea. The USA even threatens economic sanctions. In order to avoid sanction South Korea has decreased imports from other countries (mainly Japan) and has increased imports from the USA. Now South Korea imports from the USA about 100 items which it previously imported from other countries. Value of the Korean currency has also been appreciated in order to increase the competitiveness of US goods in Korean market. In the field of defence also there has been close cooperation between the two countries.

The USA and South Korea conduct annually joint naval exercises, called "Team Spirit" in the Korean peninsula. In 1992 "Team Spirit" exercise was suspended due to Korean People's protest. The exercises were again resumed in 1993 amidst protests from North Korea. A great number of US military personnel have been permanently stationed in South Korea. The US also kept nuclear weapons in South Korea though in 1992, the US announced that the nuclear weapon had been removed from South Korea.

In the wake of growing tension in the region over the NPT issue, the US again has started strengthening its military presence in the ROK. Recently (April 1994) two US military transport ships have arrived in Southern port city of the ROK, Pusan. The ships have carried Patriot anti-missile batteries. According to an estimate three patriot batteries with a total of 24 launchers have arrived. There have arrived also 84 stinger missiles. The US sources have claimed that the shipment of the missiles had to be done to protect South Korean from North Korean rocket attack. However the people of South Korea do not appear to have accepted the American arguments in support of the shipment. There are widespread protests against the shipment of missiles. As a result the government has deployed large contingent of police forces to fend off protests. Hundred of students, throwing rockets and wielding sticks, clashed with police on 18 March 1994 in different cities when they assembled to protest against the US defence secretary William Perry's visit to South Korea. Police fired tear gas to disperse the students. Perry was to arrive on 19 March in South Korea for three days to talk with the South Korean officials on military preparedness at a time of heightened tensions over the North Korea's nuclear programme. Students and other South Korean people denounced Perry for his hardline stand on the North Korea's nuclear programme. Students said Perry's visit and the deployment of Patriot anti-missile batteries in South Korea where there have been already 36,000 US troops, would provoke the DPRK, thus increasing tension in the peninsula.

13.3.2 ROK-Japanese Relations

Japan ruled over Korea for about four decades as its colony. At withdrawal it had left a bitter legacy which conditioned the future relations between the two countries. However the USA's intervention in the region eased the tension and helped normalization of relationship between ROK and Japan. But the normalization process had been slow for a long time because of periodical irruption of irritants. As it happened in early 1980's. A history text book was published in Japan. The book contained many damaging and distorting facts about Japan's past relations with Korea. The irritation created by the publication of the book was further intensified due to Japanese refusal to advance a loan for which ROK had approached earlier. The irritants were removed with the withdrawal of the text book by the Japanese authority and subsequent state visit to South Korea undertaken by the Japanese Prime Minister in 1983. In return ROK President Chun undertook an official visit to Japan in 1984. This was the first ever visit of any official high dignitary from Korea to Japan in 40 years. During the visit Japanese leaders including the Emperor Hirohito expressed deep regret for the Japanese colonial exploitation of Korea in the past. In 1990 again ROK President Roh Tae Woo undertook an official tour to Japan. Thus began series of visits and counter visits which have occasioned marked improvement in their mutual relationship.

Presently Japan is the second largest trade partner of the ROK and there exists also a strong economic tie between them. Total annual trade turnover between Japan and the ROK is more than 31 million US dollar. South Korea largely depends upon the import from Japan of raw materials and capital goods for the former's export oriented industries.

13.3.3 South Korea and Other Countries

South Korea maintains diplomatic relations with most of the independent states of the world. However its principal trading partners besides the USA, and Japan, are Germany, Australia, Indonesia, Canada, France, Italy, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Singapore and Hongkong.

South Korea suffers from unfavourable balance of trade with many countries. At the same time it enjoys most favourable balance of trade with the USA, UK, Japan, Singapore and a few others. South Korea's foreign trade grew manifold over the years. Almost 50 p.c. of South Korea's total trade is with the USA and Japan only.

The countries belonging to the Western bloc supported South Korea in the Korean war. South Korea's political relations with these countries have been steadily progressing since then. Later on the political relations have been further strengthened with the increasing trade relations.

The erstwhile socialist countries including China supported North Korea in the three year long Korean war. Since then South Korea's relations with these countries had remained frozen for years. It was only in late 1980's that the ice started breaking. With the beginning of a democratically elected administration headed by Roh Tae-woo, the relations started improving. In 1988 South Korea expanded its trade with Russia and China. In 1989 full diplomatic relations were established between Russia and South Korea. In 1990 diplomatic relations were established between South Korea and the East European countries. After the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Russia and South Korea high level meetings were held several times to further normalise the relations and to expand trade. Full diplomatic relations between China and the ROK was established in August 1992. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties China has been trying to normalise relations between the two halves of the peninsula. In the wake of the growing tension in the region over the issue of NPT South Korean President Kim Young Sam arrived in China in the last week of March 1994. He met all top leaders of China and sought China's intervention in resolving the North-South imbroglio over the NPT issue. During the visit China and South Korea also agreed to expand economic relations. Plans have been chalked out for joint production of car parts, aircraft and other items.

South Korean trade and investment in China has soared high since the two countries established diplomatic relations in August 1992. China is already the third biggest export market for South Korea after the US and Japan.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note : i) Use the space provided below each question to give your answer.
 ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the ROK-US relations.

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- 2) Analyse the growing relationship between South Korea and Japan.

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- 3) How did China and South Korea came closer to each other? Do you find any possibility of further expansion of the relations between the two countries?

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13.4 DPRK (NORTH KOREA'S) FOREIGN RELATIONS

DPRK's foreign policy and relations were also conditioned by the Korean war. Subsequently the growing dispute in the international communist movement, establishment of diplomatic ties between China, USA and the ROK, and the dissolution of the socialist bloc influenced the latter developments in the DPRK's foreign relations.

13.4.1 DPRK-China Relations

China-Korean relations date back to remote past. Korean society, civilization and culture bear marked impact of China. Buddhism which has been the principal religion to the peninsula came from China. Korean civil service in the medieval period was modelled after the Chinese system. Korea also imported the printing technology in the 13th century from China. There had been also expanding economic relations between the countries. When Korea had been struggling for independence from Japanese rule, China offered asylum to the Korean nationalists who were forced to flee away from Korea. Korean nationalists also participated in the revolutionary struggles of Chinese people. They gathered rich experiences of the guerrilla warfare. The historical bond between the peoples of China and Korea was further tested and strengthened during the Korean war. During the Korean war (1950-53) when the US commanded UN force reached to the heart of the DPRK and the latter was about to be extinguished in October 1950, one year old People's Republic of China intervened in favour of the DPRK. China sent about one lakh most experienced and veteran soldiers who swiftly repelled the aggressors and freed whole of North Korea.

The friendly ties which were reestablished through the shedding of Chinese blood for the independence of North Korea, have been continuing almost uninterruptedly. In 1970's when the relationship between China and the USA improved, there had been strong speculation that DPRK-China relationship might deteriorate. But in course of time such speculations were found baseless. Chinese leaders, Hua Guo-feng, Deng Xiao-Ping visited DPRK in 1978 and promised all necessary assistance for the development of North Korea. In 1982 again Deng Xiao-Ping and Zhao Ziyang (then Prime Minister of China) visited North Korea. During late 1980's Kim Il Sung, the topmost leader of the DPRK visited China twice first in 1987 and again in 1989. The exchange and visits have further strengthened the ties between the two countries.

China has been one of the principal trading partner of the DPRK. Trade between the two countries had been so far conducted in accordance with simple principle of barter system. An agreement has been signed in 1991 for switching over gradually the trade from barter basis to hard cash payment system. Still however considerable percentage of trade is conducted on barter basis.

13.4.2 DPRK-Russia (Erstwhile USSR)

The USSR army after crushing the Japanese resistance entered Korea in early August 1945. It backed the fighting Korean nationalists to form government for liberated Korea. The nationalists founded the People's Republic of Korea in 1947. The USSR recognized it and assured the withdrawal of Russian army soon. Russian army was withdrawn from Korea in 1948. The USSR however helped to raise a Korean army and also left weapons behind while withdrawing from the peninsula. In the Korean war the USSR helped the DPRK. After the Korean war the USSR offered massive aid for reconstruction of war damaged DPRK. In 1961 both countries signed the treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation.

In the relationship of the USSR and the DPRK, however there developed some snags in the wake of the split in the international communist movement and increasing dispute between China and the USSR. The snags were soon removed and in 1977 the DPRK signed an economic and technical cooperation agreement with the USSR. As per the terms of the agreement the USSR extended large scale aid to the DPRK. There arose again some misunderstandings on the Afghan issue in 1979. North Korea and China did not support USSR's involvement in Civil War in Afghanistan. The USSR stopped supplying petroleum to the DPRK. The damaged relationship was however repaired when a high level delegation from the USSR visited the DPRK in 1984. The delegation participated in the birthday celebration of Kim Il Sung. In return Kim Il Sung visited USSR and other East European countries in May 1984. The USSR resumed economic and military assistance and agreed to expand trade relations. The USSR supplied aircraft in 1985 to strengthen DPRK's defence system. Regular exchanges of visits by high level delegations between the two countries continued along with the expansion of fields of cooperation. In 1986 the DPRK allowed the USSR to use its Nampo Sea Port. Kim Il Sung went to the USSR in a state visit in October 1986. The relationship however underwent a drastic change with the dissolution of the USSR. In 1990's South Korea improved its relations with Russia and other East European states. Russia abolished the continuing barter trading system with the DPRK and opted trade in convertible currencies at world market rate. Russia also terminated in 1993 the treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation, signed in 1961. All these developments strained the relations between the DPRK and the successor states of the erstwhile USSR including Russia. Russia now indirectly is supporting the US stand on the NPT issue.

13.4.3 DPRK and Japanese Relations

There has not been diplomatic relation between Japan and the DPRK. But the trade and economic relations have been continuing since long though not uninterrupted. Occasionally irritations appeared. In 1982 there occurred a bomb blast incident in Rangoon. The blast killed members of visiting South Korean delegation. The DPRK was suspected as perpetrator of the blast. Japan following the incident imposed sanctions which were soon withdrawn. Again in 1987 the DPRK was blamed for the downing and destruction of a South Korean aircraft. The DPRK was condemned as

the terrorist country. Japan reimposed sanctions. In 1990 however there was marked improvement in the relationship. High level Japanese delegation visited North Korea to find out the possibilities for establishing diplomatic relation. The delegation begged apologies on behalf of the government of Japan for the exploitation and colonial aggression on the Korean peninsula during the period of Japanese rule in Korea. It also agreed to pay reparations. Trade between the two countries increased and touched to US \$ 530 million in 1992. Japanese investors also came forward to invest in North Korea. But recently again same snags have developed in the relationship due to Japan's refusal to pay reparation as claimed by the DPRK and the failure on the part of the DPRK to repay the accumulated foreign debt. Japanese investors have refused to invest as long as the full diplomatic relation between the two countries is established and the foreign debt issue is settled. The NPT issue has further strained the relations between the DPRK and Japan.

