

Chapter 1

Political Theory: An Introduction



Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

Human beings are unique in two respects: they possess reason and the ability to reflect on their actions. They also have the capacity to use language and communicate with each other. Unlike other species, they can express their innermost thoughts and desires; they can share their ideas and discuss what they consider to be good and desirable. Political theory has its roots in these twin aspects of the human self. It analyzes certain basic questions such as how should society be organized? Why do we need government? What is the best form of government? Does law limit our freedom? What does the state owe its citizens? What do we owe each other as citizens?

Political theory examines questions of this kind and systematically thinks about the values that inform political life – values such as freedom, equality and justice. It explains the meanings and significance of these and other related concepts. It clarifies the existing definitions of these concepts by focusing on some major political thinkers of the past and present. It also examines the extent to which freedom or equality are actually present in the institutions that we participate in everyday such as schools, shops, buses or trains or government offices. At an advanced level, it looks at whether existing definitions are adequate and how existing institutions (government, bureaucracy) and policy practices must be modified to become more democratic. The objective of political theory is to train citizens to think rationally about political questions and assess correctly the political events of our time.

In this chapter, we will examine what is meant by politics and political theory and why we should study it.

1.1 WHAT IS POLITICS?

“

LET'S DEBATE

“What is Politics”.

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You would have noticed that people have different ideas about what politics is. Political leaders, and persons who contest elections and hold political office, may argue that it is a kind of public service. Some others associate politics with manipulation and intrigue undertaken to pursue ambitions and satisfy wants. A few think of politics as what politicians do. If they see politicians defecting from parties, making false promises and tall

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

claims, manipulating different sections, pursuing personal or group interests ruthlessly and in worst cases stooping to crime, they link politics with 'scams'. So prevalent is this way of thinking that when we see people in different walks of life trying to promote their interests by any means possible, we say they are playing politics. If we see a cricketer manipulating to stay in the team, or a fellow student trying to use his father's position, or a colleague in office mindlessly agreeing with the boss, we say he or she is playing 'dirty' politics.

Disillusioned by such pursuits of selfishness we despair of politics. We say, "I am not interested in politics" or that "I am going to stay away from politics". It is not only ordinary people who despair of politics; even businessmen and entrepreneurs routinely blame politics for their woes even as they benefit from and fund various political parties. Cinema stars also complain of politics though they seem to be adept at the game once they join it.

We are thus confronted with conflicting images of politics. Is politics an undesirable activity that we should stay away from and get rid off? Or, is it a worthwhile activity which we must engage with in order to make a better world?

It is unfortunate that politics has come to be associated with the pursuit of self-interest by any and every method. We need to realize that politics is an important and integral part of any society. Mahatma Gandhi once observed that politics envelops us like the coils of a snake and there is no other way out but to wrestle with it. No society can exist without some form of political organization and collective decision making. A society that wants to sustain itself needs to take into account the multiple needs and interests of its members. A number of social institutions such as the family, tribes, and economic institutions have emerged to help people fulfill their needs and aspirations. Such institutions help us find ways of living together and acknowledging our obligations to each other. Among such institutions governments play an important part. How governments



You must retire from politics at once! Your activities are having a bad influence on him. He thinks he can get away with lying and cheating.

R. K. Laxman in the Times of India

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

Read the newspaper. What are the issues dominating the headlines? Do you think they have any relevance for you?

are formed and how they function is thus an important focus of politics.

But politics is not confined to the affairs of government. In fact what governments do is relevant because it affects the lives of the people in many different ways. We see that

governments determine our economic policy and foreign policy and educational policy. These policies can help to improve the lives of people but an inefficient or corrupt government can also endanger people's lives and security. If the government in power allows caste and communal conflicts to occur, markets close down and schools are shut. This disrupts our lives; we cannot buy things that we may need urgently; those who are sick cannot reach the hospital; even the school schedule gets affected, syllabi cannot be completed and we may have to take extra coaching for the exams and pay tuition fees. If, on the other hand, the government makes policies to increase literacy and employment, we may get an opportunity to go to a good school and get a decent job.

Since the actions of the government affect us deeply we take a lively interest in what governments do. We form associations and organize campaigns to articulate our demands. We negotiate with others and try to shape the goals that governments pursue. When we disagree with the policies of the government, we protest and organize demonstration to persuade our governments to change the existing laws. We passionately debate the actions of our representatives and discuss whether corruption has increased or decreased. We ask whether corruption can be rooted out; whether reservations for specific groups are just or not. We try to understand why some parties and leaders win elections. In this way we look for the rationale underlying the prevalent chaos and decay, and aspire to create a better world.

To sum up, politics arises from the fact that we have different visions of what

LET'S DO IT



How does politics influence our daily life?
Analyze a day's events in your life.

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

is just and desirable for us and our society. It involves the multiple negotiations that go on in society through which collective decisions are made. At one level, it involves what governments do and how they relate to the aspirations of the people; at another level, it involves how people struggle and influence decision making. People may be said to engage in political activity whenever they negotiate with each other and take part in collective activities which are designed to promote social development and help to resolve common problems.

“ ”

LET'S DEBATE

“Should students participate in politics? ”.

1.2 WHAT DO WE STUDY IN POLITICAL THEORY?

If we look around us what we see would be movements, development and change. But if we look deeper we would also see certain values and principles that have inspired people and guided policies. Ideals like democracy, freedom or equality for instance. Different countries may try to protect such values by enshrining them in their constitutions as is the case with the American and Indian constitutions.

These documents did not just emerge overnight; they are built upon the ideas and principles debated almost since the time of Kautilya, Aristotle to Jean Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Gandhi and Ambedkar. As far back as fifth century BC, Plato and Aristotle discussed with their students whether monarchy or democracy was better. In modern times, Rousseau first argued for freedom as a fundamental right of humankind. Karl Marx argued that equality was as crucial as freedom. Closer home, Gandhi discussed the meaning of genuine freedom or *swaraj* in his book *Hind Swaraj*. Ambedkar vigorously argued that the scheduled castes must be considered a minority, and as such, must receive special protection. These ideas find their place in the Indian Constitution; our preamble enshrines freedom and equality; the rights chapter abolishes untouchability in any form; Gandhian principles find a place in Directive Principles.

Write a short note on any of the political thinkers mentioned in the chapter. [50 words]

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

Political theory deals with the ideas and principles that shape Constitutions, governments and social life in a systematic manner. It clarifies the meaning of concepts such as freedom, equality, justice, democracy, secularism and so on. It probes the significance of principles such as rule of law, separation of powers, judicial review, etc. This is done by examining the arguments advanced by different thinkers in defense of these concepts. Though Rousseau or Marx or Gandhi did not become politicians, their ideas influenced generations of politicians everywhere. There are also contemporary thinkers who draw upon them to defend freedom or democracy in our own time. Besides examining arguments, political theorists also reflect upon our current political experiences and point out trends and possibilities for the future.

Can you identify the political concept which is in application in each of these statements/situations:

- a. I should be able to decide which subjects I want to study in school
- b. The practice of untouchability has been abolished
- c. All Indians are equal before law
- d. Christians have their own schools and colleges
- e. Foreigners who are visiting India cannot vote in Indian elections
- f. There should be no censorship of media or films
- g. Students should be consulted while planning the annual day functions
- h. Everyone must join the Republic day celebrations

But is all this relevant for us now? Have we not already achieved freedom and democracy? While India is free and independent, questions regarding freedom and equality have not ceased to crop up. This is because issues concerning freedom, equality, democracy, arise in many aspects of social life and they are in progress in different sectors at different paces. For instance, although equality may exist in the political sphere in the form of equal rights, it may not exist to the same extent in the economic or social spheres. People may enjoy equal political rights but still be discriminated

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

against socially because of their caste or poverty. Some people may have a privileged place in society while others are deprived even of basic necessities. Some are able to achieve whatever goals they set for themselves while many are unable even to go to schools so that they can have decent jobs in the future. For them, freedom is still a distant dream.

Secondly, though freedom is guaranteed in our Constitution, we encounter new interpretations all the time. This is a bit like playing a game; as we play chess or cricket, we learn how to interpret the rules. In the process, we discover new and broader meanings of the game itself. Similarly, the fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution are continually being reinterpreted in response to new circumstances. For instance, the right to life has been interpreted by the Courts to include the right to a livelihood. The right to information has been granted through a new law. Societies frequently encounter new challenges which generate new interpretations. The fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution have been amended and expanded over time through judicial interpretations and government policies which are designed to address new problems.

Thirdly, as our world changes, we may discover new dimensions of freedom as well as new threats to freedom. For instance, global communications technology is making it easier for activists to network with one another across the world for protecting tribal cultures or forests. But it also enables terrorists and criminals to network. Moreover, internet commerce is all set to increase in the future. This means that the information we give about ourselves online to buy goods or services must be protected. So even though netizens (citizens of the internet) do not like government control, they recognize that some form of regulation is necessary to safeguard individual security and privacy. As a result, questions are raised regarding how much freedom should be given to people using the net. For instance, should they be allowed to send unsolicited e-mails to strangers? Can you advertise your products in



LET'S DO IT

Collect cartoons from various newspapers and magazines. What are the various issues that they are concerned with? Which political concept do they highlight?

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

In ancient Greece, in the city of Athens, Socrates was described as the ‘wisest man’. He was known for questioning and challenging popularly held beliefs about society, religion and politics. For this he was condemned to death by the rulers of Athens.

His student Plato wrote extensively about the life and ideas of Socrates. In his book Republic, he created the character Socrates and through him examined the question - what is justice.

The book opens with a dialogue between Socrates and Cephalus. In the course of this dialogue Cephalus and his friends come to recognize that their understanding of justice is inadequate and unacceptable.

The important thing in this is that Socrates uses reason to reveal the limitations and inconsistencies in a given point of view. His adversaries eventually admit that the views they had held and lived by could not be sustained.

chat rooms? Should governments be allowed to read private e-mails to track down terrorists? How much regulation is justified and who should regulate, governments or some independent regulator Political theory has a lot to teach us about possible answers to these questions and is therefore very relevant.

1.3 PUTTING POLITICAL THEORY TO PRACTICE

In this textbook, we confine ourselves to one aspect of political theory — that which deals with the origins, meaning and significance of political ideas that we are familiar with such as freedom, equality, citizenship, justice, development, nationalism secularism and so on. When we begin a debate or argument on any topic, we usually ask “what does it mean?” and “how does it matter”? Political theorists have asked what is freedom or equality and provided diverse definitions. Unlike in mathematics where there can be one definition of a triangle or square, we encounter many definitions of equality or freedom or justice.

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

Read and see how Socrates achieved this.

Well said, Cephalus, I replied; but as concerning justice, what is it? —to speak the truth and to pay your debts —no more than this?

And even to this are there not exceptions? Suppose that a friend when in his right mind has deposited arms with me and he asks for them when he is not in his right mind, ought I to give them back to him? ...

You are quite right, he replied.

But then, I said, speaking the truth and paying your debts is not a correct definition of justice.

And instead of saying simply as we did at first, that it is just to do good to our friends and harm to our enemies, we should further say: It is just to do good to our friends when they are good and harm to our enemies when they are evil?

Yes, that appears to me to be the truth.

This is because terms like equality concern our relationships with other human beings rather than with things. Human beings, unlike things, have opinions on issues like equality. And these opinions need to be understood and harmonized. How do we go about doing this? Let us begin with our common experience of equality in different places.

You may have noticed that people often jump the queue in shops or doctor's waiting rooms or government offices. Sometimes, those who do so are told to get back in line and we feel glad. Sometimes, they get ahead and we feel cheated. We resent this because we all want equal opportunity to get goods and services for which we are paying. So when we reflect on our experience, we understand that equality means equal opportunity for all. At the same time, if there are separate counters for the old and disabled, we understand that such special treatment may be justified.

But we also notice everyday that many poor people cannot go to the shop or to a doctor because they have no money to pay

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

But ought the just to injure any one at all?

Undoubtedly he ought to injure those who are both wicked and his enemies.

When horses are injured, are they improved or deteriorated?

The latter.

Deteriorated, that is to say, in the good qualities of horses, not of dogs?

Yes, of horses.

And dogs are deteriorated in the good qualities of dogs, and not of horses?

Of course.

And will not men who are injured be deteriorated in that which is the proper virtue of man?

Certainly.

And that human virtue is justice?

To be sure.

for goods and services. Some of these people could be day labourers who are cutting stones or lugging bricks for long hours. If we are sensitive, we feel that it is not fair that in a society some members cannot even have their basic needs satisfied. We come to realize that equality must involve some kind of fairness so that people are not unduly exploited and disadvantaged by economic factors.

Consider the fact that there are many children who cannot go to school because they have to work to feed themselves. And most girl students in poor households are pulled out of school to care for their younger siblings while parents go to work. Even though the Indian constitution guarantees the right to primary education for all, this right remains formal. Again, we may feel that the government should do more for such children and their parents so that they are enabled to go to school.

Thus you may see that our idea of equality is quite complex; when we are in a queue or playground we want equal opportunity.

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

Then men who are injured are of necessity made unjust?

That is the result.

But can the musician by his art make men unmusical?

Certainly not.

Or the horseman by his art make them bad horsemen?

Impossible.

And can the just by justice make men unjust, or speaking general can the good by virtue make them bad?

Assuredly not....

Nor can the good harm any one?

Impossible.

And the just is the good?

Certainly.

If we suffer from some disability we want special provisions made. When we cannot even afford basic needs, equal opportunity is not enough. We must be enabled to go to school or get help through proactive measures such as fair distribution of resources (jobs, decent wages, subsidized hospitals etc). This requires that some agency be made responsible to ensure fairness.

So the reason we have many definitions is because the meaning of equality is dependent on the context. We started with what it meant for ourselves and then proceeded to consider others (the poor, disadvantaged, senior citizens etc). We discovered many layers of meaning. We have been doing political theory without realizing it.

Political theorists clarify the meaning of political concepts by looking at how they are understood and used in ordinary language. They also debate and examine the diverse meanings and opinions in a systematic manner. When is equality of opportunity enough? When do people need special treatment? How far and how long should such special treatment be given? Should poor children be

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

Then to injure a friend or any one else is not the act of a just man, but of the opposite, who is the unjust?

I think that what you say is quite true, Socrates.

And he who is most skilful in preventing or escaping from a disease is best able to create one?

True.

And he is the best guard of a camp who is best able to steal a march upon the enemy?

Certainly.

Then he who is a good keeper of anything is also a good thief?

That, I suppose, is to be inferred.

Then if the just man is good at keeping money, he is good at stealing it.

That is implied in the argument.

given midday meals to encourage them to stay in schools? These are some questions which they address. As you can see, these issues are eminently practical; they provide guidelines for framing public policies on education and employment.

As in the case of equality, so also in the case of other concepts, political theorists engage with everyday opinions, debate possible meanings and thrash out policy options. Freedom, Citizenship, Rights, Development, Justice, Equality, Nationalism and Secularism are some of the concepts that we will discuss in the following chapters.

1.4 WHY SHOULD WE STUDY POLITICAL THEORY

We may have political ideas but do we need to study political theory? Is it not more suited for politicians who practice politics? Or for bureaucrats who make policies? Or for those who teach political theory? Or for lawyers and judges who interpret the Constitution and laws? Or for activists and journalists who expose exploitation

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

Then after all the just man has turned out to be a thief. ...

You would argue that the good are our friends and the bad our enemies?

Yes.

And instead of saying simply as we did at first, that it is just to do good to our friends and harm to our enemies, we should further say: It is just to do good to our friends when they are good and harm to our enemies when they are evil?

Yes, *that appears to me to be the truth.*

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Of course.

and demand new rights? What do we (high school students) gain by knowing the meaning of freedom or equality?

First of all, political theory is relevant for all the above target groups. As high school students, we may choose one of the above professions in the future and so indirectly it is relevant for us even now. Do we not learn mathematics although not all of us will become mathematicians or engineers? Is it not because basic arithmetic is useful to life in general?

Secondly, we are all going to be citizens entitled to vote and decide other issues. To act responsibly, it is helpful to have a basic knowledge of the political ideas and institutions that shape the world we live in. In the information society, it is crucial that we learn to be reasonable and informed if we are to participate in gram sabhas or offer our views on websites and polls. If we simply express arbitrary preferences, we will not be very effective. But if we are thoughtful and mature we can use the new media to discuss and express our common interests.

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

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As citizens, we are a bit like the audience in a music concert; we are not the main performers interpreting the song and melody. But we set the agenda and appreciate the output and put in new requests. Have you noticed that musicians perform better when they know the audience is knowledgeable and appreciative? So also an educated and vigilant citizenry makes those who play politics more public-spirited.

Thirdly, freedom, equality and secularism are not abstract issues in our lives. We daily encounter discrimination of various sorts in families, schools, colleges, shopping malls and so on. We ourselves have prejudices against people who are different from us, be they of a different caste or religion or gender or class. If we feel oppressed, we want it redressed and if that is delayed, we feel violent revolution is justified. If we are privileged, we deny that there is any oppression even as our maids and servants struggle for dignity. Sometimes, we even feel that our servants deserve the treatment they get. What political theory encourages us to do is examine our ideas and feelings

Political Theory

Introduction

Political Theory

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And the just is the good?

Certainly.

Then to injure a friend or any one else is not the act of a just man, but of the opposite, who is the unjust?

I think that what you say is quite true, Socrates.

Then if a man says that justice consists in the repayment of debts, and that good is the debt which a man owes to his friends, and evil the debt which he owes to his enemies,—to say this is not wise; for it is not true, if, as has been clearly shown, the injuring of another can be in no case just.

I agree with you, said Polemarchus.

about political things. Just by looking at the more carefully, we become moderate in our ideas and feelings.

Finally, as students we enjoy debates and elocution competitions. We have opinions about what is right or wrong, just or unjust but do not know whether they are reasonable or not. Only when we argue with others, we realize the need to defend them and seek out reasons and arguments. Political theory exposes us to systematic thinking on justice or equality so that we can polish our opinions and argue in an informed manner and for the sake of common interests. Such skills of debating rationally and communicating effectively are likely to be great assets in the global informational order.

Political Theory

Introduction

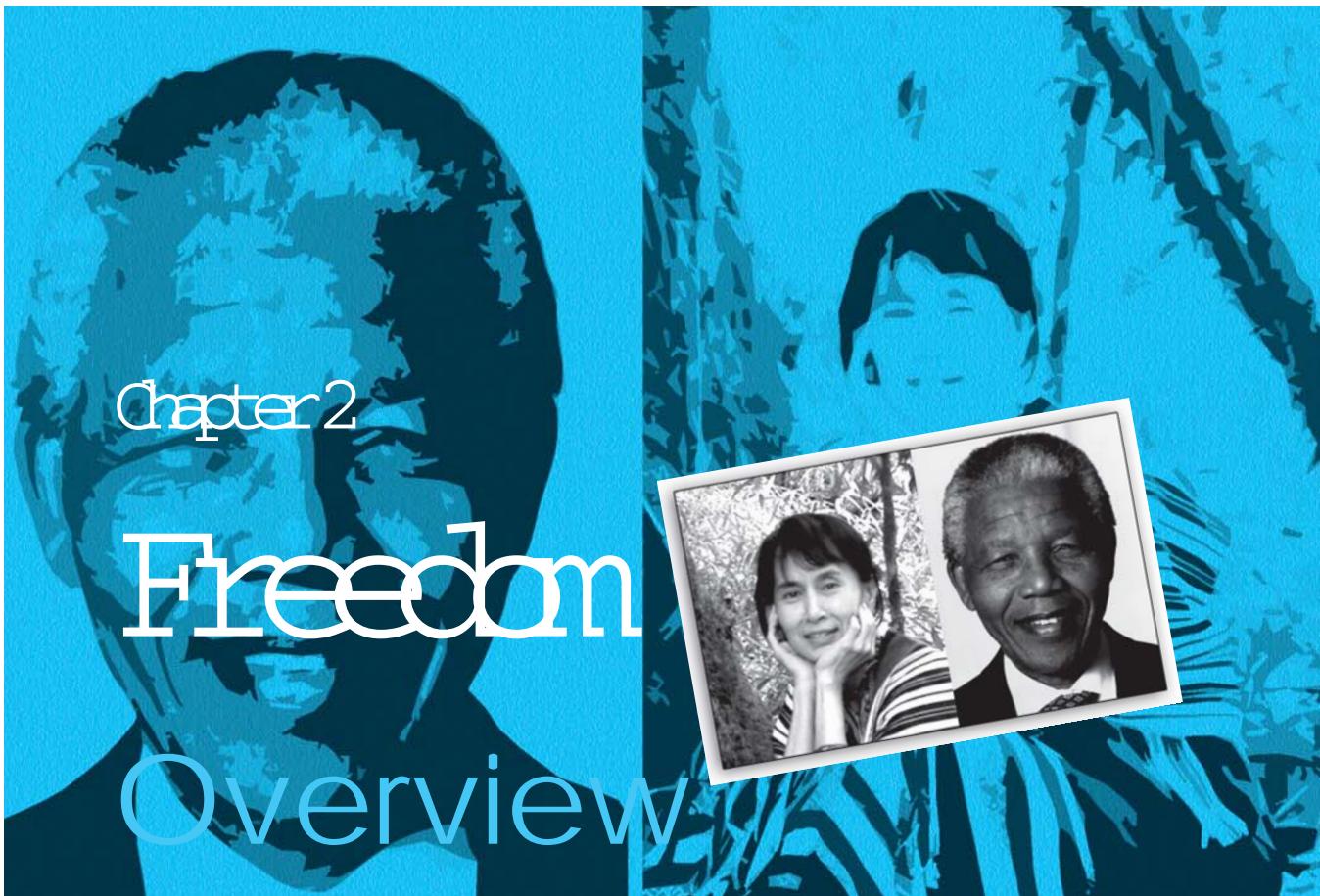
Political Theory



Exercises

Exercises

1. Which of the following statements are true/false about Political theory?
 - a. It discusses ideas that form the basis of political institutions
 - b. It explains the relationship between different religions
 - c. It explains the meanings of concepts like equality and freedom
 - d. It predicts the performance of political parties
2. Politics is more than what politicians do. Do you agree with this statement? Give examples.
3. Vigilant citizens are a must for the successful working of a democracy. Comment.
4. In what ways is the study of political theory useful for us? Identify four ways in which the political theory can be useful to us?
5. Do you think that a good/ convincing argument can compel others to listen to you?
6. Do you think studying political theory is like studying mathematics? Give reasons for your answer.



Chapter 2

Freedom

Overview

Human history provides many examples of people and communities which have been dominated, or enslaved, or exploited, by more powerful groups. But it also provides us with inspiring examples of heroic struggles against such domination. What is this freedom for which people have been willing to sacrifice and die? In its essence, the struggle for freedom represents the desire of people to be in control of their own lives and destinies and to have the opportunity to express themselves freely through their choices and activities. Not just individuals but societies also value their independence and wish to protect their culture and future.

However, given the diverse interests and ambitions of people any form of social living requires some rules and regulation. These rules may require some constraints to be imposed on the freedom of individuals but it is recognised that such constraints may also free us from insecurity and provide us with the conditions in which we can develop ourselves. In political theory much of the discussion regarding freedom has therefore focused on trying to evolve principles by which we can distinguish between socially necessary constraints and other restrictions. There has also been debate about possible limitations on freedom which may result from the social and economic structures of a society. In this chapter we will look at some of these debates.

After studying this chapter you should be able to:

- Understand the importance of freedom for individuals and societies.
- Explain the difference between the negative and positive dimensions of freedom.
- Explain what is meant by the term 'harm principle'.

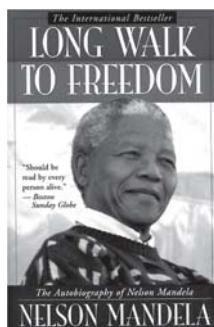
Freedom

Political Theory

Freedom

2.1 THE IDEAL OF FREEDOM

Before we set out to answer these questions, let us stop for a moment and consider this. The autobiography of one of the greatest persons of the twentieth century, Nelson Mandela, is titled *Long Walk to Freedom*. In this book he talks about his personal struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa, about the resistance of his people to the segregationist policies of the white regime, about the humiliations, hardships and police brutalities suffered by the black people of South Africa. These ranged from being bundled into townships and being denied easy movement about the country, to being denied a free choice of whom to marry. Collectively, such measures constituted a body of constraints imposed by the apartheid regime that discriminated between citizens based on their race. For Mandela and his colleagues it was the struggle against such unjust constraints, the struggle to remove the obstacles to the freedom of all the people of South Africa (not just the black or the coloured but also the white people), that was the *Long Walk to Freedom*.



For this freedom, Mandela spent twenty-eight years of his life in jail, often in solitary confinement. Imagine what it meant to give up one's youth for an ideal, to voluntarily give up the pleasure of talking with one's friends, of playing one's favourite game (Mandela loved boxing), of wearing one's favourite clothes, of listening to one's favourite music, of enjoying the many festivals that are part of one's life. Imagine giving all these up and choosing instead to be locked up alone in a room, not knowing when one would be released, only because one campaigned for the freedom of one's people. For freedom Mandela paid a very high personal cost.



Do only great men and women fight for great principles like freedom? What does this principle mean for me?

Freedom

Political Theory

Now, take another case. Gandhiji's thoughts on non-violence have been a source of inspiration for Aung San Suu Kyi as she remains today under house arrest in Myanmaar, separated from her children, unable to visit her husband when he was dying of cancer, because she feared that if she left Myanmaar to visit him in England she would not be able to return. Aung San Suu Kyi sees her freedom as connected to the freedom of her people.

Her book of essays bears the title *Freedom from Fear*. She says, "for me real freedom is freedom from fear and unless you can live free from fear you cannot live a dignified human life". These are deep thoughts that lead us to pause and consider their implications. We must not, her words suggest, be afraid of the opinions of other people, or of the attitude of authority, or of the reactions of the members of our community to the things we want to do, of the ridicule of our peers, or of speaking our mind. Yet we find that we often exhibit such fear. For Aung San Suu Kyi living a 'dignified human life' requires us to be able to overcome such fear.



From these two books of Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi, we can see the power of the ideal of freedom, an ideal that was at the centre of our national struggle and the struggles of the peoples of Asia and Africa against British, French and Portuguese colonialism.

2.2 WHAT IS FREEDOM?

A simple answer to the question 'what is freedom' is absence of constraints. Freedom is said to exist when external constraints on the individual are absent. In terms of this definition an individual could be considered free if he/she is not subject to external controls or coercion and is able to make independent decisions and act in an autonomous way. However, absence of constraints is only one dimension of freedom. Freedom is also about expanding the ability

LET'S DO IT

Can you think of someone in your village, town or district who has struggled for his/her own freedom or the freedom of others? Write a short note about that person and the particular aspect of freedom which he/she struggled to protect.

Freedom

Political Theory

SWARAJ

An analogous concept to Freedom in Indian political thought is '*Swaraj*'. The term *Swaraj* incorporates within it two words — *Swa* (Self) and *Raj* (Rule). It can be understood to mean both the rule of the self and rule over self. *Swaraj*, in the context of the freedom struggle in India referred to freedom as a constitutional and political demand, and as a value at the social-collective level. That is why *Swaraj* was such an important rallying cry in the freedom movement inspiring Tilak's famous statement — “*Swaraj* is my birth right and I shall have it.”

It is the understanding of *Swaraj* as Rule over the Self that was highlighted by Mahatma Gandhi in his work *Hind Swaraj* where he states, “It is *swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves”. *Swaraj* is not just freedom but liberation in redeeming one's self-respect, self-responsibility, and capacities for self-realisation from institutions of dehumanisation. Understanding the real 'Self', and its relation to communities and society, is critical to the project of attaining *Swaraj*.

Gandhiji believed the development that follows would liberate both individual and collective potentialities guided by the principle of justice. Needless to say, such an understanding is as relevant to the Twenty first century as it was when Gandhiji wrote the *Hind Swaraj* in 1909.

of people to freely express themselves and develop their potential. Freedom in this sense is the condition in which people can develop their creativity and capabilities.

Both these aspects of freedom — the absence of external constraints as well as the existence of conditions in which people can develop their talents — are important. A free society would be one which enables all its members to develop their potential with the minimum of social constraints.

No individual living in society can hope to enjoy total absence of any kind of constraints or restrictions. It becomes necessary then to determine which social constraints are justified and which are not, which are acceptable and which should be removed. To understand which social constraints are necessary, discussions on freedom need to look at the core relationship between the individual and the society (or group, community, or state) within which she/he is placed. That is, we need to examine the relationship between individual and society. We would need to see which features of the society allow the individual the freedom to choose, decide or act, and which do not. We would need to determine which features are desirable and which are not, which should be removed and which should not. Further we need to see if the

Freedom

Political Theory

principles which we use to differentiate necessary from unnecessary constraints also apply to the relationships between individuals and groups and nations.

Thus far we have defined freedom as the absence of constraint. To be free means to reduce or minimise social constraints that limit our ability to make choices freely. However, this is only one aspect of freedom. To put it in another way, freedom also has a positive dimension. To be free a society must widen the area in which individuals, groups, communities or nations, will be able to charter their own destiny and be what they wish to be. Freedom, in this sense, allows the full development of the individual's creativity, sensibilities and capabilities: be it in sports, science, art, music or exploration. A free society is one that enables one to pursue one's interests with a minimum of constraints. Freedom is considered valuable because it allows us to make choices and to exercise our judgement. It permits the exercise of the individual's powers of reason and judgement.

The Sources of Constraints

Restrictions on the freedom of individuals may come from domination and external controls. Such restrictions may be imposed by force or they may be imposed by a government through laws which embody the power of the rulers over the people and which may have the backing of force. This was the form of constraint represented by colonial rulers over their subjects, or by the system of apartheid in South Africa. Some form of government may be inevitable but if the government is a democratic one, the members of a state could retain some control over their rulers. That is why democratic government is considered to be an important means of protecting the freedom of people.

But constraints on freedom can also result from social inequality of the kind implicit in the caste system, or which result from extreme economic inequality in a society. The quotation from Subhas Chandra Bose on freedom draws attention to the need for the country to work to remove such constraints.

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LET'S DEBATE

Girls and boys should be free to decide whom they wish to marry. Parents should have no say in this matter.”

NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE ON FREEDOM

“If we are to bring about a revolution of ideas we have first to hold up before us an ideal which will galvanise our whole life. That ideal is freedom. But freedom is a word which has varied connotations and, even in our country, the conception of freedom has undergone a process of evolution. By freedom I mean all round freedom, i.e., freedom for the individual as well as for society; freedom for the rich as well as for the poor; freedom for men as well as for women; freedom for all individuals and for all classes. This freedom implies not only emancipation from political bondage but also equal distribution of wealth, abolition of caste barriers and social iniquities and destruction of communalism and religious intolerance. This is an ideal which may appear Utopian to hard-headed men and women, but this ideal alone can appease the hunger in the soul.”

(*Presidential Address to the Student’s Conference held at Lahore on 19 October 1929*)

2.3 WHY DO WE NEED CONSTRAINTS?

We cannot live in a world where there are no constraints. We need some constraints or else society would descend into chaos. Differences may exist between people regarding their ideas and opinions, they may have conflicting ambitions, they may compete to control scarce resources. There are numerous reasons why disagreements may develop in a society which may express themselves through open conflict. We see people around us ready to fight for all kinds of reasons ranging from the serious to the trivial. Rage while driving on the roads, fighting over parking spaces, quarrels over housing or land, disagreements regarding whether a particular film should be screened, all these, and many other issues, can lead to conflict and violence, perhaps even loss of life. Therefore every society needs some mechanisms to control violence and settle disputes. So long as we are able to respect each other’s views and do not attempt to impose our views on others we may be able to live freely and with minimum constraints. Ideally, in a free society we should be able to hold our views, develop our own rules of living, and pursue our choices.

But the creation of such a society too requires some constraints. At the very least, it requires that we be willing to respect differences of views, opinions and beliefs. However, sometimes, we think that a

Freedom

Political Theory

strong commitment to our beliefs requires that we must oppose all those who differ from or reject our views. We see their views or ways of living as unacceptable or even undesirable. Under such circumstances we need some legal and political restraints to ensure that differences may be discussed and debated without one group coercively imposing its views on the other. Worse still, we may be confronted with attempts to bully or harass us so that we conform to their wishes. If so, we may want stronger support from law to ensure that my freedom is protected.

The important question however is to identify which constraints on freedom are necessary and justifiable and which are not? What sort of authority, external to the individual, may justifiably say what can be done and what cannot? Further, are there any areas of our life and action that should be left free of all external constraints?

2.4 HARM PRINCIPLE

To answer these questions satisfactorily we have to address the issue of the limits, competence, and consequences of the imposition. We also have to engage with another issue that John Stuart Mill stated so eloquently in his essay *On Liberty*. In the discussions in

LIBERALISM

When we say that someone's parents are very 'liberal', we usually mean that they are very tolerant. As a political ideology, liberalism has been identified with tolerance as a value. Liberals have often defended the right of a person to hold and express his/her opinions and beliefs even when they disagree with them. But that is not all that there is to liberalism. And liberalism is not the only modern ideology that supports tolerance.

What is more distinctive about modern liberalism is its focus on the individual. For liberals entities like family, society, community have no value in themselves, but only if these are valued by individuals. They would say, for example, that the decision to marry someone should be taken by the individual rather than by the family, caste or the community. Liberals tend to give priority to individual liberty over values like equality. They also tend to be suspicious of political authority.

Historically, liberalism favoured free market and minimal role to the state. However, present day liberalism acknowledges a role for welfare state and accepts the need for measures to reduce both social and economic inequalities.

Freedom

political theory it is called the 'harm principle'. Let us quote his statement and then try and explain it.



Why does he talk about 'mankind'?
What about women?

The principle is that the sole end for which mankind are warranted individually or collectively in interfering with the liberty of action of any of that number is self-protection that the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community against his will is to prevent harm to others.

Mill introduces here an important distinction. He distinguishes between 'self-regarding' actions, i.e., those actions that have consequences only for the individual actor and nobody else, and 'other regarding' actions, i.e., those actions that also have consequences for others.

He argues that with respect to actions or choices that effect only one's self, self-regarding actions, the state (or any other external authority) has no business to interfere. Or put in simple language it would be: 'That's my business, I'll do what I like', or 'How does it concern you, if it does not affect you?' In contrast, with respect to actions that have consequences for others, actions which may cause harm to them, there is some case for external interference. After all if your actions cause me harm then surely I must be saved from such harm by some external authority? In this case it is the state which can constrain a person from acting in a way that causes harm to someone else.

However, as freedom is at the core of human society, is so crucial for a dignified human life, it should only be constrained in special circumstances. The 'harm caused' must be 'serious'. For minor harm, Mill recommends only social disapproval and not the force of law. For example the playing of loud music in an apartment building should bring only social disapproval from the other residents of the building. They should not involve the police. They should indicate their disapproval, of the inconvenience that playing loud music has caused them, by perhaps refusing to greet the person who plays the music disregarding the harm it is causing others. The harm that playing loud music causes is that of preventing those in other apartments from talking, or sleeping, or listening to their own music.

Freedom

Political Theory

Freedom

This is minor harm and should only provoke social disapproval. It is not a fit case for legal punishment. Constraining actions by the force of law should only happen when the other regarding actions cause serious harm to definite individuals. Otherwise society must bear the inconvenience in the spirit of protecting freedom.



LET'S THINK

The Issue of Dress Code

If choosing what to wear is an expression of one's freedom then how should we look at the following situations where there are restrictions on dress?

- In China during Mao's regime all the people had to wear 'Mao suits' based on the argument that it was an expression of equality.
- A *fatwa* was issued against Sania Mirza for her style of dress that was considered, by one cleric, to be against the dress code prescribed for women.
- The rules of a test match in cricket require every cricketer to wear white dress.
- Students are required to wear school uniforms.

Let us debate some questions.

- Is the restriction on what to wear justified in all cases or only in some? When does it constitute a constraint on freedom?
- Who has the authority to impose these constraints? Should religious leaders be given the authority to issue decrees on dress? Can the state decide what one should wear? Should the ICC set down rules of what to wear when playing cricket?
- Is the imposition excessive? Does it diminish the many ways, people have of expressing themselves?
- What are the consequences of accepting the impositions? Will the society become 'equal' if everyone dresses the same way as in Maoist China? Or are women being denied the participation in sports if they cannot wear clothes that would help them to compete effectively? Will the game be affected if cricketers wear coloured clothes?

People should be ready to tolerate different ways of life, different points of view, and the different interests, so long as they do not cause harm to others. But such tolerance need not be extended to views and actions which may put people in danger or foment hatred

Freedom

against them. Hate campaigns cause serious harm to the freedom of others and actions that cause ‘serious harm’ are actions on which constraints can be imposed. But we must make sure that the constraints imposed are not so severe that they destroy freedom itself. For example, we must not ask for life imprisonment for those who only conduct hate campaign. Maybe some restriction on their movement, or some curtailment of their right to hold public meetings can be considered especially if they continue to carry on this campaign in spite of warnings by the state to desist from conducting such campaigns.

In the constitutional discussions in India, the term used for such justifiable constraints is ‘reasonable restrictions’. The restrictions may be there but they must be reasonable, i.e., capable of being defended by reason, not excessive, not out of proportion to the action being restricted, since then it would impinge on the general condition of freedom in society. We must not develop a habit of imposing restrictions since such a habit is detrimental to freedom.

2.5 NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE LIBERTY

Earlier in the chapter we had mentioned two dimensions of freedomschool— freedom as the absence of external constraints, and freedom as the expansion of opportunities to express one’s self. In political theory these have been called negative and positive liberty. ‘Negative liberty’ seeks to define and defend an area in which the individual would be inviolable, in which he or she could ‘do, be or become’ whatever he or she wished to ‘do, be or become’. This is an area in which no external authority can interfere. It is a minimum area that is sacred and in which whatever the individual does, is not to be interfered with. The existence of the ‘minimum area of non-interference’ is the recognition that human nature and human dignity need an area where the person can act unobstructed by others. How big should this area be, or what should it contain, are matters of discussion, and will continue to be matters of debate since the bigger the area of non-interference the more the freedom.

All we need to recognise is that the negative liberty tradition argues for an inviolable area of non-interference in which the individual can express himself or herself. If the area is too small

Freedom

Political Theory

Freedom

then human dignity gets compromised. We may here ask the obvious question: Is the choice of what clothes to wear in different situations; school, playing-field, office – a choice that belongs to the minimum area and therefore one that cannot be interfered with by external authority or is it a choice that can be interfered by state, religious authority, ICC or CBSE. Negative liberty arguments are in response to the question: ‘Over what area am I the master?’ It is concerned with explaining the idea of ‘freedom from’.

In contrast, the arguments of positive liberty are concerned with explaining the idea of ‘freedom to’. They are in response to the answer ‘who governs me?’ to which the ideal answer is ‘I govern myself’. Positive liberty discussions have a long tradition that can be traced to Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, Gandhi, Aurobindo, and also to those who draw their inspiration from these thinkers. It is concerned with looking at the conditions and nature of the relationship between the individual and society and of improving these conditions such that there are fewer constraints to the development of the individual personality. The individual is like a flower that blossoms when the soil is fertile, and the sun is gentle, and the water is adequate, and the care is regular.

The individual to develop his or her capability must get the benefit of enabling positive conditions in material, political and social domains. That is, the person must not be constrained by poverty or unemployment; they must have adequate material resources to pursue their wants and needs. They must also have the opportunity to participate in the decision making process so that the laws made reflect their choices, or at least take those preferences into account. Above all, to develop their mind and intellect, individuals must have access to education and other associated opportunities necessary to lead a reasonably good life.

Positive liberty recognises that one can be free only in society (not outside it) and hence tries to make that society such that it enables the development of the individual whereas negative liberty is only concerned with the inviolable area of non-interference and not with the conditions in society, outside this area, as such. Of course negative liberty would like to expand this minimum area as



Do we have the freedom to destroy our environment?

Freedom

much as is possible keeping in mind, however, the stability of society. Generally they both go together and support each other, but it can happen that tyrants justify their rule by invoking arguments of positive liberty.

Freedom of Expression

One of the issues that is considered to belong to the minimum area of ‘non-interference’ is the freedom of expression. J.S.Mill set out good reasons why freedom of expression should not be restricted. This is a good case for discussion.

At various times there have been demands to ban books, plays, films, or academic articles in research journals. Let us think about this demand to ban books in the light of our discussion so far which sees freedom as ‘the making of choices’, where a distinction is made between ‘negative and positive liberty’, where we recognise the need for ‘justifiable constraints’ but these have to be supported by proper procedures and important moral arguments. Freedom of expression is a fundamental value and for that society must be willing to bear some inconvenience to protect it from people who want to restrict it. Remember Voltaire’s statement — ‘I disapprove of what you say but I will defend to death your right to say it’. How deeply are we committed to this freedom of expression?

Some years ago Deepa Mehta, film maker, wanted to make a film about widows in Varanasi. It sought to explore the plight of widows but there was a strong protest from a section of the polity who felt that it would show India in a very bad light, who felt it was being made to cater to foreign audiences, who felt it would bring a bad name to the ancient town. They refused to allow it to be made and as a result it could not be made in Varanasi. It was subsequently made elsewhere. Similarly the book *Ramayana Retold* by Aubrey Menon and *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie were banned after protest from some sections of society. The film *The Last Temptation of Christ* and the play *Me Nathuram Boltey* were also banned after protests.

Banning is an easy solution for the short term since it meets the immediate demand but is very harmful for the long-term prospects of freedom in a society because once one begins to ban then one develops a habit of banning. But does this mean that we should never ban? After all we do have censorship of films. Is it not similar

Freedom

Political Theory

to banning, where only a portion of a film is banned and not the whole film? The question that is often debated therefore is: When should one ban and when should one not? Should one never ban? Just for interest, in England anyone who is employed to work for the Royal household is constrained by contract (a constraint?) from writing about the inner affairs of the household. So if such a person were to leave the employment they would be unable to give an interview or write an article or author a book about the politics of the Royal household. Is this an unjustifiable constraint on the freedom of expression?

Constraints of different kind thus exist and we are subject to them in different situations. While reflecting on such situations we need to realise that when constraints are backed by organised social — religious or cultural — authority or by the might of the state, they restrict our freedom in ways that are difficult to fight against. However, if we willingly, or for the sake of pursuing our goals or ambitions, accept certain restrictions, our freedom is not similarly limited. In any case if we are not coerced into accepting the conditions, then we cannot claim that our freedom has been curtailed.

Freedom

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

John Stuart Mill, a political thinker and an activist in the nineteenth century Britain, offered a passionate defense of freedom of expression, including freedom of thought and discussion. In his book *On Liberty* he offered four reasons why there should be freedom of expression even for those who espouse ideas that appear 'false' or misleading today.

First, no idea is completely false. What appears to us as false has an element of truth. If we ban 'false' ideas, we would lose that element of truth that they contain.

This is related to the second point. Truth does not emerge by itself. It is only through a conflict of opposing view that truth emerges. Ideas that seem wrong today may have been very valuable in the emergence of what we consider right kind of ideas.

Thirdly, this conflict of ideas is valuable not just in the past but is of continuing value for all times. Truth always runs the risk of being reduced to an unthinking cliché. It is only when we expose it to opposing views that we can be sure that this idea is trustworthy.

Finally, we cannot be sure that what we consider true is actually true. Very often ideas that were considered false at one point by the entire society and therefore suppressed turned out to be true later on. A society that completely suppresses all ideas that are not acceptable today, runs the danger of losing the benefits of what might turn out to be very valuable knowledge.

Freedom

Political Theory

We began by saying that freedom is the absence of external constraints. We have now come to realise that freedom embodies our capacity and our ability to make choices. And when we make choices, we have also to accept responsibility for our actions and their consequences. It is for this reason that most advocates of liberty and freedom maintain that children must be placed in the care of parents. Our capacity to make the right choices, to assess in a reasoned manner available options, and shoulder the responsibility of our actions, have to be built through education and cultivation of judgement just as much as it needs to be nurtured by limiting the authority of the state and the society.



Exercises

1. What is meant by freedom? Is there a relationship between freedom for the individual and freedom for the nation?
2. What is the difference between the negative and positive conception of liberty?
3. What is meant by social constraints? Are constraints of any kind necessary for enjoying freedom?
4. What is the role of the state in upholding freedom of its citizens?
5. What is meant by freedom of expression? What in your view would be a reasonable restriction on this freedom? Give examples.



Chapter 3

Equality

Overview



This chapter is about the concept of equality, a value that is also enshrined in our Constitution. In reflecting on this concept it examines the following questions:

- What is equality? Why should we be concerned about this moral and political ideal?
- Does the pursuit of equality involve treating everyone the same way in every condition?
- How may we pursue equality and minimise inequality in different spheres of life?
- How do we distinguish between different dimensions of equality — political, economic and social?

In the course of understanding and answering these questions, you would encounter some important ideologies of our time — socialism, marxism, liberalism and feminism.

In this chapter you will see facts and figures about the conditions of inequality. These are only for you to appreciate the nature of inequality; the facts and figures need not be memorised.

Equality

3.1 WHY DOES EQUALITY MATTER?

Equality is a powerful moral and political ideal that has inspired and guided human society for many centuries. It is implicit in all faiths and religions which proclaim all human beings to be the creation of God. As a political ideal the concept of equality invokes the idea that all human beings have an equal worth regardless of their colour, gender, race, or nationality. It maintains that human beings deserve equal consideration and respect because of their common humanity. It is this notion of a shared humanity that lies behind, for instance, the notions of universal human rights or 'crimes against humanity'.

In the modern period the equality of all human beings has been used as a rallying slogan in the struggles against states and social institutions which uphold inequalities of rank, wealth status or privilege, among people. In the eighteenth century, the French revolutionaries used the slogan 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' to revolt against the landed feudal aristocracy and the monarchy. The demand for equality was also raised during anti-colonial liberation struggles in Asia and Africa during the twentieth century. It continues to be raised by struggling groups such as

LET'S DO IT



Search for quotations from different religious scriptures that affirm the ideal of equality. Read these in the classroom.

Everyone I know believes in a religion.
Every religion I know preaches equality.
Then why is there inequality in the world?



Equality

Political Theory

women or *dalits* who feel marginalised in our society. Today, equality is a widely accepted ideal which is embodied in the constitutions and laws of many countries.

Yet, it is inequality rather than equality which is most visible around us in the world as well as within our own society. In our country we can see slums existing side by side with luxury housing, schools with world class facilities and airconditioned classrooms along with schools which may lack even drinking water facilities or toilets, waste of food as well as starvation. There are glaring differences between what the law promises and what we see around us.

Read the accompanying fact sheet on global inequalities and the table on inequalities within our country.

FACT SHEET ON GLOBAL INEQUALITIES

- ◆ 1. The richest 50 individuals in the world have a combined income greater than that of the poorest 40 crore people.
- 2. The poorest 40 per cent of the world's population receive only 5 per cent of global income, while the richest 10 per cent of the world's population controls 54 per cent of global income.
- 3. The first world of the advanced industrial countries, mainly North America and Western Europe, with 25 per cent of the world population, owns 86 per cent of the world's industry, and consumes 80 per cent of the world energy.
- 4. On a per capita basis, a resident of the advanced industrial countries consumes at least three times as much water, ten times as much energy, thirteen times as much iron and steel and fourteen times as much paper as someone living in a developing country like India or China.
- 5. The risk of dying from pregnancy related causes is 1 to 18 in Nigeria but 1 to 8700 in Canada.
- 6. The industrial countries of the first world account for nearly two-thirds of the global emissions of carbon dioxide from the combustion of fossil fuels. They also account for three-quarters of emissions of sulphur and nitrogen oxide that cause acid rain. Many industries known for their high rate of pollution are being shifted from the developed countries to the less developed countries.

Source: *Human Development Report, 2005, UNDP.*

ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES IN INDIA

◆ Here are some findings from the Census of India held in 2001 about household amenities and assets. You don't need to memorise any of these figures. Just read these to understand the extent of urban-rural disparities in the country. Where would your own family fit?

Families that have...	Rural families	Urban families	Put ✗ or ✓ for your family
Electricity connection	44%	88%	
Tap water in the house	10%	50%	
Bathroom in the house	23%	70%	
Television	19%	64%	
Scooter/Moped/ Motorcycle	7%	25%	
Car/JEEP/ Van	1%	6%	

Thus we face a paradox : almost everyone accepts the ideal of equality, yet almost everywhere we encounter inequality. We live in a complex world of unequal wealth, opportunities, work situations, and power. Should we be concerned about these kinds of inequalities? Are they a permanent and inevitable feature of social life which reflects the differences of talent and ability of human beings as well as their different contributions towards social progress and prosperity? Or are these inequalities a consequence of our social position and rules? These are questions that have troubled people all over the world for many years.

It is a question of this kind that make equality one of the central theme of social and political theory. A student of political theory has to address a range of questions, such as, what does equality imply? Since we are different in many obvious ways, what does it mean to say that we are equal? What are we trying to achieve through the ideal of equality? Are we trying to eliminate all differences of income and status? In other words, what kind of equality are we pursuing, and for whom? Some other questions that have been raised regarding the concept of equality which we will consider here are : to promote equality should we always treat all persons in

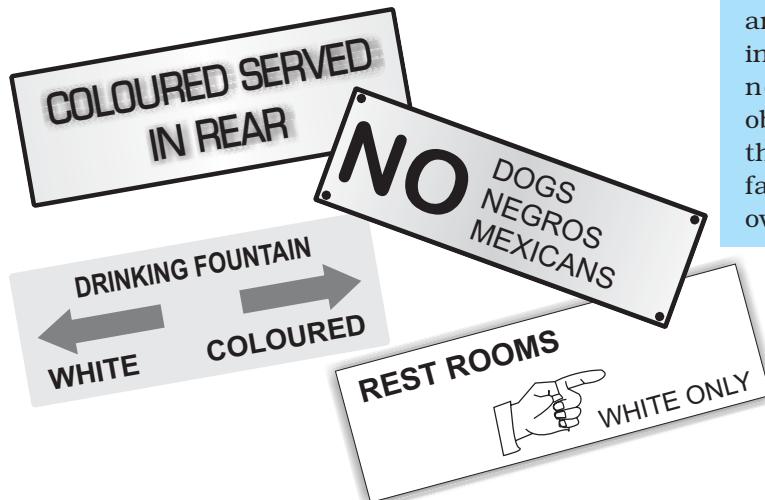
Equality

Political Theory

exactly the same way? How should a society decide which differences of treatment or reward are acceptable and which are not? Also, what kind of policies should we pursue to try and make the society more egalitarian?

3.2 WHAT IS EQUALITY?

Take a look at these images.



Why talk about global or national inequalities when all around us there are inequalities to which nobody seems to object? Just look at the way my parents favour my brother over me.

All of them make distinctions between human beings on grounds of race and colour and these appear to most of us as unacceptable. In fact, such distinctions violate our intuitive understanding of equality which tells us that all human beings should be entitled to the same respect and consideration because of their common humanity.

However, treating people with equal respect need not mean always treating them in an identical way. No society treats all its members in exactly the same way under all conditions. The smooth functioning of society requires division of work and functions and people often enjoy different status and rewards on account of it. At times these differences of treatment may appear acceptable or even necessary. For instance, we usually do not feel that giving prime ministers, or army generals, a special official rank and status goes against the notion of equality, provided their privileges are not misused. But

Equality

some other kinds of inequalities may seem unjust. For instance, if a child born in a slum is denied nutritious food or good education through no fault of his/her own, it may appear unfair to us.

The question that arises is which distinctions and differences are acceptable and which are not? When people are treated differently just because they are born in a particular religion or race or caste or gender, we regard it as an unacceptable form of inequality. But human beings may pursue different ambitions and goals and not all may be equally successful. So long as they are able to develop the best in themselves we would not feel that equality has been undermined. Some may become good musicians while others may not be equally outstanding, some become famous scientists while others more noted for their hard work and conscientiousness. The commitment to the ideal of equality does not imply the elimination of all forms of differences. It merely suggests that the treatment we receive and the opportunities we enjoy must not be pre-determined by birth or social circumstance.

Equality of Opportunities

The concept of equality implies that all people, as human beings, are entitled to the same rights and opportunities to develop their skills and talents, and to pursue their goals and ambitions. This means that in a society people may differ with regard to their choices and preferences. They may also have different talents and skills which results in some being more successful in their chosen careers than others. But just because only some become ace cricketers or successful lawyers, it does not follow that the society should be considered unequal. In other words, it is not the lack of equality of status or wealth or privilege that is significant but the inequalities in peoples' access to such basic goods, as education, health care, safe housing, that make for an unequal and unjust society.

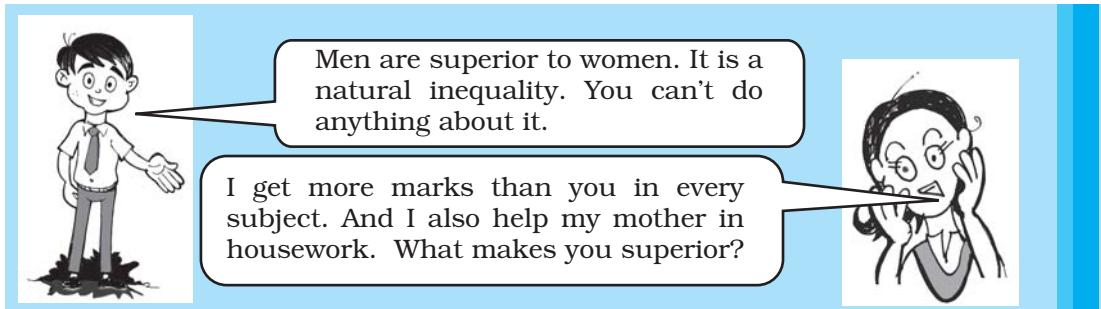
Natural and Social Inequalities

A distinction has sometimes been made in political theory between natural inequalities and socially-produced inequalities. Natural inequalities that emerge between people as a result of their different capabilities and talents and choices are often represented as natural

Equality

Political Theory

inequalities. These kind of inequalities are different from socially-produced inequalities which emerge as a consequence of inequalities of opportunity or the exploitation of some groups in a society by others.



Natural inequalities are considered to be the result of the different characteristics and abilities with which people are born. It is generally assumed that natural differences cannot be altered. Social inequalities on the other hand are those created by society. Certain societies may, for instance, value those who perform intellectual work over those who do manual work and reward them differently. They may treat differently people of different race, or colour, or gender, or caste. Differences of this kind reflect the values of a society and some of these may certainly appear to us to be unjust.

This distinction is sometimes useful in helping us to distinguish between acceptable and unfair inequalities in society but it is not always clear or self-evident. For instance, when certain inequalities in the treatment of people have existed over a long period of time they may appear to us as justifiable because they are based on natural inequalities, that is, characteristics that people are born with and cannot easily change. For example, women were for long described as 'the weaker sex', considered timid and of lesser intelligence than men, needing special protection. Therefore, it was felt that denying women equal rights could be justified. Black people in Africa were considered by their colonial masters to be of lesser intelligence, child-like, and better at manual work, sports and music. This belief was used to justify institutions like slavery. All these assessments are now questioned. They are now seen as

Equality

Political Theory

distinctions made by society as a result of the differences of power between people and nations rather than based on their inborn characteristics.

Another problem which arises with the idea of natural differences is that some differences which could be considered natural need no longer be seen as unalterable. For instance, advances in medical science and technologies have helped many disabled people to function effectively in society. Today, computers can help blind people, wheel chairs and artificial limbs can help in cases of physical disability, even a person's looks can be changed with cosmetic surgery. The famous physicist Stephen Hawking can hardly move or speak but he has made major contributions to science. It would seem unjust to most people today if disabled people are denied necessary help to overcome the effects of their disability or a fair reward for their work on the grounds that they are naturally less capable.

Given all these complexities, it would be difficult to use the natural/socially-produced distinction as a standard by which the laws and policies of a society can be assessed. For this reason many theorists today differentiate between inequality arising from our choices and inequalities operating on account of the family or circumstance in which a person is born. It is the latter that is a source of concern to advocates of equality and which they wish to minimise and eliminate.

3.3 THREE DIMENSIONS OF EQUALITY

After considering what kind of social differences are unacceptable we need to ask what are the different dimensions of equality that we may pursue or seek to achieve in society. While identifying different kinds of inequalities that exist in society, various thinkers and ideologies have highlighted three main dimensions of equality namely, political, social and economic. It is only by addressing each of these three different dimensions of equality can we move towards a more just and equal society.

Political Equality

In democratic societies political equality would normally include granting equal citizenship to all the members of the state. As you

will read in the chapter on Citizenship, equal citizenship brings with it certain basic rights such as the right to vote, freedom of expression, movement and association and freedom of belief. These are rights which are considered necessary to enable citizens to develop themselves and participate in the affairs of the state. But they are legal rights, guaranteed by the constitution and laws. We know that considerable inequality can exist even in countries which grant equal rights to all citizens. These inequalities are often the result of differences in the resources and opportunities which are available to citizens in the social and economic spheres. For this reason a demand is often made for equal opportunities, or for ‘a level playing field’. But we should remember that although political and legal equality by itself may not be sufficient to build a just and egalitarian society, it is certainly an important component of it.

Social Equality

Political equality or equality before the law is an important first step in the pursuit of equality but it often needs to be supplemented by equality of opportunities. While the former is necessary to remove any legal hurdles which might exclude people from a voice in government and deny them access to available social goods, the pursuit of equality requires that people belonging to different groups and communities also have a fair and equal chance to compete for those goods and opportunities. For this, it is necessary to minimise the effects of social and economic inequalities and guarantee certain minimum conditions of life to all the members of the society — adequate health care, the opportunity for good education, adequate nourishment and a minimum wage, among other things. In the absence of such facilities it is exceedingly difficult for all the members of the society to compete on equal terms. Where equality of opportunity does not exist a huge pool of potential talent tends to be wasted in a society.

In India, a special problem regarding equal opportunities comes not just from lack of facilities but from some of the customs which may prevail in different parts of country, or among different groups. Women, for instance, may not enjoy equal rights of inheritance in some groups, or there may be social prohibitions regarding their taking part in certain kinds of activities, or they may even be

INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION

Are the differences in the educational attainment of different communities depicted in the table below significant? Could these differences have taken place just by chance? Or do these differences point to the working of the caste system? Which factor other than the caste system do you see at work here?

Caste-community inequalities in higher education in urban India

Castes/ Communities	Graduates per thousand persons
Scheduled Caste	47
Muslim	61
Hindu-OBC	86
Scheduled Tribes	109
Christian	237
Sikh	250
Hindu-Upper Caste	253
Other Religions	315
ALL INDIA AVERAGE	155

Source:

National Sample Survey Organisation,
55th round survey, 1999-2000

discouraged from going in for higher education. In such cases the role of the state has been to offer equal legal rights to all, to make policies to prevent discrimination or harassment of women in public places or employment, to provide incentives to open up education or certain professions to women, and other such measures. But social groups and individuals also have a role to play in raising awareness and supporting those who want to exercise their rights.

Economic Equality

At the simplest level, we would say that economic inequality exists in a society if there are significant differences in wealth, property or income between individuals or classes. One way of measuring the degree of economic inequality in a society would be to measure the relative difference between the richest and poorest groups. Another way could be to estimate the number of people who

live below the poverty line. Of course absolute equality of wealth or income has probably never existed in a society. Most democracies today try to make equal opportunities available to people in the belief that this would at least give those who have talent and determination the chance to improve their condition. With equal

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LET'S DEBATE

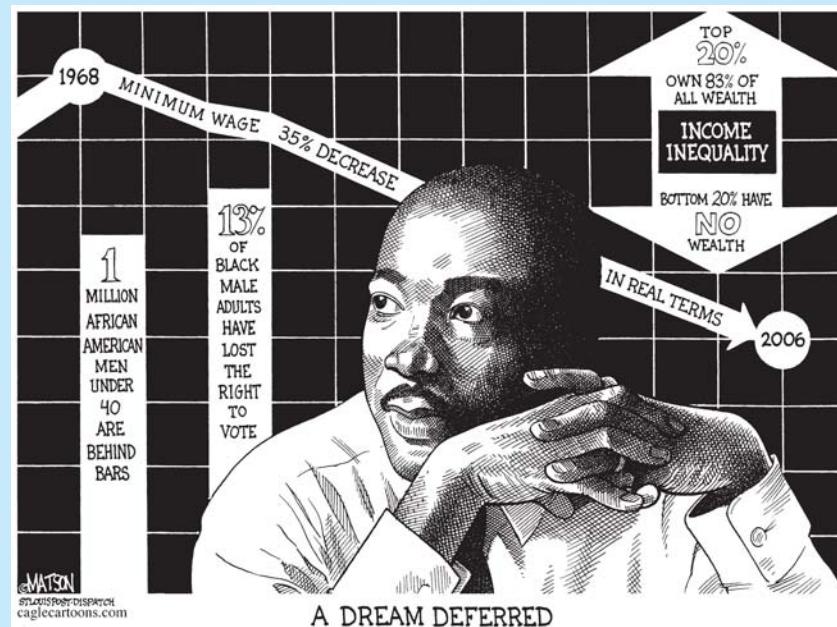
“Women should be allowed to join the combat units of the army and go up to the highest position”.

Equality

Political Theory

Fairness

READ A CARTOON



Find out more about racial inequality in the US. Which group or groups in our country suffer from similar inequality? What kind of policies have been adopted in the US to reduce this inequality? Is there something to be learnt from their experience? Can they learn something from our experience?

opportunities inequalities may continue to exist between individuals but there is the possibility of improving one's position in society with sufficient effort.

Inequalities which are entrenched, that is, which remain relatively untouched over generations, are more dangerous for a society. If in a society certain classes of people have enjoyed considerable wealth, and the power which goes with it, over generations, the society would become divided between those classes and others who have remained poor over generations. Over time such class differences can give rise to resentment and violence. Because of the power of the wealthy classes it might prove difficult to reform such a society to make it more open and egalitarian.

Equality

FEMINISM

◆ Feminism is a political doctrine of equal rights for women and men. Feminists are those men and women who believe that many of the inequalities we see in society between men and women are neither natural nor necessary and can be altered so that both women and men can lead free and equal lives.

According to feminists, inequality between men and women in society is the result of patriarchy. This term refers to a social, economic and cultural system that values men more than women and gives men power over women. Patriarchy is based on the assumption that men and women are different by nature and that this difference justifies their unequal positions in society. Feminists question this way of thinking by making a distinction between "sex" i.e. biological difference between men and women, and "gender" which determines the different roles that men and women play in society. For instance, the biological fact that only women can become pregnant and bear children does not require that only women should look after children after they are born. Feminists show us that much of the inequality between men and women is produced by society and not by nature.

Patriarchy produces a division of labour by which women are supposed to be responsible for "private" and "domestic" matters while men are responsible for work in the "public" domain. Feminists question this distinction by pointing out that in fact most women are also active in the "public" domain. That is, most women all over the world are employed in some form of work outside the home, but women continue to be solely responsible for house-work as well. However despite this "double burden" as feminists term it, women are given little or no say in decisions taken in the public domain. Feminists contend that this public/private distinction and all forms of gender inequalities can and should be eliminated.



Equality

Political Theory

Marxism and liberalism are two important political ideologies of our times. Marx was an important nineteenth century thinker who argued that the root cause of entrenched inequality was private ownership of important economic resources such as oil, or land, or forests, as well as other forms of property. He pointed out that such private ownership did not only make the class of owners wealthy, it also gave them political power. Such power enables them to influence state policies and laws and this could prove a threat to democratic government. Marxists and socialists feel that economic inequality provides support to other forms of social inequality such as differences of rank or privilege. Therefore to tackle inequality in society we need to go beyond providing equal opportunities and try and ensure public control over essential resources and forms of property. Such views may be debatable but they have raised important issues which need to be addressed.

An opposing point of view can be found in liberal theories. Liberals uphold the principle of competition as the most efficient and fair way of distributing resources and rewards in society. They believe that while states may have to intervene to try and ensure a minimum standard of living and equal opportunities for all, this cannot by itself bring equality and justice to society. Competition between people in free and fair conditions is the most just and efficient way of distributing rewards in a society. For them, as long as competition is open and free, inequalities are unlikely to become entrenched and people will get due reward for their talents and efforts.

For liberals the principle of competition is the most just and efficient way of selecting candidates for jobs or admission to educational institutions. For instance, in our country many students hope for admission to professional courses and entry is highly competitive. From time to time the government and the courts have stepped into regulate educational institutions and the entrance tests to ensure that everybody gets a fair and equal chance to compete. Some may still not get admission but it is considered to be a fair way of distributing limited seats.



LET'S DO IT

Make a list of all the social and economic inequalities that you notice among the students of your own school.

SOCIALISM

- ◆ Socialism refers to a set of political ideas that emerged as a response to the inequalities present in, and reproduced by, the industrial capitalist economy. The main concern of Socialism is how to minimise existing inequality and distribute resources justly. Although advocates of socialism are not entirely opposed to the market, they favour some kind of government regulation, planning and control over certain key areas such as education and health care.

In India the eminent socialist thinker Rammanohar Lohia, identified five kinds of inequalities that need to be fought against simultaneously: inequality between man and woman, inequality based on skin colour, caste-based inequality, colonial rule of some countries over others, and, of course, economic inequality. This might appear a self-evident idea today. But during Lohia's time it was common for the socialists to argue that class inequality was the only form of inequality worth struggling against. Other inequalities did not matter or would end automatically if economic inequality could be ended. Lohia argued that each of these inequalities had independent roots and had to be fought separately and simultaneously. He did not speak of revolution in the singular. For him struggle against these five inequalities constituted five revolutions. He added two more revolutions to this list : revolution for civil liberties against unjust encroachments on private life and revolution for non-violence, for renunciation of weapons in favour of *Satyagraha*. These were the seven revolutions or *Sapta Kranti* which for Lohia was the ideal of socialism.

Unlike socialists, liberals do not believe that political, economic and social inequalities are necessarily linked. They maintain that inequalities in each of these spheres should be tackled appropriately. Thus, democracy could help to provide political equality but it might be necessary to also devise different strategies to deal with social differences and economic inequalities. The problem for liberals is not inequality as such, but unjust and entrenched inequalities which prevent individuals from developing their capabilities.

3.4 How CAN WE PROMOTE EQUALITY?

We have already noted some of the basic differences among the socialists and the liberals on the most desirable way of achieving the goal of equality. While the relative merits and limitations of each of these points of view are being debated the world over, we still need to consider what principles and policies might be

Equality

Political Theory

Equality

considered necessary for pursuing equality. Specifically, we need to consider if the use of affirmative action is justified for purposes of bringing about equality? This issue has raised a lot of controversy in recent years and we will discuss this issue in the following section.

Establishing Formal Equality

The first step towards bringing about equality is of course ending the formal system of inequality and privileges. Social, economic and political inequalities all over the world have been protected by customs and legal systems that prohibited some sections of society from enjoying certain kinds of opportunities and rewards. Poor people were not granted the right to vote in a large number of countries. Women were not allowed to take up many professions and activities. The caste system in India prevented people from the 'lower' castes from doing anything except manual labour. In many countries only people from some families could occupy high positions.

Attainment of equality requires that all such restrictions or privileges should be brought to an end. Since many of these systems have the sanction of law, equality requires that the government and the law of the land should stop protecting these systems of inequality. This is what our Constitution does. The Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Our Constitution also abolishes the practice of untouchability. Most modern constitutions and democratic governments have formally accepted the principle of equality and incorporated it as identical treatment by law to all citizens without any regard to their caste, race, religion or gender.

Equality Through Different Treatment

However, as we noted earlier, formal equality or equality before the law is necessary but not sufficient to realise the principle of equality. Sometimes it is necessary to treat people differently in order to ensure that they can enjoy equal rights. Certain differences between people may have to be taken into account for this purpose. For instance, disabled people may justifiably demand special ramps in public spaces so that they get an equal chance to enter public

Equality

Equality
Political Theory



buildings. Or women working in call centres at night may need special protection during the journey to and from the centre so that their equal right to work may be protected. These should not be seen as infringements of equality but as enhancement of equality.

What kinds of differences hinder access to equal opportunities and what kinds of policies may be pursued to overcome those hindrances are questions that are being discussed in almost all societies today. Some countries have used policies of affirmative action to enhance equality of opportunity. In our country we have relied on the policy of reservations. In the next section, we will attempt to understand the idea of affirmative action and understand some of the issues raised by specific policies within that framework.

LET'S DO IT

Make a list of all the facilities that students with various kinds of physical handicaps would need to learn as any other student. Which of these facilities are available in your school?

Equality

Political Theory

Affirmative Action

Equality

Affirmative action is based on the idea that it is not sufficient to establish formal equality by law. When we wish to eliminate inequalities that are deeply rooted, it is necessary to take some more positive measures to minimise and eliminate entrenched forms of social inequalities. Most policies of affirmative action are thus designed to correct the cumulative effect of past inequalities.

Affirmative action can however take many forms, from preferential spending on facilities for disadvantaged communities, such as, scholarships and hostels to special consideration for admissions to educational institutions and jobs. In our country we have adopted a policy of quotas or reserved seats in education and jobs to provide equality of opportunity to deprived groups, and this has been the subject of considerable debate and disagreement. The policy has been defended on the ground that certain groups have been victims of social prejudice and discrimination in the form of exclusion and segregation. These communities who have suffered in the past and been denied equal opportunities cannot be immediately expected to compete with others on equal terms. Therefore, in the interest of creating an egalitarian and just society they need to be given special protection and help.

Special assistance in the form of affirmative action is expected to be a temporary or time-bound measure. The assumption is that special consideration will enable these communities to overcome the existing disadvantages and then compete with others on equal terms. Although policies of affirmative action are supported for making the society more equal, many theorists argue against them. They question whether treating people differently can ever lead to greater equality.

Critics of positive discrimination, particularly policies of reservations, thus invoke the principle of equality to argue against such policies. They contend that any provision of reservations or quotas for the deprived in admissions for higher education or jobs is unfair as it arbitrarily denies other sections of society their right to equal treatment. They maintain that reservations are a form of reverse discrimination and they continue with the practices that the principle of equality questions and rejects. Equality requires that all persons

Equality

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LET'S DEBATE

“Policies of affirmative action for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should be extended to admission to private educational institutions.”

be treated alike, and when we make distinctions between individuals on the basis of their caste or colour, we are likely to reinforce caste and racial prejudices. For these theorists, the important thing is to do away with social distinctions that divide our society.

In the context of this debate, it is relevant to draw a distinction between equality as a guiding principle of state policy and equal rights of individuals. Individuals have a right to equal consideration for admission to educational institutions and public sector employment. But competition should be fair. Sometimes when competing for limited seats or jobs people from deprived strata may be at a disadvantage. The needs and circumstances of a first generation learner whose parents and ancestors were illiterate are very different from those who are born into educated families. Members of excluded groups, whether they are dalits, women, or any other category, deserve and need some special help. To provide this, the state must devise social policies which would help to make such people equal and give them a fair chance to compete with others.

The fact is that in the spheres of education and health care India has done far less for its deprived population than what is their due. Inequalities in school education are glaring. Many poor children in rural areas or urban slums have little chance of attending schools. If they do get the chance, their schools have little to offer that would be comparable to the facilities available in elite schools. The inequalities with which children enter school tend to continue to hamper their chances to improve their qualifications or get good jobs. These students face hurdles in gaining admission to elite professional courses because they lack the means to pay for special coaching. The fees for professional courses also may be prohibitively high. Consequently, they cannot compete on equal terms with the more privileged sections.

Social and economic inequalities of this kind hinder the pursuit of equal opportunities. Most theorists today recognise this. What they contest is not the goal of equal opportunity but the policies

Equality

Political Theory

Equality

that the state should pursue to achieve that goal. Should the state reserve seats for the deprived communities or should they provide special facilities that can help to develop talents and skills from an early age? How should we define who is deprived? Should we use an economic criterion to identify the deprived, or should we use social inequalities arising from the caste system in our country as the basis of identifying the deprived groups? These are aspects of social policy that are today being debated. Ultimately the policies that we choose would have to be justified in terms of their success in making the society more egalitarian and fair to all.

While reflecting on the issue of equality a distinction must also be made between treating everyone in an identical manner and treating everyone as equals. The latter may on occasions need different treatment but in all such cases the primary consideration is to promote equality. Different or special treatment may be considered to realise the goal of equality but it requires justification and careful reflection. Since different treatment for different communities was part and parcel of the caste system and practices like apartheid, liberals are usually very wary of deviations from the norm of identical treatment.



LET'S THINK

Consider the following situations. Is special and differential treatment justified in any of the following?

- Working women should receive maternity leave.
- A school should spend money to buy special equipment for two visually challenged students.
- Geeta plays brilliant basketball, so the school should build a basketball court for her so that she can develop her skills further.
- Jeet's parents want him to wear a turban in school, and Irfan's parents want him to pray on Friday afternoon, so the school should not insist that Jeet should wear a helmet while playing cricket, and Irfan's teacher should not ask him to stay back for extra classes on Friday.

Equality

Many of these issues relating to the pursuit of equality have been raised by the women's movement. In the nineteenth century women struggled for equal rights. They demanded, for instance, the right to vote, the right to receive degrees in colleges and universities and the right to work — that is, the same rights as the men in their society. However, as they entered the job market they realised that women required special facilities in order to exercise these rights. For instance, they required some provision for maternity leave and crèches in the workplace. Without special considerations of this kind they could not seriously compete for jobs or enjoy a successful professional and personal life. They needed, in other words, sometimes to be treated differently if they are to enjoy the same rights as men.

As we deliberate on issues of equality and examine whether different treatment is warranted in a particular case we need continuously to ask ourselves whether different treatment is essential to ensure that a set of people can enjoy the same rights as the rest of society. Caution must, however, be exercised to see that different treatment does not yield new structures of dominance and oppression, or become a means for some dominant groups to reassert special privileges and power in society. Different treatment is intended and justified only as a means to promoting a just and egalitarian society.

Equality

Political Theory

Equality



Exercises

1. Some people argue that inequality is natural while others maintain that it is equality which is natural and the inequalities which we notice around us are created by society. Which view do you support? Give reasons.
2. There is a view that absolute economic equality is neither possible nor desirable. It is argued that the most a society can do is to try and reduce the gaps between the richest and poorest members of society. Do you agree?
3. Match the following concepts with appropriate instances:

(a) Affirmative action	(i) Every adult citizen has a right to vote
(b) Equality of opportunity	(ii) Banks offer higher rate of interest to senior citizen
(c) Equal Rights.	(iii) Every child should get free education
4. A government report on farmers' problems says that small and marginal farmers cannot get good prices from the market. It recommends that the government should intervene to ensure a better price but only for small and marginal farmers. Is this recommendation consistent with the principle of equality?
5. Which of the following violate the principles of equality? And why?
 - (a) Every child in class will read the text of the play by turn.
 - (b) The Government of Canada encouraged white Europeans to migrate to Canada from the end of the Second World War till 1960.
 - (c) There is a separate railway reservation counter for the senior citizens.

Exercises

Exercises

Equality

Political Theory

(d) Access to some forest areas is reserved for certain tribal communities.

6. Here are some arguments in favour of the right to vote for women. Which of these are consistent with the idea of equality? Give reasons.
 - (a) Women are our mothers. We shall not disrespect our mothers by denying them the right to vote.
 - (b) Decisions of the government affect women as well as men, therefore they also should have a say in choosing the rulers.
 - (c) Not granting women the right to vote will cause disharmony in the family.
 - (d) Women constitute half of humanity. You cannot subjugate them for long by denying them the right to vote.

Chapter 4

Social Justice

Overview



Just as we intuitively understand what love means even if we cannot explain all its different shades of meaning, we also have an intuitive understanding of justice even though we may not be able to define it precisely. In that sense justice is a lot like love. In addition, both love and justice evoke passionate responses from their advocates. And as with love, no one hates justice, everyone wants justice for oneself and to some extent for others also. But unlike love, which is an aspect of our relationships with a few people whom we know well, justice concerns our life in society, the way in which public life is ordered and the principles according to which social goods and social duties are distributed among different members of society. As such, questions of justice are of central importance for politics.

After going through this chapter you should be able to:

- Identify some of the principles of justice which have been put forward in different societies and at different periods of time.
- Explain what is meant by distributive justice.
- Discuss John Rawls' argument that a fair and just society would be in the interest of all members and could be defended on rational grounds.

Social Justice

Justice

4.1 WHAT IS JUSTICE?

Political Theory

All cultures and traditions have grappled with questions of justice although they may have interpreted the concept in different ways. For instance, in ancient Indian society, justice was associated with *dharma* and maintaining *dharma* or a just social order, was considered to be a primary duty of kings. In China, Confucius, the famous philosopher argued that kings should maintain justice by punishing wrong doers and rewarding the virtuous. In fourth century B.C. Athens (Greece), Plato discussed issues of justice in his book *The Republic*. Through a long dialogue between Socrates and his young friends, Glaucon and Adeimantus, Plato examined why we should be concerned about justice. The young people ask Socrates why we should be just. They observe that people who were unjust

seemed to be much better off than those who were just. Those who twisted rules to serve their interests, avoided paying taxes and were willing to lie and be deceitful, were often more successful than those who were truthful and just. If one were smart enough to avoid being caught then it would seem that being unjust is better than being just. You may have heard people expressing similar sentiments even today.

Socrates reminds these young people that if everyone were to be unjust, if everyone manipulated rules to suit their own interests, no one could be sure of benefiting from injustice. Nobody would be secure and this was likely to harm all of them. Hence, it is in our own long-term interest to obey the laws and be just. Socrates clarified that we need to understand clearly what justice means in order to figure out why it is important to be just. He explained that justice does not only mean doing good to our friends and harm to our enemies, or pursuing our own interests. Justice involves the well-being of all people. Just as a doctor is

“They say that to do injustice is, by nature, good; to suffer injustice, evil; but that the evil is greater than the good. And so when men have both done and suffered injustice and have had experience of both, not being able to avoid the one and obtain the other, they think they had better agree among themselves to have neither; hence there arise laws and mutual covenants; and that which is ordained by law is termed by the lawful and just.”

(Glaucon to Socrates in
The Republic).

Social Justice

Political Theory

concerned with the well-being of his/her patients, similarly the just ruler or the just government must be concerned with the well-being of the people. Ensuring the well-being of the people includes giving each person his due.

The idea that justice involves giving each person his due continues to be an important part of our present day understanding of justice. However, our understanding of what is due to a person has changed from the time of Plato. Today, our understanding of what is just is closely linked to our understanding of what is due to each person as a human being. According to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, human beings possess dignity. If all persons are granted dignity then what is due to each of them is that they have the opportunity to develop their talents and pursue their chosen goals. Justice requires that we give due and equal consideration to all individuals.

Equal Treatment for Equals

Although there might be broad agreement in modern society about the equal importance of all people, it is not a simple matter to decide how to give each person his/her due. A number of different principles have been put forward in this regard. One of the principles is the principle of treating equals equally. It is considered that all individuals share certain characteristics as human beings. Therefore they deserve equal rights and equal treatment. Some of the important rights which are granted in most liberal democracies today include civil rights such as the rights of life, liberty and property, political rights like the right to vote, which enable people to participate in political processes, and certain social rights which would include the right to enjoy equal opportunities with other members of the society.

Apart from equal rights, the principle of treating equals equally would require that people should not be discriminated against on grounds of class, caste, race or gender. They should be judged on the basis of their work and actions and not on the basis of the group to which they belong. Therefore, if two persons from different castes perform the same kind of work, whether it be breaking stones or delivering Pizzas, they should receive the same kind of reward. If a person gets one hundred rupees for some work and another receives only seventy five rupees for the same work because they belong to

different castes, then it would be unfair or unjust. Similarly, if a male teacher in a school gets a higher salary than a female teacher, then this difference would also be unjustifiable and wrong.

Proportionate Justice

However, equal treatment is not the only principle of justice. There could be circumstances in which we might feel that treating everybody equally would be unjust. How, for instance, would you react if it was decided in your school that all those who did an exam should get equal marks because they are all students of the same school and did the same exam? Here you might think it would be more fair if students were awarded marks according to the quality of their answer papers and also, possibly, the degree of effort they had put in. In other words, provided everybody starts from the same base line of equal rights, justice in such cases would mean rewarding people in proportion to the scale and quality of their effort. Most people would agree that although people should get the same reward for the same work, it would be fair and just to reward different kinds of work differently if we take into account factors such as the effort required, the skills required, the possible dangers involved in that work, and so on. If we use these criteria we may find that certain kinds of workers in our society are not paid a wage which takes such factors sufficiently into account. For instance, miners, skilled craftsmen, or people in sometimes dangerous but socially useful professions like policemen, may not always get a reward which is just if we compare it to what some others in society may be earning. For justice in society, the principle of equal treatment needs to be balanced with the principle of proportionality.

Recognition of Special Needs

A third principle of justice which we recognise is for a society to take into account special needs of people while distributing rewards or duties. This would be considered a way of promoting social justice. In terms of their basic status and rights as members of the society justice may require that people be treated equally. But even non-discrimination between people and rewarding them proportionately to their efforts might not be enough to ensure that people enjoy equality in other aspects of their lives in society nor that the society

Social Justice

Political Theory



LET'S THINK

Examine the following situations and discuss whether they are just. In each case discuss the principle of justice that might be used in defense of your argument.

- Suresh, a visually impaired student, gets three hours and thirty minutes to finish his mathematics paper, while the rest of the class gets only three hours.
- Geeta walks with a limp. The teacher decided to give her also three hours and thirty minutes to finish her mathematics paper.
- A teacher gives grace marks to the weaker students in class, to boost up their morale.
- A professor distributes different question papers to different students based on her evaluation of their capabilities.
- There is a proposal to reserve 33 per cent of the seats in the Parliament for women.

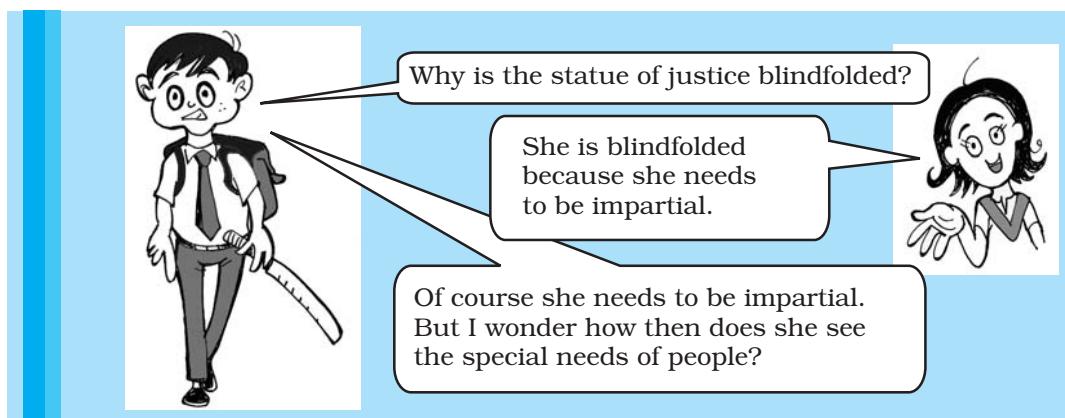
as a whole is just. The principle of taking account of the special needs of people does not necessarily contradict the principle of equal treatment so much as extend it because the principle of treating equals equally could imply that people who are not equal in certain important respects could be treated differently.

People with special needs or disabilities could be considered unequal in some particular respect and deserving of special help. But it is not always easy to get agreement regarding which inequalities of people should be recognised for providing them special help. Physical disabilities, age or lack of access to good education or health care, are some of the factors which are considered grounds for special treatment in many countries. It is believed that if people who enjoy very different standard of living and opportunities are treated equally in all respects with those who have been deprived of even the basic minimum need to live a healthy and productive life, the result is likely to be an unequal society, not an egalitarian and just one. In our country, lack of access to good education or health care and other such facilities is often found combined with

Social Justice

Political Theory

social discrimination on grounds of caste. The Constitution therefore allowed for reservations of government jobs and quotas for admissions to educational institutions for people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.



Our discussion of different principles of justice has indicated that governments might sometimes find it difficult to harmonise the three principles of justice which have been discussed — equal treatment for equals, recognition of different efforts and skills while determining rewards and burdens, and provision of minimum standard of living and equal opportunities to the needy. Pursuing equality of treatment by itself might sometimes work against giving due reward to merit. Emphasising rewarding merit as the main principle of justice might mean that marginalised sections would be at a disadvantage in many areas because they have not had access to facilities such as good nourishment or education. Different groups in the country might favour different policies depending upon which principle of justice they emphasise. It then becomes a function of governments to harmonise the different principles to promote a just society.

4.2 JUST DISTRIBUTION

To achieve social justice in society, governments might have to do more than just ensure that laws and policies treat individuals in a fair manner. Social justice also concerns the just distribution of goods and services, whether it is between nations or between different

Social Justice

Political Theory

groups and individuals within a society. If there are serious economic or social inequalities in a society, it might become necessary to try and redistribute some of the important resources of the society to provide something like a level playing field for citizens. Therefore, within a country social justice would require not only that people be treated equally in terms of the laws and policies of the society but also that they enjoy some basic equality of life conditions and opportunities. This is seen as necessary for each person to be able to pursue his/her objectives and express himself. In our country for instance, the Constitution abolished the practice of untouchability to promote social equality and ensure that people belonging to 'lower' castes have access to temples, jobs and basic necessities like water. Different state governments have also taken some measures to redistribute important resources like land in a more fair manner by instituting land reforms.

Differences of opinion on matters such whether, and how, to distribute resources and ensure equal access to education and jobs arouse fierce passions in society and even sometimes provoke violence. People believe the future of themselves and their families may be at stake. We have only to remind ourselves about the anger and even violence which has sometimes been roused by proposals to reserve seats in educational institutions or in government employment in our country. As students of political theory however we should be able to calmly examine the issues involved in terms of our understanding of the principles of justice. Can schemes to help the disadvantaged be justified in terms of a theory of justice? In the next section, we will discuss the theory of just distribution put forward by the well-known political philosopher, John Rawls. Rawls has argued that there could indeed be a rational justification for acknowledging the need to provide help to the least privileged members of a society.