13.4.4 DPRK and the US Relations

With the normalization of sino-US relations there started improvement in the DPRK-US relationship. In 1974 the DPRK proposed a peace treaty with the USA replacing the 1953 truce. It also pleaded withdrawal of foreign army from South Korea. In response to the DPRK's proposal US secretary of state Henry Kissinger suggested a 'phased approach' for the permanent solution of Korean issue. The DPRK reiterated its proposal for peace treaty but at the same time adopted measures to normalise the relationship. However the relationship did not improve much. In 1977 there took place an unusual incident, an unarmed US army helicopter was shot down by the DPRK army in the de-Militarized Zone. The incident drove the countries to the brink of a full scale war. But the situation was saved by the prompt intervention of the US President Carter and DPRK leader Kim II Sung. Both expressed regret. North Korea returned the dead and wounded US crew to the UN command in South Korea. Though peace was restored, tension continued. Again there arose crisis in 1982 over the Rangoon incident and the aircraft incident in 1987. The USA now placed DPRK in the list of countries which supported terrorism. The ongoing diplomatic contacts were also restricted. Recently the relationship has further soured over the NPT issue.

13.4.5 DPRK and Other Countries

North Korea took definite steps to improve its relations with the non aligned countries. It applied for participation in the NAM, in 1976 the ministerial level meeting of the NAM accepted the application. Kim II Sung visited Mauritania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, to strengthen North Korea's relation with NAM nations. In 1976 it was found that certain North Korean diplomats misused their diplomatic privileges and engaged in narcotic trade. These incidents spoiled the relation with Scandinavian countries. Many diplomats were expelled from Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Russia (then USSR). During the Iraq-Iran war North Korea sided with Iran. As a restorative, Syria and Libya severed diplomatic ties with North Korea. Relations with Russia also became tenuous because North Korea did not support Russia's Afghan policy. North Korea experienced a great diplomatic set back in 1982. On 9 October member of a visiting South Korean delegation to Burma was killed in Bomb blast in Rangoon. North Korea was made responsible to the blast. Immediately many south-east Asian countries, including Burma severed diplomatic relations with North Korea. Pakistan suspended proposed diplomatic relation. Belgium refused to enter into trade relation. In July there had been a significant reshuffle in the North Korea leadership structure. North Korea now decided to open the country to the foreign investors. It invited Japan and many western countries to invest in North Korea. The step might have been taken to overcome the on going economic agreements with many countries in late 1970's. The agreements were signed with the aim of getting more assistance to expand the industrial base in North Korea.

The DPRK recently has improved its image in south-east Asia, which was tarnished following the Rangoon incident. Thailand restored diplomatic relation, severed in 1982. Trade accords have been signed with Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and many other countries.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note : i) Use the space given below each question for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss DPRK and China relations.

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- 2) Write a note on DPRK and Russian relationship.

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- 3) What are the issues which have strained the DPRK's relation with USA, Japan and other countries.

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13.5 NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS

The partition of Korea had little support with the people of the peninsula. As a result, the public demand for reunification frequently surfaced. North Korean government did not accept the division. It occasionally even articulated the public sentiment in favour of reunification. North-South relation has always been overshadowed by the reunification issue. After the formalisation of partition in the war two halves inhabited by the same people, did not have any formal relationship for about two decades. The fierce popular movements in South Korea forced the ROK to open dialogue with the DPRK. The Red Cross societies of both DPRK and the ROK met in 1971. This was the first ever North-South meeting. The meeting continued for some days. Both parties issued a joint statement in 1972. The joint statement clearly endorsed the idea of reunification and expressed the conviction to achieve the same through peaceful means. It also agreed to suspend political campaigns against each other. Henceforth talks for reunification continued for some times. But it was suspended in 1973 without much valid reasons. Following the suspension of talks relations between the two halves deteriorated. Unification campaign was revived. There occurred frequent North-South naval clashes in 1974. UN command in South Korea accused DPRK in 1978 for the alleged violation of 1953 truce. The DPRK also embarked upon a propaganda in support of reunification if necessary by force. It blamed the US for conspiring against the Korean people. The DPRK announced that the very presence of US army in Korean land was the main obstacle to the reunification of Korea. By the middle of 1980's the situation changed. The DPRK proposed a tripartite meeting

including the USA, ROK and the DPRK, softened its attitude towards the ROK and sent relief materials for the victims of the disastrous flood in South Korea. Negotiations for starting economic relations opened in November 1984. The negotiation continued but ended without much result. In the middle of 1986, the DPRK withdrew from the negotiation in protest against the annual US-South Korean "Team Spirit" military manoeuvres which the DPRK has been protesting since their inception in 1976. The relation became strained. The ROK opposed the construction of a dam at Mount Kingang on the ground that the accumulated water might be used to flood South Korea. However in subsequent years the relation became to a large extent normal despite periodic friction relating to alleged DPRK's involvement in the various sabotaging acts inside the ROK. In early 1990's sufficient improvement was there in the relations. As a result, both Koreas were admitted as members separately to the UN in September 1991.

In 1991, several rounds of high level talks were held and at the end of the fifth round, the "Agreement on reconciliation, non-aggression and exchanges and cooperation between the South and the North" was signed. The accord is a landmark in the growing good relations between North and South Korea. Both states agreed to desist from campaigning against each other, to promote economic and other mutually beneficial relations, to allow reunion of the separated family members, and to work for peace and tranquility in the peninsula.

Trade relations between North and South Korea started in 1988. Since then the trade has been steadily growing. In 1991 total trade turnover was \$ 192 million. In 1992 it increased to \$ 220 million. The opening of trade relations has benefited North Korea. Its total exports exceed the total imports from South Korea. North's exports are in the tune of \$166 million but its imports are merely \$26 million.

However the relations again were vitiated on account of the NPT issue and the proposed resumption of "Team Spirit" military exercises.

Check Your Progress 4

Note : i) Use the space given below each question for your answers.
 ii) Check your answer with hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Analyse the process of normalising the relations between the two halves.

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13.6 NUCLEAR (NPT) ISSUE

The DPRK notified to the UN security council in March 1993 that since its interests are in danger and the security of the country is being threatened due to the annual US-ROK 1,20,000 soldier strong "Team Spirit" joint military exercises in the Korean peninsula, it would withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In the treaty there are provisions according to which, if a signatory feels threatened, it can opt out of the Treaty. The Japanese, US and other Western sources claim that the DPRK has secretly developed and acquired the technology and source material, sufficient to make several nuclear bombs. The International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) which monitors the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) under pressure from Japan and the USA have alleged that the DPRK maintain hidden nuclear sites. The IAEA has made it an issue and has asked the DPRK to allow international inspection of its nuclear sites. The IAEA pressure can also be attributed to the DPRK's notification for withdrawal. The DPRK authority said in support of its decision that the withdrawal from the NPT is a well justified self-defensive measure against the nuclear war manoeuvres of the United States and the unjust act of the secretary of the IAEA against the DPRK (North Korea). The DPRK called the

projected "Team Spirit" US-South Korea joint military exercises as the "Nuclear war rehearsal threatening North Korea". The IAEA is seized with the problem of pressurizing North Korea to fall in line. The Korean Authority, however has made it clear that, "If those forces (i.e. the US dominated international agencies, the UN and others) hostile to North Korea attempt to frighten us by bringing pressure and sanctions, it is a foolish dream. . . .we will answer strong arm action with self-defensive measures and military action". In the past, the DPRK vehemently opposed US-South Korean 'Team Spirit' military exercises. The DPRK's decisions to withdraw from the NPT has made the situation in the peninsula very tense. The US has been threatening actions against the DPRK. China, however has not fully endorsed the position, taken by the IAEA and the US administration on NPT issue involving North Korea. Perhaps due to China's stand on the issue now attempts are being made to ease the tension and to solve the problem through peaceful negotiation. The US has suspended the 'Team Spirit' exercises.

Check Your Progress 5

- Note : i) Use the space given below each question for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Write a note on the NPT issue.

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13.7 INDO-KOREAN RELATIONS

Though Korea shares withholds a religious and cultural franguis Buddhism which had connected the Indo-Korea culturalties had actually migrated from China. There is little evidence to show that there had been any direct intercourse between Korea and India in the pre-modern period. In Korea however Buddhism flourished and is still the principal religion. Buddhist text Tripitaka was translated into Korean language in early medieval age. Other Buddhist texts were also translated into Korean language. They were all printed in 13th and 14th century when Korea had developed the printing technology. There are about 81000 pages of Buddhist text which are available in Korean language.

There were little scope of furthering Indo-Korean relations in 19th and early 20th centuries. India did not take any side in the Korean war of 1950-53. But it warned the US backed South Korean army not to cross 38th parallel. India had anticipated that crossing of 38th parallel would provoke China to intervene. The forecast turned into reality—South Korean force crossed 38th parallel and China intervened in favour of North Korea. War became complicated. Since then India's relation with South Korea remained confined to just normal level. Recently the relationship between South Korea and India has started expanding specially after the visit of Indian Prime Minister to South Korea in 1993. India's economic relationship with South Korea has been increasing consistently. Total trade turnover between the two countries was in 1983 to the tune of US \$857,683, which increased in 1984 to US \$ 1,449,269. In 1988-89, the total trade between India and South Korea was Rs. 4,600.6 million, within two years the amount increased to Rs. 6,487.1 million. Recent developments show that there would be further development of relationship between the two countries in near future.

Since India had been neutral but was friendly to North Korea during the Korean war, a close relation between the two had started developing since then. India has trade relations with North Korea. Total trade turnover in 1984 and 1985 were US \$ 37.34

and US \$ 18.73 million respectively. Over the years the volume of trade between the two countries has increased.

Check Your Progress 6

- Note : i) Use the space given below each question for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Write a note on the role of India in the Korean War.

13.8 LET US SUM UP

In the preceding pages the foreign policies and relations of South and North Korea have been analysed. While Korean war conditioned the evolution of the foreign policies of these two states, subsequent developments in the world in general and in East Asian region in particular supplied fresh inputs so that both South and North Korea could come out from the old legacies. Consequently in the foreign policies and relations of both South and North Korea with other countries of the world there have occurred many basic changes which would surely influence the future evolution of the foreign policies of the peninsular countries.

13.9 KEY WORDS

Patriot anti-missile batteries : A kind of most sophisticated US weapon which is capable to foil the enemy rocket of any type.

13.10 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Scalapino, Robert, and Kim, Jun-Yop (eds) : 1984 : *North Korea Today : Strategic and Domestic Issues* : Los Angeles, University of California Press.

Yang, Sung-Chul : 1981 : *Korea Two Regimes* : Cambridge, MSS, Seheukman Publishing Co.