4.3 JOHN RAWLS' THEORY OF JUSTICE

If people are asked to chose the kind of society in which they would like to live, they are likely to chose one in which the rules and organisation of society allot them a privileged position. We cannot expect everyone to put aside their personal interests and think of

Social Justice

Political Theory

the good of society, especially if they believe that their decision is going to have an impact on the kind of life and opportunities their children will have in the future. Indeed, we often expect parents to think of and support what is best for their children. But such perspectives cannot form the basis of a theory of justice for a society. So how do we reach a decision that would be both fair and just?

John Rawls has tried to answer this question. He argues that the only way we can arrive at a fair and just rule is if we imagine ourselves to be in a situation in which we have to make decisions about how society should be organised although we do not know which position we would ourselves occupy in that society. That is, we do not know what kind of family we would be born in, whether we would be born into an 'upper' caste or 'lower' caste family, rich or poor, privileged or disadvantaged. Rawls argues that if we do not know, in this sense, who we will be and what options would be available to us in the future society, we will be likely to support a decision about the rules and organisation of that future society which would be fair for all the members.

Rawls describes this as thinking under a 'veil of ignorance'. He expects that in such a situation of complete ignorance about our possible position and status in society, each person would decide in the way they generally do, that is, in terms of their own interests. But since no one knows who he would be, and what is going to benefit him, each will envisage the future society from the point of view of the worst-off. It will be clear to a person who can reason and think for himself, that those who are born privileged will enjoy certain special opportunities. But, what if they have the misfortune of being born in a disadvantaged section of society where few opportunities would be available to them? Hence, it would make sense for each person, acting in his or her own interest, to try to think of rules of organisation that will ensure reasonable opportunities to the weaker sections. The attempt will be to see that important resources, like education, health, shelter, etc., are available to all persons, even if they are not part of the upper class.

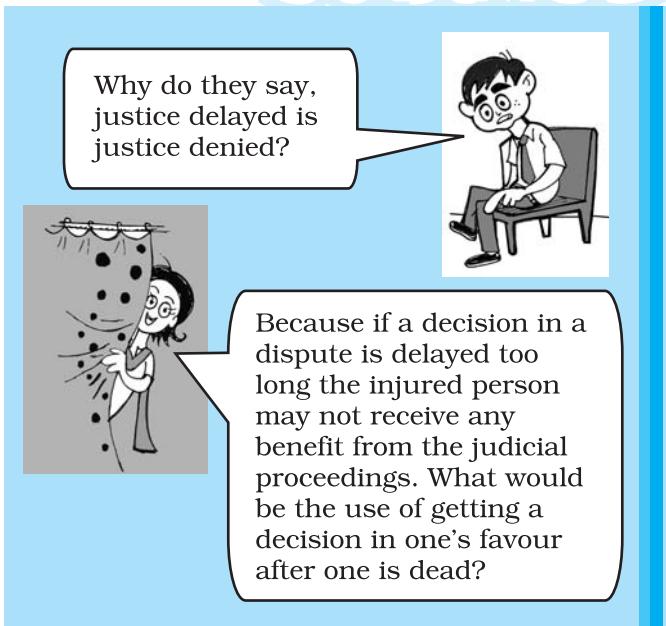
It is of course not easy to erase our identities and to imagine oneself under a veil of ignorance. But then it is equally difficult for

Social Justice

Political Theory

most people to be self-sacrificing and share their good fortune with strangers. That is why we habitually associate self-sacrifice with heroism. Given these human failings and limitations, it is better for us to think of a framework that does not require extraordinary actions. The merit of the 'veil of ignorance' position is that it expects people to just be their usual rational selves: they are expected to think for themselves and choose what they regard to be in their interest. The pertinent thing however is that when they choose under the 'veil of ignorance' they will find that it is in their interest to think from the position of the worst-off.

Wearing the imagined veil of ignorance is the first step in arriving at a system of fair laws and policies. It will be evident that rational persons will not only see things from the perspective of the worst-off, they will also try to ensure that the policies they frame benefit the society as a whole. Both things have to go hand-in-hand. Since no one knows what position they will occupy in the future society, each will seek rules that protect them in case they happen to be born among the worst-off. But it would make sense if they also try to ensure that their chosen policy does not also make those who are better-off weaker because it is also possible that they could be born into a privileged position in the future society. Therefore, it would be in the interests of all that society as a whole should benefit from the rules and policies that are decided and not just any particular section. Such fairness would be the outcome of rational action, not benevolence or generosity.



Social Justice

Political Theory

Justice

Rawls therefore argues that rational thinking, not morality, could lead us to be fair and judge impartially regarding how to distribute the benefits and burdens of a society. In his example, there are no goals or norms of morality that are given to us in advance and we remain free to determine what is best for ourselves. It is this belief which makes Rawls' theory an important and compelling way to approach the question of fairness and justice.

4.4 PURSUING SOCIAL JUSTICE

If in a society deep and persistent divisions exist between those who enjoy greater wealth and property, and the power which goes with

such ownership, and those who are excluded and deprived, we would say that social justice is lacking there. We are not talking here merely about the different standards of living which may be enjoyed by different individuals in a society. Justice does not require absolute equality and sameness in the way in which people live. But a society would be considered unjust if the differences between rich and poor are so great that they seem to be living in different worlds altogether, and if the relatively deprived have no chance at all to improve their condition however hard they may work. In other words, a just society should provide people with the basic minimum conditions to enable them to live healthy and secure lives and develop their talents as well as equal opportunities to pursue their chosen goals in society.

LET'S DO IT



Various calculations of the minimum requirements of food, income, water and such facilities have been made by government agencies and U.N. agencies. Search in your school library, or on the internet, for any such calculations.

How can we decide what are the basic minimum conditions of life needed by people? Various methods of calculating the basic needs of people have been devised by different governments and by international organisations like the World Health Organisation. But in general it is agreed that the basic amount of nourishment needed to remain healthy, housing, supply of clean drinking water, education and a minimum wage would constitute an important part of these basic conditions. Providing people with their basic needs is considered to be one of the responsibilities of a democratic government. However, providing such basic conditions of life to all citizens may pose a heavy burden on governments, particularly in countries like India which have a large number of poor people.

Social Justice

Political Theory

Even if we all agree that states should try and help the most disadvantaged members of the society to enjoy some degree of equality with others, disagreements could still arise regarding the best methods of achieving this goal. A debate is currently going on in our society, as well as in other parts of the world, about whether promoting open competition through free markets would be the best way of helping the disadvantaged without harming the better-off members of a society, or whether the government should take on the responsibility of providing a basic minimum to the poor, if necessary even through a redistribution of resources. In our country these different approaches are being supported by different political groups who debate the relative merits of different schemes for helping marginalised sections of the population such as the rural or urban poor. We will briefly examine this debate.

A Just society is that society in which ascending sense of reverence and descending sense of contempt is dissolved into the creation of a compassionate society

– B.R. Ambedkar



Free Markets versus State Intervention

Supporters of free markets maintain that as far as possible, individuals should be free to own property and enter into contracts and agreements with others regarding prices and wages and profits. They should be free to compete with each other to gain the greatest amount of benefit. This is a simple description of a free market. Supporters of the free market believe that if markets are left free of state interference the sum of market transactions would ensure overall a just distribution of benefits and duties in society. Those with merit and talent would be rewarded accordingly while the

Social Justice

Political Theory

incompetent would get a lesser reward. They would maintain that whatever be the outcome of market distribution it would be just.

However, not all free market supporters today would support absolutely unregulated markets. Many would now be willing to accept certain restrictions, for instance, states could step in to ensure a basic minimum standard of living to all people so that they are able to compete on equal terms. But they might argue that even here the most efficient way of providing people with basic services might be to allow markets in health care, education, and such services, to develop. In other words, private agencies should be encouraged to provide such services while state policies should try to empower people to buy those services. It might also be necessary for the state to give special help to the old and the sick who cannot compete. But apart from this the role of the state should only be to maintain a framework of laws and regulations to ensure that competition between individuals remains free of coercion and other obstacles. They maintain that a free market is the basis of a fair and just society. The market, it is said, does not care about the caste or religion of the person; it does not see whether you are a man or a woman. It is neutral and concerned with the talents and skills that you have. If you have the merit then nothing else matters.

One of the arguments put forward in favour of market distribution is that it gives us more choices. There is no doubt that the market system gives us more choices as consumers. We can choose the rice we eat and the school we go to, provided that we have the means to pay for them. But regarding basic goods and services what is important is the availability of good quality goods and services at a cost people can afford. If private agencies do not find this profitable for them they may prefer not to enter that particular market, or to provide cheap and substandard services. That is why there may be few private schools in remote rural areas and the few which have been set up may be of low quality. The same would be true of health care or housing. In such situations the government might have to step in.

Another argument often heard in defense of free markets and private enterprise is that the quality of services they provide is often

Social Justice

Political Theory

superior to that provided in government institutions. But the cost of such services may put them out of the reach of the poor. Private business tends to go where business would be most profitable and hence free markets eventually tend to work in the interest of the strong, the wealthy and the powerful. The result may be to deny, rather than extend, opportunities for those who are relatively weak and disadvantaged.

Arguments can be put forward on both sides of the debate but free markets often exhibit a tendency to work in favour of the already privileged. This is why many argue that to ensure social justice the state should step in to see that basic facilities are made available to all the members of a society.

In a democratic society disagreements about issues of distribution and justice are inevitable and even healthy because they force us to examine different points of view and rationally defend our own views. Politics is about the negotiation of such disagreements through debate. In our own country many kinds of social and economic inequalities exist and much remains to be done if they are to be reduced. Studying the different principles of justice should help us to discuss the issues involved and come to an agreement regarding the best way of pursuing justice.

Justice implies something which it is not only right to do and wrong not to do; but which some individual person can claim from us as his moral right.

– J. S. Mill

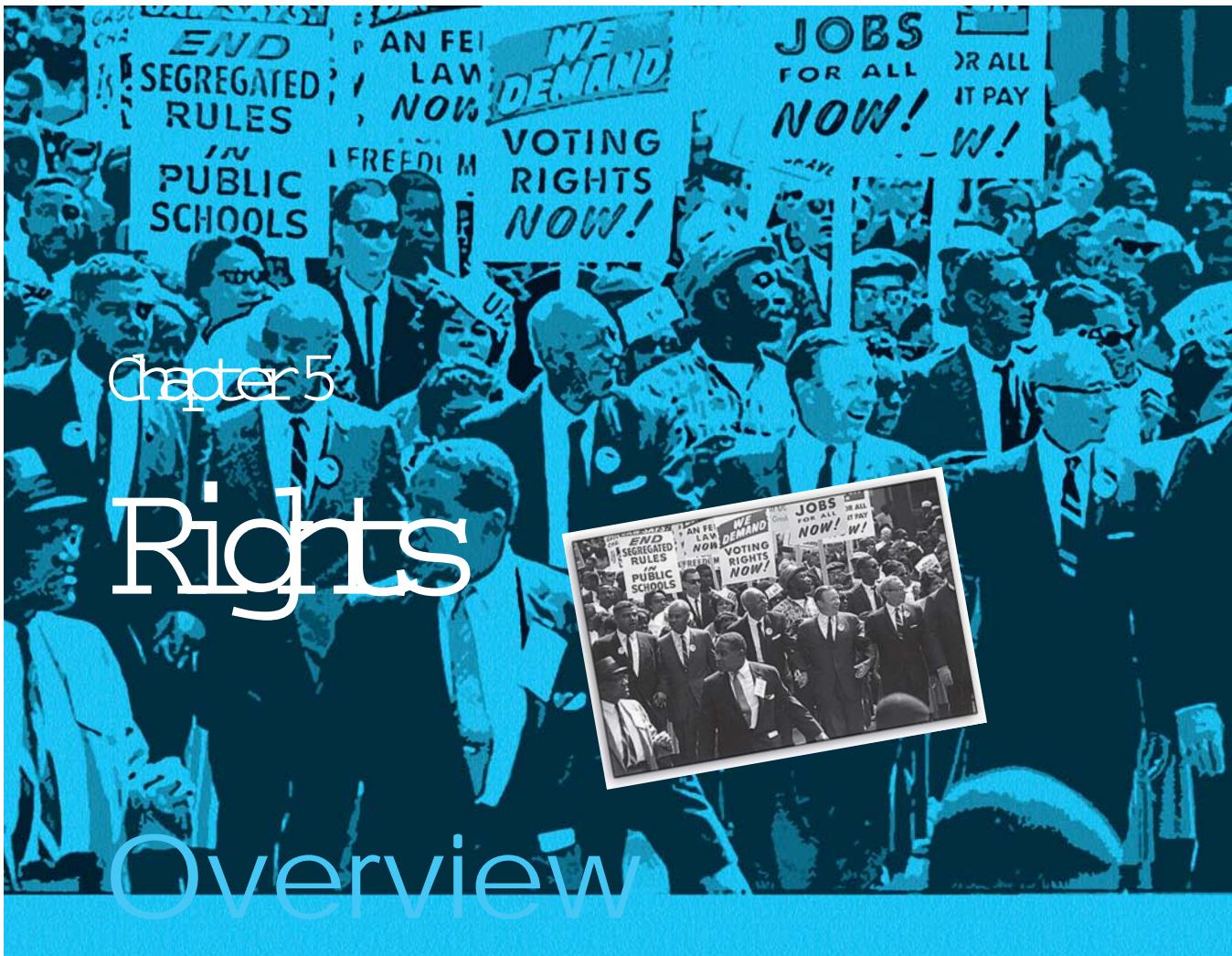
Social Justice

Political Theory

Exercises

66

Credit: Image on opening page: Shweta Rao



Chapter 5

Rights

Overview

In everyday life we often talk of our rights. As members of a democratic country we may speak of such rights as the right to vote, the right to form political parties, the right to contest elections and so on. But apart from the generally accepted political and civil rights, people today are also making new demands for rights such as the right to information, right to clean air or the right to safe drinking water. Rights are claimed not only in relation to our political and public lives but also in relation to our social and personal relationships. Moreover, rights may be claimed not only for adult human beings but also for children, unborn foetuses, and even animals. The notion of rights is thus invoked in a variety of different ways by different people. In this chapter we will explore:

- What do we mean when we speak of rights?
- What is the basis on which rights are claimed?
- What purpose do rights serve and, why are they so important?

Rights

5.1 WHAT ARE RIGHTS?

A right is essentially an entitlement or a justified claim. It denotes what we are entitled to as citizens, as individuals and as human beings. It is something that we consider to be due to us; something that the rest of society must recognise as being a legitimate claim that must be upheld. This does not mean that everything that I regard to be necessary and desirable is a right. I may want to wear the clothes of my choice to school rather than the prescribed uniform. I may want to stay out late at night but this does not mean that I have a right to dress in any way I like at school or to return home when I choose to do so. There is a distinction between what I want and think I am entitled to, and what can be designated as rights.

Rights are primarily those claims that I along with others regard to be necessary for leading a life of respect and dignity. In fact, one of the grounds on which rights have been claimed is that they represent conditions that we collectively see as a source of self-respect and dignity. For example, the right to livelihood may be considered necessary for leading a life of dignity. Being gainfully employed gives a person economic independence and thus is central for his/her dignity. Having our basic needs met gives us freedom to pursue our talents and interests. Or, take the right to express ourselves freely. This right gives us the opportunity to be creative and original, whether it be in writing, or dance, or music, or any other creative activity. But freedom of expression is also important for democratic government since it allows for the free expression of beliefs and opinions. Rights such as the right to a livelihood, or freedom of expression, would be important for all human beings who live in society and they are described as universal in nature.

Another ground on which rights have been claimed is that they are necessary for our well-being. They help individuals to develop their talents and skills. A right like the right to education, for instance, helps to develop our capacity to reason, gives us useful skills and enables us to make informed choices in life. It is in this sense that education can be designated as a universal right. However, if an activity is injurious to our health and well-being it cannot be

Rights

Political Theory

claimed as a right. For instance, since medical research has shown that prohibited drugs are injurious to one's health and since they affect our relations with others, we cannot insist that we have a right to inhale or inject drugs or smoke tobacco. In the case of smoking it may even be injurious to the health of people who may be around the smoker. Drugs may not only injure our health but they may also sometimes change our behaviour patterns and make us a danger to other people. In terms of our definition of rights, smoking or taking banned drugs cannot be claimed as a right.

5.2 WHERE DO RIGHTS COME FROM?

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, political theorists argued that rights are given to us by nature or God. The rights of men were derived from natural law. This meant that rights were not conferred by a ruler or a society, rather we are born with them. As such these rights are inalienable and no one can take these away from us. They identified three natural rights of man: the right to life, liberty and property. All other rights were said to be derived from these basic rights. The idea that we are born with certain rights, is a very powerful notion because it implies that no state or organisation should take away what has been given by the law of nature. This conception of natural rights has been used widely to oppose the exercise of arbitrary power by states and governments and to safeguard individual freedom.

In recent years, the term human rights is being used more than the term natural rights. This is because the idea of there being a natural law, or a set of norms that are laid down for us by nature, or God, appears unacceptable today. Rights are increasingly seen as guarantees that human beings themselves seek or arrive at in order to lead a minimally good life.

The assumption behind human rights is that all persons are entitled to certain things simply because they are human beings. As a human being each person is unique and equally valuable. This means that all persons are equal and no one is born to serve others.

LET'S DO IT

Go through recent newspapers and make a list of people's movements that have made proposals for new kinds of rights?

KANT ON HUMAN DIGNITY

“... everything has either a price or a dignity. What has a price is such that something else can also be put in its place as its equivalent; by contrast, that which is elevated above all price, and admits of no equivalent, has a dignity.

‘Human beings’, unlike all other objects, possess dignity. They are, for this reason valuable in themselves. For the eighteenth century German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, this simple idea had a deep meaning. For it meant that every person has dignity and ought to be so treated by virtue of being a human being. A person may be uneducated, poor or powerless. He may even be dishonest or immoral. Yet, he remains a human being and deserves to be given some minimum dignity.

For Kant, to treat people with dignity was to treat them morally. This idea became a rallying point for those struggling against social hierarchies and for human rights.

Kant’s views represent, what is called, the moral conception of rights. This position rests upon two arguments. First, we should be treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves. Second, we should make sure that we don’t treat the other person as means to our ends. We should not treat people as we treat a pen, a car, or a horse. We ought to respect people not because they are useful to us, but because they are, after all, human beings. That is, we should respect people not because they are useful to us but because they are, after all, human beings.

Each of us possesses an intrinsic value, hence we must have equal opportunities to be free and realise our full potential. This conception of a free and equal self is increasingly being used to challenge existing inequalities based on race, caste, religion and gender. Today, the UN Declaration of Human Rights builds upon this understanding of rights and it attempts to recognise those claims that the world community collectively sees as being important for leading a life of dignity and self-respect.

The notion of universal human rights has been used by oppressed people all over the world to challenge laws which segregate them and deny them equal opportunities and rights. In fact, it is through the struggles of groups that have felt excluded that the interpretation of existing rights has sometimes been altered. Slavery has, for instance, been abolished, but there are other struggles that have only had a limited success. Even today there are communities struggling to define humanity in a way which includes them.

The list of human rights which people have claimed has expanded over the years as societies face new threats and challenges. For instance, we are very conscious

Rights

Political Theory

today of the need to protect the natural environment and this has generated demands for rights to clean air, water, sustainable development, and the like. A new awareness about the changes which many people, especially women, children or the sick, face in times of war or natural crisis has also led to demands for a right to livelihood, rights of children and the like. Such claims express a sense of moral outrage about infringements of peoples' dignity and they also act as a rallying call to people to try and extend rights to all human beings. We should not underestimate the extent and power of such claims. They often invoke wide support. You may have heard about the pop star Bob Geldof's recent appeal to western governments to end poverty in Africa and seen T.V. reports about the scale of support which he received from ordinary people.

5.3 LEGAL RIGHTS AND THE STATE

While claims for human rights appeal to our moral self, the degree of success of such appeals depends on a number of factors, most important of which is the support of governments and the law. This is why so much importance is placed on the legal recognition of rights.

A Bill of Rights is enshrined in the constitutions of many countries. Constitutions represent the highest law of the land and so constitutional recognition of certain rights gives them a primary importance. In our country we call them Fundamental Rights. Other laws and policies are supposed to respect the rights granted in the Constitution. The rights mentioned in the Constitution would be



Rights

My father had applied for a telephone connection. It's been over two months and he still hasn't got it. What can he do?

You know what! Now we have a right to information. We can find out the status of his application as well as the cause for the delay.



Rights

those which are considered to be of basic importance. In some cases these may be supplemented by claims which gain importance because of the particular history and customs of a country. In India, for instance, we have a provision to ban untouchability which draws attention to a traditional social practice in the country.

So important is the legal and constitutional recognition of our claims that several theorists define rights as claims that are recognised by the state. The legal endorsement certainly gives our rights a special status in society but it is not the basis on which rights are claimed. As we discussed earlier, rights have steadily been expanded and reinterpreted to include previously excluded groups and to reflect our contemporary understanding of what it means to lead a life of dignity and respect.

However, in most cases the claimed rights are directed towards the state. That is, through these rights people make demands upon the state. When I assert my right to education, I call upon the state to make provisions for my basic education. Society may also accept the importance of education and contribute to it on its own. Different groups may open schools and fund scholarships so that children of all classes can get the benefit of education. But the primarily responsibility rests upon the state. It is the state that must initiate necessary steps to ensure that my right to education is fulfilled.

Thus, rights place an obligation upon the state to act in certain kinds of ways. Each right indicates what the state must do as well as what it must not do. For instance, my right to life obliges the state to make laws that protect me from injury by others. It calls upon the state to punish those who hurt me or harm me. If a society feels that the right to life means a right to a good quality of life, it expects the state to pursue policies that provide for clean environment along with other conditions that may be necessary for a healthy life. In other words, my right here places certain obligations upon the state to act in a certain way.

Rights not only indicate what the state must do, they also suggest what the state must refrain from doing. My right to liberty as a person, for instance, suggests that the state can not simply arrest me at its own will. If it wishes to put me behind bars it must defend that action;

Rights

Political Theory

it must give reasons for curtailing my liberty before a judicial court. This is why the police are required to produce an arrest warrant before taking me away. My rights thus place certain constraints upon state actions.

To put it another way, our rights ensure that the authority of the state is exercised without violating the sanctity of individual life and liberty. The state may be the sovereign authority; the laws it makes may be enforced with force, but the sovereign state exists not for its own sake but for the sake of the individual. It is people who matter more and it is their well-being that must be pursued by the government in power. The rulers are accountable for their actions and must not forget that law exists to ensure the good of the people.

5.4 KINDS OF RIGHTS

Most democracies today begin by drawing up a charter of political rights. Political rights give to the citizens the right to equality before law and the right to participate in the political process. They include such rights as the right to vote and elect representatives, the right to contest elections, the right to form political parties or join them. Political rights are supplemented by civil liberties. The latter refers to the right to a free and fair trial, the right to express one's views freely, the right to protest and express dissent. Collectively, civil liberties and political rights form the basis of a democratic system of government. But, as was mentioned before, rights aim to protect the well-being of the individual. Political rights contribute to it by making the government accountable to the people, by giving greater importance to the concerns of the individual over that of the rulers and by ensuring that all persons have an opportunity to influence the decisions of the government.

However, our rights of political participation can only be exercised fully when our basic needs, of food, shelter, clothing, health, are met. For a person living on the pavements and struggling to meet these basic needs, political rights by themselves have little value. They require certain facilities like an adequate wage to meet their

LET'S DO IT

Go through the newspapers of the last few days and identify cases of rights violations which have been discussed. What should the government and civil society do to prevent such violations?

Rights

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LET'S DEBATE

The right to culture means that no one should be allowed to make films that offend the religious or cultural beliefs of others.

basic needs and reasonable conditions of work. Hence democratic societies are beginning to recognise these obligations and providing economic rights. In some countries, citizens, particularly those with low incomes, receive housing and medical facilities from the state; in others, unemployed persons receive a certain minimum wage so that they can meet their basic needs. In India the government has recently introduced a rural employment guarantee scheme, among other measures to help the poor.

Today, in addition to political and economic rights more and more democracies are recognising the cultural claims of their citizens. The right to have primary education in one's mother tongue, the right to establish institutions for teaching one's language and culture, are today recognised as being necessary for leading a good life. The list of rights has thus steadily increased in democracies. While some rights, primarily the right to life, liberty, equal treatment, and the right to political participation are seen as basic rights that must receive priority, other conditions that are necessary for leading a decent life, are being recognised as justified claims or rights.

LET'S THINK



Which of the following rights granted to groups/communities are justifiable. Discuss.

- Jain community in a town sets up its own school and enrols students only from its own community.
- Purchase of land or property in Himachal Pradesh is restricted to those who are residents in that state.
- The principal of a co-ed college issued a circular that no girl should wear any 'western' dress.
- A Panchayat in Haryana decided that the boy and the girl from different castes who married each other will not be allowed to live in the village.

Rights

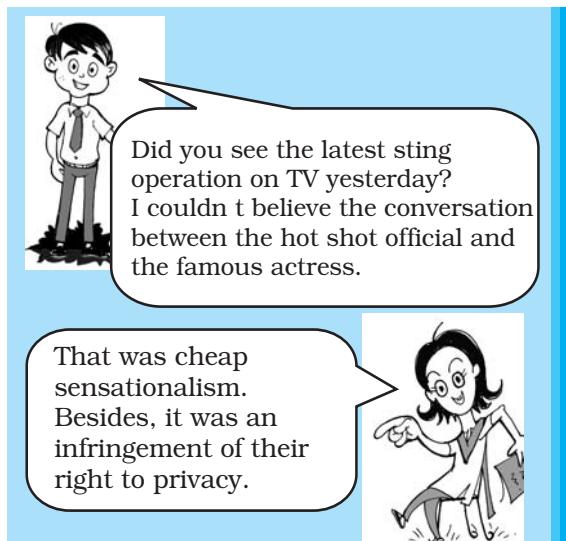
Political Theory

5.5 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights not only place obligations upon the state to act in a certain way — for instance, to ensure sustainable development — but they also place obligations upon each of us. Firstly, they compel us to think not just of our own personal needs and interests but to defend some things as being good for all of us. Protecting the ozone layer, minimising air and water pollution, maintaining the green cover by planting new trees and preventing cutting down of forests, maintaining the ecological balance, are things that are essential for all of us. They represent the ‘common-good’ that we must act to protect for ourselves as well as for the future generations who are entitled to inherit a safe and clean world without which they cannot lead a reasonably good life.

Secondly, they require that I respect the rights of others. If I say that I must be given the right to express my views I must also grant the same right to others. If I do not want others to interfere in the choices I make — the dress I wear or the music I listen to — I must refrain from interfering in the choices that others make. I must leave them free to choose their music and clothes. I cannot use the right to free speech to incite a crowd to kill my neighbour. In exercising my rights, I cannot deprive others of their rights. My rights are, in other words, limited by the principle of equal and same rights for all.

Thirdly, we must balance our rights when they come into conflict. For instance, my right to freedom of expression allows me to take pictures; however, if I take pictures of a person bathing in his house without his consent and post them on the internet, that would be a violation of his right to privacy.



Rights

Political Theory

Fourthly, citizens must be vigilant about limitations which may be placed on their rights. A currently debated topic concerns the increased restrictions which many governments are imposing on the civil liberties of citizens on the grounds of national security. Protecting national security may be defended as necessary for safeguarding the rights and well being of citizens. But at what point could the restrictions imposed as necessary for security themselves become a threat to the rights of people? Should a country facing the threat of terrorist bombings be allowed to curtail the liberty of citizens? Should it be allowed to arrest people on mere suspicion? Should it be allowed to intercept their mail or tap their phones? Should it be allowed to use torture to extract confession?

In such situations the question to ask is whether the person concerned poses an imminent threat to society. Even arrested persons should be allowed legal counsel and the opportunity to present their case before a magistrate or a court of law. We need to be extremely cautious about giving governments powers which could be used to curtail the civil liberties of individuals for such powers can be misused. Governments can become authoritarian and undermine the very reasons for which governments exist — namely, the well being of the members of the state. Hence, even though rights can never be absolute, we need to be vigilant in protecting our rights and those of others for they form the basis of a democratic society.

LET'S DEBATE

“One man's rights end where the other man's nose begins.”

Rights

Political Theory

On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicise the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

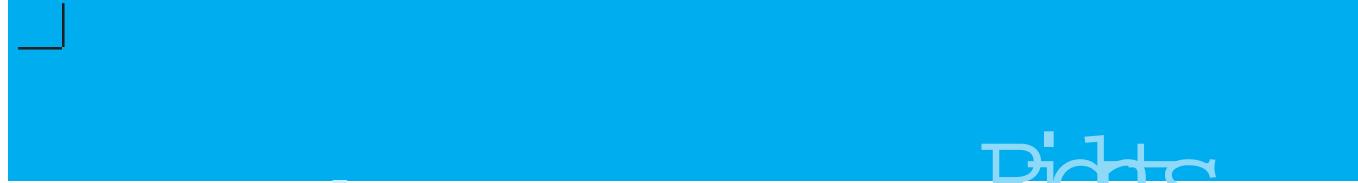
Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realisation of this pledge,

Now, therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.



Rights

Rights

Political Theory



Exercises

Exercises

1. What are rights and why are they important? What are the bases on which claims to rights can be made?
2. On what grounds are some rights considered to be universal in nature? Identify three rights which you consider universal. Give reasons.
3. Discuss briefly some of the new rights claims which are being put forward in our country today — for example the rights of tribal peoples to protect their habitat and way of life, or the rights of children against bonded labour.
4. Differentiate between political, economic and cultural rights. Give examples of each kind of right.
5. Rights place some limits on the authority of the state. Explain with examples.



Citizenship implies full and equal membership of a political community. In this chapter we will explore what exactly this means today. In Sections 6.2 and 6.3 we will look at some debates and struggles which are going on regarding the interpretation of the term 'full and equal membership'. Section 6.4 will discuss the relationship between citizens and the nation and the criteria of citizenship adopted in different countries. Theories of democratic citizenship claim that citizenship should be universal. Does this mean that every person today should be accepted as a member of one or other state? Then how can we explain the existence of so many stateless people? This issue will be discussed in Section 6.5. The last section 6.6 will discuss the issue of global citizenship. Does it exist and could it replace national citizenship?

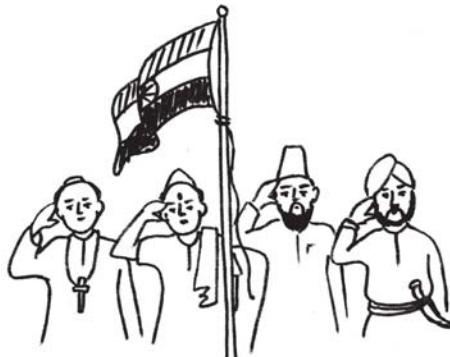
After going through this chapter you should be able to

- explain the meaning of citizenship, and
- discuss some of the areas in which that meaning is being expanded or challenged today.

Citizenship

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Political Theory



Citizenship has been defined as full and equal membership of a political community. In the contemporary world, states provide a collective political identity to their members as well as certain rights. Therefore we think of ourselves as Indians, or Japanese, or Germans, depending on the state to which we belong. Citizens expect certain rights from their state as well as help and protection wherever they may travel.

The importance of full membership of a state can be appreciated if we think of the condition of the thousands of people in the world who have the bad fortune to be forced to live as refugees or illegal migrants because no state is willing to grant them membership. Such people are not guaranteed rights by any state and generally live in precarious conditions. For them full membership of a state of their choice is a goal for which they are willing to struggle, as we see today with Palestinian refugees in the Middle East.

The precise nature of the rights granted to citizens may vary from state to state but in most democratic countries today they would include some political rights like the right to vote, civil rights

like the freedom of speech or belief, and some socio-economic rights which could include the right to a minimum wage, or the right to education. Equality of rights and status is one of the basic rights of citizenship.



Citizenship

Political Theory

Each of the rights now enjoyed by citizens has been won after struggle. Some of the earliest struggles were fought by people to assert their independence and rights against powerful monarchies. Many European countries experienced such struggles, some of them violent, like the French Revolution in 1789. In the colonies of Asia and Africa, demands for equal citizenship formed part of their struggle for independence from colonial rulers. In South Africa, the black African population had to undertake a long struggle against the ruling white minority for equal citizenship. This continued until the early 1990s. Struggles to achieve full membership and equal rights continue even now in many parts of the world. You may have read about the women's movement and the *dalit* movement in our country. Their purpose is to change public opinion by drawing attention to their needs as well as to influence government policy to ensure them equal rights and opportunities.



LET'S THINK

During seventeenth to twentieth century, white people of Europe established their rule over the black people in South Africa. Read the following description about the policy practices in South Africa till 1994.

The whites had the right to vote, contest elections and elect government; they were free to purchase property and go to any place in the country. Blacks did not have such rights. Separate colonies for whites and blacks were established. The blacks had to take 'passes' to work in white neighbourhoods. They were not allowed to keep their families in the white areas. The schools were also separate for the people of different colour.

- Do you think the Blacks had full and equal membership in the South Africa? Give reasons.
- What does the above description tell us about the relationship of different groups in South Africa?

Citizenship

Political Theory

LET'S DO IT

Think of some examples of activities of citizens in your area intended to help others, or improve the area, or protect the environment. List some of the activities which could be undertaken by young people of your age-group.

However, citizenship is about more than the relationship between states and their members. It is also about citizen-citizen relations and involves certain obligations of citizens to each other and to the society. These would include not just the legal obligations imposed by states but also a moral obligation to participate in, and contribute to, the shared life of the community. Citizens are also considered to be the inheritors and trustees of the culture and natural resources of the country.

A good way to understand a political concept is to look for instances where its accepted meaning is being questioned by groups who feel that it does not take account of their needs and aspirations.

6.2 FULL AND EQUAL MEMBERSHIP

If you have ever travelled in a crowded railway compartment or bus you will be familiar with the way in which those who may have earlier fought each other to enter, once inside discover a shared interest in keeping others out! A division soon develops between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' with 'outsiders' being seen as a threat.

Similar processes take place from time to time in cities, regions, or even the nation as a whole. If jobs, facilities like medical care or education, and natural resources like land or water, are limited, demands may be made to restrict entry to 'outsiders' even though they may be fellow citizens. You may remember the slogan 'Mumbai for Mumbaikars' which expressed such feelings. Many similar struggles have taken place in different parts of India and the world.



This raises questions about what 'full and equal membership' really means? Does it mean that citizens should enjoy equal rights

Citizenship

Political Theory

and opportunities wherever in the country they may decide to live, study, or work? Does it mean that all citizens, rich or poor, should enjoy certain basic rights and facilities?

In this section we will explore the meaning of citizenship by focusing on the first of these questions.

One of the rights granted to citizens in our country, and in many others, is freedom of movement. This right is of particular importance for workers. Labour tends to migrate in search of jobs when opportunities are not available near their homes. Some people may even travel outside the country in search of jobs. Markets for skilled and unskilled workers have developed in different parts of our country. For instance, I.T. workers may flock to towns like Bangalore. Nurses from Kerala may be found all over the country. The booming building industry in town attracts workers from different parts of the

MARTIN LUTHER KING

The 1950s witnessed the emergence of Civil Rights Movements against inequalities that existed between black and white populations in many of the southern states of the USA. Such inequalities were maintained in these states by a set of laws called Segregation Laws through which the black people were denied many civil and political rights. These laws created separate areas for coloured and white people in various civic amenities like railways, buses, theatres, housing, hotels, restaurants, etc.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a black leader of the movement against these laws. King gave many arguments against the prevailing laws of segregation. First, in terms of self-worth and dignity every human person in the world is equal regardless of one's race or colour. Second, King argued that segregation is like 'social leprosy' on the body politic because it inflicts deep psychological wounds on the people who suffer as a result of such laws.

King argued that the practice of segregation diminishes the quality of life for the white community also. He illustrates this point by examples. The white community, instead of allowing the black people to enter some community parks as was directed by the court, decided to close them. Similarly, some baseball teams had to be disbanded, as the authorities did not want to accept black players. Thirdly, the segregation laws create artificial boundaries between people and prevent them from cooperating with each other for the overall benefit of the country. For these reasons, King argued that these laws should be abolished. He gave a call for peaceful and non-violent resistance against the segregation laws. He said in one of his speeches: "We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence."

Citizenship

Political Theory

country. So do infrastructure projects like road making. You may have come across workers from different regions near your home or school.

However, often resistance builds up among the local people against so many jobs going to people from outside the area, sometimes at lower wages. A demand may develop to restrict certain jobs to those who belong to the state, or those who know the local language. Political parties may take up the issue. Resistance could even take the form of organised violence against 'outsiders'. Almost every region of India has experienced such movements. Are such movements ever justified?

We all become indignant, if Indian workers in other countries are ill-treated by the local population. Some of us may also feel that skilled and educated workers have the right to migrate for work. States may even be proud of their ability to attract such workers. But if jobs are scarce in a region, local residents may resent competition from 'outsiders'. Does the right to freedom of movement include the right to live or work in any part of the country?

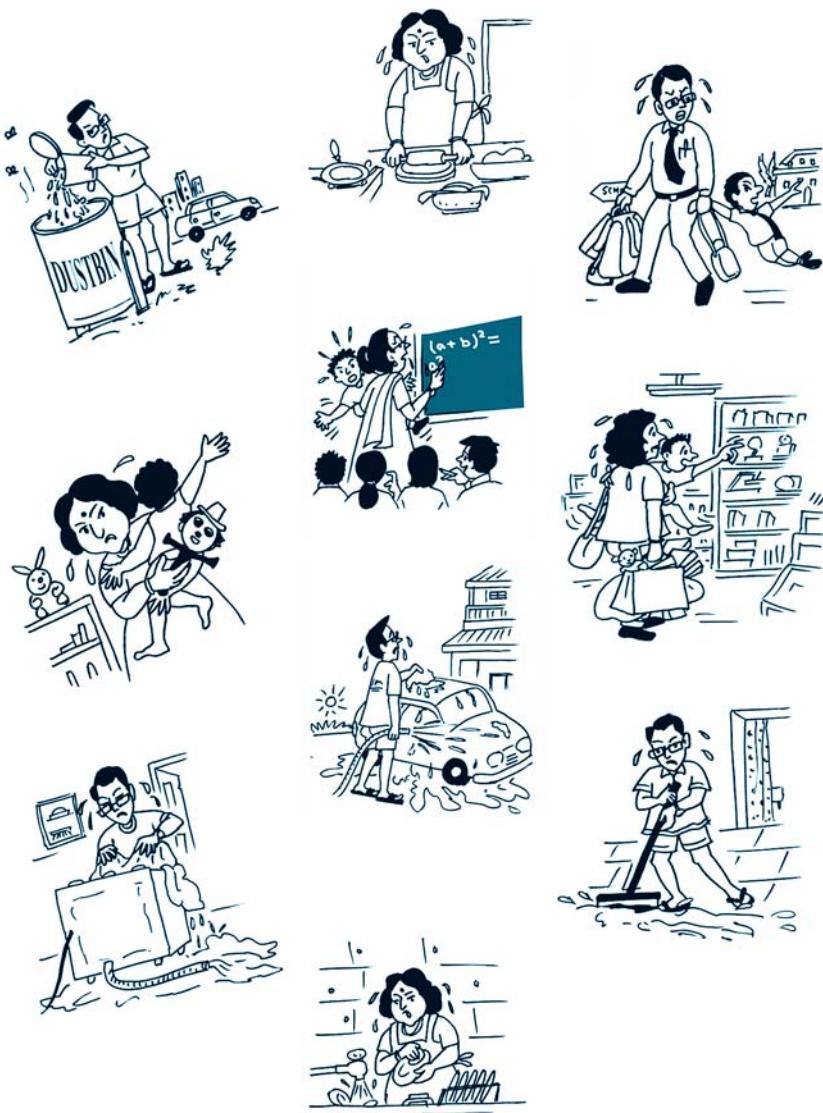
Another factor that we need to consider is that there may sometimes be a difference between our response to poor migrants and to skilled migrants. We may not always be as welcoming to poor migrants who move into our areas as we may be to skilled and affluent workers. This raises the question of whether poor and unskilled workers should have the same right to live and work anywhere in the country as do skilled workers? These are some of the issues which being debated in our country today regarding 'full and equal membership' for all citizens of the country.

However, disputes may sometimes arise even in democratic societies. How can such disputes be resolved? The right to protest is an aspect of the freedom of expression guaranteed to citizens in our Constitution, provided protest does not harm the life or property of other people or the State. Citizens are free to try and influence public opinion and government policy by forming groups, holding demonstrations, using the media, appealing to political parties, or by approaching the courts. The courts may give a decision on the

Citizenship

Political Theory

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF URBAN INDIAN MIDDLE CLASS WITHOUT IMMIGRANT WORKERS



Citizenship

Political Theory

matter, or they may urge the government to address the issue. It may be a slow process but varying degrees of success are sometimes possible. If the guiding principle of providing full and equal membership to all citizens is kept in mind, it should be possible to arrive at an acceptable solution to the problems that may arise from time to time in a society. A basic principle of democracy is that such disputes should be settled by negotiation and discussion rather than force. This is one of the obligations of citizenship.



LET'S THINK

Examine the arguments for and against freedom of movement and occupation throughout the country for citizens.

Should the long-term inhabitants of a region enjoy preference for jobs and facilities?

Or, should states be allowed to fix quotas for admissions to professional colleges for students who do not belong to that state?

6.3 EQUAL RIGHTS

In this section we will examine another aspect of citizenship, that is, the issue of whether full and equal membership means that all citizens, rich or poor, should be guaranteed certain basic rights and a minimum standard of living by the state. To discuss this issue, we will look at one set of people, that is the urban poor. Dealing with the problem of the poor in towns is one of the urgent problems facing the government today.

There is a large population of slum-dwellers and squatters in every city in India. Although they may do necessary and useful work, often at low wages, they are often viewed as unwelcome visitors by the rest of the town population. They may be blamed for straining the resources of the city or for spreading crime and disease.

The conditions in slums are often shocking. Many people may be crammed into small rooms with no private toilets, running water, or sanitation. Life and property are insecure in a slum. However,

Citizenship

Political Theory

slum dwellers make a significant contribution to the economy through their labour. They may be hawkers, petty traders, scavengers, or domestic workers, plumbers, or mechanics, among other professions. Small businesses such as cane weaving, or textile printing, or tailoring, may also develop in slums. The city probably spends relatively little on providing slum-dwellers with services such as sanitation or water supply.

CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITY AND RIGHTS

Citizenship is not merely a legal concept. It is also closely related to larger notions of equality and rights. A widely accepted formulation of this relationship was provided by the British sociologist, T. H. Marshall (1893-1981). In his book *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950), Marshall defined citizenship as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed."

The key concept in Marshall's idea of citizenship is that of 'equality'. This implies two things: first, that quality of the given rights and duties improves. Second, that the quantity of people upon whom they are bestowed grows.

Marshall sees citizenship as involving three kinds of rights: civil, political and social.

Civil rights protect the individual's life, liberty and property. Political rights enable the individual to participate in the process of governance. Social rights give the individual access to education and employment. Together they make it possible for the citizen to lead a life of dignity.

Marshall saw social class as a 'system of inequality'. Citizenship ensures equality by countering the divisive effects of class hierarchy. It thus facilitates the creation of a better-integrated and harmonious community.

Awareness about the condition of the urban poor is growing among governments, N.G.O's and other agencies, and among the slum-dwellers themselves. For instance, a national policy on urban street vendors was framed in January 2004. There are lakhs of street vendors in big cities and they often face harassment from the police and town authorities. The policy was intended to provide recognition and regulation for vendors to enable them to carry on their profession without harassment so long as they obeyed government regulations.

Slum-dwellers also are becoming aware of their rights and are beginning to organise to demand them. They have sometimes even

Citizenship

Political Theory

CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITY AND RIGHTS

The Supreme Court gave an important decision regarding the rights of slum-dwellers in Bombay in response to a Public Interest Litigation filed by a social activist, Olga Tellis against Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1985. The petition claimed the right to live on pavements or in slums because there was no alternative accommodation available close to their place of work. If they were forced to move they would lose their livelihood as well. The Supreme Court said, "Article 21 of the Constitution which guaranteed the right to life included the right to livelihood. Therefore if pavement dwellers were to be evicted they should first be provided alternative accommodation under the right to shelter."

approached the courts. Even a basic political right like the right to vote may be difficult for them to exercise because to be included in the list of voters a fixed address is required and squatters and pavement dwellers may find it difficult to provide this.

Among other groups of people who are becoming marginalised in our society are the tribal people and forest dwellers. These people are dependent on access to forests and other natural resources to maintain their way of life. Many of them face threats to their way of life and livelihood because of

the pressure of increasing populations and the search for land and resources to maintain them. Pressures from commercial interests wanting to mine the resources which may exist in forests or coasts poses another threat to the way of life and livelihood of forest dwellers and tribal peoples, as does the tourist industry. Governments are struggling with the problem of how to protect these people and their habitat without at the same time endangering development of the country. This is an issue that affects all citizens, not just tribal people.

To try and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all citizens cannot be a simple matter for any government. Different groups of people may have different needs and problems and the rights of one group may conflict with the rights of another. Equal rights for citizens need not mean that uniform policies have to be applied to all people since different groups of people may have different needs. If the purpose is not just to make policies which would apply in the same way to all people, but to make people more equal, the different needs and claims of people would have to be taken into account when framing policies.

Citizenship

Political Theory

What should become clear from this discussion is that changes in the world situation, the economy, and society demand new interpretations of the meaning and rights of citizenship. The formal laws regarding citizenship only form the starting point and the interpretation of laws is constantly evolving. While answers to some the problems which may arise may not be easy to find, the concept of equal citizenship would mean that providing equal rights and protection to all citizens should be one of the guiding principles of government policies.



LET'S THINK

According to the official figures published about the land distribution in Zimbabwe, some 4,400 white families owned 32 per cent of agricultural land that is about 10m hectares. About one million black peasant families own just 16m hectares that is the 38 per cent of the land. While the land that is with the white families are fertile and irrigated, the land in the hands of black population are less fertile and unirrigated. While tracing the history of land ownership it is very obvious that a century ago the whites had taken the fertile land from the native people. Whites have now been in Zimbabwe for generations and consider themselves as Zimbabweans. The total population of whites in Zimbabwe is just 0.06 per cent of the population. In the year 1997, the President of Zimbabwe, Mugabe announced the plans to take over around 1500 farms.

What ideas from citizenship would you use to support or oppose the claims of Black and White Citizens of Zimbabwe?

LET'S DO IT



Survey three families of workers working close to, or in, your homes or school. Find out details about their life. Where is their ancestral place? When and why did they come here? Where do they live? How many people share the accommodation? What kinds of facilities are available to them? Do their children attend school?

Citizenship

Political Theory

6.4 CITIZEN AND NATION

The concept of nation state evolved in the modern period. One of the earliest assertions regarding the sovereignty of the nation state and democratic rights of citizens was made by the revolutionaries in France in 1789. Nation states claim that their boundaries define not just a territory but also a unique culture and shared history. The national identity may be expressed through symbols like a flag, national anthem, national language, or certain ceremonial practices, among other things.

Most modern states include people of different religions, languages, and cultural traditions. But the national identity of a democratic state is supposed to provide citizens with a political identity that can be shared by all the members of the state. Democratic states usually try to define their identity so that it is as inclusive as possible — that is, which allows all citizens to identify themselves as part of the nation. But in practice, most countries tend to define their identity in a way which makes it easier for some citizens to identify with the state than others. It may also make it easier for the state to extend citizenship to some people and not others. This would be as true of the United States, which prides itself on being a country of immigrants, as any other country.

France, for instance, is a country which claims to be both secular and inclusive. It includes not only people of European origin but also citizens who originally came from other areas such as North Africa. Culture and language are important features of its national identity and all citizens are expected to assimilate into it in the public aspects of their lives. They may, however, retain their personal beliefs and practices in their private lives. This may seem like a reasonable policy but it is not always simple to define what is public and what is private and this has given rise to some controversies. Religious belief is supposed to belong to the private sphere of citizens but sometimes religious symbols and practices may enter into their public lives. You may have heard about the demand of Sikh school boys in France to wear the turban to school, and of Muslim girls to wear the head scarf with their school uniforms. This was disallowed

Citizenship

Political Theory

by some schools on the ground that it involved bringing religious symbols into the public sphere of state education. Those whose religions did not demand such practices naturally did not face the same problem. Clearly, assimilation into the national culture would be easier for some groups than for others.

The criteria for granting citizenship to new applicants varies from country to country. In countries such as Israel, or Germany, factors like religion, or ethnic origin, may be given priority when granting citizenship. In Germany there has been a persistent demand from Turkish workers, who were at one time encouraged to come and work in Germany, that their children who have been born and brought up in Germany should automatically be granted citizenship. This is still being debated. These are only a few examples of the kinds of restrictions which may be placed on citizenship even in democratic countries which pride themselves on being inclusive.

India defines itself as a secular, democratic, nation state. The movement for independence was a broad based one and deliberate attempts were made to bind together people of different religions, regions and cultures. True, Partition of the country did take place in 1947 when differences with the Muslim League could not be resolved, but this only strengthened the resolve of Indian national leaders to maintain the secular and inclusive character of the Indian nation state they were committed to build. This resolve was embodied in the Constitution.

The Indian Constitution attempted to accommodate a very diverse society. To mention just a few of these diversities, it attempted to provide full and equal citizenship to groups as different as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, many women who had not previously enjoyed equal rights, some remote communities in the Andaman and Nicobar islands who had had little contact with modern civilization, and many others. It also attempted to find a place for the different languages, religions and practices found in different parts of the country. It had to provide equal rights to all without at the same time forcing people to give up their personal beliefs, languages or cultural practices. It was therefore a unique experiment which was undertaken through the Constitution. The Republic Day parade in

Citizenship

Political Theory

Delhi symbolises the attempt of the state to include people of different regions, cultures and religions.

LET'S DEBATE

It is not appropriate for schools, or any other public agencies like the army, to insist on a common uniform and to ban the display of religious symbols such as the turban.

The provisions about citizenship in the Constitution can be found in Part Three and in subsequent laws passed by Parliament. The Constitution adopted an essentially democratic and inclusive notion of citizenship. In India, citizenship can be acquired by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation, or inclusion of territory. The rights and obligations of citizens are listed in the Constitution. There is also a provision that the state should not discriminate against citizens on the grounds of race/caste/sex/place of birth, or any of them. The rights of religious and linguistic minorities are also protected.

However, even such inclusive provisions have given rise to struggles and controversies. The women's movement, the dalit movement, or struggles of people displaced by development projects, represent only a few of the struggles being waged by people who feel that they are being denied full rights of citizenship. The experience of India indicates that democratic citizenship in any country is a project, an ideal to work towards. New issues are constantly being raised as societies change and new demands are made by groups who feel they are being marginalised. In a democratic state these demands have to be negotiated.

6.5 UNIVERSAL CITIZENSHIP

When we think of refugees, or illegal migrants, many images may come to mind. One may be of people from Asia or Africa who have paid agents to smuggle them into Europe or America. The risks are high but they seem willing to make the effort. Another image may be of people displaced by war or famine. Such images are often shown on the television. Refugees in the Darfur region of Sudan, Palestinians, Burmese or Bangladeshis, the examples are many. All these are people who have been forced to become refugees in their own, or neighbouring countries.

Citizenship

Political Theory

We often assume that full membership of a state should be available to all those who ordinarily live and work in the country as well as to those who apply for citizenship. But although many states may support the idea of universal and inclusive citizenship, each of them also fixes criteria for the grant of citizenship. These would generally be written into the Constitution and laws of the country. States use their power to keep unwanted visitors out.

However, in spite of restrictions, even the building of walls or fences, considerable migration of peoples still takes place in the world. People may be displaced by wars, or persecution, famine, or other reasons. If no state is willing to accept them and they cannot return home, they become stateless peoples or refugees. They may be forced to live in camps, or as illegal migrants. Often they cannot legally work, or educate their children, or acquire property. The problem is so great that the U.N. has appointed a High Commissioner for Refugees to try and help them.

Decisions regarding how many people can be absorbed as citizens in a country poses a difficult humanitarian and political problem for many states. Many countries have a policy of accepting those fleeing from persecution or war. But they may not want to accept unmanageable numbers of people or expose the country to security risks. India prides itself on providing refuge to persecuted peoples, as it did with the Dalai Lama and his followers in 1958. Entry of people from neighbouring countries has taken place along all the borders of the Indian state and the process continues. Many of these people remain as stateless peoples for many years or generations, living in camps, or as illegal migrants. Only a relatively few of them are eventually granted citizenship. Such problems pose a challenge to the promise of democratic citizenship which is that the rights and identity of citizen would be available to all people in the contemporary world. Although many people cannot achieve citizenship of a state of their choice no alternative identity exists for them.

The problem of stateless people is an important one confronting the world today. Borders of states are still being redefined by war or political disputes and for the people caught up in such disputes the consequences may be severe. They may lose their homes, political

Citizenship

Political Theory

identities, and security, and be forced to migrate. Can citizenship provide a solution to the problems of such people? If not, what kind of alternative identity can be provided today? Do we need to try and evolve a more genuinely universal identity than national citizenship? Suggestions for a notion of global citizenship are sometimes put forward. The possibilities will be discussed in the next section.

LET'S DO IT

List some of the stateless people living in India today. Write a short note on any of them.

6.6 GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Consider the following statements:

- There was an outpouring of sympathy and help for the victims of the tsunami which affected a number of countries in South Asia in 2004.*
- International networks link terrorists today.*
- The United Nations is working with different states to try and prevent the spread of bird flu and the possible emergence of a human viral pandemic.*

What is common to the statements given above? What do they tell us about the world in which we live today?

We live today in an interconnected world. New means of communication such as the internet, and television, and cell phones, have brought a major change in the way in which we understand our world. In the past it might have taken months for news about developments in one part of the world to become known in other parts. But new modes of communication have put us into immediate contact with developments in different parts of the globe. We can watch disasters and wars on our television screens as they are taking place. This has helped to develop sympathies and shared concerns among people in different countries of the world.

Supporters of global citizenship argue that although a world community and global society does not yet exist, people already feel

Citizenship

Political Theory

linked to each other across national boundaries. They would say that the outpouring of help from all parts of the world for victims of the Asian tsunami and other major calamities is a sign of the emergence of a global society. They feel that we should try to strengthen this feeling and work towards a concept of global citizenship.

The concept of national citizenship assumes that our state can provide us with the protection and rights which we need to live with dignity in the world today. But states today are faced with many problems which they cannot tackle by themselves. In this situation are individual rights, guaranteed by the state, sufficient to protect the freedom of people today? Or has the time come to move to a concept of human rights and global citizenship?

One of the attractions of the notion of global citizenship is that it might make it easier to deal with problems which extend across national boundaries and which therefore need cooperative action by the people and governments of many states. For instance, it might make it easier to find an acceptable solution to the issue of migrants and stateless peoples, or at least to ensure them basic rights and protection regardless of the country in which they may be living.

In the previous section, we saw that equal citizenship within a country can be threatened by the socio-economic inequalities or other problems which might exist. Such problems can ultimately only be solved by the governments and people of that particular society. Therefore, full and equal membership of a state remains important for people today. But the concept of global citizenship reminds us that national citizenship might need to be supplemented by an awareness that we live in an interconnected world and that there is also a need for us to strengthen our links with people in different parts of the world and be ready to work with people and governments across national boundaries.

Citizenship

Political Theory



Exercises

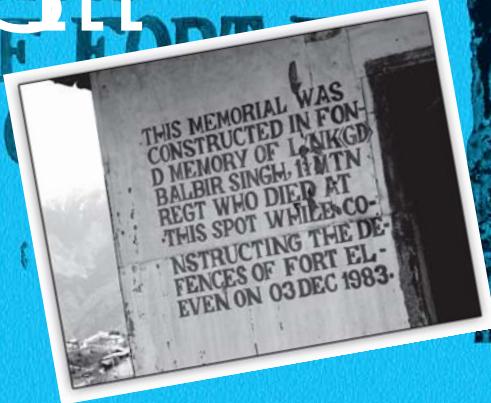
1. Citizenship as full and equal membership of a political community involves both rights and obligations. Which rights could citizens expect to enjoy in most democratic state today? What kind of obligation will they have to their state and fellow citizens?
2. All citizens may be granted equal rights but all may not be able to equally exercise them. Explain.
3. Write a short note on any two struggles for full enjoyment of citizen rights which have taken place in India in recent years. Which rights were being claimed in each case?
4. What are some of the problems faced by refugees? In what ways could the concept of global citizenship benefit them?
5. Migration of people to different regions within the country is often resisted by the local inhabitants. What are some of the contributions that the migrants could make to the local economy?
6. “Democratic citizenship is a project rather than an accomplished fact even in countries like India which grant equal citizenship”. Discuss some of the issues regarding citizenship being raised in India today.

Chapter 7

Nationalism

Overview

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EVEN ON 03 DEC 1983.



This chapter will introduce and discuss the ideas of nationalism and nation. Our concern will be not so much to understand why nationalism has arisen, or what functions it serves; rather our concern would be to think carefully about nationalism and assess its claims and aspirations. After studying this chapter you should be able to:

- understand the concepts of nation and nationalism.
- acknowledge the strengths and limitations of nationalism.
- appreciate the need for ensuring a link between democracy and nationalism.

Nationalism

Political Theory

7.1 INTRODUCING NATIONALISM

If we were to take a quick poll of what people commonly understand by the term nationalism we are likely to get responses which talk about patriotism, national flags, sacrificing for the country, and the like. The Republic Day parade in Delhi is a striking symbol of Indian nationalism and it brings out the sense of power, strength, as well as diversity which many associate with the Indian nation. But if we try to go deeper we will find that it is difficult to arrive at a precise and widely accepted definition of the term nationalism. This need not mean that we should abandon the effort. Nationalism needs to be studied because it plays such an important role in world affairs.

During the last two centuries or more, nationalism has emerged as one of the most compelling of political creeds which has helped to shape history. It has inspired intense loyalties as well as deep hatreds. It has united people as well as divided them, helped to liberate them from oppressive rule as well as been the cause of conflict and bitterness and wars. It has been a factor in the break up of empires and states. Nationalist struggles have contributed to the drawing and redrawing of the boundaries of states and empires. At present a large part of the world is divided into different nation-states although the process of re-ordering of state boundaries has not come to an end and separatist struggles within existing states are common.

Nationalism has passed through many phases. For instance, in the nineteenth century Europe, it led to the unification of a number of small kingdoms into larger nation-states. The present day German and Italian states were formed through such a process of unification and consolidation. A large number of new states were also founded in Latin America. Along with the consolidation of state boundaries, local dialects and local loyalties were also gradually consolidated into state loyalties and common languages. The people of the new states acquired a new political identity which was based on membership of the nation-state. We have seen a similar process of consolidation taking place in our own country in the last century or more.

But nationalism also accompanied and contributed to the break up of large empires such as the Austro-Hungarian and Russian

Nationalism

Political Theory

empires in the early twentieth century in Europe as well as the break up of the British, French, Dutch and Portuguese empires in Asia and Africa. The struggle for freedom from colonial rule by India and other former colonies were nationalist struggles, inspired by the desire to establish nation-states which would be independent of foreign control.

The process of redrawing state boundaries continues to take place. Since 1960, even apparently stable nation-states have been confronted by nationalist demands put forward by groups or regions and these may include demands for separate statehood. Today, in many parts of the world we witness nationalist struggles that threaten to divide existing states. Such separatist movements have developed among the Quebecois in Canada, the Basques in northern Spain, the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq, and the Tamils in Sri Lanka, among others. The language of nationalism is also used by some groups in India. Arab nationalism today may hope to unite Arab countries in a pan Arab union but separatist movements like the Basques or Kurds struggle to divide existing states.

We may all agree that nationalism is a powerful force in the world even today. But it is more difficult to arrive at agreement regarding the definition of terms like nation or nationalism. What is a nation? Why do people form nations and to what do nations aspire? Why are people ready to sacrifice and even die for their nation? Why, and in what way, are claims to nationhood linked to claims to statehood? Do nations have a right to statehood or national self-determination? Or can the claims of nationalism be met without conceding separate statehood? In this chapter we will explore some of these issues.



In this age of globalisation, the world is shrinking. We are living in a global village. Nations are irrelevant.

That's not the case. Nationalism is still relevant. You can see this when Indian team goes out to play cricket. Or when you discover that Indians living abroad still watch Bollywood films.



Nationalism

Political Theory

7.2 NATIONS AND NATIONALISM

A nation is not any casual collection of people. At the same time it is also different from other groups or communities found in human society. It is different from the family which is based on face-to-face relationships with each member having direct personal knowledge of the identity and character of others. It is also different from tribes and clans and other kinship groups in which ties of marriage and descent link members to each other so that even if we do not personally know all the members we can, if need be, trace the links that bind them to us. But as a member of a nation we may never come face to face with most of our fellow nationals nor need we share ties of descent with them. Yet nations exist, are lived in and valued by their members.

It is commonly believed that nations are constituted by a group who share certain features such as descent, or language, or religion or ethnicity. But there is in fact no common set of characteristics which is present in all nations. Many nations do not have a common language, Canada is an example here. Canada includes English speaking as well as French speaking peoples. India also has a large

number of languages which are spoken in different regions and by different communities. Nor do many nations have a common religion to unite them. The same could be said of other characteristics such as race or descent.

LET'S DO IT

Identify any patriotic song in your language. How is the nation described in this song? Identify and watch any patriotic films in your language. How has nationalism been portrayed and its complexities worked out in these films?

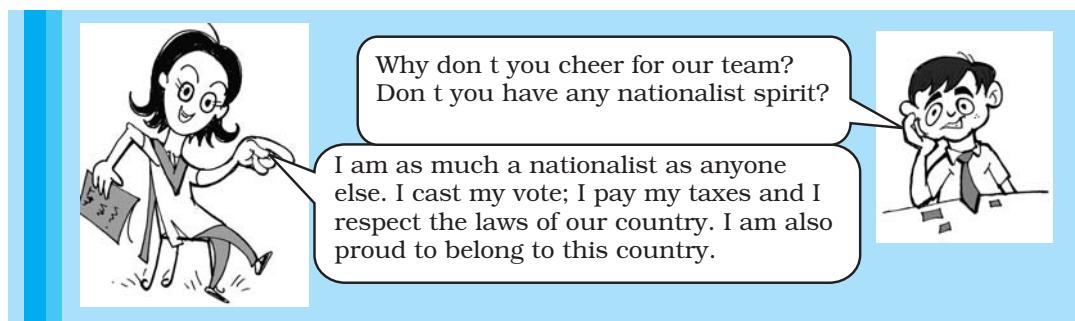
What then constitutes a nation? A nation is to a great extent an 'imagined' community, held together by the collective beliefs, aspirations and imaginations of its members. It is based on certain assumptions which people make about the collective whole with which they identify. Let us identify and understand some of the assumptions which people make about the nation.

Nationalism

Political Theory

Shared Beliefs

First, a nation is constituted by belief. Nations are not like mountains, rivers or buildings which we can see and feel. They are not things which exist independent of the beliefs that people have about them. To speak of a people as a nation is not to make a comment about their physical characteristics or behaviour. Rather, it is to refer to the collective identity and vision for the future of a group which aspires to have an independent political existence. To this extent, nations can be compared with a team. When we speak of a team, we mean a set of people who work or play together and, more importantly, conceive of themselves as a collective group. If they did not think of themselves in this way they would cease to be a team and be simply different individuals playing a game or undertaking a task. A nation exists when its members believe that they belong together.



History

Second, people who see themselves as a nation also embody a sense of continuing historical identity. That is, nations perceive themselves as stretching back into the past as well as reaching into the future. They articulate for themselves a sense of their own history by drawing on collective memories, legends, historical records, to outline the continuing identity of the nation. Thus nationalists in India invoked its ancient civilisation and cultural heritage and other achievements to claim that India has had a long and continuing history as a civilisation and that this civilisational continuity and unity is the basis of the Indian nation. Jawaharlal Nehru, for instance, wrote in

Nationalism

Political Theory

his book *The Discovery of India*, “Though outwardly there was diversity and infinite variety among the people, everywhere there was that tremendous impress of oneness, which held all of us together in ages past, whatever political fate or misfortune had befallen us”.

Territory

Third, nations identify with a particular territory. Sharing a common past and living together on a particular territory over a long period of time gives people a sense of their collective identity. It helps them to imagine themselves as one people. It is therefore not surprising that people who see themselves as a nation speak of a homeland. The territory they occupied and the land on which they have lived has a special significance for them, and they claim it as their own. Nations however characterise the homeland in different ways, for instance as motherland, or fatherland, or holy land. The Jewish people for instance, in spite of being dispersed and scattered in different parts of the world always claimed that their original homeland was in Palestine, the ‘promised land’. The Indian nation identifies with the rivers, mountains and regions of the Indian subcontinent. However, since more than one set of people may lay claim to the same territory, the aspiration for a homeland has been a major cause of conflict in the world.

Shared Political Ideals

Fourth, while territory and shared historical identity play an important role in creating a sense of oneness, it is a shared vision of the future and the collective aspiration to have an independent political existence that distinguishes groups from nations. Members of a nation share a vision of the kind of state they want to build. They affirm among other things a set of values and principles such as democracy, secularism and liberalism. These ideals represent the terms under which they come together and are willing to live together. It represents, in other words, their political identity as a nation.

In a democracy, it is shared commitment to a set of political values and ideals that is the most desirable basis of a political community or a nation-state. Within it, members of political community are bound by a set of obligations. These obligations

Nationalism

Political Theory

arise from the recognition of the rights of each other as citizens. A nation is strengthened when its people acknowledge and accept their obligations to their fellow members. We might even say that recognition of this framework of obligations is the strongest test of loyalty to the nation.

Common Political Identity

Many people believe that a shared political vision about the state and society we wish to create is not enough to bind individuals together as a nation. They seek instead a shared cultural identity, such as a common language, or common descent. There is no doubt that speaking the same language makes it easier for us to communicate with each other and sharing the same religion gives us a set of common beliefs and social practices. Observing the same festivals, seeking the same holidays, and holding the same symbols valuable can bring people together, but it can also pose a threat to the values that we cherish in a democracy.

There are two reasons for this. One, all major religions in the world are internally diverse. They have survived and evolved through a dialogue within the community. As a result there exists within each religion a number of sects who differ significantly in their interpretation of the religious texts and norms. If we ignore these differences and forge an identity on the basis of a common religion we are likely to create a highly authoritative and oppressive society.

Two, most societies are culturally diverse. They have people belonging to different religions and languages living together in the same territory. To impose a single religious or linguistic identity as a condition of belonging to a particular state would necessarily exclude some groups. It might restrict the religious liberty of the excluded group or disadvantage those who do not speak the national language. Either way, the ideal that we cherish most in democracy – namely, equal treatment and liberty for all – would be severely limited. For both these reasons it is desirable to imagine the nation in political rather than cultural terms. That is, democracies need to emphasise and expect loyalty to a set of values that may be enshrined in the Constitution of the country rather than adherence to a particular religion, race or language.

Nationalism

Political Theory

We have identified above some of the ways in which nations express their sense of collective identity. We have also seen why democratic states need to forge this identity on the basis of shared political ideals. But we are still left with an important question, namely, why do people imagine themselves as a nation? What are some of the aspirations of different nations? In the next two sections we shall try to address these questions.

7.3 NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

Nations, unlike other social groups, seek the right to govern themselves and determine their future development. They seek, in other words, the right to self-determination. In making this claim a nation seeks recognition and acceptance by the international community of its status as a distinct political entity or state. Most often these claims come from people who have lived together on a given land for a long period of time and who have a sense of common identity. In some cases such claims to self-determination are linked also to the desire to form a state in which the culture of the group is protected if not privileged.

Claims of the latter kind were frequently made in the nineteenth century in Europe. The notion of one culture - one state began to gain acceptability at the time. Subsequently, the idea of one culture-one state was employed while reordering state boundaries after World War I. The Treaty of Versailles established a number of small, newly independent states, but it proved virtually impossible to satisfy all the demands for self determination which were made at the time. Besides, re-organisation of state boundaries to satisfy the demands of one culture - one state, led to mass migration of population across state boundaries. Millions of people as a consequence were displaced from their homes and expelled from the land which had been their home for generations. Many others became victims of communal violence.

Humanity paid a heavy price for re-organising boundaries in a way that culturally distinct communities could form separate nation-states. Besides, even in this effort it was not possible to ensure that the newly created states contained only one ethnic community.

Nationalism

Nationalism

Political Theory

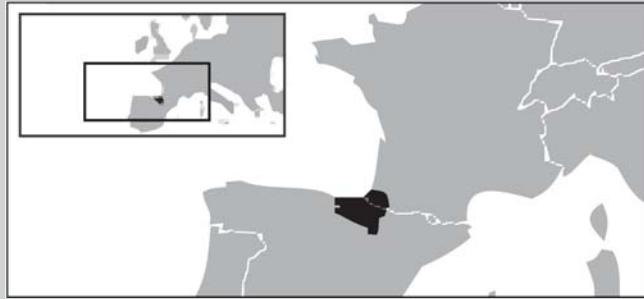
DEMAND FOR NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION IN BASQUE

Demands for national self-determination have been raised in different parts of the World. Let us look at one such case.

Basque is a hilly and prosperous region in Spain. This region is recognised by the Spanish government as an 'autonomous' region within the Spanish federation. But the leaders of Basque Nationalist Movement are not satisfied with this autonomy. They want this region to become a separate country. Supporters of this movement have used constitutional and, till recently, violent means to press for this demand.

Basque Nationalists say that their culture is very different from the Spanish culture. They have their own language that does not resemble Spanish at all. Only one-third of the people in Basque understand that language today. The hilly terrain makes the Basque region geographically distinct from the rest of the Spain. Ever since the Roman days, the Basque region never surrendered its autonomy to the Spanish rulers. Its systems of justice, administration and finance were governed by its own unique arrangements.

The modern Basque Nationalist Movement started when, around the end of nineteenth century, the Spanish rulers tried to abolish this unique political-administrative arrangement. In the twentieth century, the Spanish dictator Franco further cut down this autonomy. He went as far as to ban the use of Basque language in public places and even homes. These repressive measures have now been withdrawn. But the leaders of Basque movement continue to be suspicious of the motives of the Spanish government and fearful of the entry of 'outsiders' in their region. Their opponents say that Basque separatists are trying to make political gains out of an issue already resolved. *Do you think Basque nationalists are justified in demanding a separate nation? Is Basque a nation? What more would you like to know before you can answer this question? Can you think of similar examples from different parts of the world? Can you think of regions and groups in our country where such demands have been made?*



Source: www.wikipedia.org

Nationalism

Political Theory

Indeed most states had more than one ethnic and cultural community living within its boundaries. These communities, which were often small in number and constituted a minority within the state were often disadvantaged. Hence, the problem of accommodating minorities as equal citizens remained. The only positive aspect of these developments was that it granted political recognition to various groups who saw themselves as distinct nations and wanted the opportunity to govern themselves and determined their own future.

The right to national self-determination has also asserted by national liberation movements in Asia and Africa when they were struggling against colonial domination. Nationalist movements maintained that political independence would provide dignity and recognition to the colonised people and also help them to protect the collective interests of their people. Most national liberation movements were inspired by the goal of bringing justice and rights and prosperity to the nation. However, here also, it proved almost impossible to ensure that each cultural group, some of whom claimed to be distinct nations, could achieve political independence and statehood. As a result, migration of populations, border wars, and violence have continued to plague many countries in the region. Thus we have the paradoxical situation of nation-states which themselves had achieved independence through struggle now acting against minorities within their own territories who claim the right to national self-determination.

Virtually every state in the world today faces the dilemma of how to deal with movements for self-determination and this has raised questions about the right to national self-determination. More and more people are beginning to realise that the solution does not lie in creating new states but in making existing states more democratic and equal. That is, in ensuring that people with different cultural and ethnic identities live and co-exist as partners and equal citizens within the country. This may be essential not only for resolving problems arising from new claims for self-determination but also for building a strong and united state. After all, a nation-state which does not respect the rights

Nationalism

Political Theory

and cultural identity of minorities within the state would find it difficult to gain the loyalty of its members.

7.4 NATIONALISM AND PLURALISM

Once we abandon the idea of one-culture-one-state, it becomes necessary to consider ways by which different cultures and communities can survive and flourish within a country. It is in pursuit of this goal that many democratic societies today have introduced measures for recognising and protecting the identity of cultural minority communities living within their territory. The Indian constitution has an elaborate set of provisions for the protection of religious, linguistic and cultural minorities.

The kinds of group rights which have been granted in different countries include constitutional protection for the language, cultures and religion, of minority groups and their members. In some cases identified communities also have the right to representation as a group in legislative bodies and other state institutions.

Such rights may be justified on the grounds that they provide equal treatment and protection of the law for members of these groups as well as protection for the cultural identity of the group. Different groups need to be granted recognition as a part of the national community. This means that the national identity has to be defined in an inclusive manner which can recognise the importance and unique contribution of all the cultural communities within the state.

Although it is hoped that granting groups recognition and protection would satisfy their aspirations, some groups may continue to demand separate statehood. This may seem paradoxical when globalisation is also spreading in the world but nationalist aspirations continue to motivate many groups and communities.

LET'S DO IT

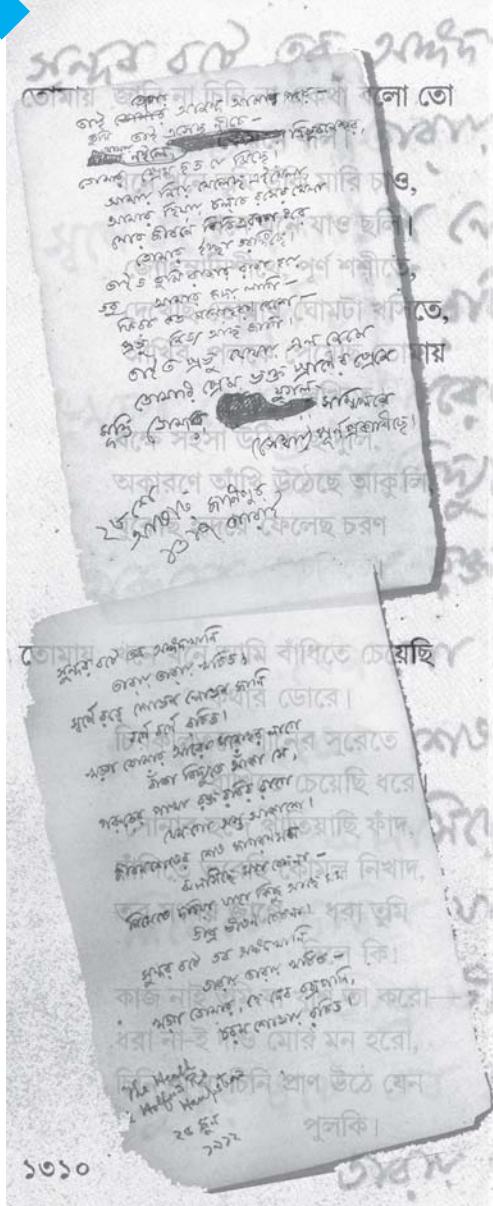
Cut out clippings from various newspapers and magazines related to the demands of various groups in India and abroad for the right to self-determination. Form an opinion about the following:

- What are the reasons behind these demands?
- What strategies have they employed?
- Are their claims justified?
- What do you think could be the possible solution?

Nationalism

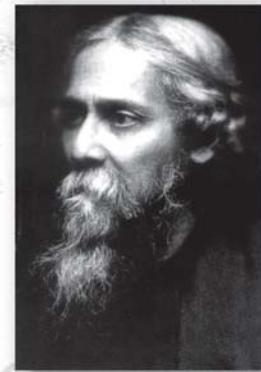
Political Theory

TAGORE'S CRITIQUE OF NATIONALISM



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"Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live."



This was said by Rabindranath Tagore. He was against colonial rule and asserted India's right to independence. He felt that in the British administration of the colonies, there was no place for 'upholding of dignity of human relationships,' an idea which was otherwise cherished in the British civilisation. Tagore made a distinction between opposing western imperialism and rejecting western civilisation. While Indians should be rooted in their own culture and heritage, they should not resist learning freely and profitably from abroad.

A critique of what he called 'patriotism' is a persistent theme in his writings. He was very critical of the narrow expressions of nationalism that he found at work in parts of our independence movement. In particular, he was afraid that a rejection of the west in favour of what looked like Indian traditions was not only limiting in itself; it could easily turn into hostility to other influences from abroad, including Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Islam which have been present in our country.

Nationalism

Political Theory

Considerable generosity and skill is needed for countries to be able to deal with such demands in a democratic manner.

To sum up, the right to national self-determination was often understood to include the right to independent statehood for nationalities. But not only would it be impossible to grant independent statehood to every group that sees itself as a distinct cultural group, or nation, it would probably also be undesirable. It might lead to the formation of a number of states too small to be economically and politically viable and it could multiply the problems of minorities. The right has now been reinterpreted to mean granting certain democratic rights for a nationality within a state.

The world we live in is one that is deeply conscious of the importance of giving recognition to identities. Today we witness many struggles for the recognition of group identities, many of which employ the language of nationalism. While we need to acknowledge the claims of identity we should be careful not to allow identity claims to lead to divisions and violence in the society. We need to remember that each person has many identities. For instance, a person may have identities based on gender, caste group, religion, language, or region, and may be proud of all of them. So long as each person feels that he/she can freely express the different dimensions of his/her personality, they may not feel the need to make claims on the state for political recognition and concessions for any one identity. In a democracy the political identity of citizen should encompass the different identities which people may have. It would be dangerous if intolerant and homogenizing forms of identity and nationalism are allowed to develop.

Nationalism

Political Theory



Exercises

Exercises

1. How is a nation different from other forms of collective belonging?
2. What do you understand by the right to national self-determination? How has this idea resulted in both formation of and challenges to nation-states?
3. “We have seen that nationalism can unite people as well as divide them, liberate them as well generate bitterness and conflict”. Illustrate your answer with examples.
Neither descent, nor language, nor religion or ethnicity can claim to be a common factor in nationalisms all over the world. Comment.
4. Illustrate with suitable examples the factors that lead to the emergence nationalist feelings.
5. How is a democracy more effective than authoritarian governments in dealing with conflicting nationalist aspirations?
6. What do you think are the limitations of nationalism?



Chapter 8

Secularism

Overview

When different cultures and communities exist within the same country, how should a democratic state ensure equality for each of them? This is the question that emerged in the previous chapter. In this chapter we will try and see how the concept of secularism may be applied to answer that concern. In India, the idea of secularism is ever present in public debates and discussions, yet there is something very perplexing about the state of secularism in India. On the one hand, almost every politician swears by it. Every political party professes to be secular. On the other hand, all kinds of anxieties and doubts beset secularism in India. Secularism is challenged not only by clerics and religious nationalists but by some politicians, social activists and even academics.

In this chapter we will engage in this ongoing debate by asking the following questions:

- What is the meaning of secularism?
- Is secularism a western implant on Indian soil?
- Is it suitable for societies where religion continues to exercise a strong influence on individual lives?
- Does secularism show partiality? Does it 'pamper' minorities?
- Is secularism anti-religious?

At the end of this chapter you should be able to understand and appreciate the importance of secularism in a democratic society like India, and learn something about the distinctiveness of Indian secularism.

Secularism

Political Theory

8.1 WHAT IS SECULARISM?

Though Jews faced discrimination for centuries throughout Europe, in the present state of Israel, Arab minorities, both Christian and Muslims, are excluded from social, political and economic benefits available to Jewish citizens. Subtle forms of discrimination also continue to persist against non-Christians in several parts of Europe. The condition of religious minorities in the neighbouring states of Pakistan and Bangladesh has also generated considerable concern. Such examples remind us of the continuing importance of secularism for people and societies in today's world.

Inter-religious Domination

In our own country, the Constitution declares that every Indian citizen has a right to live with freedom and dignity in any part of the country. Yet in reality, many forms of exclusion and discrimination continue to persist. Consider three most stark examples:

- Nearly four thousand Sikhs were massacred in Delhi and many other parts of the country in 1984. The families of the victims feel that the guilty were not punished.
- Several thousands of Hindu Kashmiri pandits have been forced to leave their homes in the Kashmir valley; they have not been able to return to their homes for more than two decades.
- Nearly two thousand Muslims were massacred in Gujarat in 2002. The surviving members of many of these families still cannot go back to the villages in which they lived.

What do these examples have in common? They all have to do with discrimination in one form or the other. In each case members of one community are targeted and victimised on account of their religious identity. In other words, basic freedoms of a set of citizens are denied. Some might even say that these incidents are instances of religious persecution and they reflect inter-religious domination.

Secularism is first and foremost a doctrine that opposes all such forms of inter-religious domination. This is however only one crucial aspect of the concept of secularism. An equally important dimension

of secularism is its opposition to intra-religious domination. Let us get deeper into this issue.

Intra-religious Domination

Some people believe that religion is merely the 'opium of the masses' and that, one day, when the basic needs of all are fulfilled and they lead a happy and contented life, religion will disappear. Such a view comes from an exaggerated sense of human potential. It is unlikely that human beings will ever be able to *fully* know the world and control it. We may be able to prolong our life but will never become immortal. Disease can never be entirely eliminated, nor can we get rid of an element of accident and luck from our lives. Separation and loss are endemic to the human condition. While a large part of our suffering is man-made and hence eliminable, at least some of our suffering is not made by man. Religion, art and philosophy are responses to such sufferings. Secularism too accepts this and therefore it is not anti-religious.

However, religion has its share of some deep-rooted problems. For example, one can hardly think of a religion that treats its male and female members on an equal footing. In religions such as Hinduism, some sections have faced persistent discrimination. For example *dalits* have been barred from entering Hindu temples. In some parts of the country, Hindu woman cannot enter temples. When religion is organised, it is frequently taken over by its most conservative faction, which does not tolerate any dissent. Religious fundamentalism in parts of the US has become a big problem and endangers peace both within the country and outside. Many religions fragment into sects which leads to frequent sectarian violence and persecution of dissenting minorities.

Thus religious domination cannot be identified only with inter-religious domination. It takes another conspicuous form, namely, *intra-religious* domination. As secularism is opposed to all forms of institutionalised religious domination, it challenges not merely inter-religious but also intra-religious domination.

We now possess a general idea of secularism. It is a normative doctrine which seeks to realise a secular society, i.e., one devoid of

Secularism

Political Theory

either inter-religious or intra-religious domination. Put positively, it promotes freedom within religions, and equality between, as well as within, religions. Within this larger framework let us now consider a narrower and more specific question, namely: What kind of state is necessary to realise these goals. In other words, let us consider how a state committed to the ideal of secularism should relate to religion and religious communities.

8.2 SECULAR STATE

Perhaps one way of preventing religious discrimination is to work together for mutual enlightenment. Education is one way of helping to change the mindset of people. Individual examples of sharing and mutual help can also contribute towards reducing prejudice and suspicion between communities. It is always inspiring to read stories of Hindus saving Muslims or Muslims saving Hindus in the

midst of a deadly communal riot. But it is unlikely that mere education or the goodness of some persons will eliminate religious discrimination. In modern societies, states have enormous public power. How they function is bound to make a crucial difference to the outcome of any struggle to create a society less ridden with inter-community conflict and religious discrimination. For this reason we need to see what kind of state is needed to prevent religious conflict and to promote religious harmony.

LET'S DO IT

List some of the ways in which you feel communal harmony could be promoted.

How should a state prevent domination by any religious group? For a start, a state must not be run by the heads of any particular religion. A state governed directly by a priestly order is called theocratic. Theocratic states, such as the Papal states of Europe in medieval times or in recent times the Taliban-controlled states, lacking separation between religious and political institutions, are known for their hierarchies, and oppressions, and reluctance to allow freedom of religion to members of other religious groups. If we value peace, freedom and equality, religious institutions and state institutions must be separated.

Some people think that the separation of state and religion is sufficient for the existence of a secular state. This does not appear

Secularism

Political Theory

to be so. Many states which are non-theocratic continue to have a close alliance with a particular religion. For example, the state in England in the sixteenth century was not run by a priestly class but clearly favoured the Anglican Church and its members. England had an established Anglican religion, which was the official religion of the state. Today Pakistan has an official state religion, namely Sunni Islam. Such regimes may leave little scope for internal dissent or religious equality.

To be truly secular, a state must not only refuse to be theocratic but also have no formal, legal alliance with any religion. The separation of religion-state is however an necessary but not a sufficient ingredient of a secular state. A secular state must be committed to principles and goals which are at least partly derived from non-religious sources. These ends should include peace, religious freedom, freedom from religiously grounded oppressions, discrimination and exclusions, as also inter-religious and intra-religious equality.

To promote these ends the state must be separated from organised religion and its institutions for the sake of some of these values. However, there is no reason to suggest that this separation should take a particular form. In fact the nature and extent of separation may take different forms, depending upon the specific values it is meant to promote and the way in which these values are spelt out. We will now consider two such conceptions: the mainstream western conception best represented by the American state, and an alternative conception best exemplified by the Indian state.

8.3 THE WESTERN MODEL OF SECULARISM

All secular states have one thing in common: they are neither theocratic nor do they establish a religion. However, in most commonly prevalent conceptions, inspired mainly by the American model, separation of religion and state is understood as mutual exclusion: the state will not intervene in the affairs of religion and, in the same manner, religion will not interfere in the affairs of the state. Each

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LET'S DEBATE

Learning more about other religions is the first step towards learning to respect and accept other people and their beliefs. But that need not mean that we should not be able to stand up for what we feel are basic human values.

Secularism

Political Theory

KEMAL ATATURK'S SECULARISM

Let us look at a very different kind of secularism practised in Turkey in the first half of the twentieth century. This secularism was not about principled distance from organised religion, instead it involved, active intervention in and suppression of, religion. This version of secularism was propounded and practised by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

He came to power after the first war. He was determined to put an end to the institution of *Khalifa* in the public life of Turkey. Ataturk was convinced that only a clear break with traditional thinking and expressions could elevate Turkey from the sorry state it was in. He set out in an aggressive manner to modernise and secularise Turkey. Ataturk changed his own name from Mustafa Kemal Pasha to Kemal Ataturk (Ataturk translates as Father of the Turks). The *Fez*, a traditional cap worn by Muslims, was banned by the Hat Law. Western clothing was encouraged for men and women. The Western (Gregorian) calendar replaced the traditional Turkish calendar. In 1928, the new Turkish alphabet (in a modified Latin form) was adopted.