Bridges, Brian: 1986 : *Korean and the West* : London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

13.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) 1) Korea War
- 2) Involvement of World powers in Korea Peninsular
- 3) Economic backwardness
- 4) Geographical location
- 5) Outlook of the political leaders.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) 1) Subordinate relation
 - 2) Suppression of popular movements in the ROK created temporary irritation to the otherwise continuing good relations.
 - 3) Strong trade and economic ties.
 - 4) There has always been favourable balance of trade for South Korea.
 - 5) The US maintains army bases in South Korea.
 - 6) Presence of US army has been opposed by the people.
- 2) 1) Initially there was friction because of the colonial legacy.
 - 2) US intervention in the region helped normalise Japan-ROK relation.
 - 3) Japan has strong trade and economic ties.
- 3) 1) Normalisation of US-China relations changed the South Korean attitude towards China.
 - 2) China found South Korean economic prosperity useful for the modernization and liberalization of Chinese economy.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) i) Historical legacy.
ii) Chinese intervention in favour of the DPRK in the Korean War.
iii) Geographical proximity
iv) Ideological affinity.
- 2) i) Sino-Russian dispute created problem in the DPRK-USSR ties.
ii) USSR helped North Korea to achieve self reliance
iii) Presently the relations are not so friendly because of the dissolution of the erstwhile USSR.
- 3) i) Involvement of North Korean diplomats in scandals connected with rice trade.
ii) Drowning and destruction of US army helicopter.
iii) Rangoon incident
iv) Aircraft issue of 1987.
v) North Korea's failure to repay the debt.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) i) People of both countries want reunification. In South Korea very often people rise in revolt demanding reunification.
ii) Official steps were initiated in 1972.
iii) Had there been no international interference the North-South relations would have remained cordial.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) North Korea is a signatory to the NPT. But due to "Team Spirit" army manoeuvres and the presence of huge army of the USA in South Korea, North Korea feels threatened. As a result North Korea has threatened to withdraw from the NPT.

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) i) India asked the US commanded UN force not to cross 38th parallel.
ii) India observed neutrality but was sympathetic to North Korea.

UNIT 14 SINGAPORE

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 History
 - 14.2.1 Malacca's Prominence and Early European Contacts
 - 14.2.2 Rule of the Sultan of Johor
 - 14.2.3 Founding of Modern Singapore
 - 14.2.4 Second World War and Singapore
- 14.3 Independence
 - 14.3.1 Early Political Structure
 - 14.3.2 Genesis of the New Constitution
 - 14.3.3 Rendel Constitution of 1955
 - 14.3.4 1955 Elections
 - 14.3.5 David Marshal and Thereafter
 - 14.3.6 Issue of Merger of Singapore with Malaya
 - 14.3.7 Internal Problems of PAP
 - 14.3.8 Formation of Malaysia Federation
- 14.4 Government and Politics
 - 14.4.1 Singapore's Parliament
 - 14.4.2 The Judicial System
 - 14.4.3 The Social System
- 14.5 Economy
 - 14.5.1 Early Economic Transformation
 - 14.5.2 Export Oriented Economic Development Policy
 - 14.5.3 Formation of ASEAN
 - 14.5.4 From Import Substitution to Export Promotion
 - 14.5.5 Foreign Exchange Reserves and Economic Growth
 - 14.5.6 Governmental Steps
- 14.6 Security and Foreign Policies
 - 14.6.1 PAP and Elimination of Communist Influence
- 14.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.8 Some Useful Books
- 14.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the unit are :

- to make you understand as to how Singapore was discovered as a major trading centre of South-east Asia,
- to tell you about the independence struggle of Singapore, as well as its constitution and government,
- to help you assess the economic strategy followed by Singapore , and
- to help you learn about security and foreign policies of Singapore.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Singapore, or **Singapura** (Lion City), as the name indicates, is a testimony to the Indian religious and cultural influences on this South-east Asian region. Singapore, which remained a part of the Malay peninsula (later Malaysia) till it got separated and proclaimed itself as an independent republic in 1965, has nothing much to boast about its history. Singapore's importance as a

rivalry for controlling territories and ports for trading and other business activities. Since independence, an astute leadership with long-term perspective and foresight has successfully exploited the strategic geographical location of Singapore. On the other hand but also the cold war influenced this South-east Asian state's politics to build an extremely efficient and prosperous city-state that can boast of enjoying the second highest per capital income in the whole of Asia-Pacific. Today, Singapore has emerged as a centre of major banking, financial and service activities in the Far East. It is no more a market place for cheap electronic consumer goods but has, indeed, become an important manufacturing place for high-tech and high-value added products. Situated at the southern tip of Malaysia close to equator, Singapore conjures at once the feelings of immaculate cleanliness and efficacy.

14.2 HISTORY

Little is known of the early history of Singapore. One of the earliest references to Singapore comes from a Japanese account, the **Nagarakretagama**, which refers to a settlement called "Temasek" (Sea Town) on the island. Much of what is known of early Singapore comes from the colourful and vivid **Sejarah Melayu** or 'Malay Annals'. As the story goes, the name 'Singapura' was given by Sri Tri Buana, the ruler of Palembang, who landed on Temasek one day while seeking shelter from a storm. He saw an animal, which he took to be a lion, and decided to establish a settlement which he named Singapura. During the 14th century, Singapore was involved in prolonged conflict between Siam (now Thailand) and the Java-based Majapahit empire for control of the Malay Peninsula. According to the **Nagarakretagama**, Singapore was overcome in one Majapahit attack but rose to prominence again when Parameswara, a prince of Palembang, came to the island. Parameswara killed the local chieftain and installed himself as the island's new ruler. Shortly before 1400, Singapore was attacked by the Javanese forces of the Majapahit Empire and Parameswara had to flee. He subsequently founded the Malacca Sultanate in neighbouring Malaya.

14.2.1 Malacca's Prominence and Early European Contacts

Much before Singapore was developed a major entry port by the British, it was the city of Malacca that ruled the roost deriving its wealth and prosperity from maritime commerce for centuries in the insular South-east Asian region. Europeans first made contacts with South-east Asia at Malacca in 1509 and the Portuguese captured the city after a bloody struggle in 1511. The city was considered important because of its strategic location and trading activities. After controlling Malacca for over a century, the Portuguese were replaced by the Dutch. Realising the need to gain a foothold in this part of the world, and as a sequence to the British-Dutch rivalry, the British East India Company gave permission to an enterprising British captain, Francis Light, to acquire Penang island on the west coast of Malaysia from the Sultan of Kedah. This was subsequently occupied by the Company in 1786. Napoleon's occupation of the Netherlands prompted the British to immediately seize Malacca. It was, in fact, formalised through the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824. Another port village, called Singapore, was added to the already established ports of Penang and Malacca by the British. This was to develop in the later years as one of the prized possessions of the British crown.

14.2.2 Rule of the Sultan of Johor

Sultan of Johor who stationed a "Temenggong" (or Defence Minister) on the island as his representative. It was about this time that Singapore's strategic location came to be recognised by the British. Britain with its China trade expanding, saw the need for a good harbour in the vicinity of the Malay Peninsula that could serve as a port of call for ships on the route from India to China, control trade in the Malay Archipelago, and check any further northward advance by the Dutch in the East Indies.

14.2.3 Founding of Modern Singapore

Modern Singapore was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles (1781-1826), the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bencoolen, who in late 1818, obtained tacit approval from Lord Hastings, Governor-General of India, to establish a trading station at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. After landing in Singapore on 29 January 1819, Raffles could immediately figure out the immense potential of the region. In February the same year Raffles concluded a preliminary treaty with Sultan Hussein of Johor. Within three years, Singapore was earning more revenue than a well established port like Penang, which resulted in bringing the island directly under the suzerainty of British colonial administration in 1824. By the latter half of nineteenth century, particularly with the opening of Suez Canal in 1869 and the invention of steam-driven ships (which removed the dependence on trade winds for navigation), Singapore instantly became an ideal port of call for ships travelling between Europe and the Far East, mainly because of its geographic location and the natural deep-water harbour it possessed. The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century witnessed a dramatic growth in Singapore's prosperity, as trade increased eightfold between 1873 and 1913. By this time, Singapore had completely overshadowed the older ports of Penang and Malacca. This in turn attracted new immigration of people from China (Chinese coolies) and India (Indian clerks). According to a census conducted in 1860, Singapore's population had grown to more than 80 thousand, with the Chinese comprising 61.9% of the island's population and the Malays and Indians accounting for 13.5% and 16.05% respectively. The others, including Europeans, accounted for 8.5 per cent.

14.2.4 Second World War and Singapore

During World War II, Singapore along the rest of South-east Asia, fell to the Japanese. The Japanese forces occupied Singapore on 15 February 1942 and renamed it as Syonan (Light of the South). Singapore remained under Japanese occupation till the end of the war, and by the time the British tried to bring back the *status quo ante*, it was a different Singapore. Post-war Singapore reflected a different balance of power and expectations, and the British never recovered the prestige they had enjoyed before the war. In addition, peace did not bring an end to economic hardships as food remained scarce, the cost of living high, and essential services virtually non-existent.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.
 ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What were the factors that led to rise in prominence of Singapore under colonial rule?

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- 2) Who founded modern Singapore and why?

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14.3 INDEPENDENCE

The British made Singapore a separate Crown Colony in April 1946 thus severing the age-old links with the rest of Malaya. While preparing rest of Malaya for independence, the British intended to retain Singapore as their commercial and military base.

14.3.1 Early Political Structure

Initially, constitutional powers in Singapore were vested in the Governor, who had an advisory council of officials and nominated non-officials. This evolved into separate Executive and Legislative councils in July 1947. The Governor still retained firm control over the colony, but there was provision for the election of six members of the Legislative Council by popular vote. Hence, Singapore's first election was held on 20 March 1948 to elect the six legislative councillors. The state of emergency declared across the whole of the Malay Peninsula by the British in June 1948 to combat the militant communist movement raging in the colony, was also extended to Singapore, though there was no armed struggle as such.

14.3.2 Genesis of the New Constitution

While the British had intended to transfer power gradually to an English-educated group, which they thought, would remain loyal to them, little did they realise the dynamism that was propelled by the communist revolution in mainland China which tremendously inspired the Chinese-educated youth. Towards the end of 1953, the British government appointed a commission under Sir George Rendel to review Singapore's constitutional position and make recommendations for change. The proposals, which were accepted by the government, became the basis of a new constitution which gave Singapore a greater measure of self-government.

14.3.3 Rendel Constitution of 1955

Among the main features of the Rendel Constitution Draft of 1955 was the suggestion that the Executive Council be replaced by a council of nine ministers with collective responsibility for all matters, except defence, external affairs and internal security. The Governor, who would preside over the Council of Ministers, had to consult the Chief Minister (leader of the strongest party in the Legislative Assembly) on important matters. The Chief Minister could recommend six of the ministers, with the remaining three to be appointed by the Governor. The council was to be responsible to the Legislative Assembly of 32 members. On the eve of Rendel's proposal, two

political parties were formed: the Labour Front under the leadership of David Marshal and the People's Action Party (PAP) under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew.

Singapore



14.3.4 1955 Elections

The 1955 election was the first lively political contest in Singapore's history. Automatic registration had expanded the register of voters from 75,000 to over 300,000 and, for the first time, it included the large number of Chinese who had shown no interest in previous elections. With six political parties contending, the election campaign and especially the mass rallies were the most exciting political events the people of Singapore had ever experienced. The 1955 election ushered in a new era leading to the demise of pro-British conservative elements. The Labour Front became the leading party by winning 10 seats in the Assembly while the People's Action Party won 3 seats. Both these parties were considered left-wing and were committed to end the colonial rule in the island.