Can you imagine a secularism that does not give you the freedom to keep the name you are identified with, wear the dress you are used to, change the language you communicate in? In what ways do you think Ataturk's secularism is different from Indian secularism ?

has a separate sphere of its own with independent jurisdiction. No policy of the state can have an exclusively religious rationale. No religious classification can be the basis of any public policy. If this happened there is illegitimate intrusion of religion in the state.

Similarly, the state cannot aid any religious institution. It cannot give financial support to educational institutions run by religious communities. Nor can it hinder the activities of religious communities, as long as they are within the broad limits set by the law of the land. For example, if a religious institution forbids a woman from becoming a priest, then the state can do little about it. If a religious community excommunicates its dissenters, the state can only be a silent witness. If a particular religion forbids the entry of some of its members in the sanctum of its temple, then the state has no option but to let the matter rest exactly where it is. On this view, religion is a private matter, not a matter of state policy or law.

This common conception interprets freedom and equality in an individualist manner. Liberty is the liberty of individuals. Equality

Secularism

Political Theory

is equality between individuals. There is no scope for the idea that a community has the liberty to follow practices of its own choosing. There is little scope for community-based rights or minority rights. The history of western societies tells us why this is so. Except for the presence of the Jews, most western societies were marked by a great deal of religious homogeneity. Given this fact, they naturally focused on intra-religious domination. While strict separation of the state from the church is emphasised to realise among other things, individual freedom, issues of inter-religious (and therefore of minority rights) equality are often neglected.

Finally, this form of mainstream secularism has no place for the idea of state-supported religious reform. This feature follows directly from its understanding that the separation of state from church/religion entails a relationship of mutual exclusion.

8.4 THE INDIAN MODEL OF SECULARISM

Sometimes it is said that Indian secularism is an imitation of western secularism. But a careful reading of our Constitution shows that this is not the case. Indian secularism is fundamentally different from Western secularism.

NEHRU ON SECULARISM'

‘Equal protection by the State to all religions’. This is how Nehru responded when a student asked him to spell out what secularism meant in independent India. He wanted a secular state to be one that “protects all religions, but does not favour one at the expense of others and does not itself adopt any religion as the state religion”. Nehru was the philosopher of Indian secularism.

Nehru did not practise any religion, nor did he believe in God. But for him secularism did not mean hostility to religion. In that sense Nehru was very different from Ataturk in Turkey. At the same time Nehru was not in favour of a complete separation between religion and state. A secular state can interfere in matters of religion to bring about social reform. Nehru himself played a key role in enacting laws abolishing caste discrimination, dowry and *sati*, and extending legal rights and social freedom to Indian women.

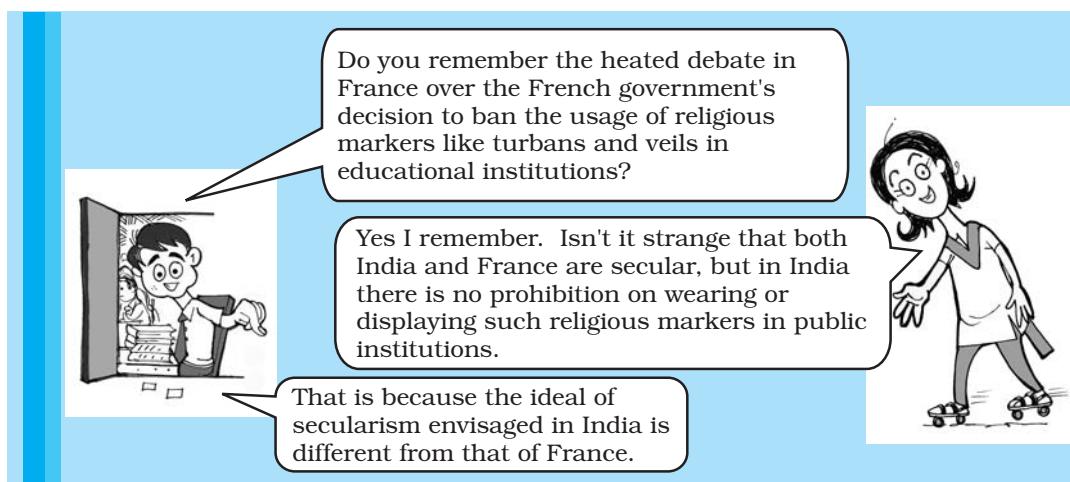
While Nehru was prepared to be flexible on many counts, there was one thing on which he was always firm and uncompromising. Secularism for him meant a complete opposition to communalism of all kinds. Nehru was particularly severe in his criticism of the communalism of the majority community, which posed a threat to national unity. Secularism for him was not only a matter of principles, it was also the only guarantee of the unity and integrity of India.

Secularism

Political Theory

Indian secularism does not focus only on church-state separation and the idea of inter-religious equality is crucial to the Indian conception. Let us elaborate this further.

What makes Indian secularism distinctive? For a start it arose in the context of deep religious diversity that predated the advent of Western modern ideas and nationalism. There was already a culture of inter-religious 'tolerance' in India. However, we must not forget that tolerance is compatible with religious domination. It may allow some space to everyone but such freedom is usually limited. Besides, tolerance allows you to put up with people whom you find deeply repugnant. This is a great virtue if a society is recovering from a major civil war but not in times of peace where people are struggling for equal dignity and respect.



The advent of western modernity brought to the fore hitherto neglected and marginalised notions of equality in Indian thought. It sharpened these ideas and helped us to focus on equality within the community. It also ushered ideas of inter-community equality to replace the notion of hierarchy. Thus Indian secularism took on a distinct form as a result of an interaction between what already existed in a society that had religious diversity and the ideas that came from the west. It resulted in equal focus on intra-religious and inter-religious domination. Indian secularism equally opposed the

Secularism

Political Theory

oppression of *dalits* and women within Hinduism, the discrimination against women within Indian Islam or Christianity, and the possible threats that a majority community might pose to the rights of the minority religious communities. This is its first important difference from mainstream western secularism.

Connected to it is the second difference. Indian secularism deals not only with religious freedom of *individuals* but also with religious freedom of minority *communities*. Within it, an individual has the right to profess the religion of his or her choice. Likewise, religious minorities also have a right to exist and to maintain their own culture and educational institutions.

A third difference is this. Since a secular state must be concerned equally with intra-religious domination, Indian secularism has made room for and is compatible with the idea of state-supported religious reform. Thus, the Indian constitution bans untouchability. The Indian state has enacted several laws abolishing child marriage and lifting the taboo on inter-caste marriage sanctioned by Hinduism.

The question however that arises is: can a state initiate or even support religious reforms and yet be secular? Can a state claim to be secular and not maintain separation of religion from state? The secular character of the Indian state is established by virtue of the fact that it is neither theocratic nor has it established any one or multiple religions. Beyond that it has adopted a very sophisticated policy in pursuit of religious equality. This allows it either to disengage with religion in American style, or engage with it if required.

The Indian state may engage with religion negatively to oppose religious tyranny. This is reflected in such actions as the ban on untouchability. It may also choose a positive mode of engagement. Thus, the Indian Constitution grants all religious minorities the right to establish and maintain their own educational institutions which may receive assistance from the state. All these complex strategies can be adopted by the state to promote the values of peace, freedom and equality.

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LET'S DEBATE

Religious identities and differences have no significance for the young.

Secularism

Political Theory



LET'S THINK

Is secularism compatible with the following?

- Subsidising a pilgrimage for a minority community.
- Performing religious rituals in government offices.

LET'S DO IT

- Watch any of the following films (like *Bombay* / *Garam Hawa*)? What are the different ideals of secularism that they depict?
- Read a short story 'Name' in *Forsaking Paradise: Stories from Ladakh* by Abdul Ghani Sheikh [Published by Katha]

It should be clear by now why the complexity of Indian secularism cannot be captured by the phrase "*equal respect for all religions*". If by this phrase is meant peaceful coexistence of all religions or inter-religious toleration, then this will not be enough because secularism is much more than mere peaceful coexistence or toleration. If this phrase mean equal feeling of respect towards all established religions and their practices then there is an ambiguity that needs clearing. Indian secularism allows for principled state intervention in all religions. Such intervention betrays disrespect to some aspects of every religion. For example, religiously sanctioned caste-hierarchies are not acceptable within Indian secularism. The secular state does not have to treat every aspect of every religion with equal respect. It allows equal disrespect for some aspects of organised religions.

8.5 CRITICISMS OF INDIAN SECULARISM

Indian secularism has been subjected to fierce criticism. What are these? Can we defend secularism from them?

Anti-religious

First, it is often argued that secularism is anti-religious. We hope to have shown that secularism is against institutionalised religious domination. This is not the same as being anti-religious.

Similarly, it has been argued by some that secularism threatens religious identity. However, as we noted earlier, secularism promotes religious freedom and equality. Hence, it clearly protects religious identity rather than threatens it. Of course, it does undermine

Secularism

some forms of religious identity: those, which are dogmatic, violent, fanatical, exclusivist and those, which foster hatred of other religions. The real question is whether or not something is undermined but whether what is undermined is intrinsically worthy or unworthy.

Western Import

A second criticism is that secularism is linked to Christianity, that it is western and therefore unsuited to Indian conditions. On the surface, this is a strange complaint. For there are millions of things in India today, from trousers to the internet and parliamentary democracy, that have their origins in the west. One response, therefore, could be: so what? Have you heard a European complain that because zero was invented in India, they will not work with it?

However, this is a somewhat shallow response. The more important and relevant point is that for a state to be truly secular, it must have ends of its own. Western states became secular when, at an important level, they challenged the control of established religious authority over social and political life. The western model of secularism is not therefore a product of the Christian world. What of the claim that it is western? The mutual exclusion of religion and state, which is supposed to be the ideal of western secular societies, is also not the defining feature of all secular states. The idea of separation can be interpreted differently by different societies. A secular state may keep a principled distance from religion to promote peace between communities and it may also intervene to protect the rights of specific communities.

This exactly is what has happened in India. India evolved a variant of secularism that is not just an implant from the west on Indian soil. The fact is that the secularism has both western and non-western origins. In the west, it was the Church-state separation which was central and in countries such as India, the ideas of peaceful co-existence of different religious communities has been important.

Minoritism

A third accusation against secularism is the charge of minoritism. It is true that Indian secularism advocates minority rights so the question is: Is this justified? Consider four adults in a compartment

Secularism

Political Theory

of a train travelling at the fastest speed imaginable. In the middle of the journey, one of the four passengers expresses a desire to smoke. The second one complains that he cannot bear cigarette smoke. The other two passengers smoke too but say nothing. Clearly there is a conflict here between two passengers. A suggestion is made that it be resolved by vote. The two mild smokers go along with the addict and the non-smoker is defeated by a margin of two votes. The person in the minority loses but the result appears fair because a proper democratic procedure adopted by common agreement was followed.

Now alter the situation a bit. Suppose that the non-smoker suffers from asthma. Smoking can induce a life-threatening attack in him. His preference that the other person does not smoke expresses now his fundamental and very urgent interest. Would the procedure previously followed, of going with the decision of the

majority, be fair in such a context? Do you not think that the addicted smoker should refrain till the train reaches its destination? You will agree that when it comes to fundamental interests, voting as a democratic procedure is inappropriate. A person has a prior right to the satisfaction of his or her significant interests. What holds true of individuals also holds for communities. The most fundamental interest of minorities must not be harmed and must be protected by constitutional law. This is exactly how it is in the Indian Constitution. Minority rights are justified as long as these rights protect their fundamental interests.



I thought treating everyone in exactly the same way is not always fair!

At this point someone might still say that minority rights are special privileges which come with some costs to others. Why then should such special privilege be given? This question can be best answered by another example. Consider that a film is being shown in an auditorium on the first floor. The auditorium is accessible by a staircase. Everyone is free to buy a ticket, go up the stairs and see the film. Or, are they? Is everyone really free? Suppose that among avid film-goers are some old people, some who have recently broken a leg and others who have long been physically challenged. None of them can really climb up the stairs. Do you

Secularism

Political Theory

think it would be wrong if a lift or a ramp was provided for people in wheel chairs? Doing so enables them to achieve exactly what others routinely procure through the staircase. Yet, this group in minority needs a different mode of getting to the first floor. If all spaces are structured in such a way that they suit only young, able-bodied persons, then some category of persons will forever be excluded from a simple benefit such as watching a film. To make a separate arrangement for them is not to accord them any special treatment. It is to treat them with the same respect and dignity with which all others are being treated. The lesson is that minority rights need not be nor should be viewed as special privileges.

Interventionist

A fourth criticism claims that secularism is coercive and that it interferes excessively with the religious freedom of communities. This misreads Indian secularism. It is true that by rejecting the idea of separation as mutual exclusion, Indian secularism rejects non-interference in religion. But it does not follow that it is excessively interventionist. Indian secularism follows the concept of principled distance which also allows for non-interference. Besides, interference need not automatically mean coercive intervention.

It is of course true that Indian secularism permits state-supported religious reform. But this should not be equated with a change imposed from above, with coercive intervention. But it might be argued: does it do this consistently? Why have personal laws of all religious communities not been reformed? This is the big dilemma facing the Indian state. A secularist might see the personal laws (laws concerning marriage, inheritance and other family matters which are governed by different religions) as manifestations of community-specific rights that are protected by the Constitution. Or he might see these laws as an affront to the basic principles of secularism on the ground that they treat women unequally and therefore unjustly. Personal laws can be seen as manifestations of freedom



How can a State treat all religions equally? Would granting equal number of holidays to each religion help? Or would banning any religious ceremony on public occasions be a way of doing this?

Secularism

Political Theory

from inter-religious domination or as instances of intra-religious domination.

Such internal conflicts are part and parcel of any complex doctrine but they are not something that we need to live with forever. Personal laws can be reformed in such a way that they continue to exemplify both minority rights and equality between men and women. But such reform should neither be brought about by State or group coercion nor should the state adopt a policy of total distance from it. The state must act as a facilitator by supporting liberal and democratic voices within every religion.

Vote Bank Politics

Fifth, there is the argument that secularism encourages the politics of vote banks. As an empirical claim, this is not entirely false. However, we need to put this issue in perspective. First, in a democracy politicians are bound to seek votes. That is part of their job and that is what democratic politics is largely about. To blame a politician for pursuing a group of people or promising to initiate a policy with the motivation to secure their votes is unfair. The real question is what precisely the vote is sought for. Is it to promote solely his self-interest or power or is it also for the welfare of the group in question? If the group which voted for the politician does not get any benefit from this act, then surely the politician must be blamed. If secular politicians who sought the votes of minorities also manage to give them what they want, then this is a success of the secular project which aims, after all, to also protect the interests of the minorities.

But what if the welfare of the group in question is sought at the cost of the welfare and rights of other groups? What if the interests of the majority are undermined by these secular politicians? Then a new injustice is born. But can you think of such examples? Not one or two but a whole lot of them such that you can claim that the whole system is skewed in favour of minorities? If you think hard, you might find that there is little evidence that this has happened in India. In short, there is nothing wrong with vote bank politics as such, but only with a form of vote bank politics that generates

Secularism

Political Theory

injustice. The mere fact that secular parties utilise vote banks is not troublesome. All parties do so in relation to some social group.

Impossible Project

A final, cynical criticism might be this: Secularism cannot work because it tries to do too much, to find a solution to an intractable problem. What is this problem? People with deep religious differences will never live together in peace. Now, this is an empirically false claim. The history of Indian civilisation shows that this kind of living together is realisable. It was realised elsewhere too. The Ottoman Empire is a stirring example. But now critics might say that co-existence under conditions of inequality was indeed possible. Everyone could find a place in a hierarchically arranged order. The point, they claim, is that this will not work today when equality is increasingly becoming a dominant cultural value.

There is another way of responding to this criticism. Far from pursuing an impossible objective Indian secularism mirrors the future of the world. A great experiment is being carried out in India watched with razor-sharp eyes and with great interest by the whole world. It is doing so because with the migration of people from the former colonies to the west, and the increased movement of people across the globe with the intensification of globalisation, Europe and America and some parts of the Middle-East are beginning to resemble India in the diversity of cultures and religions which are present in their societies. These societies are watching the future of the Indian experiment with keen interest.

Secularism

Political Theory

Read out the list of gazetted holidays in India. Does it uphold the case of Secularism in India? Give your arguements.

Name of the holiday	Date according to Gregorian Calendar (for 2006)
1. Id-ul-Zuha (Bakrid)	11 st January
2. Republic Day	26 th January
3. Muharram	09 th February
4. Holi	15 th March
5. Ram Navami	06 th April
6. Mahavir Jayanti	11 th April
7. Milad-Un-Nabi (Birthday of Prophet Mohammed)	11 th April
8. Good Friday	14 th April
9. Buddha Purnima	13 th May
10. Independence Day	15 th August
11. Janmashtami	16 th August
12. Mahatama Gandhi's Birthday	2 nd October
13. Dussehra (Vijaya Dashami)	2 nd October
14. Diwali (Deepawali)	21 st October
15. Id-ul-Fitr	25 th October
16. Guru Nanak's Birthday	05 th November
17. Christmas Day	25 th December

Secularism

Political Theory



1. Which of the following do you feel are compatible with the idea of secularism? Give reasons.
 - (a) Absence of domination of one religious group by another.
 - (b) Recognition of a state religion.
 - (c) Equal state support to all religions.
 - (d) Mandatory prayers in schools.
 - (e) Allowing separate educational institutions for any minority community.
 - (f) Appointment of temple management bodies by the government.
 - (g) Intervention of state to ensure entry of Dalits in temples.

2. Some of the key characteristics of western and Indian model of secularism have got mixed up. Separate them and make a new table.

Western Secularism	Indian Secularism
Strict non-interference of religion and state in each other's affairs	State supported religious reforms allowed
Equality between different religious groups is a key concern	Equality between different sects of a religion is emphasised
Attention to minority rights	Less attention to community based rights
Individual and his rights at the centre	Rights of both individual and religious community protected.

Exercises

Secularism

Political Theory

Exercises

3. What do you understand by secularism? Can it be equated with religious tolerance?
4. Do you agree with the following statements? Give reasons for supporting or opposing any of them.
 - (a) Secularism does not allow us to have a religious identity.
 - (b) Secularism is against inequality within a religious group or between different religious groups.
 - (c) Secularism has a western-Christian origin. It is not suitable for India.
5. Indian secularism focuses on more than the religion-state separation. Explain.
6. Explain the concept of principled distance.



Chapter 9

Peace

Overview

The screaming media reports on wars, terrorist attacks and riots constantly remind us that we live in turbulent times. While actual peace remains elusive, the word itself seems to have become quite popular. It springs readily to the lips of politicians, journalists, industrialists, educators and army chiefs. It is also cited as a cherished value in a wide variety of documents including textbooks, constitutions, charters and treaties. As the idea of peace is readily invoked and the desirability of pursuing peace is rarely questioned we may think that the meaning of this concept needs no further clarification. However, this is not the case. As we will see later, the seeming consensus around the idea of peace is a relatively recent phenomenon. Over the years, the meaning and value of peace has been assessed fairly differently.

The advocates of peace face many questions:

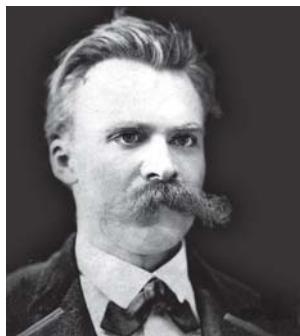
- What exactly is peace? And, why is it so fragile in today's world?
- What can be done to establish peace?
- Can we use violence to establish peace?
- What are the main reasons for the growing violence in our society?

These are questions that we will examine in greater detail in this chapter.

Peace

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Like ‘democracy’, ‘justice’ and ‘human rights’, ‘peace’ has become a buzzword. But we must remember that this seeming consensus on the desirability of peace is relatively recent. Many important thinkers of the past wrote about peace in negative terms.



Friedrich Nietzsche

The nineteenth century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was one of those who glorified war. Nietzsche did not value peace because he believed that only conflict could facilitate the growth of civilisation. Several other thinkers have similarly condemned peace and commended strife as a vehicle of individual heroism and social vitality. The Italian social theorist, Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), argued that people who were able and willing to use force to achieve their goals constituted the governing elites in most societies. He described them as ‘lions’.

This is not to suggest that the cause of peace had no champions. In fact, it occupied a central place in the original teachings of almost all religions. The modern era too has witnessed ardent advocates of peace, both in the spiritual and secular domains. Mahatma Gandhi would figure prominently among them. However, the contemporary preoccupation with peace can be traced to the atrocities of the twentieth century, which resulted in the death of millions of human beings. You may have read about some of these events in your history textbooks: the rise of Fascism, Nazism and the World Wars. Closer home in India and Pakistan we have experienced the horrors of Partition.

Many of the aforesaid calamities involved the use of advanced technology to wreak havoc on an unprecedented scale. Thus, Germany ‘carpet-bombed’ London during the Second World War and the British responded by sending 1000-bomber raids to attack German cities. The war ended with the USA dropping atom bombs on the Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At least 1,20,000 people died immediately from the two attacks and many more died later due to the effects of nuclear radiation. Nearly 95 per cent of the casualties were civilians.

Peace

Political Theory

LET'S DO IT

Read the novel *The flowers of Hiroshima* written by Edita Morris. Note how the use of the atomic bomb continued to traumatised the people for long.

The post-war decades were marked by intense rivalry between two superpowers—the capitalist USA and the communist USSR—for world supremacy. Since nuclear weapons had become the new currency of power, both countries began to make and stockpile them on a large scale. The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was a particularly dark episode in this unfolding military competition. It began when American spy planes discovered Soviet nuclear missiles in neighbouring Cuba. The USA responded by organising a naval blockade of Cuba and threatening military action against the USSR, if the missiles were not removed. This eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation ended when the Soviet Union withdrew the missiles. During the two weeks it lasted, the crisis had brought humanity perilously close to the brink of total destruction.

So, if people praise peace today, that is not merely because they believe it to be a good idea. Humanity has learnt to value peace after paying a huge price for its absence. The spectre of tragic conflict continues to haunt us. Today life is more insecure than ever before as people everywhere face a growing threat from terrorism. Peace continues to be valuable, partly because dangers to it are ever present.

9.2 THE MEANING OF PEACE

Peace is often defined as the absence of war. The definition is simple but misleading. This is because war is usually equated with armed conflict between countries. However, what happened in Rwanda or Bosnia was not a war of this kind. Yet, it represented a



Must be from a backward nation.
He talked about employment,
education, health, shelter and not a
word about the nuclear bomb!

Peace

Political Theory

violation or cessation of peace. While every war leads to absence of peace, every absence of peace need not take the form of war.

The second step in defining peace would be to see it as absence of violent conflict of all kinds including war, riot, massacre, assassination, or simply physical attack. This definition is clearly better than the earlier one. Yet, it does not take us very far. Violence is often rooted in the very structure of society. Social institutions and practices that reinforce entrenched inequalities of caste, class and gender, can also cause injury in subtle and invisible ways. If any challenge is made to these hierarchies by oppressed classes it may also breed conflict and violence. 'Structural violence' of this kind may produce large-scale evil consequences. Let us look at a few concrete instances of such violence arising from caste hierarchy, class disparity, patriarchy, colonialism, and racism/communalism.

Forms of Structural Violence

The traditional caste system treated certain groups of people as *asprishya* or untouchable. Till it was outlawed by the Constitution of independent India, the practice of untouchability subjected them to social exclusion and deprivation of the worst sort. The country is still struggling to erase the scars and relics of this ugly custom. While a social order based on class appears to be more flexible, it too generates a great deal of inequality and oppression. In the developing countries a majority of the labouring classes are confined to the informal sector where the wages and conditions of work are abysmal. A sizeable underclass exists even in the developed countries.

Patriarchy entails a form of social organisation that results in the systematic subordination of, and discrimination against, women. Its manifestations include selective abortion of female foetuses, denial of adequate nourishment and education to the girl-child, child-marriage, wife battering, dowry-related crimes, sexual harassment at the workplace, rape, and honour killing. The low sex ratio (933 females per 1000 males) in India is a poignant index of the ravages of patriarchy.

Colonialism in the sense of prolonged and direct subjection of a people to alien rule is now a rare phenomenon. But the ongoing Palestinian struggle against Israeli domination shows that it has

Peace

Political Theory

Peace



LET'S THINK

Which of the following views do you agree with and why?

- "All wrong-doing arises because of mind. If mind is transformed can wrong-doing remain?"
– Gautam Buddha
- "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent"
– Mahatma Gandhi
- "Ye shall be those whose eyes ever seek for an enemy...ye shall love peace as a means to new wars—and the short peace more than the long. You I advise not to work, but to victory. Let your work be a fight, let your peace be a victory"
– Friedrich Nietzsche

not disappeared completely. Besides, the former colonies of European imperialist countries are yet to recover completely from the forms of manifold exploitation they suffered during the colonial era.

Racism and communalism involve the stigmatisation and oppression of an entire racial group or community. Though the notion that humanity can be divided into distinct races is scientifically spurious, it has been used to justify insidious practices such as Negro slavery in the United States of America (until 1865), the slaughter of Jews in Hitler's Germany, and apartheid—a policy followed until 1992 by the White-controlled government in South Africa, which treated the majority Black people of the country as second-class citizens. Racial discrimination still continues covertly in the West and is now often directed against immigrants from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Communalism may be seen as the South Asian counterpart of racism where the victims tend to be minority religious groups.

The psychological and tangible harm suffered by the victims of violence often creates grievances that persist over generations. Sometimes they may give rise to fresh bouts of conflict when provoked by some incident or even remark. We have examples of long-term

Peace

Political Theory

Peace

grievances being harboured by communities against each other in South Asia, such as those stemming from the violence unleashed during the partition of British India in 1947.

A just and lasting peace can be attained only by articulating and removing the latent grievances and causes of conflict through a process of dialogue. Hence the ongoing attempts to resolve problems between India and Pakistan also include promoting increased contacts among people in all walks of life.

Eliminating Violence

The Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation rightly observes: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". Several age-old spiritual principles (e.g., compassion) and practices (e.g., meditation) are geared precisely to the facilitation of such an endeavour. Modern healing techniques and therapies like psychoanalysis can perform a similar function.

However, we have noted that violence does not originate merely within the individual psyche; it is also rooted in certain social structures. The elimination of structural violence necessitates the creation of a just and democratic society. Peace, understood as the harmonious coexistence of contented people, would be a product of such a society. It can never be achieved once and for all. Peace is not an end-state, but a process involving an active pursuit of the moral and material resources needed to establish human welfare in the broadest sense of the term.

LET'S DO IT

List the names of a few Nobel Peace Prize winners. Write a note on any one of them.



Components for the Creation of Terrorism

9.3 CAN VIOLENCE EVER PROMOTE PEACE?

It has often been asserted that violence — though it is an evil — can sometimes be a necessary prelude to bringing about peace. It may be

Peace

Political Theory

argued that tyrants and oppressors can be prevented from continuing to harm the populace only by being forcibly removed. Or the liberation struggles of oppressed people can be justified even though they may use some violence. But resort to violence, however well meaning, could turn out to be self-defeating. Once deployed, it tends to spin out of control, leaving behind a trail of death and destruction.

It is for this reason that pacifists, who consider peace to be a supreme value, take a moral stand against the use of violence even for attaining just ends. They too recognise the need to fight oppression. However, they advocate the mobilisation of love and truth to win the hearts and minds of the oppressors.



LET'S THINK

The Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia was a particularly horrific example of the counter-productive nature of revolutionary violence. An outcome of the insurrection led by Pol Pot, the regime sought to institute a communist order geared to the liberation of the oppressed peasantry. During 1975–1979, it let loose a reign of terror that caused the death of approximately 1.7 million people (21 per cent of the country's population). This was one of the bleakest human tragedies of the previous century.

The systematic deployment of violence by radical movements to attain apparently desirable objectives may not always have such dramatically appalling consequences. But in the process, it frequently assumes an institutional form, thereby becoming an integral part of the resulting political order. A case in point is the FLN (National Liberation Front), which led the Algerian independence movement by using violent means. While it liberated the country from the yoke of French imperialism in 1962, the FLN regime soon degenerated into authoritarianism and triggered a backlash in the form of Islamic fundamentalism.



The way to bring about peace is to punish the people who are responsible for violence.

No Munni, violence should not be used to counter violence. We can only bring about lasting peace by stressing on peaceful means.



Ah! Now that you sound like the champion of peace, tell me, are you using similar "peaceful methods" to deal with your younger brothers? Or is the "thrashing him" policy being pursued?

Peace

MAHATMA GANDHI ON NON-VIOLENCE

You may have heard the phrase '*Majboori Ka Naam Mahatma Gandhi*'? The tendency to equate helplessness with non-violence and non-violence with Gandhi has led some people to say this. Underlying this light remark is the widespread view that non-violence is the way of the weak. Gandhi rejected this understanding of non-violence and articulated an altogether different philosophy of non-violence. We usually understand non-violence to mean non-injury. A non-violent act is thought to be one that does not cause physical injury. Gandhi changed this meaning in two fundamental ways. For him non-violence meant not just refraining from causing physical harm, mental harm or loss of livelihood. It also meant giving up even the thought of harming someone. For him 'causing' did not mean doing the harm oneself. For Gandhi, "I would be guilty of violence, if I helped someone in harming someone else or if I benefited from a harmful act." In this sense Gandhi's notion of violence was close to 'structural violence'. The second major change that Gandhi introduced was to give the idea of non-violence a positive meaning. Not causing harm was not enough. *Ahimsa* required an element of conscious compassion. Gandhi was opposed to passive spiritualism. For him non-violence meant a positive and active pursuit of well-being and goodness. Therefore those who practise non-violence must exercise physical and mental restraint under the gravest provocation. Non-violence is an extremely active force that has no room for cowardice or weakness. Gandhi in fact went to the extent of stating that if non-violence were inadequate to defend oneself, then it would be better to resort to violence than take refuge in passivity in the name of non-violence. Some Gandhians say that the popular saying cited at the outset should be changed to "*Mazbooti ka naam Mahatma Gandhi*".

This is not to underestimate the potential of militant but non-violent form of resistance. Civil disobedience is a major mode of such struggle and it has been successfully used to make a dent in structures of oppression; a prominent instance being Gandhi's deployment of *satyagraha* during the Indian Freedom Movement. Gandhi took his stand on justice and appealed to the conscience of the British rulers. If that did not work, he put moral and political pressure on them by launching a mass movement involving open but non-violent breaking of the unjust laws. Drawing

LET'S DEBATE

Do you think recourse to violence may sometimes be necessary? After all, the Nazi regime in Germany had to be overthrown through external military intervention.

Peace

Political Theory

inspiration from him, Martin Luther King waged a similar battle in the 1960s against anti-Black racial discrimination in the USA.

9.4 PEACE AND THE STATE

It is often argued that the division of world into separate sovereign states is an impediment to the pursuit of peace. As each state sees itself as an independent and supreme entity, it tends to

LET'S DO IT



Collect material on Gandhi's various methods of Satyagraha used in South Africa, Champaran and in Dandi March. If possible read the book *Pahala Girmatiya* by Giriraj Kishore.

Find more about Martin Luther King's Civil Rights Movement. How was he inspired by Gandhi?

protect its own perceived self-interest. While the pursuit of peace requires that we see ourselves as part of the larger humanity, states tend to make distinctions between people. To pursue the interest of their citizens they are willing to inflict injury upon others.

Besides, in today's world each state has consolidated instruments of coercion and force. While the state was expected to use its force, its army or its police, to protect its citizens, in practice these forces could be deployed against its own members to suppress dissent. This is most clearly evident in authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships, like the one currently ruling Myanmar. The long-term solution to such problems lies in making the state more accountable through meaningful democratisation and reining it in via an effective system of

Peace

A poignant dilemma arises from the tendency of many states to use violent means for achieving their objectives in the international arena, especially for capturing territory and natural resources. The resulting contention can escalate into a full-scale war. Thus, in 1990, Iraq invaded its small, oil-rich neighbour Kuwait. It justified the war by asserting that Kuwaiti territory had been an Iraqi province arbitrarily cut off by imperialism, and by accusing Kuwait of slant drilling into Iraq's oil supplies. The invasion was eventually repulsed by a US-led military coalition. Conflict of this kind is an ever-present possibility in a global system devoid of an effective world government. It is also exacerbated by vested interests like the armament industry, which find war a profitable proposition.

civil liberties. This is the route taken by the post-apartheid regime in South Africa, which is one of the prominent political success stories of recent years. The struggle for democracy and human rights is thus closely linked to the safeguarding of peace.

9.5 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE PURSUIT OF PEACE

Different strategies have been used for the pursuit and maintenance of peace. These have been shaped by three distinct approaches. The first approach accords centrality to states, respects their sovereignty, and treats competition among them as a fact of life. Its main concern is with the proper management of this competition, and with the containment of possible conflict through inter-state arrangements like 'balance of power'. Such a balance is said to have prevailed in the nineteenth century when the major European countries fine-tuned their struggle for power by forming alliances that deterred potential aggressors and prevented the outbreak of a large-scale war.

The second approach too grants the deep-rooted nature of inter-state rivalry. But it stresses the positive presence and possibilities of interdependence. It underscores the growing social and economic cooperation among nations. Such cooperation is expected to temper state sovereignty and promote international understanding. Consequently global conflict would be reduced, leading to better prospects of peace. An example frequently cited by advocates of this approach is that of post-World War II Europe which secured durable peace by graduating from economic integration to political unification.

Unlike the first two approaches, the third considers the state system to be a passing phase of human history. It envisages the emergence of a supra-national order and sees the fostering of a global community as the surest guarantee of peace. The seeds of such a community are found in the expanding interactions and coalitions across state boundaries that involve diverse non-governmental actors like multinational corporations and people's movements. The proponents of this approach argue that the ongoing process of globalisation is further eroding the already diminished primacy and sovereignty of the state, thereby creating conditions conducive to the establishment of world peace.

Peace

Political Theory

Peace

PACIFISM

Pacifism preaches opposition to war or violence as a means of settling disputes. It covers a spectrum of views ranging from a preference for diplomacy in resolving international disputes to absolute opposition to the use of violence, or even force, in any circumstance. Pacifism may be based on principle or pragmatism. Principled pacifism springs from the belief that war, deliberate lethal force, violence or any form of coercion is morally wrong. Pragmatic pacifism does not adhere to such an absolute principle but holds that there are better ways of resolving a dispute than war, or considers the benefits of a war to be outweighed by the costs. 'Dove' or 'dovish' are informal terms used to describe people who seek to avoid war. The terms allude to the placid nature of the dove. Some people termed dovish would not view their position as pacifist, for they would consider war to be justifiable in some circumstances. The opposite of a dove is a 'hawk' or a warmonger. Some pacifists, while opposing war, are not opposed to all use of coercion, physical force against people or destruction of property. Anti-militarists, for example, are specifically opposed to the modern nation-states' military institutions rather than to 'violence' in general. Other pacifists follow principles of non-violence, believing that only non-violent action is acceptable

Adapted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacifism>>

The United Nations may be said to embody elements of all the three approaches. The Security Council, which gives permanent membership and veto power (the right to shoot down a proposal even if it supported by other members) to five dominant states, reflects the prevalent international hierarchy. The Economic and Social Council promotes inter-state cooperation in several spheres. The Commission on Human Rights seeks to shape and apply transnational norms.

9.6 CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

While the U.N.O. has several noteworthy achievements to its credit, it has not succeeded in preventing and eliminating threats to peace. Instead, dominant states have asserted their sovereignty and sought to shape regional power structures and the international system itself in keeping with their own perceptions and priorities. To this end they have even resorted to direct military action against and

Peace

Political Theory

Peace

occupation of foreign territories. The recent US intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq is a glaring example of such conduct. Numerous lives have been lost in the ensuing warfare.

The rise of terrorism is partly a response to the self-serving and ham-handed conduct of the aggressive states. Terrorists currently pose a great threat to peace through an adroit and ruthless use of modern weapons and advanced technology more generally. The demolition of the World Trade Centre (New York, USA) by Islamic militants on 9 September 2001 was a striking manifestation of this sinister reality. The use of biological/chemical/nuclear weapons of mass destruction by these forces remains a frightening possibility.

The global community has failed to curb the rapacity of the domineering powers and the guerrilla tactics of the terrorists. It has also often served as a mute spectator of genocide — the systematic massacre of an entire group of people. This became particularly evident in Rwanda — an African country that witnessed the murder of nearly half a million Tutsis by Hutus during 1994. Despite the availability of intelligence before the killing began and subsequent international media coverage of the genocide as it unfolded, there was no international intervention. The UN refused to authorise its peace-keeping operation in Rwanda to stop the carnage.

LET'S DO IT



Design a peace award with a symbol(s). Which symbol(s) do you think best depicts your understanding of the term 'peace'. Who would you like to award this to and why?

All this is not to say that peace is a lost cause. After World War II, countries like Japan and Costa Rica decided not to maintain military forces. Several parts of the world have witnessed the creation of nuclear-weapons-free zones where the use, development or deployment of nuclear weapons is banned through an internationally recognised treaty. Today there are six such zones which have been achieved or are in the process of acceptance, covering the Antarctic territory, Latin America and the Caribbean, South-East Asia, Africa, the South Pacific, and Mongolia. The disintegration of the USSR in 1991 put a full stop to the era of military (especially nuclear) rivalry between

Peace

Political Theory

the super powers and removed a major threat to international security.

Besides, the contemporary era has witnessed the rise of numerous popular initiatives aimed at fostering peace. These are often collectively described as the peace movement. The devastation caused by World War I galvanised the movement. It has since gathered momentum and gained a large following across geographical and political barriers. The movement is sustained by people from diverse walks of life and includes workers, writers, scientists, teachers, media persons, priests and statesmen. It has expanded and achieved depth by forging mutually beneficial linkages with other movements such as those championing the empowerment of women and protection of the environment. The movement has also created a body of knowledge called Peace Studies and effectively used new channels of communication such as the internet.

In this chapter we have examined various dimensions of peace: its meaning, the intellectual and practical challenges it faces, as also its prospects. We have seen that the pursuit of peace involves a constant effort to create and sustain harmonious social relations conducive to human well-being and flourishing. The pathway to peace can be blocked by many obstacles ranging from injustice to imperialism. But the temptation to remove them by using indiscriminate violence is both unethical and extremely risky. In an era of genocide, terrorism and total war which blurs the line between civilians and combatants, the quest for peace must inform both the means and ends of political action.

Peace

“ ”

LET'S DEBATE

The existence of nuclear weapons in today's world contributes towards preventing war



Peace

Peace

Political Theory



Exercises

Exercises

1. Do you think that a change towards a peaceful world, needs a change in the way people think? Can mind promote peace and is it enough to focus only on the human mind?
2. A State must protect the lives and rights of its citizens. However, at times its own actions are a source of violence against some of its citizens. Comment with the help of some examples
3. Peace can be best realised when there is freedom, equality and justice. Do you agree?
4. Use of violence does not achieve just ends in the long run. What do you think about this statement?
5. Differentiate between the major approaches, discussed in the chapter, to the establishment of peace in the world.

Chapter 10

Development

Overview



In this chapter, we will start with the common understanding of development and the problems presented by this understanding. In the later sections' we will explore the ways in which these problems can be addressed and discuss some alternative ways of thinking about development. After going through this chapter you should be able to

- explain the meaning of the term development.
- discuss the achievements and problems of existing models of development.
- discuss some of the alternative models of development which have been put forward.

Development

Political Theory

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Suppose in a school each class brings out an annual class magazine as one of their extra-curricular activities. In one class, the teacher takes the last year's magazine as a model, makes a plan of what this year's magazine should contain in terms of topics, articles, poetry, etc. and then divides and assigns topics to different students. It is possible that as a result a student interested in cricket may find that she has been allotted a different topic and the one who has been allotted cricket is actually keen to write a play. It is also possible that in this scheme three students may want to get together to work out a series of cartoons but find that they have been placed in different groups. In another class, however, the content of the magazine is debated by the students. There are many disagreements but eventually a plan for a magazine emerges about which all are in agreement.

In your opinion, which class will come up with a magazine in which the students get to realise their particular interests in the best possible manner? The first may produce a good-looking magazine but will the content be engrossing? Will the person who wants to write on cricket, write with equal passion on her assigned topic? Which magazine will be seen as unique and which as standard? Which class will feel that working on the magazine was interesting and which class will do it as just routine homework?

For a society, deciding about what constitutes development is a bit like students deciding about what kind of school magazine they want and how they should work on it. We could mechanically follow a model which has been previously used in our own, or other countries, or we could plan keeping in mind the good of the society as a whole as well as the rights of those people whose lives may be directly affected by development projects. The leaders can either concentrate on implementing plans regardless of protests or they can proceed democratically, carrying the people with them.

In the broadest sense of the term, development conveys the ideas of improvement, progress, well-being and an aspiration for a better life. Through its notion of development a society articulates what constitutes its vision for the society as a whole and how best to achieve

Development

Political Theory

it. However, the term development is also often used in a narrower sense to refer to more limited goals such as increasing the rate of economic growth, or modernising the society. Development has unfortunately often come to be identified with achieving pre-set targets, or completing projects like dams, or factories, hospitals, rather than with realising the broader vision of development which the society upholds. In the process some sections of society may have benefited while others may have had to suffer loss of their homes, or lands, or way of life, without any compensatory gains.

Issues such as whether the rights of people have been respected in the course of development, whether the benefits and burdens of development have been justly distributed, or whether decisions regarding development priorities have been democratically made, have been raised in many countries. Hence, development has become the subject of considerable controversy today. The models of development which have been adopted in different countries have become the subject of debate and criticism and alternative models have been put forward. In such a situation the broader understanding of development can serve as a standard by which the development experience of a country is examined.

10.2 THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The concept of development gained importance after the second half of the twentieth century. This was the time when a large number of countries in Asia and Africa gained political independence. Most were impoverished and their populations had a low standard of living. Education, health and other facilities were poor. They were often described as 'underdeveloped' or 'developing'. The comparison was with the richer countries in Western Europe and the United States.

In the 1950s and 1960s when most countries of Asia and Africa had achieved independence from colonial rule, the most urgent task in front of them was to solve the pressing problems of poverty, malnourishment, unemployment, illiteracy and the lack of basic amenities that a majority of their populations faced. They argued that the reason why they were backward was because under colonial rule their resources had been used not for their own benefit but for

Development

Political Theory

the benefit of their colonial masters. With Independence, they could reorganise their resources in the best possible manner to serve their national interests. Therefore it was now possible for them to formulate such policies which would allow them to overcome their backwardness and move towards achieving the standards of their former colonial masters. This provided the impetus for these countries to undertake development projects.

R. K. Laxman in the Times of India



If this project comes up we will be finished!

The concept of development has undergone many changes over the years. In the initial years the focus was on catching up with the west in terms of economic growth and modernisation of societies. Developing countries adopted goals like faster economic growth through industrialisation, modernisation of agriculture and extending and modernising education. It was believed at the time that the state was the only agency capable of initiating this kind of social and economic change. Many countries embarked upon ambitious projects of development, often with the help of loans and aid from the developed countries.

In India a series of Five Year Plans for development were made starting from the 1950s, and these included a number of mega projects such as the Bhakra Nangal Dam, setting up steel plants in different parts of the country, mining, fertilizer production and improving agricultural techniques. It was hoped that a multi-pronged strategy would have an impact on the economy and significantly increase the wealth of the country. It was also hoped that the emerging prosperity would gradually 'trickle down' to the poorest sections of society and help to reduce inequality. A great deal of faith was placed in adopting the latest discoveries of science and state of the art technologies. New educational institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology were set up and collaboration

Development

Political Theory

with advanced countries in order to have access to their knowledge became a top priority. It was believed that the process of development would make the society more modern and forward looking and set it on the path of growth.

However, the model of development adopted by India and other countries has come under a great deal of criticism over the years and this has led to some rethinking about the goals and processes of development today.

10.3 CRITICISMS OF DEVELOPMENT MODELS

Critics of development have pointed out that the kind of development models which have been adopted in many countries has proved very costly for the developing countries. The financial costs have been enormous, putting many countries into long-term debt. Africa is still suffering from the enormous debts which it ran up by borrowings from the richer countries. The gains in terms of growth have not been commensurate and poverty and disease continue to plague the continent.

The Social Costs of Development

This model of development has also had high social costs. A large number of people have been displaced from their homes and localities due to the construction of big dams, industrial activities and mining activities, or other projects. Displacement results in loss of livelihood and increases impoverishment. If rural agricultural communities are displaced from their traditional occupations and regions they end up at the margins of society, swelling the large number of urban and rural poor. Traditional skills acquired over an extended period may be lost. There is also a loss of culture because when people are relocated they lose a whole way of community life. Such displacement has led to struggles in many countries.

Displaced people have not always accepted their fate passively. You may have heard about the 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' which

LET'S DO IT

Is any major developmental project (e.g. building of dam, road, rail or industry etc.) taking place in your area? Has there been any protest or complaint against that project? What issues have been raised by the protesters? What is the response of the government to these issues? Meet some protesters and government officials to find out their versions.

Development

Political Theory

has been leading a movement against the Sardar Sarovar Dam on the river Narmada for many years. The supporters of this big dam claim that it will generate electricity, help irrigate large areas of land and also provide drinking water to the desert areas of Kutch and Saurashtra. The opponents of the dam dispute these claims. They claim that almost one million people have displaced. They have lost their lands through submergence, or construction, and consequently lost their livelihood. Most of these people belong to the tribal and *dalit* communities who constitute some of the most under-privileged groups in the country. Some even argue that the dam would greatly upset the ecological balance submerging large tracts of forests.

Environmental Costs of Development

Development has indeed caused a high degree of environmental degradation in many countries and not just the displaced people but all of the population is beginning to feel the consequences. When the 'tsunami' hit the South and South-East Asian coasts last year it was observed that the destruction of mangroves and the building of commercial enterprises along the shore line was the reason for the greater extent of the damage caused. You must have read about global warming. The ice in the Arctic and Antarctic is melting because of increased emission of green house gases into the atmosphere and this has the potential to cause floods and actually submerge low lying areas like Bangladesh and the Maldives.

In the long term the ecological crisis will adversely affect all of us. Air pollution is already a problem which does not discriminate between the rich and the poor. But in the short term, indiscriminate use of resources tends to adversely affect the under-privileged more sharply. Loss of forests affects the poor who use forest resources for a variety of subsistence needs like firewood, medicinal herbs or food. Drying up of rivers and ponds and falling ground water levels means that women have to walk longer in order to procure water.

The model of development we are pursuing is heavily dependent on the increasing use of energy. Most of the energy currently generated in the world is from non-renewable sources like coal or petroleum. Large tracts of the Amazon rainforests are being deforested in order to provide for the increased consumer needs.

Development

Political Theory

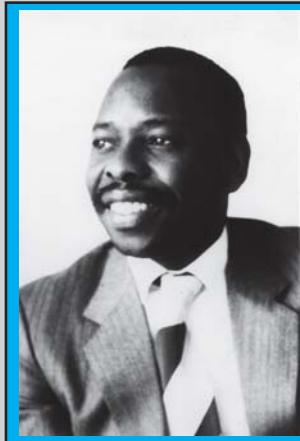
KEN SARO-WIWA

Just imagine that a hidden treasure is found in your backyard. How will you feel if the treasure is taken away little by little by authorities in the name of development? This development is not reflected in your standard of living or even in facilities for the colony you stay in. Further, your house as a site for the treasure is constantly vandalised by people who claim to use the treasure for development. Isn't it gross injustice for the people in whose house the treasure has been unearthed?

Oil had been found in the region of Ogoni in Nigeria in 1950s which resulted in crude oil exploration. Soon economic growth and big business created around it an entangled web of political intrigues, environmental problems and corruption. This prevented development of the very region where oil had been found.

Ken Saro-Wiwa, an Ogoni by birth, was recognised as an author, journalist and television producer in the 1980s. In his work, he observed and reacted to the exploitation around him as the oil and gas industry took riches from beneath the feet of the poor Ogoni farmers, and in return left the land polluted and the people disenfranchised.

Saro-Wiwa led a non-violent struggle with the launch of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1990 — an open, grassroots community-based political movement. The movement was so effective, that by 1993 the oil companies had to pull out of Ogoni. But Saro-Wiwa paid the price for this. The military rulers of Nigeria framed him in a murder case and the military tribunal sentenced him to death. Saro-Wiwa said that the military rulers were doing this on behest of Shell, the multi-national oil company that had to withdraw from the Ogoni region. Human rights organisations all over the world protested against this trial and appealed for his release. Ignoring this world-wide protest, the Nigerian rulers executed Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995.



ENVIRONMENTALISM

You must have often heard terms like pollution, waste management, sustainable development, protection of endangered species and global warming. These are the buzz words of the environmental movement which works to protect natural resources and ecosystems. Environmentalists maintain that human beings should learn to live in harmony with the rhythms of the ecosystem and not manipulate the natural environment to serve their immediate interests. They believe that mankind is using up and destroying natural resources to such an extent that we will bequeath only a barren earth, poisoned rivers and polluted air to future generations.

The roots of environmentalism can be traced back to the nineteenth century revolt against industrialisation. Today, the environmental movement has become a world-wide phenomenon with thousands of non-governmental groups and even some 'green' political parties. Some well-known environmental groups include Green Peace and the World Wildlife Fund and in India we have the Chipko Movement which emerged to protect the Himalayan forests. Such groups try to pressurise governments to modify their industrial and developmental policies in the light of environmental goals.

Are there enough of these non-renewable resources which can allow not only the advanced countries but all people in the world to enjoy an affluent life style? Given the finite nature of these resources, the answer would be no. What about the future generations? Are we going to hand over a depleted earth and multiple problems to them?

Assessing Development

It could not of course be said that development has had only negative effects for the world. Some countries have had some success in increasing their rate of economic growth and even in reducing poverty. But over all, inequalities have not been seriously reduced and poverty continues to be a problem in the developing world. As we saw earlier, it was assumed that the benefits of growth would trickle down to the poorest and most unprivileged sections of the society and thereby raise the standards of living of all. However the world over, the gap between the rich and the poor has been widening. A country may have high rates of growth but that doesn't necessarily translate into

a fair distribution of its benefits. When economic growth and redistribution do not go together the benefits are likely to be cornered by those who are already privileged.

Development

Political Theory

It is now increasingly being recognised that there is a need to adopt a broader notion of development. An excessive focus on economic growth has not only given rise to a wide range of problems but even economic growth has not always been satisfactory. Hence, development is now being viewed in broader terms as a process which should improve the quality of life of all the people.

If development is understood as a process which aims to improve the quality of life of people, it could be argued that measuring the rate of economic growth alone would be an inadequate and at times misleading indicator of development. There is now a search for alternative ways of measuring development. One such attempt is the Human Development Report which is annually brought out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This report ranks countries on the basis of their performance in social indicators like literacy and education levels, life expectancy and maternal mortality rates. This measure is called the Human Development Index. According to this conception development should be a process which allows more and more people to make meaningful choices and the pre-condition for this is the fulfilment of basic needs like food, education, health and shelter. This is called the basic needs approach. Popular slogans like '*roti, kapda aur makaan*', '*garibi hatao*' or '*bijli, sadak, pani*' convey the sentiment that without the fulfilment of basic needs, it is impossible for an individual to live a dignified life and pursue her desires. Freedom from want or deprivation is the key to effectively exercising one's choices and pursuing one's desires. In this view, if people die of starvation or cold due to lack of food and shelter, or if children are working instead of being in school, this is indicative of a state of under-development.



LET'S THINK

Gather information (news reports, articles, charts, tables) about the Human Development Index from the latest Human Development Report available to you. Form different groups in the class and have each group make a presentation on the following:

- India's changing HDI rank.
- India's rank compared to its neighbours.
- Different components of the HDI and India's score on each.
- Compare HDI data for India with figures for economic growth of the country.

Development

Political Theory

10.4 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

In the preceding sections we discussed some of the limitations of the model of development pursued so far. There have been huge costs — both human and environmental — of development policies and the costs and benefits of development have been unequally distributed among people. Further, the strategies of development adopted in most countries have been ‘top-down’, that is, the selection of development priorities and strategies and the actual implementation of projects were all generally decided by the higher levels of the political leadership and bureaucracy. There was often little consultation with the people whose lives would be most immediately affected by development projects. Neither was their experience and the knowledge

acquired over centuries utilized nor were their interests taken into account. This was as true of democratic countries as of dictatorial ones. Development thus became a process designed and implemented by the ruling sections in the country who have also often been the major beneficiaries of development projects. This has underscored the need to think of alternative ways of understanding and pursuing development which are equitable and sustainable. Issues of rights, equality, freedom, justice and democracy have all been raised in the process. In this section, we shall examine how these concepts have taken on newer meanings in the context of the development debate.

LET's Do It

Make a list of the kind of things that we regularly discard. Think about how we could recycle or reuse them to reduce the amount of harmful waste.

Right Claims

We have noted how the benefits of development have been largely cornered by the powerful and the costs of the development model have been borne by the poorest and vulnerable sections of the population whether due to ecological degradation or due to displacement and loss of livelihood. One of the issues which has been raised is regarding the protections that affected people can claim from the State and the society as a whole. In a democracy do people have a right be consulted in decisions which directly affect their lives? Do they have a right to livelihood which they can claim when an

Development

Political Theory

activity sanctioned by the government threatens their source of livelihood? Another issue is regarding rights to natural resources. Can communities claim traditional rights to the use of natural resources? This particularly applies to tribal and aboriginal communities who have a specific way of community life and relationship to the environment.

The crucial issue here is to whom do natural resources belong? Is it the local community, the state concerned, or are they a common resource of all humanity? If we understand resources as common to humanity then humanity would include future generations as well. Negotiating the competing demands of different sections of a population as well as achieving a balance between the claims of the present and future is the task of democracies.

Democratic Participation

How many times have you been told that you must do something—say, obey your parents or teachers — for your own good? And have you felt like saying, if it is good for me, please let me decide that myself? The distinction between democracy and dictatorship is that in a democracy conflicts over resources, or different visions of the good life, are resolved through debate and a respect for the rights of all and these cannot be imposed from above. Thus, if everyone in a society has a common stake in achieving a better life, then everyone needs to be involved in formulating the goals of development and in devising ways of implementing it. There is a difference between following a plan made by others and sharing in the formulation of the plans. Firstly, even if others make plans with the best intentions, they are likely to be less aware than you about your specific needs. Secondly, being an active part of the decision-making process is empowering.

Both democracy and development are concerned with realising the common good. By what process can the common good be defined? In democratic countries the right of people to participate in decision making is emphasised. One of the ways which has been

“

LET'S DEBATE

The rivers belong to the people and not to the government; therefore any decision about river water should not be taken without people's approval

Development

Political Theory

LET'S THINK



These pictures are of satyagraha in the village of Domkhedi in the Narmada Valley. As a result of the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam, the waters of the Narmada flooded the valley. The 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' protestors chose to face the rising waters. When the waters rose dangerously up to the shoulders of the activists, the government arrested them. Find out more about this controversy and discuss the merits and demerits of big dams. Is the 'Sardar Sarovar Dam' a good way to solve the problem of water shortage? Were the activists justified in offering resistance to this government scheme?



Pictures Credit: Harikrishna and Deepa Jani from www.narmada.org

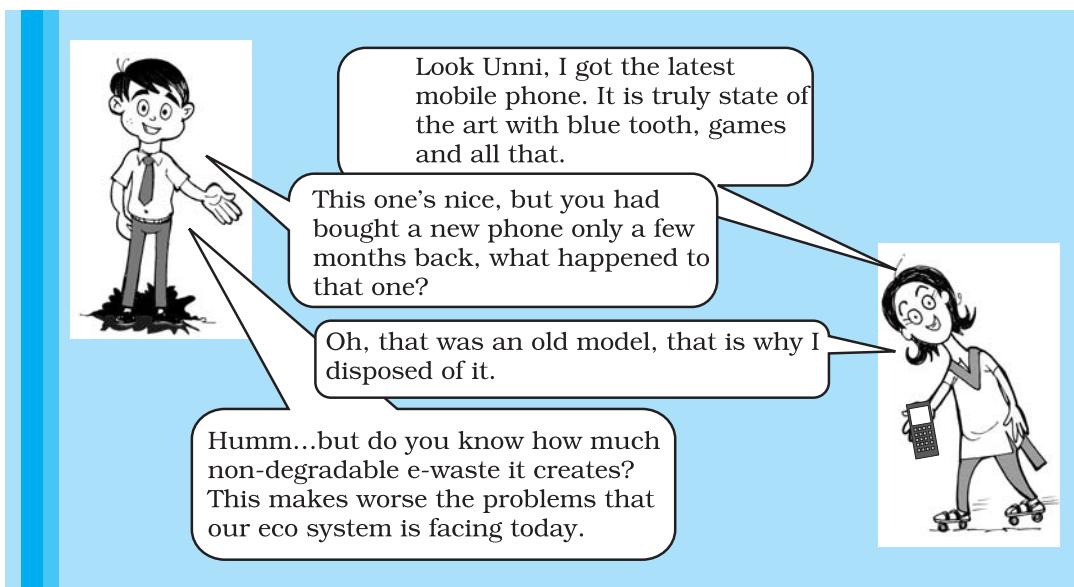
suggested to ensure participation is to allow local decision-making bodies to take decisions about development projects in the local area. Increasing the powers and resources of local bodies is thus being advocated. On the one hand it is argued that people have to be consulted on issues which most affect them and it should be possible to reject projects which can adversely affect the community. On the other it is said that, involvement in planning and formulating policies allows people to direct resources towards their needs. Where a road must be laid, what should be the route of the metro or local buses, where a park or school should be located, whether a village needs a check dam or an internet café should be decisions which must be taken by them.

It was argued above that the prevailing model of development is "top-down" and tends to view people as objects of development. It

Development

Political Theory

assumes that there is one best way to arrive at solutions for our problems. In the process the accumulated knowledge and experiences of people may be ignored. A decentralised approach to development makes it possible to use various kinds of technologies — traditional and modern — in a creative manner.



Development and Life Style

An alternative model of development would also try to move away from the high cost, ecologically wasteful, technology driven notion of development. Development should not be measured only by the number of cell phones in the country, or by the sophisticated weapons which are developed, or by the size of the cars which people drive, but by the quality of life enjoyed by people in terms of happiness and harmony and satisfaction of essential needs. At one level, efforts should be made to conserve natural resources and use renewable sources of energy as far as is possible. Efforts such as rain-water harvesting, solar and bio-gas plants, micro-hydel projects, compost pits to generate manure out of organic waste are examples in this direction. Such activities have to take place at a local level and therefore demand higher involvement from people. Big projects are

Development

Political Theory

not the only way to effect big improvement. Opponents of big dams have advocated a series of small dams and bunds which require much less investment, cause minimal displacement and can be beneficial to the local population.

At another level, there is also a need to scale down our need for non-renewable resources by changing life styles. This is a tricky issue because it may appear as if people are being asked to accept a lower standard of living and this could also be seen as a curtailment of their freedom to choose. But debating the possibility of alternative life styles could also mean increasing avenues for freedom and creativity by opening up alternative visions of the good life. However, any such policy would call for a high degree of co-operation between governments and people across countries. This would mean adopting democratic methods of decision-making on such matters. But if we understand development as a process of enhancing one's freedoms, and think of people not as passive consumers but as active participants in deciding development goals, it should be possible to reach agreement on such issues. In the process, our notions of rights, freedom and justice would be extended.

Conclusion

The idea of development refers to the desire for a better life. This is a very powerful desire and the hope of improvement is a driving force of human action. In this chapter we have seen how widely accepted versions of what constitutes improvement have come under critical scrutiny. There is a multi-pronged search for a more equitable, sustainable and democratic model of development. In the process, a number of concepts of political theory such as equality, democracy and rights, have been reinterpreted.

The issues that have arisen while pursuing the goal of development reveal that the choices we make have an impact upon others — other human beings and other species in the world. We must therefore see ourselves as part of the larger universe for our fates are linked together. Besides, my actions not only affect others, they also have an impact upon my own future possibilities. We need therefore to choose carefully, keeping in mind not just our present needs but also our long-term interests.

Development

Political Theory



Exercises

1. What do you understand by the term development? Would all sections of society benefit from such a definition of development?
2. Discuss some of the social and ecological costs of the kind of development which has been pursued in most countries.
3. What are some of the new claims for rights which the process of development has generated?
4. What would be the advantages of democracy over other forms of government for ensuring that decisions regarding development are made to promote the common good?
5. In your view how successful have popular struggles like been in making the state responsive to the social and environmental costs of development? Discuss with examples.

Exercises

Credit: Image on opening page: <http://sardarsarovardam.org> (SARDAR SAROVAR NARMADA NIGAM LTD).

Development Development

Political Theory

Notes

CONTENTS

Foreword --- iii

Letter to the Readers --- v

Chapter 1 Challenges of Nation Building	2
Chapter 2 Era of One-party Dominance	26
Chapter 3 Politics of Planned Development	46
Chapter 4 India's External Relations	64
Chapter 5 Challenges to and Restoration of the Congress System	82
Chapter 6 The Crisis of Democratic Order	102
Chapter 7 Rise of Popular Movements	128
Chapter 8 Regional Aspirations	148
Chapter 9 Recent Developments in Indian Politics	172



FOREWORD

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

NCERT appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the Advisory Group on Social Science, Professor Hari Vasudevan and the Chief Advisors for this book, Shri Yogendra Yadav and Professor Suhas Palshikar for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their Principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring



Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G. P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

New Delhi
20 December 2006

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training



LETTER TO THE READERS

As India completes sixty years as an independent and democratic country, it is time to look back and reflect on this period. So much of the trends and patterns of our politics as well as the strengths and weaknesses of our democracy have been shaped during these six decades. Yet it is surprising how little the younger citizens of our country know about this history. You would have a good idea of the freedom struggle because you study that in the History textbooks. You would also know something about our contemporary politics from the media. But very few young citizens know much about the period that connects the freedom movement to contemporary politics. This is the gap the present book seeks to fill. It tells you the story of the journey of our democracy during the last sixty years so that you can make sense of the political reality that surrounds all of us.

This book is not a chronicle of all or even main events during the past six decades. We have tried to weave the history of the last sixty years around some major issues and themes. The first eight chapters of the book cover a certain period of this history, but in a selective manner by focussing on one issue or theme that dominated those years. The final chapter offers an overview of various issues that have emerged in the most recent period.

Politics is often understood as a power game played by some big leaders. Politics is, of course, about power. But politics is also about taking collective decisions, about sorting out differences, about reaching consensus. That is why we simply cannot run our collective affairs without politics. Similarly, big leaders no doubt influence the course of politics. But politics is much more than a story of individual ambitions and frustrations. That is why you will not find much emphasis on personalities in this book. You will find some biographical sketches so as to give you a rich sense of those times. But we do not expect you to memorise these biographical details.

In order to give you a feel of the times, we have included many photographs, cartoons, maps and other images. As in other books, Unni and Munni are there to share their innocent yet irreverent questions and comments with you. By now you know that what Unni and Munni say is not the opinion of the textbook. You, and even the authors, may or may not agree with Unni and Munni. But you should, like them, begin to question everything.

This book refrains from passing judgement on events and personalities of this period. The objective of this book is to equip you with information and perspectives so that you can take more informed and well thought out positions on politics, either as students of Political Science or as citizens of the country. That is why we tell the story in an open-ended and non-partisan manner. This has not been easy, for there is no way



a book like this can side-step all the ‘controversial’ issues. Many of the significant issues of this period were and continue to be subjects of deep political differences.

The Team that prepared this book decided to follow certain norms to ensure non-partisan treatment of the subject. Firstly, it presents more than one viewpoint when dealing with controversial subjects. Secondly, wherever available, it uses authentic sources like the reports of various Commissions or court judgements, to reconstruct crucial details. Thirdly, it uses a variety of sources from scholarly writings to different newspapers and magazines, etc. to tell the story. Fourthly, the book avoids detailed discussion of the role of political leaders who are still active in politics.

Writing this textbook turned out to be particularly challenging for we do not have sufficient information on this period. Most of the archival material is still closed to the researchers. There are not many standard histories of this period that a textbook like this can draw upon. The Textbook Development Committee turned this challenge into an opportunity. We are grateful to the Team members who spared their valuable time for preparing the drafts of the various chapters. We would like to place on record our gratitude to Professors Rekha Chowdhary and Surinder Jodhka for contributing drafts for the sections on Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab respectively.

Given the significance and the sensitive nature of the book, it was decided to put the drafts through many rounds of scrutiny by a group of Political Scientists and historians. We decided to request three ‘readers’ – Dr. Ramchandra Guha, Professor Sunil Khilnani and Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan – to read an early draft of this text for accuracy and non-partisan treatment of the subject. We are very grateful that all of them accepted our request and took out time to read and comment on the drafts. Their remarks encouraged us; their suggestions saved us from many errors. We owe a special debt to Ramchandra Guha, since we have liberally drawn upon his book, *India after Gandhi*. Dr. Philip Oldenberg also read parts of the book and made valuable comments. We were fortunate in having a group of eminent scholars, Professors Mrinal Miri, G.P. Deshpande and Gopal Guru, who constituted a special sub-committee of the National Monitoring Committee and read the book at least thrice. We wish to thank Professor Krishna Kumar, Director NCERT and Professor Hari Vasudevan, Chairperson, Advisory Committee for Textbooks, for their support, advise and guidance at different stages of this delicate project. We are also thankful to Professor Yash Pal for his interest in and support to this book.

We are thankful to Lokniti Programme of the CSDS, Delhi which for the last one year provided a home and resource base for the work on this textbook. Various members of the CSDS family who went out of their way to support this work include Sanjeer Alam, Avinash Jha,



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This book is a tribute to the maturity of Indian democracy and is intended as a small contribution to enriching the democratic deliberations in our country. We sincerely hope that this book will be received in this spirit and will be useful not only for students of Political Science but also to a wider group of young citizens of our country.

Ujjwal Kumar Singh
Advisor

Suhas Palshikar and Yogendra Yadav
Chief Advisors



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE, READ...

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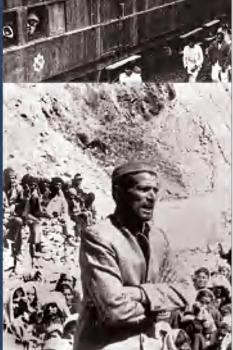
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Hindus and Muslims in Kolkata in 1947 marked the end of communal violence by jointly flying the flags of India and Pakistan from trucks patrolling the city. This rare photograph captured the joy of freedom and the tragedy of partition in India and in Pakistan.

In this chapter...

The first few years in the life of independent India were full of challenges. Some of the most pressing ones concerned national unity and territorial integrity of India. We begin the story of politics in India since Independence by looking at how three of these challenges of nation-building were successfully negotiated in the first decade after 1947.

- Freedom came with Partition, which resulted in large scale violence and displacement and challenged the very idea of a secular India.
- The integration of the princely states into the Indian union needed urgent resolution.
- The internal boundaries of the country needed to be drawn afresh to meet the aspirations of the people who spoke different languages.

In the next two chapters we shall turn to other kinds of challenges faced by the country in this early phase.

CHALLENGES OF NATION BUILDING

Challenges for the new nation

At the hour of midnight on 14-15 August 1947, India attained independence. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India, addressed a special session of the Constituent Assembly that night. This was the famous ‘tryst with destiny’ speech that you are familiar with.

This was the moment Indians had been waiting for. You have read in your history textbooks that there were many voices in our national movement. But there were two goals almost everyone agreed upon: one, that after Independence, we shall run our country through democratic government; and two, that the government will be run for the good of all, particularly the poor and the socially disadvantaged groups. Now that the country was independent, the time had come to realise the promise of freedom.

This was not going to be easy. India was born in very difficult circumstances. Perhaps no other country by then was born in a situation more difficult than that of India in 1947. Freedom came with the partition of the country. The year 1947 was a year of unprecedented violence and trauma of displacement. It was in this situation that independent India started on its journey to achieve several objectives. Yet the turmoil that accompanied independence did not make our leaders lose sight of the multiple challenges that faced the new nation.



Credit: PIB

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru speaking from the Red Fort,
15 August 1947



Hindustan Times, 19 July 1947

Three Challenges

“ Tomorrow we shall be free from the slavery of the British domination. But at midnight India will be partitioned. Tomorrow will thus be a day of rejoicing as well as of mourning.

Mahatma Gandhi
14 August 1947,
Kolkata.

Broadly, independent India faced three kinds of challenges. The first and the immediate challenge was to shape a nation that was united, yet accommodative of the diversity in our society. India was a land of continental size and diversity. Its people spoke different languages and followed different cultures and religions. At that time it was widely believed that a country full of such kinds of diversity could not remain together for long. The partition of the country appeared to prove everyone's worst fears. There were serious questions about the future of India: Would India survive as a unified country? Would it do so by emphasising national unity at the cost of every other objective? Would it mean rejecting all regional and sub-national identities? And there was an urgent question: How was integration of the territory of India to be achieved?

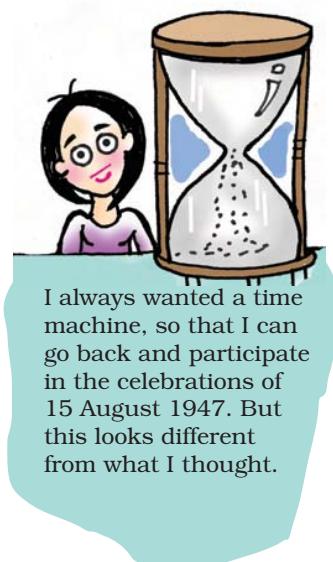
The second challenge was to establish democracy. You have already studied the Indian Constitution. You know that the Constitution granted fundamental rights and extended the right to vote to every citizen. India adopted representative democracy based on the parliamentary form of government. These features ensure that the political competition would take place in a democratic framework.

A democratic constitution is necessary but not sufficient for establishing a democracy. The challenge was to develop democratic practices in accordance with the Constitution.

The third challenge was to ensure the development and well-being of the entire society and not only of some sections. Here again the Constitution clearly laid down the principle of equality and special protection to socially disadvantaged groups and religious and cultural communities. The Constitution also set out in the Directive Principles of State Policy the welfare goals that democratic politics must achieve. The real challenge now was to evolve effective policies for economic development and eradication of poverty.

How did independent India respond to these challenges? To what extent did India succeed in achieving the various objectives set out by the Constitution? This entire book is an attempt to respond to these questions. The book tells the story of politics in India since Independence so as to equip you to develop your own answers to big questions like these. In the first three chapters we look at how the three challenges mentioned above were faced in the early years after Independence.

In this chapter, we focus on the first challenge of nation-building that occupied centre-stage in the years immediately after Independence. We begin by looking at the events that formed the context of Independence. This can help us understand why the issue of national unity and security became a primary challenge at the time of Independence. We shall then see how India chose to shape itself into a nation, united by a shared history and common destiny. This unity had to reflect the aspirations of people across the different regions and deal with the disparities that existed among regions and different sections of people. In the next two chapters we shall turn to the challenge of establishing a democracy and achieving economic development with equality and justice.



These three stamps were issued in 1950 to mark the first Republic Day on 26 January 1950. What do the images on these stamps tell you about the challenges to the new republic? If you were asked to design these stamps in 1950, which images would you have chosen?

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JINNAH'S SPEECH AT STATE DINNER TO LORD & LADY MOUNTBATTEN

KARACHI, Wednesday,
11 AUGUST 1947
IT WILL BE OUR ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN GOODELL AND FRIENDSHIP WITH
BRITAIN AND OUR NEIGHBOURING UNION—HINDUSTAN ALONG WITH OTHER SISTER
STATES SO THAT WE ALL TOGETHER MAY MAKE OUR GREATEST CONTRIBUTION FOR
THE PROSPERITY OF THE WORLD," SAID AED-E-AZAM JINNAH IN PROPOSING A TRIBUTE
TO THE KING AT THE STATE DINNER GIVEN BY HIM IN HONOUR OF THE VISIT OF
LORD MOUNTBATTEN AND LADY MOUNTBATTEN.

The Dawn of Freedom

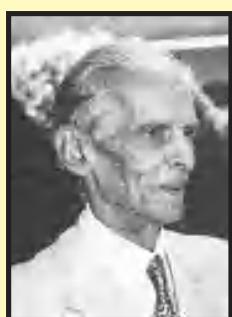
Faiz Ahmed Faiz

This scarred, marred brightness,
this bitten-by-night dawn -
The one that was awaited, surely, this is not that dawn.
This is not the dawn yearning for which
Had we set out, friends, hoping to find
sometime, somewhere
The final destination of stars in the wilderness of the sky.
Somewhere, at least, must be a shore for the languid
waves of the night,
Somewhere at least must anchor the sad
boat of the heart ...

Translation of an extract from Urdu poem Subh-e-azadi



Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) Born in Sialkot; stayed in Pakistan after Partition. A leftist in his political leanings, he opposed the Pakistani regime and was imprisoned. Collections of his poetry include *Naksh-e-Fariyadi*, *Dast-e-Saba* and *Zindan-Nama*. Regarded as one of the greatest poets of South Asia in the twentieth century.



We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community – because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vaishnavas, Khatris, also Bengalees, Madrasis, and so on – will vanish. ... You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Karachi, 11 August 1947.

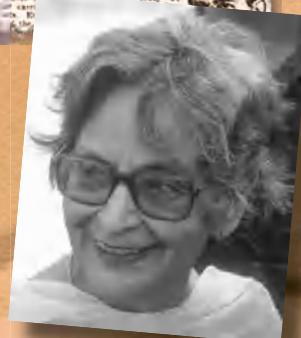


Today I call Waris Shah

Amrita Pritam

Today, I call Waris Shah, "Speak from your grave"
And turn, today, the book of love's next affectionate page
Once, a daughter of Punjab cried and you wrote a wailing saga
Today, a million daughters, cry to you, Waris Shah
Rise! O' narrator of the grieving; rise! look at your Punjab
Today, fields are lined with corpses, and blood fills the Chenab
Someone has mixed poison in the five rivers' flow
Their deadly water is, now, irrigating our lands galore
This fertile land is sprouting, venom from every pore
The sky is turning red from endless cries of gore
The toxic forest wind, screams from inside its wake
Turning each flute's bamboo-shoot, into a deadly snake ...

Translation of an extract from a Punjabi poem "Aaj Akhan Waris Shah Nun"



Amrita Pritam (1919–2005):
A prominent Punjabi poet and fiction writer. Recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Shree and Jnanapeeth Award. After Partition she made Delhi her second home. She was active in writing and editing 'Nagmani' a Punjabi monthly magazine till her last.



We have a Muslim minority who are so large in numbers that they cannot, even if they want, go anywhere else. That is a basic fact about which there can be no argument. Whatever the provocation from Pakistan and whatever the indignities and horrors inflicted on non-Muslims there, we have got to deal with this minority in a civilised manner. We must give them security and the rights of citizens in a democratic State. If we fail to do so, we shall have a festering sore which will eventually poison the whole body politic and probably destroy it.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Letter to Chief Ministers, 15 October 1947.

Partition: displacement and rehabilitation

On 14-15 August 1947, not one but two nation-states came into existence – India and Pakistan. This was a result of ‘partition’, the division of British India into India and Pakistan. The drawing of the border demarcating the territory of each country marked the culmination of political developments that you have read about in the history textbooks. According to the ‘two-nation theory’ advanced by the Muslim League, India consisted of not one but two ‘people’, Hindus and Muslims. That is why it demanded Pakistan, a separate country for the Muslims. The Congress opposed this theory and the demand for Pakistan. But several political developments in 1940s, the political competition between the Congress and the Muslim League and the British role led to the decision for the creation of Pakistan.

Process of Partition

Thus it was decided that what was till then known as ‘India’ would be divided into two countries, ‘India’ and ‘Pakistan’. Such a division was not only very painful, but also very difficult to decide and to implement. It was decided to follow the principle of religious majorities. This basically means that areas where the Muslims were in majority would make up the territory of Pakistan. The rest was to stay with India.

The idea might appear simple, but it presented all kinds of difficulties. First of all, there was no single belt of Muslim majority areas in British India. There were two areas of concentration, one in the west and one in the east. There was no way these two parts could be joined. So it was decided that the new country, Pakistan, will comprise two territories, West and East Pakistan separated by a long expanse of Indian territory. Secondly, not all Muslim majority areas wanted to be in Pakistan. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the undisputed leader of the North Western Frontier Province and known as ‘Frontier Gandhi’, was staunchly opposed to the two-nation theory. Eventually, his voice was simply ignored and the NWFP was made to merge with Pakistan.



Oh, now I understand! What was 'East' Bengal has now become Bangladesh. That is why our Bengal is called 'West' Bengal!

The third problem was that two of the Muslim majority provinces of British India, Punjab and Bengal, had very large areas where the non-Muslims were in majority. Eventually it was decided that these two provinces would be bifurcated according to the religious majority at the district or even lower level. This decision could not be made by the midnight of 14-15 August. It meant that a large number of people did not know on the day of Independence whether they were in India or in Pakistan. The Partition of these two provinces caused the deepest trauma of Partition.

This was related to the fourth and the most intractable of all the problems of partition. This was the problem of ‘minorities’ on both

sides of the border. Lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs in the areas that were now in Pakistan and an equally large number of Muslims on the Indian side of Punjab and Bengal (and to some extent Delhi and surrounding areas) found themselves trapped. They were to discover that they were undesirable aliens in their own home, in the land where they and their ancestors had lived for centuries. As soon as it became clear that the country was going to be partitioned, the minorities on both sides became easy targets of attack. No one had quite anticipated the scale of this problem. No one had any plans for handling this. Initially, the people and political leaders kept hoping that this violence was temporary and would be controlled soon. But very soon the violence went out of control. The minorities on both sides of the border were left with no option except to leave their homes, often at a few hours' notice.

Consequences of Partition

The year 1947 was the year of one of the largest, most abrupt, unplanned and tragic transfer of population that human history has known. There were killings and atrocities on both sides of the border. In the name of religion people of one community ruthlessly killed and maimed people of the other community. Cities like Lahore,



Credit: DPA.

A train full of 'refugees' in 1947.

Hospitality Delayed

Saadat Hasan Manto

Rioters brought the running train to a halt. People belonging to the other community were pulled out and slaughtered with swords and bullets.

The remaining passengers were treated to halwa, fruits and milk.

The chief organiser said, 'Brothers and sisters, news of this train's arrival was delayed. That is why we have not been able to entertain you lavishly – the way we wanted to.'

Source: English translation of Urdu short story Kasre-Nafsi

Amritsar and Kolkata became divided into 'communal zones'. Muslims would avoid going into an area where mainly Hindus or Sikhs lived; similarly the Hindus and Sikhs stayed away from areas of Muslim predominance.

Forced to abandon their homes and move across borders, people went through immense sufferings. Minorities on both sides of the border fled their home and often secured temporary shelter in 'refugee camps'. They often found unhelpful local administration and police in what was till recently their own country. They travelled to the other side of the new border by all sorts of means, often by foot. Even during this journey they were often attacked, killed or raped. Thousands of women were abducted on both sides of the border. They were made to convert to the religion of the

abductor and were forced into marriage. In many cases women were killed by their own family members to preserve the 'family honour'. Many children were separated from their parents. Those who did manage to cross the border found that they had no home. For lakhs of these 'refugees' the country's freedom meant life in 'refugee camps', for months and sometimes for years.

Writers, poets and film-makers in India and Pakistan have expressed the ruthlessness of the killings and the suffering of displacement and violence in their novels, short-stories, poems and films. While recounting the trauma of Partition, they have often used the phrase that the survivors themselves used to describe Partition — as a 'division of hearts'.

The Partition was not merely a division of properties, liabilities

Credit: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library



Gandhi in Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) in 1947.

and assets, or a political division of the country and the administrative apparatus. What also got divided were the financial assets, and things like tables, chairs, typewriters, paper-clips, books and also musical instruments of the police band! The employees of the government and the railways were also 'divided'. Above all, it was a violent separation of communities who had hitherto lived together as neighbours. It is estimated that the Partition forced about 80 lakh people to migrate across the new border. Between five to ten lakh people were killed in Partition related violence.

Beyond the administrative concerns and financial strains, however, the Partition posed another deeper issue. The leaders of the Indian national struggle did not believe in the two-nation theory. And yet, partition on religious basis had taken place. Did that make India a Hindu nation automatically? Even after large scale migration of Muslims to the newly created Pakistan, the Muslim population in India accounted for 12 per cent of the total population in 1951. So, how would the government of India treat its Muslim citizens and other religious minorities (Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Jews)? The Partition had already created severe conflict between the two communities.

There were competing political interests behind these conflicts. The Muslim League was formed to protect the interests of the Muslims in colonial India. It was in the forefront of the demand for a separate Muslim nation. Similarly, there were organisations, which were trying to organise the Hindus in order to turn India into a Hindu nation. But most leaders of the national movement believed that India must treat persons of all religions

Let's watch a Film

GARAM HAWA



Salim Mirza, a shoe manufacturer in Agra, increasingly finds himself a stranger amid the people he has lived with all his life. He feels lost in the emerging reality after Partition. His business suffers and a refugee from the other side of partitioned India occupies his ancestral dwelling. His daughter too has a tragic end. He believes that things would soon be normal again.

But many of his family members decide to move to Pakistan. Salim is torn between an impulse to move out to Pakistan and an urge to stay back. A decisive moment comes when Salim witnesses a students' procession demanding fair treatment from the government. His son Sikandar has joined the procession. Can you imagine what Mirza Salim finally did? What do you think you would have done in these circumstances?

Year: 1973
Director: M.S. Sathyu
Screenplay: Kaifi Azmi
Actors: Balraj Sahani, Jalal Aga, Farouque Sheikh, Gita Siddharth

Mahatma Gandhi's sacrifice

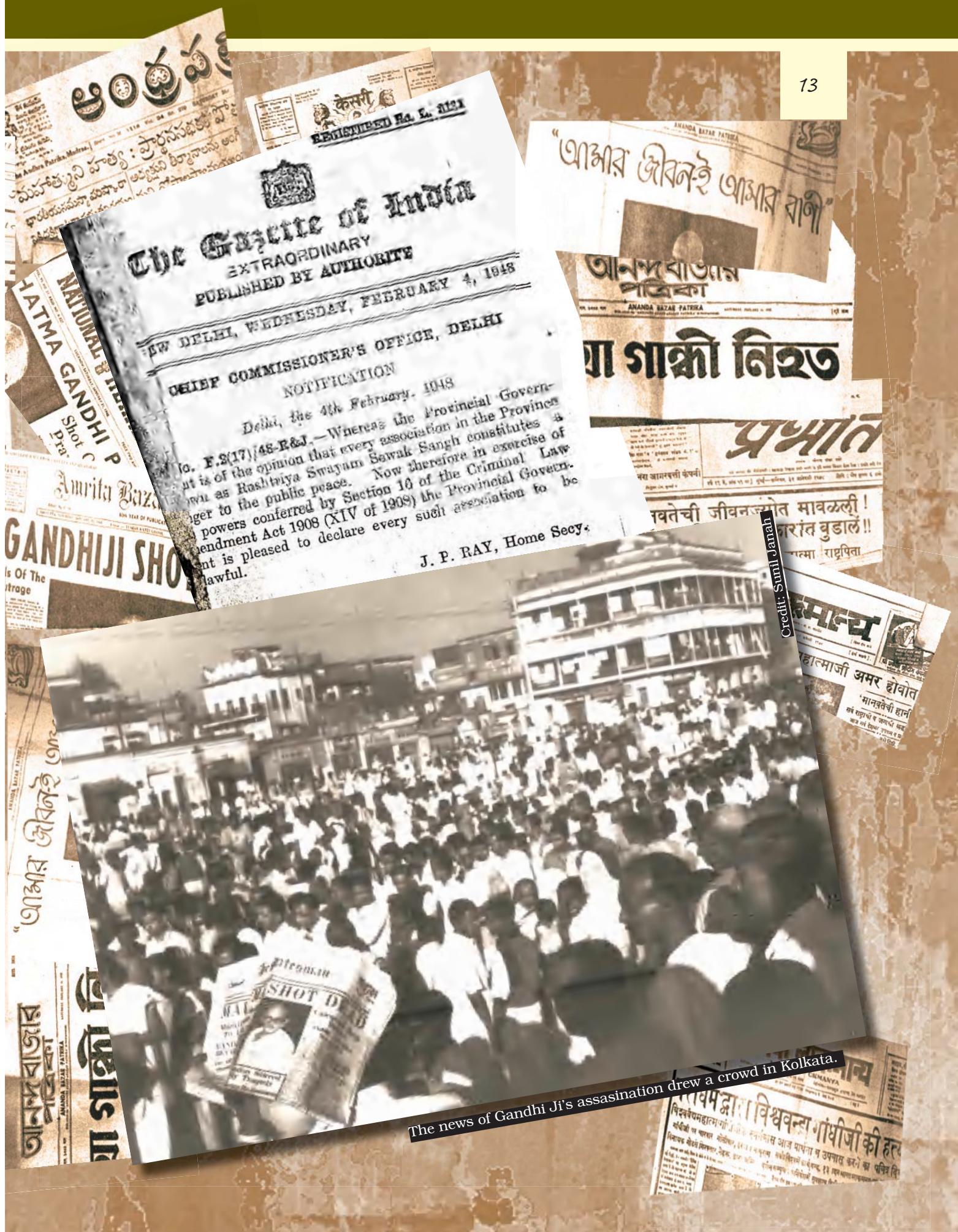
On the 15th August 1947 Mahatma Gandhi did not participate in any of the Independence Day celebrations. He was in Kolkata in the areas which were torn by gruesome riots between Hindus and Muslims. He was saddened by the communal violence and disheartened that the principles of ahimsa (non-violence) and satyagraha (active but non-violent resistance) that he had lived and worked for, had failed to bind the people in troubled times. Gandhiji went on to persuade the Hindus and Muslims to give up violence. His presence in Kolkata greatly improved the situation, and the coming of independence was celebrated in a spirit of communal harmony, with joyous dancing in the streets. Gandhiji's prayer meetings attracted large crowds. But this was short lived as riots between Hindus and Muslims erupted once again and Gandhiji had to resort to a fast to bring peace.