14.3.5 David Marshall and Thereafter

David Marshall became Singapore's first Chief Minister on 6 April 1955, in a coalition government made up of his own Labour Front, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). Though Marshall's administration was marred by serious and at times, violent labour unrest, he managed to force the British to hold talks on Singapore's constitutional future in 1956 rather than at the end of the assembly's term. Pledged to attaining full internal self-government for Singapore at the constitutional talks in London in April-May 1956, Marshall resigned on 6 June, following the breakdown of the talks.

Marshall's deputy, Lim Yew Hock, became the Chief Minister in June 1956 and in his tenure (lasting till 1959) most of the front organisations of the communists were smashed. In March 1957, Lim Yew Hock led a constitutional mission to London and was successful in negotiating the main terms of a new Singapore Constitution. Under this, Singapore was to be given full internal self-government, but security was to be put in the hands of an Internal Security Council, consisting of three representatives each from Singapore and the United Kingdom.

The year 1959 marked Singapore's advance from the status of a colony to that of a self-governing state. In May 1959, Singapore's first general election was held to choose the 51 representatives to the first fully elected Legislative Assembly. The People's Action Party led by Lee Kuan Yew swept the polls by winning 43 of 51 seats. On 3 June 1959, the new Constitution confirming Singapore as a self-governing state was brought into force by proclamation of the Governor. The first Government of the State of Singapore was sworn in on 5 June with Lee Kuan Yew as Prime Minister.

14.3.6 Issue of Merger of Singapore with Malaya

Educated Chinese both in Malaya and Singapore by then had been arguing for a merger of Singapore with Malaya. Lee Kuan Yew became the strongest advocate of this unification proposal despite his victory in the 1959 elections. He thought there was little economic future for an independent Singapore. The Malayan Chinese wanted the merger because it would increase the overall strength of Chinese community in a united Malaya. This was because nearly 75 per cent of Singapore's population was of ethnic Chinese origin, and this would obviously have increased the Chinese bargaining power in Malaya. Because of peculiar ethnic composition in Malaya having roughly about 50 per cent indigenous Malays, 35 per cent Chinese and 15 per cent Indians, the Malays were not enthusiastic about merger with Singapore. An

additional 1.3 million Singaporean Chinese would not only upset the delicate racial balance but would also give Singapore the earlier importance at the cost of Malaya because Singapore was already handling most of Malaya's trade. Malays were also apprehensive about the left-leaning political parties of Singapore, including Lee Kuan Yew's PAP.

14.3.7 Internal Problems of PAP

Despite its landslide victory, the PAP had its own internal problems. The event that had precipitated the split within the PAP was a historic speech by the Federation of Malaya's Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, on 27 May 1961. For the first time Rahman proposed the formation of Malaysia, with the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo (Sabah), and Brunei as constituent states. Rahman's worry was that if he did not accept the idea of a merger, Singapore would certainly emerge as an independent communist state and become Southeast Asia's "Cuba". Ultimately in September 1961, the Prime Ministers of Malaya and Singapore reached a broad agreement on merger with a plan for the integration of the two territories before June 1963.

14.3.8 Formation of Malaysia Federation

By the time the Malaysia Federation was formed in September 1963, Brunei decided against merger preferring to remain a British protectorate. However, Singapore's membership in the Federation of Malaysia proved to be short-lived. The new political set-up could perhaps have survived the communal differences but could not contain the inflated egos of the two rival leaders—Tunku Abdul Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew. British efforts to mediate and bring about a reconciliation between the two leaders were in vain and before the British or other Commonwealth leaders could interfere any further, Rahman took the sudden initiative to throw Singapore out of the Malaysian Federation in August 1965. Thereafter commenced Singapore's struggle to survive and prosper on its own and to build a national identity and national consciousness in a disparate population of immigrants.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Briefly explain the main features of the Rendel Constitution.

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- 2) Why was Singapore merged with Malaya to form Malaysia in 1962?
Why did it separate in 1965?

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14.4 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Singapore is a republic with a parliamentary system of government. Its written constitution provides for a president as head of the state, elected by parliament every four years. According to a Constitutional amendment effected recently, the President will henceforth be elected popularly and will have veto power over the budget and public appointments. The president appoints that member of parliament as the prime minister who commands the confidence of the majority in the parliament. Political power is vested in the prime minister and his Cabinet ministers who are responsible collectively to parliament; the supreme legislative authority. Because of the efficiency of the bureaucracy in Singapore, it is also known as an "administrative state". These exist a bureaucratic elite of more than 300 well-educated and loyal technocrats who occupy senior posts in the state bureaucracy and in statutory boards and public corporates.

14.4.1 Singapore's Parliament

Singapore's parliament is unicameral and consists of 81 members who are elected by a secret ballot with every citizen aged 21 years and above being eligible to vote. A general election is held within three months of the dissolution of a parliament, which has a maximum legal life of five years. Voting in elections has been compulsory since 1959. The People's Action Party (PAP) has been in power since 1959, having won all the general elections in succession. Since the 1988 general elections, Singapore was divided into 55 electoral divisions, of which 42 were single-member constituencies and 13 were group representation constituencies (GRC). Each GRC returned 3 MPs, one of whom must be from the Malay community, the Indian and other minority communities.

14.4.2 The Judicial System

The judicial power is vested in the High Court, the court of Appeal, the court of Criminal Appeal, and 23 subordinate courts. Judges are appointed by the President. Jury trial was abolished in 1970. Persons suspected of endangering country's security can be detained without trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA). The High Court consists of the chief justice and such other judges as may be appointed from time to time. There are special provisions in the constitution to safeguard the tenure of office and the independence of the judges of the High Court.

14.4.3 The Social System

Singapore, though relatively small in size and population, is a multiethnic society. Ethnic breakdown is Chinese 77.7%, Malay 14.1, Indians 7.17 and others 1.11. Naturally, it is a multireligious state, too. However, the state calls itself secular. Significantly, some 86% government-built multiracial estates.

14.5 ECONOMY

Because Singapore is one of the oft-mentioned economic success stories based particularly on export-promotion, it is essential to understand the

economic policies and the processes of its economy. Obviously, Singapore cannot become a model for other countries simply because the problems faced by a particular country are entirely different from that of other countries. Moreover, Singapore is a tiny island city-state with a population of about 27 lakhs less than that of Delhi. But, it does offer many lessons for other countries.

14.5.1 Early Economic Transformation

Economic transformation of Singapore began in 1959, when the country attained internal self-government. Since then, the economy has gone through several stages of development leading to its present strength as a modern and diversified business centre. The priority in the early years of Singapore's economic development was employment generation as unemployment was rampant. The Economic Development Board (EDB) was set up in 1961 to spearhead Singapore's industrialisation programme, aimed at generating employment through the establishment of manufacturing industries.

14.5.2 Export Oriented Economic Development Policy

At a time when most of the developing countries were stressing self-reliance and less dependency on multinational corporations in the sixties, Singapore adopted an export-oriented economic development policy. This policy was primarily dictated by the small size of the market and little or no opportunities to mobilise capital for large-scale industrialisation. Locally, Singapore was left with no option but to look for external sources, particularly the multinationals, for capital investments and technology. Singapore entered the international economic scene at a time when the multinationals were looking for an increased competitiveness for their products because of intense competition. By providing incentives and excellent facilities for investments, Singapore soon became a haven for the establishment of labour-intensive industries because of low labour costs in the late sixties and early seventies.

14.5.3 Formation of ASEAN

An added dimension to Singapore's rapid economic growth was the formation of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967 comprising of Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Creation of ASEAN provided the much-needed political stability for Southeast Asia which was rocked by insurgencies and wars. Though the Vietnam war was still raging with direct American military intervention, fortunately it did not spill over into the rest of South-east Asia; basically, because of American patronage that was extended to the ASEAN countries. With the deposition of President Sukarno by General Suharto in Indonesia in 1965, most of the intra-regional problems of the island region of South Asia were settled. These political developments had a direct bearing over the economic policies and development of the member countries of ASEAN.

14.5.4 From Import Substitution to Export Promotion

Efforts were made to encourage drastic changes in the strategies of economic development from import-substitution to export-promotion. Conscious efforts by the United States and other Western countries to propel the economic development by massive external economic inputs enabled Singapore to become the biggest beneficiary. By early seventies, Japan too started emerging as a major capital exporter. The obvious choice for Japan are countries such as Singapore because of its political stability and its economic policies. It was also partly a deliberate policy by the United States, the West and the international financial institutions such as the World Bank

and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to develop smaller countries, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea; rapidly firstly to blunt the communist appeal by economic prosperity and secondly, to show the rest of the developing countries the virtues of capitalism and free-market economic policies.

14.5.5 Foreign Exchange Reserves and Economic Growth

Having achieved one of the best economic growth rates in Asia by attracting foreign trade and investment, Singapore is planning to invest its massive reserves of foreign exchange. It is estimated that Singapore possesses more than US \$30 billion of foreign exchange reserves—highest per capita reserve in Asia. Singapore sees investing its money and management skills abroad as the key to maintaining rapid economic growth as the island's population matures. It also wants to exploit Singapore's multiracial character to attract highly skilled people from around Asia and serve as a focus for the Chinese and Indian diasporas. Singapore is already a joint venture partner in industrial parks, communication networks and other infrastructure projects in the planned "growth triangle" consisting of Singapore, the southern Malaysian province of Johor Baru and the adjacent Batam and other islands of Indonesia. With its vast reserves, Singapore plans to become a capital exporting country. While current growth is still impressive by global standards, it is falling behind that of Asian neighbours. In future, Singapore may have to settle for the slower expansion associated with advanced economies.

14.5.6 Governmental Steps

The government has taken a series of steps in the past few years to push Singapore's cash-rich companies to invest abroad, and to increase both the numbers and skill level of the population. Ambitious new plans to make Singapore an international city are not without constraints. Because of its small size, Singapore has very limited opportunities for developing the local market in order that economic development be brought about; nor is there greater scope for infrastructural development, for most of the infrastructure is already very well developed and modern. Secondly, though Singapore has the money it lacks technology. Finally, and more importantly are the demographic changes that Singapore is likely to undergo in the next few decades. Singapore has a population of 27 lakhs which is growing rather slowly, and it is ageing, while its labour force may begin to shrink in the next century. Population growth is expected to slow to less than 1 per cent in the 1990s and could fall to as low as 0.2 per cent by 2025. More worrying than the slower growth of population is the changing age structure. With more old people to support, social services will be more greatly stretched and the ratio of wage earners to retirees will drop. Hence, Singapore has to chalk out plans now for the coming years to maintain the pace of prosperity. Thus, plans are afoot to concentrate on fewer advanced technologies; to capitalise on the highly efficient service sectors and to undertake investments abroad.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note :**
- Use the space given below for your answer.
 - Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.
- 1) What are the main features of Singapore's Constitution?
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- 2) Explain briefly the economic strategy of Singapore.

14.6 SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICIES

It is necessary to keep in mind the tumultuous events that haunted Singapore before as well as immediately after independence, i.e., racial tensions and communist insurgency. Hence, Singapore's defence and security policies have been developed primarily to combat these threats and safeguard the country's independence. Compulsory drafting in the military is considered an effective way to inculcate racial harmony. As the country prospered, increasingly greater emphasis was laid on the defense build up. Singapore's defence expenditure is nearly US \$2 billion and the Singapore Armed Forces operate some of the most modern military equipment. Initially, Singapore's policy was based on the concept of regionalism and ASEAN was the instrument to forge closer relations with the neighbours. Though Singapore does not face any ostensible threat from its neighbours, it does not want to take chances. Singapore is like Israel in the midst of the Muslim Malay world. Infact, its policies are also formulated on the lines similar to that of Israel.

14.6.1 PAP and Elimination of Communist Influence

Because of the turmoil Singapore underwent in the immediate aftermath of independence, the leadership of the dominant party, the PAP, decided to eliminate the communist influence. In order to improve the economic conditions, Singapore embraced the best option available, i.e., free market economy and the foreign policy was also attuned to make that strategy a success. Hence, it decided to throw its lot with Western countries. By becoming anti-communist and pro-American, Singapore ensured that its security was not affected. Secondly, it was able to take active participation in the ASEAN affairs. Thirdly, it was able to seek active external cooperation from a major power—the USA—to counter balance any regional threats that might arise. Finally, it was able to fine tune its foreign policy to serve its economic interests. This is best exemplified by the recent warming up of relations between Singapore and Vietnam, which were till recently adversaries.

Check Your Progress 4

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Briefly explain the security concerns of Singapore.

- 2) What are the major aspects of Singapore's foreign policy?
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14.7 LET US SUM UP

In conclusion, it may be stated that Singapore was primarily a creation of the British to serve colonial business activities. But, gradually because of its strategic location, Singapore became a major port in the whole of South-east Asia. After the occupation by the Japanese during the Second World War, the British merged Singapore with Malaya to form Malaysia, but because of racial problems in Malaya, Singapore got separated from Malaysia in 1965 and became an independent republic. Since then, the leadership of Singapore has taken appropriate steps from time to time. The economic prosperity Singapore achieved had its political costs. Though elections are held periodically and certain norms of democracy are maintained, obviously the ruling PAP has been less tolerant of political opposition. Dissent is tackled with iron hand and dreaded internal security laws are used to scuttle opposition to the ruling party. The public is repeatedly reminded of drastic consequences of electing a party other than the PAP. After achieving certain levels of prosperity, Singaporeans are becoming restive because they feel politically stymied. With the proclaimed desire to put a check on the unchallenged authority of the PAP, gradually the opposition parties are attracting greater number of votes. However, it is difficult to predict that PAP will be voted out of power in the near future.

Economically, Singapore has consolidated its position as a dynamic Newly Industrialised Country (NIC) by adapting itself to the changes in the international business environment. Its biggest assets are its foresight and massive reserves, which and it proved it is capable of using them intelligently.

14.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

DGE Hall, 1981, *A History of South-east Asia* (London : Macmillan).

George Kahin 1968. (ed), *Government and Politics in South-east Asia* (New York : Cornell University Press).

John Smyth, 1971. *Percival and the Tragedy of Singapore* (London Macdonald).

J. Anah, 1989. et al; (eds), *The Government and Politics of Singapore*. Singapore, Oxford University Press.

R.S. Milne and Dinae K. Mauzy 1990. *Singapore : The Legacy of Lee Kuan Yew*, Boulder Colo.

Thomas J Bellows. "Singapore", in Joel Krieger, 1993. ed. *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, New York : Oxford University Press.

J. Denis Derbyshire and Zan Desbyshire 1990. *Chambers Political Systems of The World*, New Delhi : Allied Publishers.

14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See sub-section 15.2.3
- 2) Same as above

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See sub-section 15.3.3
- 2) See sub-sections 15.3.6 & 15.3.8

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See section 15.4
- 2) See section 15.5

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) See section 15.6
- 2) As above

UNIT 15 MALAYSIA

Structure

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 The Country
 - 15.2.1 The People
 - 15.2.2 Religion
- 15.3 The Economy
 - 15.3.1 The New Economic Policy
- 15.4 Administrative and Social Conditions
 - 15.4.1 The Administrative Structure
 - 15.4.2 Judicial System
 - 15.4.3 Armed Forces
 - 15.4.4 Educational System and Health Services
 - 15.4.5 Cultural Life
- 15.5 Malaysian Political Culture
- 15.6 Growth of the Constitution
 - 15.6.1 European Incursions
 - 15.6.2 The British Administration
 - 15.6.3 Post-War Malaya
 - 15.6.4 Independence
 - 15.6.5 Formation of Malaysia
 - 15.6.6 The Cobbold Commission
- 15.7 Salient Features of the Constitution
- 15.8 The Federal Executive
 - 15.8.1 Yang di-Pertuan Agong
 - 15.8.2 Election
 - 15.8.3 Conference of Rulers
 - 15.8.4 The Prime Minister
 - 15.8.5 Cabinet and Ministers
 - 15.8.6 The Constitutional Position of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong
- 15.9 The Federal Parliament
 - 15.9.1 The Dewan Negara
 - 15.9.2 Dewan Rakyat
 - 15.9.3 Sessions
 - 15.9.4 Committee System
 - 15.9.5 Legislative Procedure
 - 15.9.6 Functions of Parliament
- 15.10 Federal Judiciary and the Rights of the Citizens
 - 15.10.1 Judicial Authority
 - 15.10.2 Jurisdiction
- 15.11 Party System
 - 15.11.1 General Elections in Brief
 - 15.11.2 The Alliance Party
 - 15.11.3 Other Parties
 - 15.11.4 Nature of the Party System
- 15.12 Malaysia in International Affairs
 - 15.12.1 The Aftermath
 - 15.12.2 Foreign Relations
- 15.13 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.14 Key Words
- 15.15 Some Useful Books
- 15.16 Answers to Check Your Progress

15.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit are to :

- i) Explain the socio-economic system of Malyasia

- ii) Explain the background against which the present constitution has evolved and how it functions and
- iii) Explain its government and politics

15.1 INTRODUCTION

The Federation of Malaysia, a parliamentary democracy ruled by a Constitutional Monarch, and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations formed in 1963, has a long political tradition and a distinct social and political set-up. Malaysia is a plural society. Largely because of its plural nature, Malaysia has witnessed the gradual emergence of a multi-party system.

15.2 THE COUNTRY

Malaysia lies in the heart of Southeast Asia. A crescent shaped country close to the equator, it occupies two distinct regions—Peninsular Malaysia extending from the Kra Isthmus to the Straits of Johor, and Sabah and Sarawak on the northwestern coast of the island of Borneo.

These regions are separated by about 750 Km of the South China Sea. Peninsular Malaysia has a land frontier with Thailand in the north; to the south, it is linked with the Republic of Singapore by a causeway. To the west across the Straits of Melacca lies the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

15.2.1 The People

Malaysia has a diversity of races. Malaysians are made up of Malays, and other indigenous people, the Sea Dayaks (Ibans), Land Dayaks (Bidayuh), Kadazans, Kanayahs, Melanaus and Maruts (who are known as 'Bhumiputras'), as well as Chinese, Indians, Eurasians and many others. They all live and work together. Out of a total population of 14.6 million people in 1990, 57.3% are Malays and other indigenous people, 32.1% Chinese, 10% Indians and 0.6% others.

15.2.2 Religion

Islam is the official religion but there is freedom of worship. Malays, usually Muslims who speak Bahasa Malaysia (the national language), constitute more than half of Malaysia's population. There are some Muslim Indians and Chinese. The Chinese are mainly Buddhists or Taoists. Most Indians are Hindus but there is a Sikh minority also. The Ruler is the religious head of Islam in all states except in Pulau Pinang in Melacca, where the religious head is the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the Supreme-Head of State. In each state there is a council of religion to advise the state government. All Islamic observances or ceremonies which apply to the country as a whole are decided by the National Council for Islamic Affairs.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.
- 1) What is the ethnic composition of Malaysian society?

15.3 THE ECONOMY

The development of Malaysian economy since the 1960s has been impressive, and today it has to be one of Asia's most prosperous and fast growing economies. Malaysia has a predominantly market economy heavily dependent on production and export of petroleum, rubber, tin and palm oil, the classic features of a developing economy. Malaysia faces four major economic problems. First, rapid population growth poses problems of employing a growing labour force and maintaining, if not improving, the standard of living. Second, Malaysia's heavy dependence on exports of non-fuel raw materials makes its economy very vulnerable. In addition, the market for natural rubber is shrinking, while profitability of tin mining began to fall in the late 1970s as the more accessible deposits became exhausted. Third, there is a very uneven distribution of income between Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak and Sabah, between the urban and rural population, and among ethnic groups. Finally, there is a serious shortage of skilled labour.

The country's economic plans have attempted to safeguard its economic future in two ways. There has been an attempt at agricultural diversification, by persuading farmers not to depend wholly on rubber but on planting such crops as oil palm and pine apples. A lot of emphasis is being laid on industrialisation.

15.3.1 The New Economic Policy

The New Economic Policy (NEP) initiated after racial riots in 1970 against prosperous minority (usually Chinese or Indian merchant) communities, was designed to promote "national unity" by means of eradicating poverty. This was to be done by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians.

The NEP, incorporated in the Second Malaysian Plan of 1971-75, established a 30 per cent rule which meant that in 20 years, i.e., by 1990, the Malays and other indigenous people would be owning and managing at least 30 per cent of the total commercial and industrial activities. The government also took urgent action to rectify the imbalance in the racial composition of people at various levels.

The agriculture sector accounts for approximately one-fourth of the gross national product and employs up to one-half of the work force. The Federal Land Development Authority is the country's largest producer of palm oil. Roundwood, exported to Japan, Singapore, and members of the European Economic Community, is a major source of foreign exchange.

Malaysia has usually earned more from exports of merchandise than it spent on imports of merchandise. In 1980, these exports earned \$12.9 billion, while imports cost \$10.6 billion. Nearly a quarter of Malaysia's trade is with Japan. The United States and Singapore was also major trading partners. Malaysia has also benefited from an inflow of foreign capital, mainly in the form of direct investments.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the main objectives of the New Malaysian Economic Policy.

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- 2) What are the major economic problems faced by the Malaysian economy?

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15.4 ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

15.4.1 The Administrative Structure

Malaysia is a Federal Constitutional Monarchy, with a non-political Head of State, or Yang di-Pertuan Agong, who is elected from among nine state hereditary rulers for a five year term. The legislature is composed of the Dewan Negara, or Senate with a membership of 69 (made up of 26 elected and 43 appointed members) and Dewan Rakyat, or House of Representatives with 180 members which functions in a manner similar to the British House of Commons and consists of 180 members elected to a five-year term by universal adult suffrage. The leader of the party with the most seats in Parliament serves as Prime Minister and names a Cabinet, the members of which are appointed by the paramount ruler. The dominant political organization is the National Front, a coalition of parties representing the country's three major ethnic groups.