Next month Gandhiji moved to Delhi where large scale violence had erupted. He was deeply concerned about ensuring that Muslims should be allowed to stay in India with dignity, as equal citizens. He was also concerned about the relations between India and Pakistan. He was unhappy with what he saw as the Indian government's decision not to honour its financial commitments to Pakistan. With all this in mind he undertook what turned out to be his last fast in January 1948. As in Kolkata, his fast had a dramatic effect in Delhi. Communal tension and violence reduced. Muslims of Delhi and surrounding areas could safely return to their homes. The Government of India agreed to give Pakistan its dues.

Gandhiji's actions were however not liked by all. Extremists in both the communities blamed him for their conditions. He was particularly disliked by those who wanted Hindus to take revenge or who wanted India to become a country for the Hindus, just as Pakistan was for Muslims. They accused Gandhiji of acting in the interests of the Muslims and Pakistan. Gandhiji thought that these people were misguided. He was convinced that any attempt to make India into a country only for the Hindus would destroy India. His steadfast pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity provoked Hindu extremists so much that they made several attempts to assassinate Gandhiji. Despite this he refused to accept armed protection and continued to meet everyone during his prayer meetings. Finally, on 30 January 1948, one such extremist, Nathuram Vinayak Godse, walked up to Gandhiji during his evening prayer in Delhi and fired three bullets at him, killing him instantly. Thus ended a life long struggle for truth, non-violence, justice and tolerance.

Gandhiji's death had an almost magical effect on the communal situation in the country. Partition-related anger and violence suddenly subsided. The Government of India cracked down on organisations that were spreading communal hatred. Organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh were banned for some time. Communal politics began to lose its appeal.





equally and that India should not be a country that gave superior status to adherents of one faith and inferior to those who practiced another religion. All citizens would be equal irrespective of their religious affiliation. Being religious or a believer would not be a test of citizenship. They cherished therefore the ideal of a secular nation. This ideal was enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

Shweta noticed that her Nana (maternal grandfather) would get very quiet whenever anyone mentioned Pakistan. One day she decided to ask him about it. Her Nana told her about how he moved from Lahore to Ludhiana during Partition. Both his parents were killed. Even he would not have survived, but a neighbouring Muslim family gave him shelter and kept him in hiding for several days. They helped him find some relatives and that is how he managed to cross the border and start a new life.

Have you heard a similar story? Ask your grandparents or anyone of that generation about their memories of Independence Day, about the celebration, about the trauma of Partition, about the expectations they had from independence.

Write down at least two of these stories.

Let's re-search

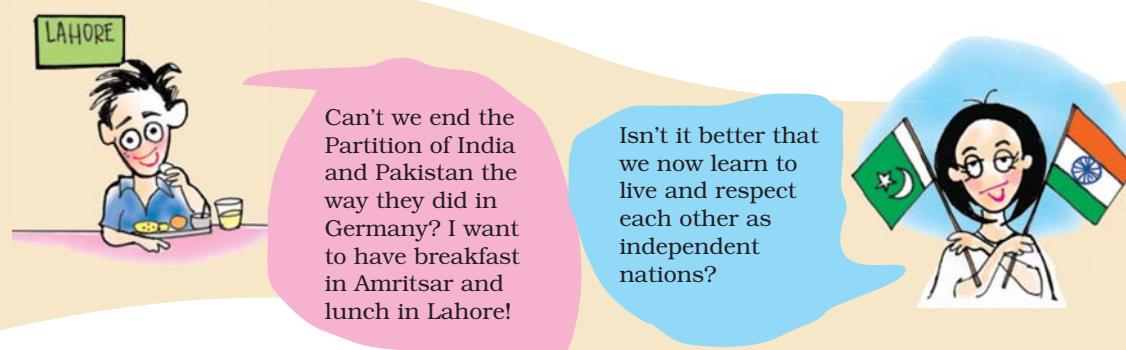
Integration of Princely States

British India was divided into what were called the British Indian Provinces and the Princely States. The British Indian Provinces were directly under the control of the British government. On the other hand, several large and small states ruled by princes, called the Princely States, enjoyed some form of control over their internal affairs as long as they accepted British supremacy. This was called paramountcy or suzerainty of the British crown. Princely States covered one-third of the land area of the British Indian Empire and one out of four Indians lived under princely rule.

The problem

Just before Independence it was announced by the British that with the end of their rule over India, paramountcy of the British crown over Princely States would also lapse. This meant that all these states, as many as 565 in all, would become legally independent. The British government took the view that all these states were free to join either India or Pakistan or remain independent if they so wished. This decision was left not to the people but to the princely rulers of these states. This was a very serious problem and could threaten the very existence of a united India.

The problems started very soon. First of all, the ruler of Travancore announced that the state had decided on Independence. The Nizam



of Hyderabad made a similar announcement the next day. Rulers like the Nawab of Bhopal were averse to joining the Constituent Assembly. This response of the rulers of the Princely States meant that after Independence there was a very real possibility that India would get further divided into a number of small countries. The prospects of democracy for the people in these states also looked bleak. This was a strange situation, since the Indian Independence was aimed at unity, self-determination as well as democracy. In most of these princely states, governments were run in a non-democratic manner and the rulers were unwilling to give democratic rights to their populations.

“We are at a momentous stage in the history of India. By common endeavour, we can raise the country to new greatness, while lack of unity will expose us to unexpected calamities. I hope the Indian States will realise fully that if we do not cooperate and work together in the general interest, anarchy and chaos will overwhelm us all, great and small, and lead us to total ruin...

”

Sardar Patel

Letter to Princely rulers,
1947.

Government's approach

The interim government took a firm stance against the possible division of India into small principalities of different sizes. The Muslim League opposed the Indian National Congress and took the view that the States should be free to adopt any course they liked. Sardar Patel was India's Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Minister during the crucial period immediately following Independence. He played a historic role in negotiating with the rulers of princely states firmly but diplomatically and bringing most of them into the Indian Union. It may look easy now. But it was a very complicated task which required skilful persuasion. For instance, there were 26 small states in today's Orissa. Saurashtra region of Gujarat had 14 big states, 119 small states and numerous other different administrations.

The government's approach was guided by three considerations. Firstly, the people of most of the princely states clearly wanted to become part of the Indian union. Secondly, the government was prepared to be flexible in giving autonomy to some regions. The idea was to accommodate plurality and adopt a flexible approach in dealing with the demands of the regions. Thirdly, in the backdrop of Partition which brought into focus the contest over demarcation of territory, the integration and consolidation of the territorial boundaries of the nation had assumed supreme importance.

Before 15 August 1947, peaceful negotiations had brought almost all states whose territories were contiguous to the new boundaries of India, into the Indian Union. The rulers of most of the states signed a document called the 'Instrument of Accession' which meant that their state agreed to become a part of the Union of India. Accession of the Princely States of Junagadh, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Manipur proved more difficult than the rest. The issue of Junagarh was resolved after a plebiscite confirmed people's desire to join India. You will read about Kashmir in Chapter Eight. Here, let us look at the cases of Hyderabad and Manipur.



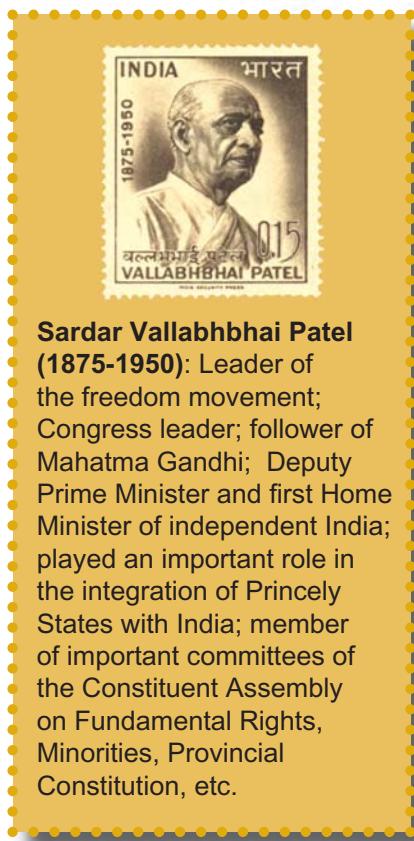
Credit: PIB

Sardar Patel with the Nizam of Hyderabad

Hyderabad

Hyderabad, the largest of the Princely States was surrounded entirely by Indian territory. Some parts of the old Hyderabad state are today parts of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Its ruler carried the title, 'Nizam', and he was one of the world's richest men. The Nizam wanted an independent status for Hyderabad. He entered into what was called the Standstill Agreement with India in November 1947 for a year while negotiations with the Indian government were going on.

In the meantime, a movement of the people of Hyderabad State against the Nizam's rule gathered force. The peasantry in the Telangana region in particular, was the victim of Nizam's oppressive rule and rose against him. Women who had seen the worst of this oppression joined the movement in large numbers. Hyderabad town was the nerve centre of this movement. The Communists and the Hyderabad Congress were in the forefront of the movement. The Nizam responded by unleashing a para-military force known as the Razakars on the people. The atrocities and communal nature of the Razakars knew no bounds. They



Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950): Leader of the freedom movement; Congress leader; follower of Mahatma Gandhi; Deputy Prime Minister and first Home Minister of independent India; played an important role in the integration of Princely States with India; member of important committees of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights, Minorities, Provincial Constitution, etc.



I wonder what happened to all those hundreds of kings, queens, princes and princesses. How did they live their lives after becoming just ordinary citizens?

murdered, maimed, raped and looted, targeting particularly the non-Muslims. The central government had to order the army to tackle the situation. In September 1948, Indian army moved in to control the Nizam's forces. After a few days of intermittent fighting, the Nizam surrendered. This led to Hyderabad's accession to India.

Manipur

A few days before Independence, the Maharaja of Manipur, Bodhachandra Singh, signed the Instrument of Accession with the Indian government on the assurance that the internal autonomy of Manipur would be maintained. Under the pressure of public opinion, the Maharaja held elections in Manipur in June 1948 and the state became a constitutional monarchy. Thus Manipur was the first part of India to hold an election based on universal adult franchise.

In the Legislative Assembly of Manipur there were sharp differences over the question of merger of Manipur with India. While the state Congress wanted the merger, other political parties were opposed to this. The Government of India succeeded in pressurising the Maharaja into signing a Merger Agreement in September 1949, without consulting the popularly elected Legislative Assembly of Manipur. This caused a lot of anger and resentment in Manipur, the repercussions of which are still being felt.



This cartoon comments on the relation between the people and the rulers in the Princely States, and also on Patel's approach to resolving this issue.

Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India

Reorganisation of States

The process of nation-building did not come to an end with Partition and integration of Princely States. Now the challenge was to draw the internal boundaries of the Indian states. This was not just a matter of administrative divisions. The boundaries had to be drawn in a way so that the linguistic and cultural plurality of the country could be reflected without affecting the unity of the nation.

During colonial rule, the state boundaries were drawn either on administrative convenience or simply coincided with the territories annexed by the British government or the territories ruled by the princely powers.

Our national movement had rejected these divisions as artificial and had promised the linguistic principle as the basis of formation of states. In fact after the Nagpur session of Congress in 1920 the principle was recognised as the basis of the reorganisation of the Indian National Congress party itself. Many Provincial Congress Committees were created by linguistic zones, which did not follow the administrative divisions of British India.

Things changed after Independence and Partition. Our leaders felt that carving out states on the basis of language might lead to disruption and disintegration. It was also felt that this would draw attention away from other social and economic challenges that the country faced. The central leadership decided to postpone matters. The need for postponement was also felt because the fate of the Princely States had not been decided. Also, the memory of Partition was still fresh.

This decision of the national leadership was challenged by the local leaders and the people. Protests began in the Telugu speaking areas of the old Madras province, which included present day Tamil Nadu, parts of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka. The Vishalandhra movement (as the movement for a separate Andhra was called) demanded that the Telugu speaking areas should be separated from the Madras province of which they were a part and be made into a separate Andhra province. Nearly all the political forces in the Andhra region were in favour of linguistic reorganisation of the then Madras province.

The movement gathered momentum as a result of the Central government's vacillation. Potti Sriramulu, a Congress leader and a veteran Gandhian, went on an indefinite fast that led to his death after 56 days. This caused great unrest and resulted in violent outbursts in Andhra region. People in large numbers took to the streets. Many were injured or lost their lives in police firing. In Madras, several legislators resigned their seats in protest. Finally, the Prime Minister announced the formation of a separate Andhra state in December 1952.

“...if linguistic provinces are formed, it will also give a fillip to the regional languages. It would be absurd to make Hindustani the medium of instruction in all the regions and it is still more absurd to use English for this purpose.”

Mahatma Gandhi
January 1948



Note: This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.

Read the map and answer the following questions:

1. Name the original state from which the following states were carved out:
Gujarat Haryana
Meghalaya Chhattisgarh
 2. Name two states that were affected by the Partition of the country.
 3. Name two states today that were once a Union Territory.



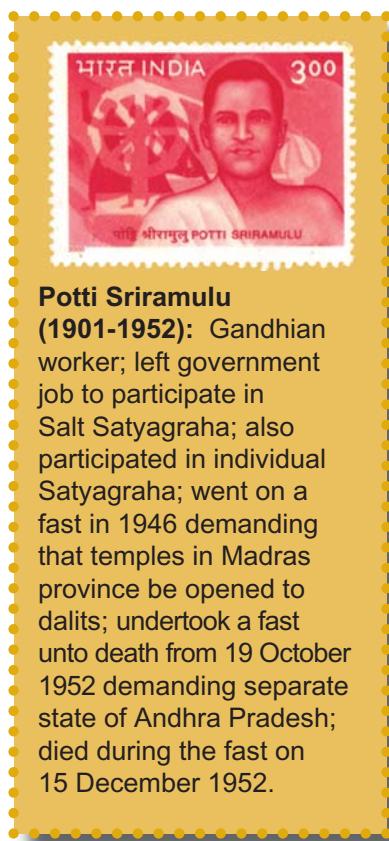
Credit: Shankar

"Struggle for Survival" (Published in 1953) captures contemporary impression of the demand for linguistic states

The formation of Andhra Pradesh spurred the struggle for making of other states on linguistic lines in other parts of the country. These struggles forced the Central Government into appointing a States Reorganisation Commission in 1953 to look into the question of redrawing of the boundaries of states. The Commission in its report accepted that the boundaries of the state should reflect the boundaries of different languages. On the basis of its report the States Reorganisation Act was passed in 1956. This led to the creation of 14 states and six union territories.



Now, isn't this very interesting? Nehru and other leaders were very popular, and yet the people did not hesitate to agitate for linguistic states against the wishes of the leaders!

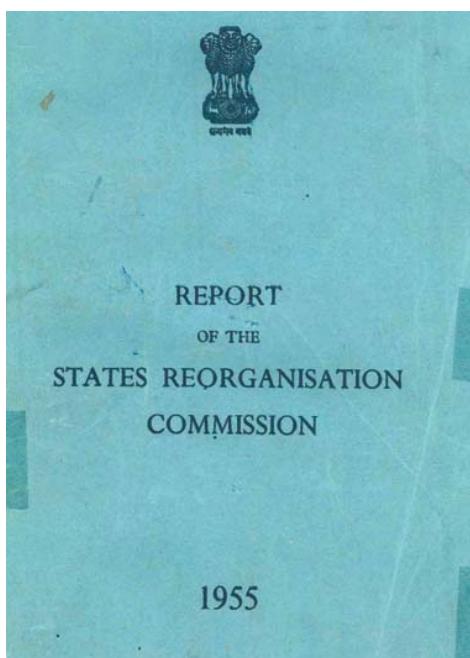


Potti Sriramulu
(1901-1952): Gandhian worker; left government job to participate in Salt Satyagraha; also participated in individual Satyagraha; went on a fast in 1946 demanding that temples in Madras province be opened to dalits; undertook a fast unto death from 19 October 1952 demanding separate state of Andhra Pradesh; died during the fast on 15 December 1952.



Credit: Shankar

"Coaxing the Genie back" (Published in 1956) asked if the State Reorganisation Commission could contain the genie of linguism.



One of the most important concerns in the early years was that demands for separate states would endanger the unity of the country. It was felt that linguistic states may foster separatism and create pressures on the newly founded nation. But the leadership, under popular pressure, finally made a choice in favour of linguistic states. It was hoped that if we accept the regional and linguistic claims of all regions, the threat of division and separatism would be reduced. Besides, the accommodation of regional demands and the formation of linguistic states were also seen as more democratic.

Now it is more than fifty years since the formation of linguistic states. We can say that linguistic states and the movements for the formation of these states changed the nature of democratic politics and leadership in some basic ways. The path to politics and power was now open to people other than the small English speaking elite. Linguistic reorganisation also gave some uniform basis to the drawing of state boundaries. It did not lead

to disintegration of the country as many had feared earlier. On the contrary it strengthened national unity.

Above all, the linguistic states underlined the acceptance of the principle of diversity. When we say that India adopted democracy, it does not simply mean that India embraced a democratic constitution, nor does it merely mean that India adopted the format of elections. The choice was larger than that. It was a choice in favour of recognising and accepting the existence of differences which could at times be oppositional. Democracy, in other words, was associated with plurality of ideas and ways of life. Much of the politics in the later period was to take place within this framework.

Fast Forward Creation of new states



The acceptance of the principle of linguistic states did not mean, however, that all states immediately became linguistic states. There was an experiment of 'bilingual' Bombay state, consisting of Gujarati and Marathi speaking people. After a popular agitation, the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat were created in 1960.

In Punjab also, there were two linguistic groups: Hindi speaking and Punjabi speaking. The Punjabi speaking people demanded a separate state. But it was not granted with other states in 1956. Statehood for Punjab came ten years later, in 1966, when the territories of today's Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were separated from the larger Punjab state.

Another major reorganisation of states took place in the north east in 1972. Meghalaya was carved out of Assam in 1972. Manipur and Tripura too emerged as separate states in the same year. The states of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram came into being in 1987. Nagaland had become a state much earlier in 1963.

Language did not, however, remain the sole basis of organisation of states. In later years sub-regions raised demands for separate states on the basis of a separate regional culture or complaints of regional imbalance in development. Three such states, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand, were created in 2000. The story of reorganisation has not come to an end. There are many regions in the country where there are movements demanding separate and smaller states. These include Telangana in Andhra Pradesh, Vidarbha in Maharashtra, Harit Pradesh in the western region of Uttar Pradesh and the northern region of West Bengal.



The US has one-fourth
of our population but 51
states. Why can't India
have more than 100
states?

EXERCISES

1. Which among the following statements about the Partition is incorrect?

(a) Partition of India was the outcome of the “two-nation theory.”
(b) Punjab and Bengal were the two provinces divided on the basis of religion.
(c) East Pakistan and West Pakistan were not contiguous.
(d) The scheme of Partition included a plan for transfer of population across the border.

2. Match the principles with the instances:

(a) Mapping of boundaries on religious grounds	i. Pakistan and Bangladesh
(b) Mapping of boundaries on grounds of different languages	ii. India and Pakistan
(c) Demarcating boundaries within a country by geographical zones	iii. Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh
(d) Demarcating boundaries within a country on administrative and political grounds	iv. Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand

3. Take a current political map of India (showing outlines of states) and mark the location of the following Princely States.

(a) Junagadh	(b) Manipur
(c) Mysore	(d) Gwalior

4. Here are two opinions –

Bismay: “The merger with the Indian State was an extension of democracy to the people of the Princely States.”

Inderpreet: “I am not so sure, there was force being used. Democracy comes by creating consensus.”

What is your own opinion in the light of accession of Princely States and the responses of the people in these parts?

5. Read the following very different statements made in August 1947 –

“Today you have worn on your heads a crown of thorns. The seat of power is a nasty thing. You have to remain ever wakeful on that seat.... you have to be more humble and forbearing...now there will be no end to your being tested.” — M.K GANDHI

“...India will awake to a life of freedom....we step out from the old to the new...we end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity...” — JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Spell out the agenda of nation building that flows from these two statements. Which one appeals more to you and why?

6. What are the reasons being used by Nehru for keeping India secular? Do you think these reasons were only ethical and sentimental? Or were there some prudential reasons as well?
7. Bring out two major differences between the challenge of nation building for eastern and western regions of the country at the time of Independence.
8. What was the task of the States Reorganisation Commission? What was its most salient recommendation?
9. It is said that the nation is to a large extent an “imagined community” held together by common beliefs, history, political aspirations and imaginations. Identify the features that make India a nation.

10. Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

“In the history of nation-building only the Soviet experiment bears comparison with the Indian. There too, a sense of unity had to be forged between many diverse ethnic groups, religious, linguistic communities and social classes. The scale – geographic as well as demographic – was comparably massive. The raw material the state had to work with was equally unpropitious: a people divided by faith and driven by debt and disease.” — RAMACHANDRA GUHA

- (a) List the commonalities that the author mentions between India and Soviet Union and give one example for each of these from India.
- (b) The author does not talk about dissimilarities between the two experiments. Can you mention two dissimilarities?
- (c) In retrospect which of these two experiments worked better and why?

LET US DO IT TOGETHER

- Read a novel/ story on Partition by an Indian and a Pakistani/ Bangladeshi writer. What are the commonalities of the experience across the border?
- Collect all the stories from the ‘Let’s Re-search’ suggestion in this chapter. Prepare a wallpaper that highlights the common experiences and has stories on the unique experiences.



Credit: Shankar

This famous sketch by Shankar appeared on the cover of his collection – *Don't Spare Me, Shankar*. The original sketch was drawn in the context of India's China policy. But this cartoon captures the dual role of the Congress during the era of one-party dominance.

In this chapter...

The challenge of nation-building, covered in the last chapter, was accompanied by the challenge of instituting democratic politics. Thus, electoral competition among political parties began immediately after Independence. In this chapter, we look at the first decade of electoral politics in order to understand

- the establishment of a system of free and fair elections;
- the domination of the Congress party in the years immediately after Independence; and
- the emergence of opposition parties and their policies.

ERA OF ONE-PARTY DOMINANCE

Challenge of building democracy

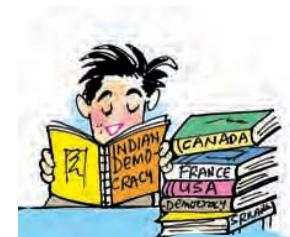
You now have an idea of the difficult circumstances in which independent India was born. You have read about the serious challenge of nation-building that confronted the country right in the beginning. Faced with such serious challenges, leaders in many other countries of the world decided that their country could not afford to have democracy. They said that national unity was their first priority and that democracy will introduce differences and conflicts. Therefore many of the countries that gained freedom from colonialism experienced non-democratic rule. It took various forms: nominal democracy but effective control by one leader, one party rule or direct army rule. Non-democratic regimes always started with a promise of restoring democracy very soon. But once they established themselves, it was very difficult to dislodge them.

The conditions in India were not very different. But the leaders of the newly independent India decided to take the more difficult path. Any other path would have been surprising, for our freedom struggle was deeply committed to the idea of democracy. Our leaders were conscious of the critical role of politics in any democracy. They did not see politics as a problem; they saw it as a way of solving the problems. Every society needs to decide how it will govern and regulate itself. There are always different policy alternatives to choose from. There are different groups with different and conflicting aspirations. How do we resolve these differences? Democratic politics is an answer to this question. While competition and power are the two most visible things about politics, the purpose of political activity is and should be deciding and pursuing public interest. This is the route our leaders decided to take.

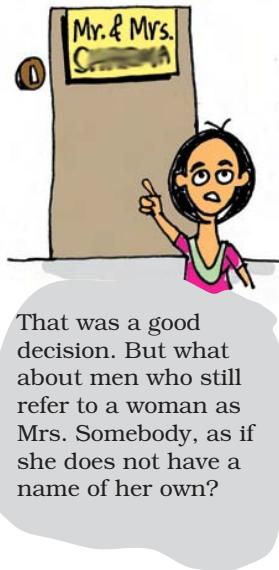
Last year you studied how our Constitution was drafted. You would remember that the Constitution was ready and signed on 26 November 1949 and it came into effect on 26 January 1950. At that time the country was being ruled by an interim government. It was now necessary to install the first democratically elected government of the country. The Constitution had laid down the rules, now the machine had to be put in place. Initially it was thought that this was only a matter of a few months. The Election Commission of India was set up in January 1950. Sukumar Sen became the first Chief Election Commissioner. The country's first general elections were expected sometime in 1950 itself.

“ In India,...
...hero-worship, plays a part
in its politics unequalled
in magnitude by the part
it plays in the politics of
any other country....But in
politics, ...hero-worship is a
sure road to degradation and
eventual dictatorship.”

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
Speech in Constituent Assembly
25 November 1949



What's so special
about our being a
democracy? Sooner
or later every country
has become a
democracy, isn't it?



But the Election Commission discovered that it was not going to be easy to hold a free and fair election in a country of India's size. Holding an election required delimitation or drawing the boundaries of the electoral constituencies. It also required preparing the electoral rolls, or the list of all the citizens eligible to vote. Both these tasks took a lot of time. When the first draft of the rolls was published, it was discovered that the names of nearly 40 lakh women were not recorded in the list. They were simply listed as "wife of ..." or "daughter of ...". The Election Commission refused to accept these entries and ordered a revision if possible and deletion if necessary. Preparing for the first general election was a mammoth exercise. No election on this scale had ever been conducted in the world before. At that time there were 17 crore eligible voters, who had to elect about 3,200 MLAs and 489 Members of Lok Sabha. Only 15 per cent of these eligible voters were literate. Therefore the Election Commission had to think of some special method of voting. The Election Commission trained over 3 lakh officers and polling staff to conduct the elections.

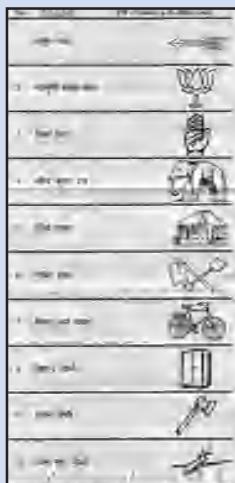
It was not just the size of the country and the electorate that made this election unusual. The first general election was also the first big test of democracy in a poor and illiterate country. Till then democracy had existed only in the prosperous countries, mainly in Europe and North America, where nearly everyone was literate. By that time many countries in Europe had not given voting rights to all women. In this context India's experiment with universal adult franchise

Credit: Shankar



A cartoonist's impression of the election committee formed by the Congress to choose party candidates in 1952. On the committee, besides Nehru: Morarji Desai, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Dr B.C. Roy, Kamaraj Nadar, Rajagopalachari, Jagjivan Ram, Maulana Azad, D.P. Mishra, P.D. Tandon and Govind Ballabh Pant.

Changing methods of voting



A sample of the ballot paper used from the third to the thirteenth general elections to Lok Sabha

These days we use an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) to record voters' preferences. But that is not how we started. In the first general election, it was decided to place inside each polling booth a box for each candidate with the election symbol of that candidate. Each voter was given a blank ballot paper which they had to drop into the box of the candidate they wanted to vote for. About 20 lakh steel boxes were used for this purpose.

A presiding officer from Punjab described how he prepared the ballot boxes—"Each box had to have its candidate's symbol, both inside and outside it, and outside on either side, had to be displayed the name of the candidate in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi along with the number of the constituency, the polling station and the polling booth. The paper seal with the numerical description of the candidate, signed by the presiding officer, had to be inserted in the token frame and its

window closed by its door which had to be fixed in its place at the other end by means of a wire. All this had to be done on the day previous to the one fixed for polling. To fix symbols and labels the boxes had first to be rubbed with sandpaper or a piece of brick. I found that it took about five hours for six persons, including my two daughters, to complete this work. All this was done at my house."

After the first two elections this method was changed. Now the ballot paper carried the names and symbols of all the candidates and the voter was required to put a stamp on the name of the candidate they wanted to vote for. This method worked for nearly forty years. Towards the end of 1990s the Election Commission started using the EVM. By 2004 the entire country had shifted to the EVM.



Electronic Voting Machine

Ask the elders in your family and neighbourhood about their experience of participating in elections.

- Did anyone vote in the first or second general election? Who did they vote for and why?
- Is there someone who has used all the three methods of voting? Which one did they prefer?
- In which ways do they find the elections of those days different from the present ones?

Let's re-search



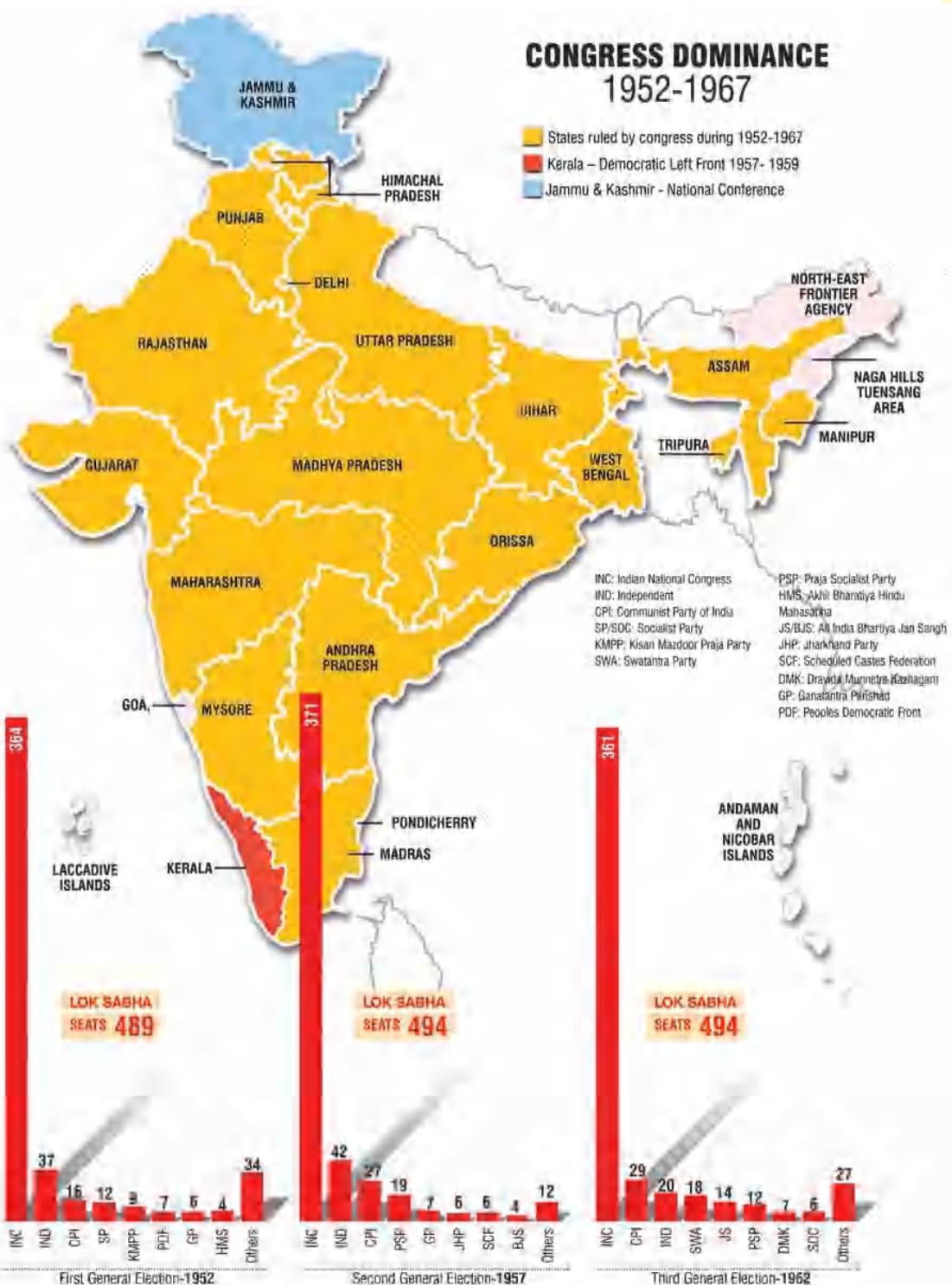
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958): original name — Abul Kalam Mohiyuddin Ahmed; scholar of Islam; freedom fighter and Congress leader; proponent of Hindu-Muslim unity; opposed to Partition; member of Constituent Assembly; Education Minister in the first cabinet of free India.

appeared very bold and risky. An Indian editor called it “the biggest gamble in history”. Organiser, a magazine, wrote that Jawaharlal Nehru “would live to confess the failure of universal adult franchise in India”. A British member of the Indian Civil Service claimed that “a future and more enlightened age will view with astonishment the absurd farce of recording the votes of millions of illiterate people”.

The elections had to be postponed twice and finally held from October 1951 to February 1952. But this election is referred to as the 1952 election since most parts of the country voted in January 1952. It took six months for the campaigning, polling and counting to be completed. Elections were competitive — there were on an average more than four candidates for each seat. The level of participation was encouraging — more than half the eligible voters turned out to vote on the day of elections. When the results were declared these were accepted as fair even by the losers. The Indian experiment had proved the critics wrong. The Times of India held that the polls have “confounded all those sceptics who thought the introduction of adult franchise too risky an experiment in this country”. The Hindustan Times claimed that “there is universal agreement that the Indian people have conducted themselves admirably in the largest experiment in democratic elections in the history of the world”. Observers outside India were equally impressed. India’s general election of 1952 became a landmark in the history of democracy all over the world. It was no longer possible to argue that democratic elections could not be held in conditions of poverty or lack of education. It proved that democracy could be practiced anywhere in the world.

Congress dominance in the first three general elections

The results of the first general election did not surprise anyone. The Indian National Congress was expected to win this election. The Congress party, as it was popularly known, had inherited the legacy of the national movement. It was the only party then to have an organisation spread all over the country. And finally, in Jawaharlal Nehru, the party had the most popular and charismatic leader in Indian politics. He led the Congress campaign and toured through the country. When the final results were declared, the extent of the victory of the Congress did surprise many. The party won 364 of the 489 seats in the first Lok Sabha and finished way ahead of any other challenger. The Communist Party of India that came next in terms of seats won only 16 seats. The state elections were held with the Lok



Note: This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.



Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (1889-1964): A Gandhian and Freedom fighter; belonged to the royal family of Kapurthala; inherited Christian religion from her mother; member of Constituent Assembly; Minister for Health in independent India's first ministry; continued as Health Minister till 1957.

Sabha elections. The Congress scored big victory in those elections as well. It won a majority of seats in all the states except Travancore-Cochin (part of today's Kerala), Madras and Orissa. Finally even in these states the Congress formed the government. So the party ruled all over the country at the national and the state level. As expected, Jawaharlal Nehru became the Prime Minister after the first general election.

A look at the electoral map on the last page would give you a sense of the dominance of the Congress during the period 1952-1962. In the second and the third general elections, held in 1957 and 1962 respectively, the Congress maintained the same position in the Lok Sabha by winning three-fourth of the seats. None of the opposition parties could win even one-tenth of the number of seats won by the Congress. In the state assembly elections, the Congress did not get majority in a few cases. The most significant of these cases was in Kerala in 1957

when a coalition led by the CPI formed the government. Apart from exceptions like this, the Congress controlled the national and all the state governments.

The extent of the victory of the Congress was artificially boosted by our electoral system. The Congress won three out of every four seats but it did not get even half of the votes. In 1952, for example, the Congress obtained 45 per cent of the total votes. But it managed to win 74 per cent of the seats. The Socialist Party, the second largest party in terms of votes, secured more than 10 per cent of the votes all over the country. But it could not even win three per cent of the seats. How did this happen? For this you need to recall the discussion about the first-past-the-post method in your textbook 'Constitution at Work' last year.

In this system of election, that has been adopted in our country, the party that gets more votes than others tends to get much more than its proportional share. That is exactly what worked in favour of the Congress. If we add up the votes of all the non-Congress candidates it was more than the votes of the Congress. But the non-Congress votes were divided between different rival parties and candidates. So the Congress was still way ahead of the opposition and managed to win.



Socialist Party

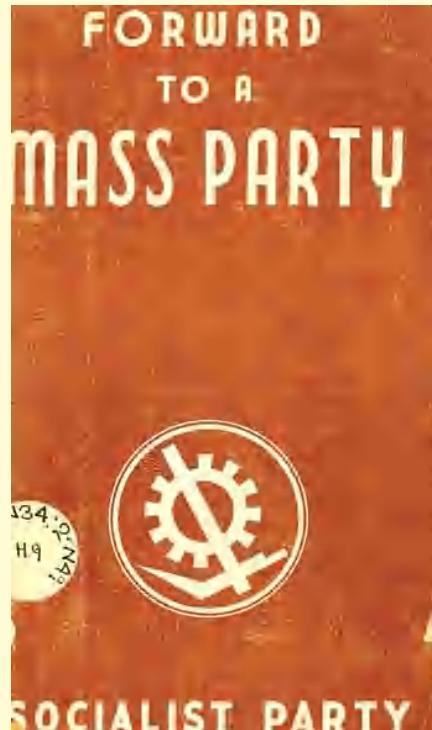
The origins of the Socialist Party can be traced back to the mass movement stage of the Indian National Congress in the pre-independence era. The Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was formed within the Congress in 1934 by a group of young leaders who wanted a more radical and egalitarian Congress. In 1948, the Congress amended its constitution to prevent its members from having a dual party membership. This forced the Socialists to form a separate Socialist Party in 1948. The Party's electoral performance caused much disappointment to its supporters. Although the Party had presence in most of the states of India, it could achieve electoral success only in a few pockets.



Acharya Narendra Dev (1889-1956): Freedom fighter and founding President of the Congress Socialist Party; jailed several times during the freedom movement; active in peasants' movement; a scholar of Buddhism; after independence led the Socialist Party and later the Praja Socialist Party.

The socialists believed in the ideology of democratic socialism which distinguished them both from the Congress as well as from the Communists. They criticised the Congress for favouring capitalists and landlords and for ignoring the workers and the peasants. But the socialists faced a dilemma when in 1955 the Congress declared its goal to be the socialist pattern of society. Thus it became difficult for the socialists to present themselves as an effective alternative to the Congress. Some of them, led by Rammanohar Lohia, increased their distance from and criticism of the Congress party. Some others like Asoka Mehta advocated a limited cooperation with the Congress.

The Socialist Party went through many splits and reunions leading to the formation of many socialist parties. These included the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Praja Socialist Party and Samyukta Socialist Party. Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta, Acharya Narendra Dev, Rammanohar Lohia and S.M. Joshi were among the leaders of the socialist parties. Many parties in contemporary India, like the Samajwadi Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, Janata Dal (United) and the Janata Dal (Secular) trace their origins to the Socialist Party.



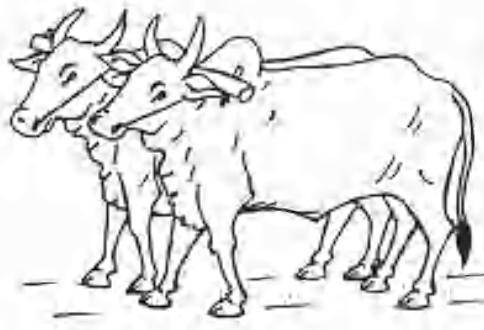
Nature of Congress dominance

India is not the only country to have experienced the dominance of one party. If we look around the world, we find many other examples of one-party dominance. But there is a crucial difference between these and the Indian experience. In the rest of the cases the dominance of one party was ensured by compromising democracy. In some countries like China, Cuba and Syria the constitution permits only a single party to rule the country. Some others like Myanmar, Belarus, Egypt, and Eritrea are effectively one-party states due to legal and military measures. Until a few years ago, Mexico, South Korea and Taiwan were also effectively one-party dominant states. What distinguished the dominance of the Congress party in India from all these cases was it happened under democratic conditions. Many parties contested elections in conditions of free and fair elections and yet the Congress managed to win election after election. This was similar to the dominance the African National Congress has enjoyed in South Africa after the end of apartheid.

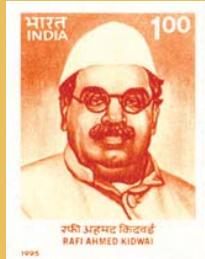


Founded in 1929, as National Revolutionary Party and later renamed as the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the PRI (in Spanish), exercised power in Mexico for almost six decades. It represented the legacy of the Mexican revolution. Originally PRI was a mixture of various interests

including political and military leaders, labour and peasant organisations and numerous political parties. Over a period of time, Plutarco Elías Calles, the founder of PRI, was able to capture the organisation and thereby the government. Elections were held at regular intervals and it was the PRI which won every time. Other parties existed in name only so as to give the ruling party greater legitimacy. The electoral laws were operated in a manner so as to ensure that the PRI always won. Elections were often rigged and manipulated by the ruling party. Its rule was described as 'the perfect dictatorship'. Finally the party lost in the Presidential elections held in 2000. Mexico is no longer a one-party dominated country. But the tactics adopted by the PRI during the period of its dominance had a long-term effect on the health of democracy. The citizens have yet to develop full confidence in the free and fair nature of elections.



Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956): Leader of the anti-caste movement and the struggle for justice to the Dalits; scholar and intellectual; founder of Independent Labour Party; later founded the Scheduled Castes Federation; planned the formation of the Republican Party of India; Member of Viceroy's Executive Council during the Second World War; Chairman, Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly; Minister in Nehru's first cabinet after Independence; resigned in 1951 due to differences over the Hindu Code Bill; adopted Buddhism in 1956, with thousands of followers.



Rafi Ahmed Kidwai (1894-1954):
Congress leader from U.P.; Minister in U.P. in 1937 and again in 1946; Minister for Communications in the first ministry of free India; Food and Agriculture Minister, 1952-54.

Earlier we had coalition in a party, now we have coalition of parties. Does it mean that we have had a coalition government since 1952?



The roots of this extraordinary success of the Congress party go back to the legacy of the freedom struggle. Congress was seen as inheritor of the national movement. Many leaders who were in the forefront of that struggle were now contesting elections as Congress candidates. The Congress was already a very well-organised party and by the time the other parties could even think of a strategy, the Congress had already started its campaign. In fact, many parties were formed only around Independence or after that. Thus, the Congress had the 'first off the blocks' advantage. By the time of Independence the party had not only spread across the length and breadth of the country as we had seen in the maps but also had an organisational network down to the local level. Most importantly, as the Congress was till recently a national movement, its nature was all-inclusive. All these factors contributed to the dominance of the Congress party.