The Constitution provides for parliamentary elections and for elections to state legislatures, to be held at least every five years.

15.4.2 Judicial System

The Constitution of Malaysia, the supreme law of the country, provides that the judicial power of the federation shall be vested in the High Court of West Malaysia and the High Court in East Malaysia as well as in subordinate courts. Above the High Courts is the Federal Court, with jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals from decisions by any High Court. The Supreme Head of the judiciary is the Lord President of the Federal Court.

15.4.3 Armed Forces

The Malaysian armed forces which consist of the army, the navy and the air force, have increased in strength and capability since the formation of Malaysia in 1963. After the withdrawal of British military forces from Malaysia and Singapore at the end of 1971, a five power agreement between

Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain was concluded to ensure defence against external aggression. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) also provides additional regional security.

The States of Malaysia inherited from their common colonial past an internal security based on the British model. The police force is well-trained and combats not only crime but also subversive activities, including armed Communist insurrection.

15.4.4 Educational System and Health Services

Education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 15. It is estimated that more than 90 per cent of all primary school age children attend the country's six year primary schools.

Malaysia's social-welfare system provides employed persons with work injury, old age, and desirability benefits. The general level of the country's health has improved greatly since World War II. Overall the country's life expectancy rate is about 68 years for males and about 73 years for females.

15.4.5 Cultural Life

Malaysia, with its complex family of peoples and cultures, is a melting pot of traditions stemming from the Malay Archipelago as well as from China, India and the West. Malay and Bornean cultures are indigenous to the area. The most important literary work is considered to be the *Sejarah Melayu* ("Malay Annals") written about 1535, which presents a detailed account of the medieval city-state of Malacca.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Enumerate the federal structure of Malaysia.

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- 2) Present briefly the general level of health services in post World War II period.

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15.5 MALAYSIAN POLITICAL CULTURE

The Malaysian political system can be better understand by taking a look at the culture within which it operates. Malaysian people have in-built faith in democratic institutions, equality of all men and possession of certain inalienable rights. But Malaysia, as a federation of disparate ethnic, economic, and political components, has had difficulties and problems from the moment of its inception in 1963. The most intractable of these

problems—the strained relations between West Malaysia and Singapore—was solved by affecting a political separation. Other problems, equally serious, remain however. Racial riots between the Malays and the Chinese in May 1969—which led to the suspension of parliamentary rule and to the declaration of a state of emergency that lasted till February 1971—were an indication of the underlying tensions stemming from ethnic imbalances. These tensions persisted through the 1980s and early 1990s, with Malays constituting a majority of the population in five of Malaysia's six poorest states. The Malays, virtually all of whom are Muslims have been increasingly attracted to radical forms of Islam, thus further exacerbating racial tensions.

Check Your Progress 4

- Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Briefly discuss Malaysia's political culture.

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15.6 GROWTH OF THE CONSTITUTION

There are many interpretations of the early history of Malaysia. It is believed that the earliest organized political states first emerged in the north of the Malay Peninsula. The regions of present day Malaysia formed part of the Budhist Sri Vijayan Empire between the ninth and fourteenth centuries, an empire which was eventually overthrown by a Javanese Hindu Kingdom. Islam was subsequently introduced and a substantial empire built up, prior to the Portuguese conquest of Malacca in 1511. Thereafter, the area successively came under the Dutch (1641-1795), the British (1795-1817), the Dutch again (1818-24), and finally once again the British (1824-1963).

15.6.1 European Incursions

In 1511, Melacca was captured by the Portuguese. This marked the beginning of European incursions into Melacca. In 1641 Melacca fell to the Dutch. Neither conquest to any important social change in Malay society. Late in the 18th century, British commercial interests from India extended to Pulau Pinang which the British acquired from the Sultan of Kedah in 1786. In 1819, the British acquired Singapore from the Sultan of Johor. In 1824, Britain acquired Melacca from Dutch in exchange for Bencoolen in Sumatra. Two years later Pulau Pinang, Melacca and Singapore became collectively known as the Straits Settlements.

15.6.2 The British Administration

The development of a wealthy commercial class in the Straits Settlements led to growing investments in the Peninsula, and British sovereignty was progressively established. By the middle of the 19th century, the economic invasion of the Peninsula had begun. In 1867, the administration of the Straits Settlements was transferred from the Indian Office to the Colonial Office. The Pangkor Agreement of 1874 marked the beginning of radical, political and administrative change in the Malay States.

The Residential System was introduced whereby British officers called 'Residents' were appointed to advise the Sultans on all matters except those touching on Malay custom and religion. In 1895 Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang were combined into a federation known as Federated Malay States (FMS). In 1877 and 1878, British business interests succeeded in obtaining cessions of north and east Borneo from the Sultans of Brunei and Sulu respectively. When the British North Borneo Company was founded in 1882, it acquired all the ceded possessions. In 1888, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo (now Sabah) became British protectorates.

In 1909, the Siamese transferred to the British their rights of suzerainty over Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Terengganu. A British Advisor was then appointed to each of these four States. Johor joined this grouping in 1914 to form the unfederated Malay States (UMS). These five States never joined the federation for fear of losing their power to the British.

15.6.3 Post-War Malaya

The British Military Administration (BMA) was set-up after the war. The Straits Settlements were disbanded and Singapore became a Crown Colony. The British created the Malayan Union in April 1946, which included Melacca, Pulau Pinang, and the nine Malay States. The Malayan Union was abandoned in 1948 following strong opposition from Malay nationalists. Dissatisfaction arose because of the transfer of powers from Malay Rulers to the British Crown. In its place emerged the 1948 Federation of Malaya Agreement, which provided for a High Commissioner and a Federal Legislative Council consisting of 75 members, 50 of whom were not officials.

15.6.4 Independence

In 1955, a new constitution was introduced transferring most of the responsibility of the government to the elected representatives of the people. The new Federal Legislative Council was to consist of 52 members, three (ex-officio) members, 11 State and Settlement representatives, 22 representatives of scheduled interests, three representatives of racial minorities, and seven reserve members nominated by the High Commissioner. Two were filled by officials and five by non-officials after consultation with the leader of the majority party among elected members. In the elections held in July 1955, the Alliance Party, a coalition of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) won 51 out of 52 seats. The President of the UMNO, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who was also the head of the Alliance, became the Chief Minister.

In early 1956, a conference was held in London to discuss the question of independence. Among other things, it was agreed that a Constitutional Commission should be appointed as soon as possible to draft a constitution providing for full self-government and independence within the Commonwealth by August 1957, if possible. By March the same year, an Independence Constitutional Commission headed by Lord Reid was appointed. The Legislative Council accepted the constitutional proposals submitted by the Commission regarding a federal form of constitution based on parliamentary democracy, in February 1957, and the Federation of Malaya Agreement was concluded in August 1957. By month end, Independence was finally achieved with Tunku Abdul Rehman becoming the first Prime Minister.

15.6.5 Formation of Malaysia

By 1959, although the Alliance Party was firmly in control in Malaya, the

appeared to have consolidated themselves. Soon, the British Government made plans to allow Singapore to gain independence by mid-1963. The Malayan government was also concerned over the situation in Sabah and Sarawak where the British Government had done little to safeguard the position of the indigenous people. With these considerations in mind, the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, on 27 May 1961, publicly mooted the idea of Malaya working in close cooperation with Singapore, Sabah, Brunei and Sarawak, leading to the formation of Malaysia.

15.6.6 The Cobbold Commission

From February till mid-April 1962, Lord Cobbold, a former Governor of the Bank of England, led a five-man Commission of Inquiry to ascertain the views of the people in North Borneo and Sarawak regarding the proposed federation. The British and Malayan Governments accepted almost all the unanimous recommendations of the Commission and decided in principle that the proposed Federation brought into being by 31 August 1963. This would entail the transfer of sovereignty over Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo and detailed constitutional arrangements for North Borneo and Sarawak, including safeguards for their special interest, all to be drawn up after consultation with the legislatures of the two territories. Thus, Malaysia came into being on 16 September 1963 comprising the Federation of Malaya, Singapore (which separated in 1965) and the colonies of North Borneo (renamed Sabah and Sarawak).

Check Your Progress 5

- Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.
- 1) Give a brief account of European incursions into Malaya.

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- 2) What were the main provisions of the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1948?

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15.7 SALIENT FEATURES OF THE CONSTITUTION

The salient features of the Malaysian Constitution are as follows:

Written and rigid

It is written and rigid. It contains 161 articles.

Supreme Law of the Land

Article 4 of the Constitution clearly lays down : (1) This Constitution is the

supreme law of the Federation and any law passed after Merdeka (Independence) Day which is inconsistent with this Constitution shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void. Its supremacy is maintained by the federal courts in Malaysia.

Enacted as well as evolved

The basic document was enacted in 1948. The formation of Malaysia did not lead to the adoption of a new constitution. Even the Constitution of 1957 was an amended form of the constitution of 1948. Even that constitution was not written wholly anew; it was a continuation of the preceding form of government in an amended form. Thus the constitution is enacted as well as evolved.

Federal Judiciary

There is Federal Court at the apex and there are High Courts for Malaya, and Borneo Territories. The Federal Court and the High Courts have the powers of interpreting the Constitution and judicial review. The judiciary is unpoliticized and independent.

Fundamental Rights

The Constitution embodies fundamental rights and liberties as they can be enforced by the courts.

Position of Religion

According to Article 3, Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation. However, Islam is not the religion of the States of Sabah and Sarawak.

Check Your Progress 6

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Is Malaysian Constitution written, rigid or both?

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- 2) What is the position of religion in the constitution?

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15.8 THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE

Malaysia is a Constitutional Monarchy comprising of 13 States, 9 of which were formerly sultanates under British protection and 4 of which (Melacca, Pulau Pinang, Sarawak, and Sabah) were former British settlements ruled by appointed governors. The Constitution provides for the election of a head

of state, the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong**, (the paramount ruler), for a single term of five years by the Conference of Rulers. The executive power rests with the cabinet, chosen by the prime minister, who is the leader of the majority party.

15.8.1 Yang di-Pertuan Agong

His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong is the Supreme head of Malaysia. Every act of government flows from his authority though he acts on the advice of Parliament and the cabinet. The appointment of prime minister is actually his discretion. He can refuse to dissolve the parliament even against the advice of the prime minister. As fountain of justice, he appoints the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts on the advice of the prime minister, in accordance with procedures in the Federal Constitution. As a Fountain of Honour, he can bestow orders of chivalry or give honours or recognition. In addition the Yang di-Pertuan Agong has the power to grant pardons and respites.

15.8.2 Election

To qualify for the election he must be one of the nine rulers. He holds office for five years or till his resignation whichever is earlier or death. In the case of vacancy, the office falls vacant, the Conference of Rulers meets to elect a successor. On his election the Yang di-Pertuan Agong relinquishes, for his tenure of office, all his functions as Ruler of his own State and may appoint a Regent. However, he remains a temporal Head (Muslim Religion) in his State; and in the event of the Regency becoming vacant thereafter, he may appoint a new Regent in accordance with the constitution of his state. He must also approve any amendment to his state's constitution.

15.8.3 Conference of Rulers.

The Conference of Rulers is established by the Constitution and comprises Rulers and Yang di-Pertua-Yang di-Pertua Negeri. Its prime duty is the election of the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong**. The Conference must be consulted on the appointment of Judges, the Attorney-General, the Election Commission and the Public Service Commission. The Conference must likewise be consulted and concur in the alteration of state boundaries, the extension to the Federation as a whole, in Muslim religious acts and observances, and in any Bill to amend the constitution. The Prime Minister, Menteri-Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers attend all the meetings of the Conference of Rulers other than a meeting to elect the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong** or the **Timbalan Yang di-Pertuan Agong**.

15.8.4 The Prime Minister

In accordance with the principle of democratic system, the real head of the executive is the prime minister. As the head of the government, the Prime Minister is responsible to the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong** for all governmental matters. The prime minister is the leader of the majority party in the **Dewan Rakyat**. He also heads of the Council of ministers, were he is the primus interpares, the first among equals.

15.8.5 Cabinet and Ministers

The **Yang di-Pertuan Agong** appoints a Cabinet—a Council of Ministers—to advise him in the exercise of his functions. It comprises of the prime minister and an unspecified number of ministers who must all be members of parliament. Ministers are appointed on the advice of the prime minister. The Cabinet meets regularly, generally once a week, to formulate governmental

policy. The Ministers hold different portfolios and are collectively responsible for all decisions made by the Cabinet, the highest policy-making body in the country.

15.8.6 The Constitutional Position of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong

Although the Yang di-Pertuan Agong is the Constitutional Monarch bound by the Constitution to act at all times on the advice of the Cabinet, he cannot be removed by the Cabinet or Parliament itself. His position is stronger than the President of India, who can be impeached, but not as strong as that of the English Monarch, who cannot be removed at all in as much as Yang di-Pertuan Agong may be removed from office by the Conference of Rulers.

Although the Monarch is a constitutional entity and part of the parliament, there are certain functions which he performs in relation to parliament as a whole and in relation to the House separately. He can summon, prorogue, or dissolve the parliament. He may address either House or both Houses jointly. He also appoints 32 Senators—men of distinction in the professions, commerce, industry etc.

On the advice of the Prime Minister and after consulting the Conference of Rulers, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong appoints: i) Lord President of the Federal Court; ii) Chief Justices of the High Courts; and iii) other judges of these courts. He can also extend the tenure of office of a judge of the Federal Court beyond the age of 65 years, but for not more than 6 months beyond that age. Finally, he is authorized to determine at what place in the Borneo States the High Court will have its principal registry, and he also has the authority to appoint a judicial commissioner for the dispatch of business of the High Court in Borneo.

Check Your Progress 7

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end fo the unit.

- 1) Enumerate the process for the election of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

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15.9 THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENT

At the federal level, legislative power is vested in a bicameral legislature headed by the Monarch and comprising the Dewan Negara (Senate) and Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives). Each state has a unicameral legislature for which elections are held every five years.

The distribution of legislative powers between the federal and state government is enumerated in the Ninth Schedule of the federal constitution in the Federal List, State List, and a Concurrent List.

Should there be any inconsistency between a federal and a state law, federal law takes precedence.

15.9.1 The Dewan Negara

The **Dewan Negara**, the upper and permanent chambers, has 69 members of whom 40 are nominated by the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong** from among citizens who, in his opinion have rendered distinguished public service or have achieved distinctions in professions etc. Two members to represent the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and one member from the Federal Territory of Labuan are appointed by the King. The remaining 26 Senators are elected by the Legislative Assemblies of the 13 States each returning 2. Both the President and the Deputy President are elected by members of the **Dewan Negara** from among themselves. A Senator holds office for three years.

15.9.2 The Dewan Rakyat

The popular chamber elected by the people directly on the basis of adult suffrage. Its size is based on population. With a population of 6.6 million, the first Parliament of 1959 had 104 members. The membership rose to 144 in 1969 and to 180 in 1990. The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are elected by the **Dewan Rakyat**. But there is a special provision in the Constitution for the Speaker to be elected from outside the **Dewan Rakyat**; the person so elected is regarded as a member of the Dewan in addition to the 180 elected members. Membership to Dewan Rakyat is limited to citizens aged 21 and above and to those who are not members of the Senate. The life of the Lower House is five years. However, it is the discretion of the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong** to dissolve parliament before then, if the prime minister so advises.

15.9.3 Sessions

The **Yang di-Pertuan Agong** from time to time summons parliament ensuring that to let more than 6 months lapse between the last sitting in one session and the date appointed for its first meeting in the next session. Parliament generally meets for about a week at a time, except for a longer meeting to consider the budget, and then it adjourns.

15.9.4 Committee System

Malaysia practices Committee system in Parliament. A bill after introduction is first considered by the whole House, before being referred to a Committee. But usually there are no select committees in the Parliament of Malaysia. The normal practise is for the House of Representatives to use the Committee of the Whole House for the Committee Stage of bills. After the Second Reading, the House itself considers the details and when the bill has been reported out of committee there is a short Third Reading.

15.9.5 Legislative Procedure

The legislative procedure as has been prescribed by the Constitution and standing orders, is very much similar to that followed in the British and Indian Parliaments. Bills are divided into ordinary bills and money bills. Besides, there are private members bills, introduced by private members.

Subject to Article 67, a Bill other than money bill, may originate in either house. When a Bill has been passed by the house in which it originated, it is sent to the other house; and it is presented to the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong** for his assent. A Bill becomes a law on being assented to by the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong**, but no law can come into force until it has been published, without prejudice, however, to the power of Parliament, to postpone the operation of

15.9.6 Functions of Parliament

The Parliament can legislate only within the limits of its own spheres, namely the Federal and Concurrent Lists, and in some cases in the State List. The authority of the Parliament to legislate is subject to the judicial review by the federal courts. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong is empowered during an emergency, to promulgate ordinances having the force of law in accordance with Article 150.

Parliament alone has the power to levy any taxes or rates, to increase or decrease any existing tax, to make grants to the States, to pass legislation regarding the remuneration to be paid to MPs and high officials. Parliament being the custodian of public purse enables it to exercise a large measure of control over the executive; largely through discussions during the budget debate.

The Cabinet is collectively responsible for its policies and programmes to the House of Representatives. The executive proposes amendments to the Constitution and the parliament accepts, rejects or modifies them. Article 159 empowers the parliament to amend the constitution which so far has been amended over twenty times. But there are certain limitations to the amendment of Articles 10 (4), 14-31, 38, 63 (3), 70, 71 (1), 72 (4), 152, 153, and 159 (5), in that these cannot be amended without the consent of the Conference of Rulers.

Members of both Houses of Parliament have been granted certain privileges. Their breaches, if any, are punishable by the houses.

Check Your Progress 8

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) The Dewan Negara is composed.....members of whom.....are nominated by.....
- 2) Explain the way the Malaysian Parliament controls the Executive.

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15.10 FEDERAL JUDICIARY AND THE RIGHTS OF THE CITIZENS

Malaysia's court system shows the spread of British influence in Malaya. The 1957 Constitution continued with the prevailing judicial system by providing that there should be a Supreme Court and such subordinate courts as might be determined by the federal law.

But in 1963, with the formation of Malaysia, the Supreme Court was abolished by amending Article 121 and providing that the judicial power of the Federation shall be vested in three high courts of coordinate jurisdiction ad status and in such subordinate courts as may be provided by law—the three High Courts being those of Malaya, Singapore and Borneo. Since the separation of Singapore in 1965, there are now only two, each headed by its

15.10.1 Judicial Authority

The Federal Court is the highest judicial authority in the country comprising the Lord President, the Chief Justices and four federal judges. Usually it sits in a panel of 3 and occasionally in a panel of 5. It travels on circuit to the major state capitals, but it has its principal registry in Kuala Lumpur.

The High Court in Malaya is for the States of Malaya and has its principal registry in Kuala Lumpur. The High Court in Borneo is for the States of Sabah and Sarawak, with its principal registry located in a place determined by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. Each of the two High Courts consists of a chief justice and not less than four other judges; but the number of other judges is not to exceed, unless parliament decides otherwise, 12 in the High Court in Malaya and 8 in the High Court in Borneo.

Lord President of the Federal Court, the Chief Justice of the High Courts and other judges are appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, after consulting the Conference of Rulers.

A judge of the Federal Court may at any time resign but cannot be removed from his office except in accordance with certain provisions. Thus, if the Prime Minister or Lord President after consulting the Prime Minister, represents to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong that a judge of the Federal Court ought to be removed on grounds of misbehaviour or inability due to infirmity of body or mind to discharge the functions of his office, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong will appoint a tribunal and refer the representation to it; and may on the recommendation of the tribunal remove the judge from office. Subordinate or inferior courts, established by federal law, include sessions courts, magistrates' courts and Penghulu Courts, exercising a limited and local jurisdiction. They are established by the state legislatures and form a separate system of court. But there is no state judicial system with general functions.

15.10.2 Jurisdiction

The Federal Court has exclusive jurisdiction to decide appeals from decisions of a High Court or a judge thereof. It has such original jurisdiction as is specified in Articles 128 and 130. Under its original jurisdiction, the Federal Court has the power to interpret the constitution and decide disputes between states and between any state and the federal government. Article 128 (1) gives it the power of judicial review by authorizing it to determine whether a law made by Parliament or by the legislature of a State is invalid if it is in conflict with the provisions of the Constitution. It has referral jurisdiction under Article 128 (2) which says that when there is a proceeding before another court and a question arises as to the effects of any provisions of the Constitution, the Federal Court has jurisdiction to determine the question and remit the case to the other court to be disposed of (in accordance with the determination). Finally, it has advisory jurisdiction under Article 130, which gives power to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to seek the advise of Federal Court on any matter.

Each High Court has original and appellate jurisdiction and has power to interpret the constitution.

Check Your Progress 9

- Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.
- 1) Explain the practice of judicial review in Malaysia.
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- 2) What are the various rights offered to a citizen in Malaysia?

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15.11 PARTY SYSTEM

In Malaysia elections are held at least every five years in a free and fair manner and the members of the House of Representatives and State Legislatures are elected on the basis of the First past the Post System candidate who secures the highest number of votes in a constituency is declared elected.

15.11.1 General Elections in Brief

Since independence in 1957, eight general elections have been held—in 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990. In both 1964, 1969 elections, the Alliance Party returned to power at the federal level, maintaining an unbroken record as the governing party since 1955.

Following the 1969 elections, there was a brief outbreak of inter-racial violence, subsequently characterized as the 'May 18 Incident', which compelled the government to declare a State of Emergency and establish a National Operations Council to administer the country.

In 1970, Tun Abdul Razak bin Haji Hussein became the second prime minister of Malaysia with Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj stepping down in his favour.

In 1971, Parliament was reconvened and constitutional amendments were passed to restrain public discussion of issues inimical to racial harmony. At the same time, measures were taken to ensure that the indigenous people were afforded opportunities for full participation in the economic life of the country. In furtherance of this, the Alliance Party successfully initiated action to form a National Front, which included many of the opposition political parties. On 24 August 1974, Malaysia held its fourth general elections and the National Front emerged with a landslide victory capturing 135 parliamentary seats out of 154. On 15 January 1976, the second Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak passed away. Tun Hussein Onn became the third Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The fifth general elections was held in 1978. It was a remarkable performance for the National Front as it retained control of 10 state assemblies. This followed the defection of the Pan Islamic Party from the Front. But the Front suffered a decline in its support: it got 55.14 per cent in 1978 as compared with 60.7 per cent in 1974. In terms of seats, the Front secured more than 2/3 of the total.

On 16 July 1981, Dato' Seti Mahathir Mohammad became Malaysia's Prime Minister. This coincided with the retirement of Tun Hussein Onn. In the

1982 and the 1986 general elections, the ruling National Front won with a 2/3 majority. In 1982, National Front won a sweeping majority getting 132 out of 254 seats. The eight general elections were held in October 1990 and the National Front won 128 seats in the 180 member Dewan Rakyat.

15.11.2 The Alliance Party

Before World War II, there was limited political activity in Malaya but the Japanese occupation and its aftermath brought a new political awareness. Post-war political parties sought independence, and although the Malaya feared domination by the populous minorities, particularly the economically stronger Chinese, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the leading Malay party, and the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) formed the Alliance Party in 1952. This party was later joined by the Malaysian Indian Congress and became the nation's dominant political party.

As a principal political party of the Federation, the UMNO was originally formed in May 1946 to fight for independence, and safeguard the interests of the indigenous people. Since independence, the party has set as its major aim the safeguarding of Malay interests', the promotion of national unity and the pursuit of a 'neutral foreign policy'.

Dissentions grew within the UMNO during 1987-88, culminating in a High Court ruling in February 1988, which as a result of irregularities in the party's internal elections of April 1987, declared the UMNO to be an 'unlawful' body. It therefore had to be disbanded, and a new UMNO (UMNO Baru) was immediately founded by Dr. Mahathir. Dissident UMNO members, led by former Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and former trade and industry minister, Tunku Tan Sri Razaleigh Hamzah, were forced outside and in May 1989 formed an alternative party, Semangat '46 (Spirit of 1946).

Twelve other parties are currently also members of the ruling National Front coalition, the majority being communally or regionally based. The most important is the Chinese-oriented MCA, a conservative grouping, formed in 1949, which currently claims a membership of 500,000 and is led by Dr Ling Liang Sik.

15.11.3 Other Parties

The role of all other parties in politics of the country has been much less important. Moreover, it is not easy to classify them. Some are non-Malay, some communal, while some are free from communal overtones.

The principal opposition party in the Federation is the predominantly Chinese, 12,000 member Democratic Action Party (DAP), led by Liom Kit Siang. Formed in 1966, the DAP advocated the establishment of a multi-racial society based on the principles of democratic socialism. Also important is the Islamic-radical, 250,000 member Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), formed in 1951 advocates the establishment of a fully Islamic society.

Others include the Kadazan-supported Sabah United Party (PBS), by the Roman Catholic, Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan, the Hizbul Muslim, established as a breakaway group from the PBS, the Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS), the Malaysian Islamic Council Front (FMIC) and the Sarawak National Party (SNP).

15.11.4 Nature of the Party System

The chief characteristics of the party system may now briefly be discussed as follows:

Legal Position of the Political Parties

Malaysia's constitution, is silent on this subject. There are more than 20 political parties in Malaysia. The formation of a political party is subject to the rules as laid down under the Societies Act 1966 amended from time to time. Section 7(1) of the Act empowers the Registrar of Societies to refuse registration of a political party that in the opinion of the minister is likely to affect the interest or the security of the Federation or any part thereof, public order or morality; and (b) which is an organization or group of political nature established or having affiliation or connection outside the Federation. The Malaysian Communist Party banned during colonial days, never applied for registration.

Multiplicity and Communal/Racial Character of Parties

This is a very significant feature, arising from the fact that the Malaysian society is multi-racial. Besides the three important racial communities—Malays, Chinese and Indians—there are many others inhabiting different parts or regions of the country. Malaysian political parties are communal, being based on racial differences.

One-Party Dominance

The party-system in Malaysia, is characterized by the dominance of one political party. The Alliance Party, as a coalition of three parties—UMNO, MCA and MIC—dominated the national political scene from 1955 till 1971. Later, the National Front, with UMNO, as its main component came into power. It may, however, be remarked that no single party has been coalitional. Keeping in view the success of the Alliance Party, another Alliance type coalition—the Socialist Front—existed from 1957 till 1965.

Interest Groups

Interest groups in Malaysia are of recent origin and they are not many in number. The most important interest groups are the trade unions, which are not free from the influence of communalism. Urban workers—Chinese and Indians—are organized into trade unions. Indians have a large number of trade unions and union leaders. By 1962 there were about 300 trade unions, which were later reorganized. The biggest union is the National Union of Plantation Workers and the largest grouping of Unions is the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC). The various chambers of commerce are important pressure groups.

Check Your Progress 10

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the ideology of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party.

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- 2) What happens if an organization of political nature is established having connections outside Federations?

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15.12 MALAYSIA IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Malaysia was established in an atmosphere of rapidly rising tension. The London Agreement which gave final shape to the federation, was opposed by its immediate neighbours. The reservations expressed by the Philippines stemmed mainly from the unresolved issue of its claim of sovereignty over parts of North Borneo. Indonesian hostility, on the other hand, was a complex web of ideological, economic and political factors. The Philippine government broke diplomatic relations with Malaysia. During the year that followed, relations between Malaysia and Indonesia had deteriorated to such an extent that all trade, travel and communication ties were severed.

15.12.1 The Aftermath

In January 1966, Indonesia's confrontation against Malaysia acquired a lesser degree of intensity as leaders in Indonesia were involved in the formation of a new government.

On 1 June 1966, a peace pact designed to end Indonesia's three-year old confrontation against Malaysia was agreed upon in Bangkok by Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, and Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Adam Malik.

Following the peace agreement between Indonesia and Malaysia, the Philippines took concrete steps to recognize Malaysia, and on 3 June, Malaysia and the Philippines resumed full diplomatic relations after a lapse of three years.

On 11 August 1966, peace agreement between Malaysia and Indonesia was signed in Jakarta between Tun Abdul Razak and Mr. Adam Malik, signalling the end of three-year confrontation. By August 1967, Malaysia and Indonesia resumed full-diplomatic relations.

15.12.2 Foreign Relations

The keynote of Malaysia's foreign policy is peace. Malaysia places great importance on fostering and maintaining regional cooperation in South-east Asia; promoting Islamic solidarity; consolidating non-alignment; seeking friendly relations with as many countries as possible and strengthening links with nations with whom Malaysia has common interests.

To enhance regionalism, Malaysia is actively involved in ASEAN (Association of South-east Asian Nations) other members of which are Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) and is working towards creating a zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in South-east Asia (ZOPFAN) to provide the basis for peace and stability in the region.

Malaysia, as a member of ASEAN, has attempted to establish strong diplomatic relations with its communist neighbours. Between 1978 and 1989 Malaysia provided 'first asylums' for about 230,000 Vietnamese refugees, pending their resettlement in the West.

Malaysia is a strong advocate of solidarity and unity among Islamic states. Malaysia is strengthening its friendly relations with these States by promoting cooperation not only in religious but also in the economic, social, cultural, educational, scientific and technological fields, particularly through the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

To help consolidate the strength and ideals of non-alignment, Malaysia plays an active role in the non-aligned movement and has attended several of its meetings including the Algiers Summit in September 1973, the Colombo Summit in August 1976, the Havana Summit in September 1979, the New Delhi Summit in September 1983 and the Harare Summit in September 1986.

The efforts by Malaysia to promote international cooperation and understanding for the establishment of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) based on justice and equality are also clearly seen in its direct involvement in the activities of world bodies like the United Nations, its various agencies and the Commonwealth, and of regional organizations for cooperation such as the Colombo Plan and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Malaysia has 63 diplomatic missions in 53 countries, apart from concurrent accreditations to an additional 42 countries from neighbouring capitals. Honorary consultates have also been established in 18 countries. Eighty-three countries have diplomatic missions in Malaysia and 24 are accredited to Malaysia from neighbouring countries.

Check Your Progress 11

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) What do the following stand for?

- i) ASEAN
- ii) ZOPFAN
- iii) NIEO
- iv) NAM

15.13 LET US SUM UP

Malaysia attained independence 10 years after India, and it became Malaysia Federation in September 1963, by including the colonies of Sabah and Sarawak. Singapore separated from the Federation of Malaysia in August 1965. Some notable features of Malaysia, particularly for Indian students, are: first, its population like that of India is composite and heterogeneous. Thus, its society is plural and its politics is largely characterized by ethnic conflicts. Second, like India the component units of Malaysian Federation had also been ruled by the British before independence. Third, the constitution of Malaysia, again, like that of India, is both parliamentary and federal. The basic features are the same in both the cases, yet there are several differences between the constitutional provisions and practices of the two countries.

15.14 KEY WORDS

Federation : The act of uniting in a league by agreement of each number to subordinate its power to that to the central authority.

Parliamentary System : If the legislature and executive wings work in close cooperation and executive is responsible to the legislature, the system is called Parliamentary.

Political Culture : The general climate of opinion and values in which people of a country learn about politics and in which their government operates.

Primus inter pares : First among equals.

Judicial Review : Power of the Supreme Court to review the laws made by Parliament and declare them ultra-vires if found to be against the provisions of the constitution.

ASEAN : Association of East Asian Nations.

ZOPFAN : Zone of Peace, Friendship and Neutrality.

Non-Alignment : A policy, originated in reaction to the Cold War, pursued by a group of nations, not to join any of the power blocs or politics, which ultimately gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement.

NIEO : New International Economic Order.

Protectorate : The relation of a strong state to a weaker state under its control and protection or a state or territory so controlled and protected.

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15.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Section 15.2

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See Section 15.3
- 2) See Section 15.3

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See Section 15.4.1

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) See Section 15.5

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) See Sub-section 15.6.1

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) The Constitution of Malaysia is both written and rigid.
- 2) Islam is the official religion of the Malaysian federation, but other religions may also be practised.

Check Your Progress 7

- 1) See sub-section 15.8.2
- 2) It means that all the members of the Council of Ministers and Cabinet are collectively responsible for all their decisions that they take, to the Parliament and that if a bill introduced by any member of Council or Cabinet is defeated on the floor of the House, the whole ministry collapses. That is why it is said that they swim and sink together.
- 3) See sub-section 15.8.6

Check Your Progress 8

- 1) 69, 40, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong
- 2) See sub-section 15.9.6

Check Your Progress 9

- 1) Judicial review in Malaysia is the power of the Supreme Court to review the laws made by the parliament and declare them null and void if found unconstitutional.
- 2) See sub-section 15.10.4

Check Your Progress 10

- 1) See sub-section 15.11.3
- 2) It will be banned

Check Your Progress 11

- 1) i) Association of East Asian Nations
ii) Zone of Peace, Friendship and Neutrality
iii) New International Economic Order
iv) Non-Aligned Movement.