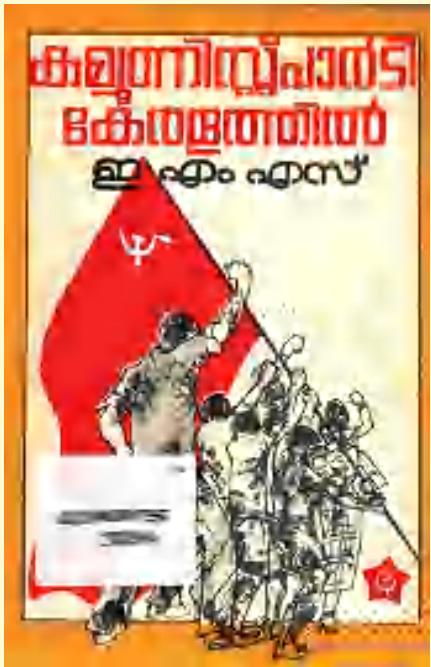
Congress as social and ideological coalition

You have already studied the history of how Congress evolved from its origins in 1885 as a pressure group for the newly educated, professional and commercial classes to a mass movement in the twentieth century. This laid the basis for its eventual transformation into a mass political party and its subsequent domination of the political system. Thus the Congress began as a party dominated by the English speaking, upper caste, upper middle-class and urban elite. But with every civil disobedience movement it launched, its social base widened. It brought together diverse groups, whose interests were often contradictory. Peasants and industrialists, urban dwellers and villagers, workers and owners, middle, lower and upper classes and castes, all found space in the Congress. Gradually, its leadership also expanded beyond the upper caste and upper class professionals to agriculture based leaders with a rural orientation. By the time of Independence, the Congress was transformed into a rainbow-like social coalition broadly representing India's diversity in terms of classes and castes, religions and languages and various interests.

Many of these groups merged their identity within the Congress. Very often they did not and continued to exist within the Congress as groups and individuals holding different beliefs. In this sense the Congress was an ideological coalition as well. It accommodated the revolutionary and pacifist, conservative and radical, extremist and moderate and the right, left and all shades of the centre. The Congress was a 'platform' for numerous groups, interests and even political parties to take part in the national movement. In pre-Independence days, many organisations and parties with their own constitution and organisational structure were allowed to exist within the Congress.



The Communist Party of India

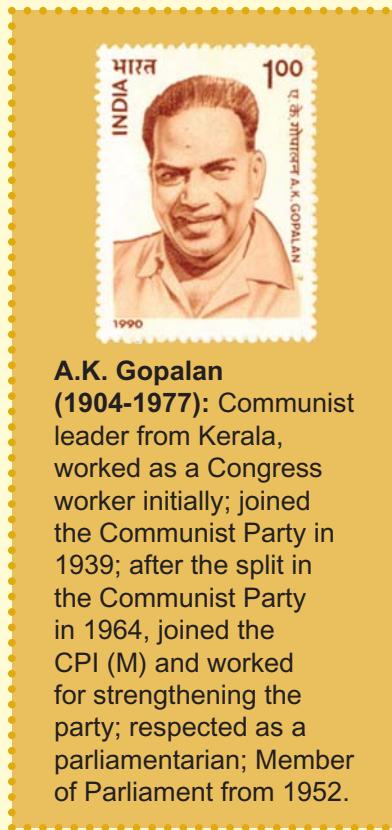


In the early 1920s communist groups emerged in different parts of India taking inspiration from the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and advocating socialism as the solution to problems affecting the country. From 1935, the Communists worked mainly from within the fold of the Indian National Congress. A parting of ways took place in December 1941, when the Communists decided to support the British in their war against Nazi Germany. Unlike other non-Congress parties the CPI had a well-oiled party machinery and dedicated cadre at the time of Independence. However, Independence raised different voices in the party. The basic question that troubled the party was the nature of Indian independence. Was India really free or was freedom a sham?

Soon after Independence, the party thought that the transfer of power in 1947 was not true

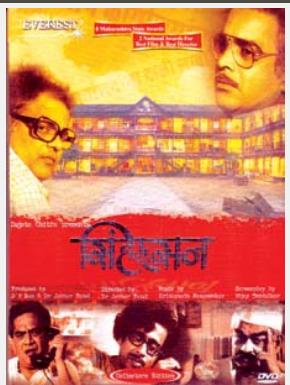
independence and encouraged violent uprisings in Telangana. The Communists failed to generate popular support for their position and were crushed by the armed forces. This forced them to rethink their position. In 1951 the Communist Party abandoned the path of violent revolution and decided to participate in the approaching general elections. In the first general election, CPI won 16 seats and emerged as the largest opposition party. The party's support was more concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Kerala.

A. K. Gopalan, S.A. Dange, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, P.C. Joshi, Ajay Ghosh and P. Sundarayya were among the notable leaders of the CPI. The Party went through a major split in 1964 following the ideological rift between Soviet Union and China. The pro-Soviet faction remained as the CPI, while the opponents formed the CPI(M). Both these parties continue to exist to this day.



Let's watch a Film

SIMHASAN



This Marathi film, based on Arun Sadhu's two novels 'Simhasan' and 'Mumbai Dinank', depicts the tussle for the post of Chief Minister in Maharashtra. The story is told through journalist Digu Tipnis as the silent 'Sutradhar'. It tries to capture the intense power struggle within the ruling party and the secondary role of the Opposition.

Finance Minister, Vishwasrao Dabhade is making all-out efforts to unseat the incumbent Chief Minister. Both contenders are trying to woo trade union leader D'Costa to obtain his support. In this factional fight, other politicians too seek to obtain maximum advantage while bargaining with both sides. Smuggling in Mumbai and the grim social reality in rural Maharashtra form the sub-plots in this film.

Year: 1981
 Director: Jabbar Patel
 Screenplay: Vijay Tendulkar
 Cast: Nilu Phule, Arun Sarnaik, Dr. Shreeram Lagoo, Satish Dubashi, Datta Bhat, Madhukar Toradmal, Madhav Watve, Mohan Agashe

Some of these, like the Congress Socialist Party, later separated from the Congress and became opposition parties. Despite differences regarding the methods, specific programmes and policies the party managed to contain if not resolve differences and build a consensus.

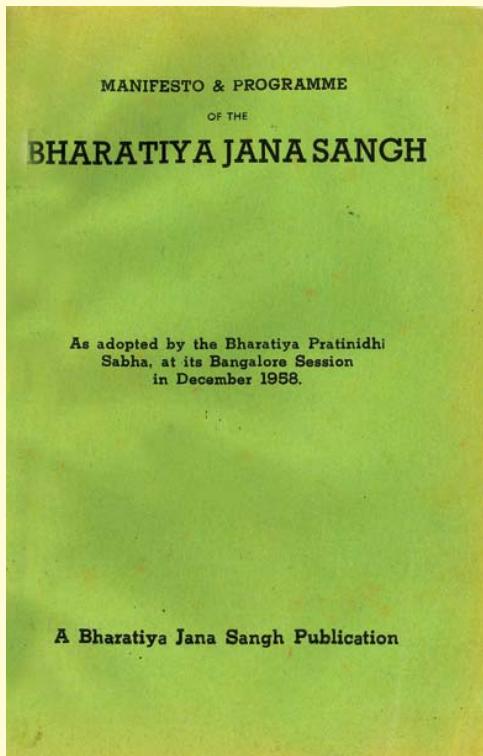
Tolerance and management of factions

This coalition-like character of the Congress gave it an unusual strength. Firstly, a coalition accommodates all those who join it. Therefore, it has to avoid any extreme position and strike a balance on almost all issues. Compromise and inclusiveness are the hallmarks of a coalition. This strategy put the opposition in a difficulty. Anything that the opposition wanted to say, would also find a place in the programme and ideology of the Congress. Secondly, in a party that has the nature of a coalition, there is a greater tolerance of internal differences and ambitions of various groups and leaders are accommodated. The Congress did both these things during the freedom struggle and continued doing this even after Independence. That is why, even if a group was not happy with the position of the party or with its share of power, it would remain inside the party and fight the other groups rather than leaving the party and becoming an 'opposition'.

These groups inside the party are called factions. The coalitional nature of the Congress party tolerated and in fact encouraged various factions. Some of these factions were based on ideological considerations but very often these factions were rooted in personal ambitions and rivalries. Instead of being a weakness, internal factionalism became a strength of



Bharatiya Jana Sangh

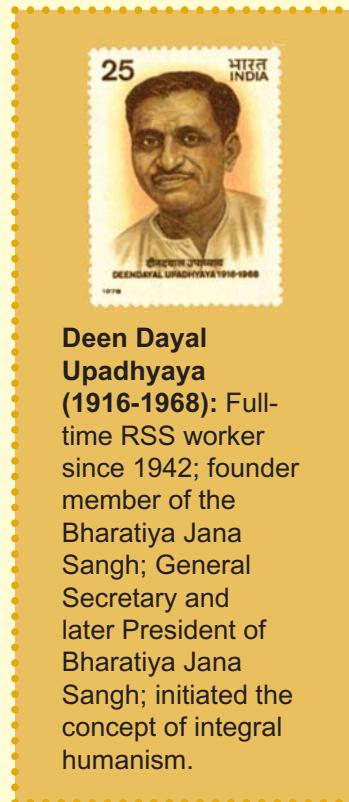


The Bharatiya Jana Sangh was formed in 1951 with Shyama Prasad Mukherjee as its founder-President. Its lineage however can be traced back to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu Mahasabha before Independence.

The Jana Sangh was different from other parties in terms of ideology and programmes. It emphasised the idea of one country, one culture and one nation and believed that the country could become modern, progressive and strong on the basis of Indian culture and traditions. The party called for a reunion of India and Pakistan in Akhand Bharat. The party was in forefront of the agitation to replace English with Hindi as the official language of India and was also opposed to the granting of concessions to religious and cultural minorities. The party was

a consistent advocate of India developing nuclear weapons especially after China carried out its atomic tests in 1964.

In the 1950s Jana Sangh remained on the margins of the electoral politics and was able to secure only 3 Lok Sabha seats in 1952 elections and 4 seats in 1957 general elections to Lok Sabha. In the early years its support came mainly from the urban areas in the Hindi speaking states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The party's leaders included Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and Balraj Madhok. The Bharatiya Janata Party traces its roots to the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.



Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (1916-1968): Full-time RSS worker since 1942; founder member of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh; General Secretary and later President of Bharatiya Jana Sangh; initiated the concept of integral humanism.

the Congress. Since there was room within the party for various factions to fight with each other, it meant that leaders representing different interests and ideologies remained within the Congress rather than go out and form a new party.

Most of the state units of the Congress were made up of numerous factions. The factions took different ideological positions making the Congress appear as a grand centrist party. The other parties primarily attempted to influence these factions and thereby indirectly influenced policy and decision making from the "margins". They were far removed from the actual exercise of authority. They were not alternatives to the ruling party; instead they constantly pressurised and criticised, censured and influenced the Congress. The system of factions functioned as balancing mechanism within the ruling party. Political competition therefore took place within the Congress. In that sense, in the first decade of electoral competition the Congress acted both as the ruling party as well as the opposition. That is why this period of Indian politics has been described as the 'Congress system'.



I thought factions were a disease that needed to be cured. You make it sound as if factions are normal and good.

Credit: Shankar



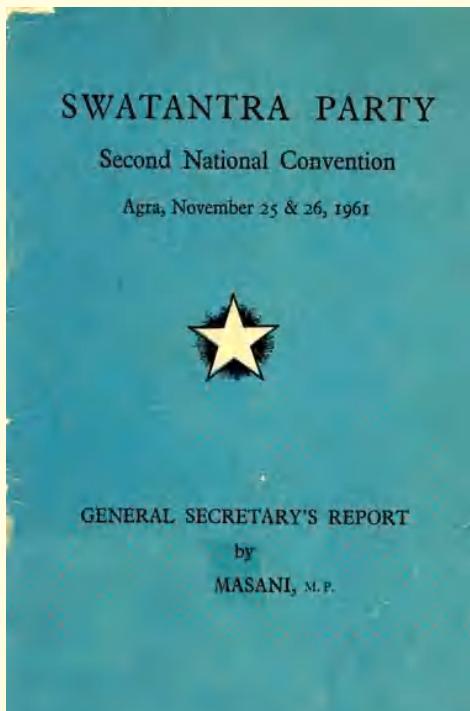
"Tug of War" (29 August 1954) is a cartoonist's impression of the relative strength of the opposition and the government. Sitting on the tree are Nehru and his cabinet colleagues. Trying to topple the tree are opposition leaders A. K. Gopalan, Acharya Kripalani, N.C. Chatterjee, Srikantan Nair and Sardar Hukum Singh.

As we have noted above, it is not that India did not have opposition parties during this period. While discussing the results of the elections, we have already come across the names of many parties other than the Congress. Even then India had a larger number of diverse and vibrant opposition parties than many other multi-party democracies. Some of these had come into being even before the first general election of 1952. Some of these parties played an important part in the politics of the country in the 'sixties and 'seventies. The roots of almost all the non-Congress parties of today can be traced to one or the other of the opposition parties of the 1950s.

All these opposition parties succeeded in gaining only a token representation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies during this period. Yet their presence played a crucial role in maintaining the democratic character of the system. These parties offered a sustained and often principled criticism of the policies and practices of the Congress party. This kept the ruling party under check and often changed the balance of power within the Congress. By keeping democratic political alternative alive,



Swatantra Party



free private sector. The Swatantra Party was against land ceilings in agriculture, and opposed cooperative farming and state trading. It was also opposed to the progressive tax regime and demanded dismantling of the licensing regime. It was critical of the policy of non-alignment and maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union and advocated closer ties with the United States. The Swatantra Party gained strength in different parts of the Country by way of merger with numerous regional parties and interests. It attracted the landlords and princes who wanted to protect their land and status that was being threatened by the land reforms legislation. The industrialists and business class who were against nationalisation and the licensing policies also supported the party. Its narrow social base and the lack of a dedicated cadre of party members did not allow it to build a strong organisational network.

Swatantra Party was formed in August 1959 after the Nagpur resolution of the Congress which called for land ceilings, take-over of food grain trade by the state and adoption of cooperative farming. The party was led by old Congressmen like C. Rajagopalachari, K.M.Munshi, N.G.Ranga and Minoo Masani. The party stood out from the others in terms of its position on economic issues.

The Swatantra Party wanted the government to be less and less involved in controlling the economy. It believed that prosperity could come only through individual freedom.

It was critical of the development strategy of state intervention in the economy, centralised planning, nationalisation and the public sector. It instead favoured expansion of a



C. Rajagopalachari
(1878-1972): A senior leader of Congress and literary writer; close associate of Mahatma Gandhi; member of Constituent Assembly; first Indian to be the Governor General of India (1948-1950); minister in Union Cabinet; later became Chief Minister of Madras state; first recipient of the Bharat Ratna Award; founder of the Swatantra Party (1959).

“..... Tandon's election is considered (by Congress members) more important than my presence in the Govt or the Congress..... I have completely exhausted my utility both in the Congress and Govt.

Jawaharlal Nehru

in a letter to Rajaji, after the election of Tandon as Congress president against his wishes.

these parties prevented the resentment with the system from turning anti-democratic. These parties also groomed the leaders who were to play a crucial role in the shaping of our country.

In the early years there was a lot of mutual respect between the leaders of the Congress and those of the opposition. The interim government that ruled the country after the declaration of Independence and the first general election included opposition leaders like Dr. Ambedkar and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in the cabinet. Jawaharlal Nehru often referred to his fondness for the Socialist Party and invited socialist leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan to join his government. This kind of personal relationship with and respect for political adversaries declined after the party competition grew more intense.

Thus this first phase of democratic politics in our country was quite unique. The inclusive character of the national movement led by the Congress enabled it to attract different sections, groups and interests making it a broad based social and ideological coalition. The



Nehru's Cabinet after the swearing-in of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari as Governor-General in 1948. Sitting from left to right: Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Baldev Singh, Maulana Azad, Prime Minister Nehru, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Mr. John Matthai and Jagivan Ram. Standing from left to right: Mr. Gadgil, Mr. Neogi, Dr. Ambedkar, Shyama Prasad Mukherji, Mr. Gopalaswamy Iyengar and Mr. Jayramdas Daulatram.

Party competition in a Bihar village

When two buffalos fight, the grass beneath them gets crushed. The Congress and Socialist parties are fighting with each other. Both of them are seeking new members. The poor people will be ground between the two grindstones!

"No, the poor people won't be crushed. In fact, they'll benefit", was someone's reply. "Things aren't accomplished by one party alone. It is the competition and rivalry between two groups that benefits the public..."

The news of Socialist Party meeting had agitated the Santhals. The news of the opening of the hospital hadn't made much impression on them – nor did they ever bother much about the fights and quarrels, or the friendly gatherings of the villagers. But this meeting was for the tillers of the soil. "To whom does the land belong? To the tiller!

He who tills will sow! He who sows will harvest! He who works will eat, come what may!" Kalicharan lectured....

There was turmoil in the District Office of the Congress Party too. They were about to elect a Party Chairman. There were four candidates — two real contenders and two dummy candidates. It was a contest between Rajputs and Bhumihars. The wealthy businessmen and zamindars from both the castes were cruising all over the district in their motorcars, campaigning. All kinds of mudslinging was going on between them. The Seth who owned the Katihar cotton mill was representing the Bhumihar party, and the owner of Farbigang jute mill was representing the Rajputs You should see the money they're flashing around.

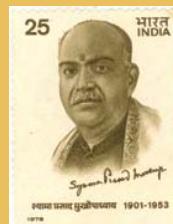
Translated extracts from Fanishwarnath Renu's novel "Maila Anchal". The novel is set in Purnia district in North East Bihar in the early years after Independence.

key role of the Congress in the freedom struggle thus gave it a head start over others. As the ability of the Congress to accommodate all interests and all aspirants for political power steadily declined, other political parties started gaining greater significance. Thus, Congress dominance constitutes only one phase in the politics of the country. We shall come to the other phases in later parts of this textbook.



Fanishwarnath Renu

Shyama Prasad Mukherjee (1901-1953): Leader of Hindu Mahasabha; founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh; Minister in Nehru's first cabinet after Independence; resigned in 1950 due to differences over relations with Pakistan; Member of Constituent Assembly and later, the first Lok Sabha; was opposed to India's policy of autonomy to Jammu & Kashmir; arrested during Jana Sangh's agitation against Kashmir policy; died during detention.



EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct option to fill in the blanks.
 - (a) The First General Elections in 1952 involved simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and (*The President of India/ State Assemblies/ Rajya Sabha/ The Prime Minister*)
 - (b) The party that won the second largest number of Lok Sabha seats in the first elections was the..... (*Praja Socialist Party/ Bharatiya Jana Sangh/ Communist Party of India/Bharatiya Janata Party*)
 - (c) One of the guiding principles of the ideology of the Swatantra Party was..... (*Working class interests/ protection of Princely States / economy free from State control / Autonomy of States within the Union*)

2. Match the following leaders listed in List A with the parties in List B.

List A	List B
(a) S. A. Dange	i. Bharatiya Jana Sangh
(b) Shyama Prasad Mukherjee	ii. Swatantra Party
(c) Minoo Masani	iii. Praja Socialist Party
(d) Asoka Mehta	iv. Communist Party of India

3. Four statements regarding one- party dominance are given below. Mark each of them as true or false.
 - (a) One-party dominance is rooted in the absence of strong alternative political parties.
 - (b) One-party dominance occurs because of weak public opinion.
 - (c) One-party dominance is linked to the nation's colonial past.
 - (d) One-party dominance reflects the absence of democratic ideals in a country.

4. If Bharatiya Jana Sangh or the Communist Party of India had formed the government after the first election, in which respects would the policies of the government have been different? Specify three differences each for both the parties.

5. In what sense was the Congress an ideological coalition? Mention the various ideological currents present within the Congress.

6. Did the prevalence of a 'one party dominant system' affect adversely the democratic nature of Indian politics?

7. Bring out three differences each between Socialist parties and the Communist party and between Bharatiya Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party.

8. What would you consider as the main differences between Mexico and India under one party domination?

9. Take a political map of India (with State outlines) and mark:
- (a) two states where Congress was not in power at some point during 1952-67.
 - (b) two states where the Congress remained in power through this period.

10. Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

"Patel, the organisational man of the Congress, wanted to purge the Congress of other political groups and sought to make of it a cohesive and disciplined political party. He sought to take the Congress away from its all-embracing character and turn it into a close-knit party of disciplined cadres. Being a 'realist' he looked more for discipline than for comprehension. While Gandhi took too romantic a view of "carrying on the movement," Patel's idea of transforming the Congress into strictly political party with a single ideology and tight discipline showed an equal lack of understanding of the eclectic role that the Congress, as a government, was to be called upon to perform in the decades to follow." — RAJNI KOTHARI

- (a) Why does the author think that Congress should not have been a cohesive and disciplined party?
- (b) Give some examples of the eclectic role of the Congress party in the early years.
- (c) Why does the author say that Gandhi's view about Congress' future was romantic?

LET US DO IT TOGETHER

Make a chart of elections and governments in your State since 1952. The chart could have the following columns: year of election, name of the winning party, name of ruling party or parties, name of the Chief Minister(s).



In this chapter...

In the last two chapters we have studied how the leaders of independent India responded to the challenges of nation-building and establishing democracy. Let us now turn to the third challenge, that of economic development to ensure well-being of all. As in the case of the first two challenges, our leaders chose a path that was different and difficult. In this case their success was much more limited, for this challenge was tougher and more enduring.

In this chapter, we study the story of political choices involved in some of the key questions of economic development.

- What were the key choices and debates about development?
- Which strategy was adopted by our leaders in the first two decades? And why?
- What were the main achievements and limitations of this strategy?
- Why was this development strategy abandoned in later years?

Stamps like these, issued mostly between 1955 and 1968, depicted a vision of planned development. Left to right, top to bottom: Damodar Valley, Bhakra Dam, Chittaranjan Locomotives, Gauhati Refinery, Tractor, Sindri Fertilisers, Bhakra Dam, Electric Train, Wheat Revolution, Hirakud Dam, Hindustan Aircraft Factory

POLITICS OF PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

As the global demand for steel increases, Orissa, which has one of the largest reserves of untapped iron ore in the country, is being seen as an important investment destination. The State government hopes to cash in on this unprecedented demand for iron ore and has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with both international and domestic steel makers. The government believes that this would bring in necessary capital investment and provide a lot of employment opportunities. The iron ore resources lie in some of the most underdeveloped and predominantly tribal districts of the state. The tribal population fears that the setting up of industries would mean displacement from their home and livelihood. The environmentalists fear that mining and industry would pollute the environment. The central government feels that if the industry is not allowed it would set a bad example and discourage investments in the country.

Can you identify the various interests involved in this case? What are their key points of conflict? Do you think there are any common points on which everyone can agree? Can this issue be resolved in a way which satisfies all the various interests? As you ask these questions, you would find yourself facing yet bigger questions. What kind of development does Orissa need? Indeed, whose need can be called Orissa's need?

Political contestation

These questions cannot be answered by an expert. Decisions of this kind involve weighing the interests of one social group against another, present generation against future generations. In a democracy such major decisions should be taken or at least approved by the people themselves. It is important to take advice from experts on mining, from environmentalists and from economists. Yet the final decision must be a political decision, taken by people's representatives who are in touch with the feelings of the people.

After Independence our country had to make a series of major decisions like this. Each of these decisions could not be made independent of other such decisions. All these decisions were bound together by a shared vision or model of economic development. Almost

Orissa villagers protest against POSCO plant

Staff Reporter

BHUBANESWAR: People facing displacement by the proposed POSCO-India steel plant in Jagatsinghpur district staged a demonstration outside the Korean company's office here on Thursday. They were demanding cancellation of the memorandum of understanding signed between the company and the Orissa government one year ago.

More than 100 men and women from the gram panchayats of Dhinkia, Nuagaon and Gadakujanga tried to enter the office premises but the police prevented them. Raising slogans, the protesters said the company should not be allowed to set up its plant at the cost of their lives and livelihood. The demonstration was organised by the Rashtriya Yuva Sangathan and the Nabaniarma Samiti.

The Hindu, 23 June 2006

What is Left and what is Right?

In the politics of most countries, you will always come across references to parties and groups with a Left or Right ideology or leaning. These terms characterise the position of the concerned groups or parties regarding social change and role of the state in effecting economic redistribution. Left often refers to those who are in favour of the poor, downtrodden sections and support government policies for the benefit of these sections. The Right refers to those who believe that free competition and market economy alone ensure progress and that the government should not unnecessarily intervene in the economy.

Can you tell which of the parties in the 1960s were Rightist and which were the Left parties? Where would you place the Congress party of that time?

everyone agreed that the development of India should mean both economic growth and social and economic justice. It was also agreed that this matter cannot be left to businessmen, industrialists and farmers themselves, that the government should play a key role in this. There was disagreement, however, on the kind of role that the government must play in ensuring growth with justice. Was it necessary to have a centralised institution to plan for the entire country? Should the government itself run some key industries and business? How much importance was to be attached to the needs of justice if it differed from the requirements of economic growth?

Each of these questions involved contestation which has continued ever since. Each of the decision had political

consequence. Most of these issues involved political judgement and required consultations among political parties and approval of the public. That is why we need to study the process of development as a part of the history of politics in India.

Ideas of development

Very often this contestation involves the very idea of development. The example of Orissa shows us that it is not enough to say that everyone wants development. For 'development' has different meanings for different sections of the people. Development would mean different things for example, to an industrialist who is planning to set up a steel plant, to an urban consumer of steel and to the Adivasi who lives in that region. Thus any discussion on development is bound to generate contradictions, conflicts and debates.

The first decade after Independence witnessed a lot of debate around this question. It was common then, as it is even now, for people to refer to the 'West' as the standard for measuring development. 'Development' was about becoming more 'modern' and modern was about becoming more like the industrialised countries of the West. This is how common people as well as the experts thought. It was believed that every country would go through the process of modernisation as in the West, which involved the breakdown of traditional social structures and the rise of capitalism and liberalism. Modernisation was also associated with the ideas of growth, material progress and scientific rationality. This kind of idea of development allowed everyone to talk about different countries as developed, developing or underdeveloped.

I thought the connection was simpler!
All big decisions involve big money and that is why politicians take these decisions.



On the eve of Independence, India had before it, two models of modern development: the liberal-capitalist model as in much of Europe and the US and the socialist model as in the USSR. You have already studied these two ideologies and read about the 'cold war' between the two super powers. There were many in India then who were deeply impressed by the Soviet model of development. These included not just the leaders of the Communist Party of India, but also those of the Socialist Party and leaders like Nehru within the Congress. There were very few supporters of the American style capitalist development.

This reflected a broad consensus that had developed during the national movement. The nationalist leaders were clear that the economic concerns of the government of free India would have to be different from the narrowly defined commercial functions of the colonial government. It was clear, moreover, that the task of poverty alleviation and social and economic redistribution was being seen primarily as the responsibility of the government. There were debates among them. For some, industrialisation seemed to be the preferred path. For others, the development of agriculture and in particular alleviation of rural poverty was the priority.

Planning

Despite the various differences, there was a consensus on one point: that development could not be left to private actors, that there was the need for the government to develop a design or plan for development. In fact the idea of planning as a process of rebuilding economy earned a good deal of public support in the 1940s and 1950s all over the world. The experience of Great Depression in Europe, the inter-war

Are you saying we don't have to be western in order to be modern? Is that possible?



Credit: Hindustan Times

Nehru
addressing
the staff of
the Planning
Commission

Credit:Ninan



Planning Commission

Do you recall any reference to the Planning Commission in your book *Constitution at Work* last year? Actually there was none, for the Planning Commission is not one of the many commissions and other bodies set up by the Constitution. The Planning Commission was set up in March, 1950 by a simple resolution of the Government of India. It has an advisory role and its recommendations become effective only when the Union Cabinet approved these. The resolution which set up the Commission defined the scope of its work in the following terms :

"The Constitution of India has guaranteed certain Fundamental Rights to the citizens of India and enunciated certain Directive Principles of State Policy, in particular, that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting....a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall direct its policy towards securing, among other things,



I wonder if the Planning Commission has actually followed these objectives in practice.

- that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood ;
- that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; and
- that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment.

reconstruction of Japan and Germany, and most of all the spectacular economic growth against heavy odds in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s contributed to this consensus.

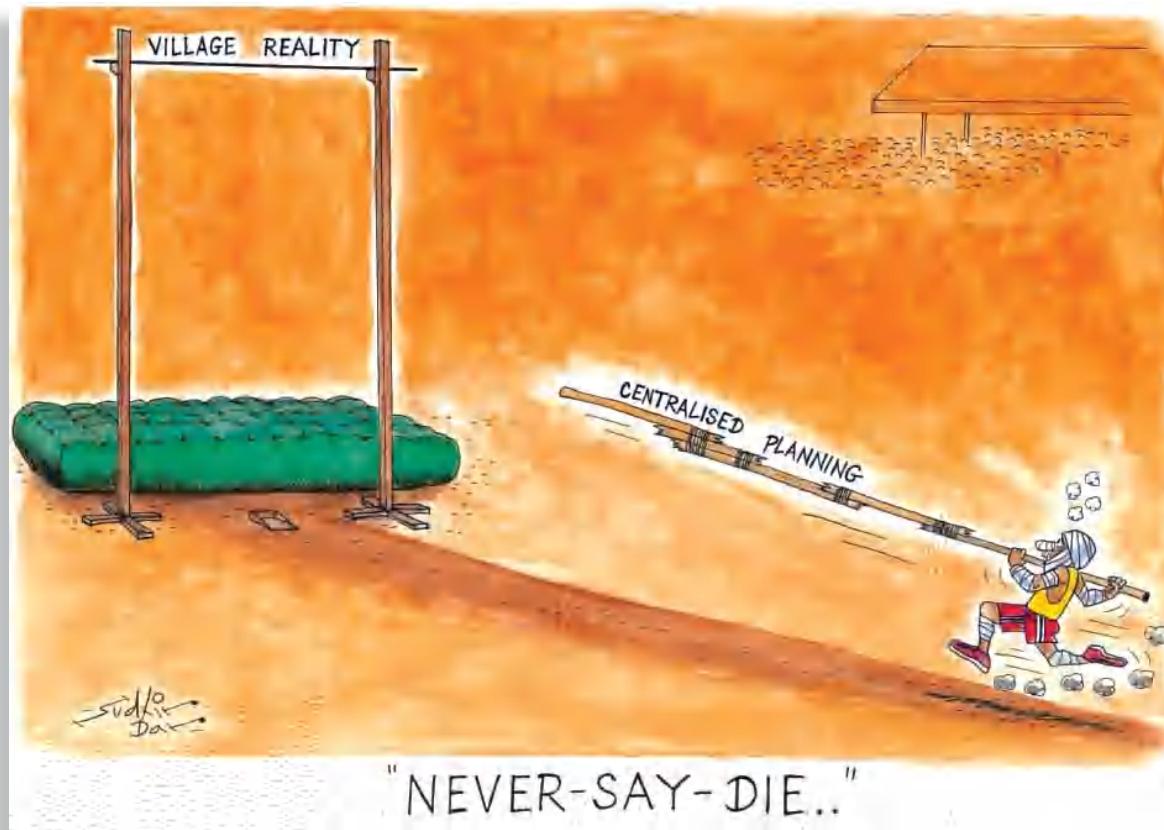
Thus the Planning Commission was not a sudden invention. In fact, it has a very interesting history. We commonly assume that private investors, such as industrialists and big business entrepreneurs, are averse to ideas of planning: they seek an open economy without any state control in the flow of capital. That was not what happened here. Rather, a section of the big industrialists got together in 1944 and drafted a joint proposal for setting up a planned economy in the country. It was called the Bombay Plan. The Bombay Plan wanted the state to take major initiatives in industrial and other economic investments. Thus, from left to right, planning for development was the most obvious choice for the country after Independence. Soon after India became independent, the Planning Commission came into being. The Prime Minister was its Chairperson. It became the most influential and central machinery for deciding what path and strategy India would adopt for its development.

The Early Initiatives

As in the USSR, the Planning Commission of India opted for five year plans (FYP). The idea is very simple: the Government of India prepares a document that has a plan for all its income and expenditure for the next five years. Accordingly the budget of the central and all the State governments is divided into two parts: 'non-plan' budget that is spent

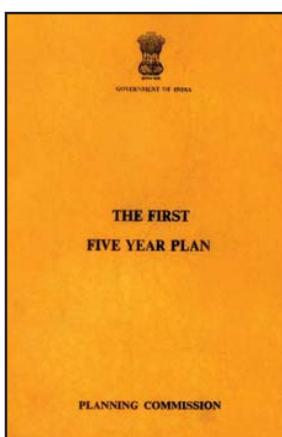


on routine items on a yearly basis and 'plan' budget that is spent on a five year basis as per the priorities fixed by the plan. A five year plan has the advantage of permitting the government to focus on the larger picture and make long-term intervention in the economy.



Credit: Sudhir Dar /UNDP and Planning Commission

The draft of the First Five Year Plan and then the actual Plan Document, released in December 1951, generated a lot of excitement in the country. People from all walks of life – academics, journalists, government and private sector employees, industrialists, farmers, politicians etc. – discussed and debated the documents extensively. The excitement with planning reached its peak with the launching of the Second Five Year Plan in 1956 and continued somewhat till the Third Five Year Plan in 1961. The Fourth Plan was due to start in 1966. By this time, the novelty of planning had declined considerably, and moreover, India was facing acute economic crisis. The government decided to take a 'plan holiday'. Though many criticisms emerged both about the process and the priorities of these plans, the foundation of India's economic development was firmly in place by then.



First Five Year Plan document

The First Five Year Plan

The First Five Year Plan (1951–1956) sought to get the country's economy out of the cycle of poverty. K.N. Raj, a young economist involved in drafting the plan, argued that India should 'hasten slowly' for the first two decades as a fast rate of development might endanger democracy. The First Five Year Plan addressed, mainly, the agrarian sector including investment in dams and irrigation.

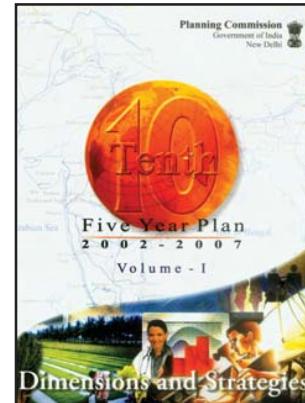
Agricultural sector was hit hardest by Partition and needed urgent attention. Huge allocations were made for large-scale projects like the Bhakhra Nangal Dam. The Plan identified the pattern of land distribution in the country as the principal obstacle in the way of agricultural growth. It focused on land reforms as the key to the country's development.

One of the basic aims of the planners was to raise the level of national income, which could be possible only if the people saved more money than they spent. As the basic level of spending was very low in the 1950s, it could not be reduced any more. So the planners sought to push savings up. That too was difficult as the total capital stock in the country was rather low compared to the total number of employable people. Nevertheless, people's savings did rise in the first phase of the planned process until the end of the Third Five Year Plan. But, the rise was not as spectacular as was expected at the beginning of the First Plan. Later, from the early 1960s till the early 1970s, the proportion of savings in the country actually dropped consistently.

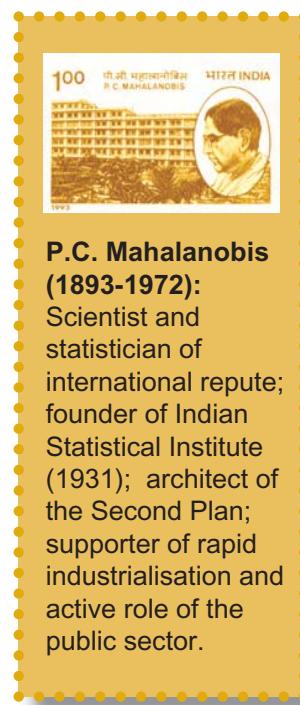
Rapid Industrialisation

The Second FYP stressed on heavy industries. It was drafted by a team of economists and planners under the leadership of P. C. Mahalanobis. If the first plan had preached patience, the second wanted to bring about quick structural transformation by making changes simultaneously in all possible directions. Before this plan was finalised, the Congress party at its session held at Avadi near the then Madras city, passed an important resolution. It declared that 'socialist pattern of society' was its goal. This was reflected in the Second Plan. The government imposed substantial tariffs on imports in order to protect domestic industries. Such protected environment helped both public and private sector industries to grow. As savings and investment were growing in this period, a bulk of these industries like electricity, railways, steel, machineries and communication could be developed in the public sector. Indeed, such a push for industrialisation marked a turning point in India's development.

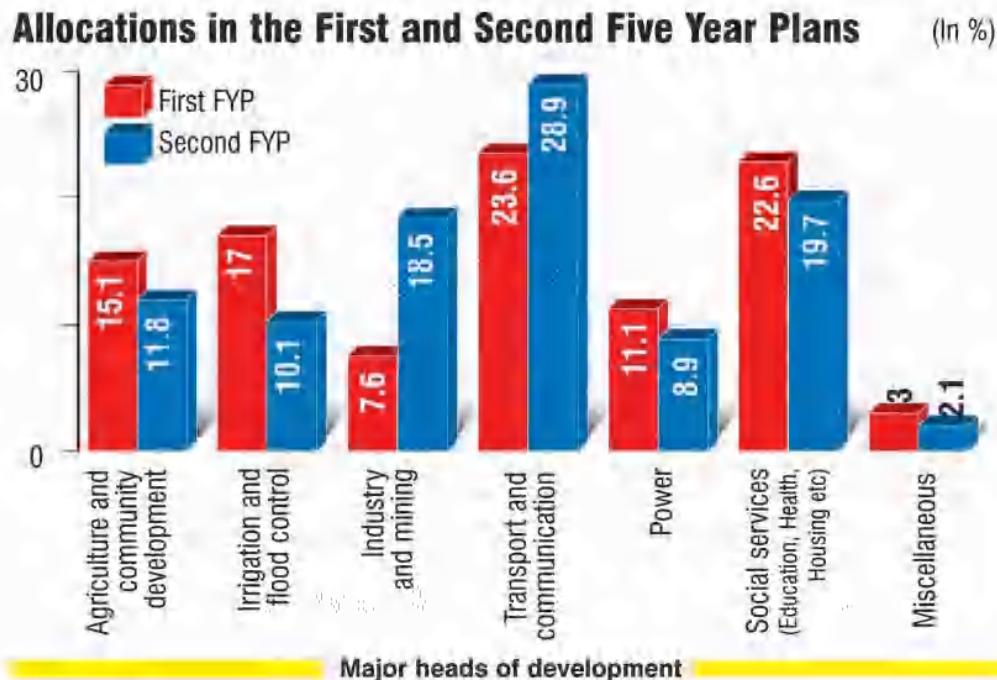
It, however, had its problems as well. India was technologically backward, so it had to spend precious foreign exchange to buy technology from the global market. That apart, as industry attracted more investment than agriculture, the possibility of food shortage loomed large. The Indian planners found balancing industry and agriculture really difficult. The Third Plan was not significantly different from the Second. Critics pointed out that the plan strategies from this time around displayed an unmistakable "urban bias". Others thought that industry was wrongly given priority over agriculture. There were also those who wanted focus on agriculture-related industries rather than heavy ones.



Tenth Five Year Plan document



**P.C. Mahalanobis
(1893-1972):**
Scientist and
statistician of
international repute;
founder of Indian
Statistical Institute
(1931); architect of
the Second Plan;
supporter of rapid
industrialisation and
active role of the
public sector.



Decentralised planning

It is not necessary that all planning always has to be centralised; nor is it that planning is only about big industries and large projects. The 'Kerala model' is the name given to the path of planning and development charted by the State of Kerala. There has been a focus in this model on education, health, land reform, effective food distribution, and poverty alleviation. Despite low per capita incomes, and a relatively weak industrial base, Kerala achieved nearly total literacy, long life expectancy, low infant and female mortality, low birth rates and high access to medical care. Between 1987 and 1991, the government launched the New Democratic Initiative which involved campaigns for development (including total literacy especially in science and environment) designed to involve people directly in development activities through voluntary citizens' organisations. The State has also taken initiative to involve people in making plans at the Panchayat, block and district level.

Key Controversies

The strategy of development followed in the early years raised several important questions. Let us examine two of these disputes that continue to be relevant.

Agriculture versus industry

We have already touched upon a big question: between agriculture and industry, which one should attract more public resources in a backward economy like that of India? Many thought that the Second Plan lacked an agrarian strategy for development, and the emphasis on industry caused agriculture and rural India to suffer. Gandhian economists like J. C. Kumarappa proposed an alternative blueprint that put greater emphasis on rural industrialisation. Chaudhary Charan Singh, a Congress leader who later broke from the party to form Bharatiya Lok Dal,



J.C. Kumarappa
(1892-1960): Original name J.C. Cornelius; economist and chartered accountant; studied in England and USA; follower of Mahatma Gandhi; tried to apply Gandhian principles to economic policies; author of 'Economy of Permanence'; participated in planning process as member of the Planning Commission

forcefully articulated the case for keeping agriculture at the centre of planning for India. He said that the planning was leading to creation of prosperity in urban and industrial section at the expense of the farmers and rural population.

Others thought that without a drastic increase in industrial production, there could be no escape from the cycle of poverty. They argued that Indian planning did have an agrarian strategy to boost the production of food-grains. The state made laws for land reforms and distribution of resources among the poor in the villages. It also proposed programmes of community development and spent large sums on irrigation projects. The failure was not that of policy but its non-implementation, because the landowning classes

Let's watch a Film

PATHER PANCHALI



This film tells the story of a poor family in a Bengal village and its struggle to survive. Durga, the daughter of Harihar and Sarbjaya, with her younger brother, Apu, goes on enjoying life oblivious of the struggles and the poverty. The film revolves around the simple life and the efforts of the mother of Durga and Apu to maintain the family.

Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road) narrates the desires and disappointments of the poor family through the tale of the youngsters. Finally, during monsoon, Durga falls ill and dies while her father is away. Harihar returns with gifts, including a sari for Durga.....

The film won numerous awards nationally and internationally, including the President's Gold and Silver medals for the year 1955.

Year: 1955
 Director: Satyajit Ray
 Story: Bibhutibhushan
 Bandyopadhyay
 Screenplay: Satyajit Ray
 Actors: Kanu Bannerjee, Karuna Bannerjee, Subir Bannerjee, Uma Das Gupta Durga, Chunibala Devi

had lot of social and political power. Besides, they also argue that even if the government had spent more money on agriculture it would not have solved the massive problem of rural poverty.

Public versus private sector

India did not follow any of the two known paths to development – it did not accept the capitalist model of development in which development was left entirely to the private sector, nor did it follow the socialist model in which private property was abolished and all the production was controlled by the state. Elements from both these models were taken and mixed together in India. That is why it was described as ‘mixed economy’. Much of the agriculture, trade and industry were left in private hands. The state controlled key heavy industries, provided industrial infrastructure, regulated trade and made some crucial interventions in agriculture.

A mixed model like this was open to criticism from both the left and the right. Critics argued that the planners refused to provide the private sector with enough space and the stimulus to grow. The enlarged public sector produced powerful vested interests that

Astride the Public Sector are Central Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri, Ajit Prasad Jain, Kailash Nath Katju, Jagjivan Ram, T. T. Krishnamachari, Swaran Singh, Gulzari Lal Nanda and B. K. Keskar



Credit: Shankar

created enough hurdles for private capital, especially by way of installing systems of licenses and permits for investment. Moreover, the state's policy to restrict import of goods that could be produced in the domestic market with little or no competition left the private sector with no incentive to improve their products and make them cheaper. The state controlled more things than were necessary and this led to inefficiency and corruption.

Then there were critics who thought that the state did not do enough. They pointed out that the state did not spend any significant amount for public education and healthcare. The state intervened only in those areas where the private sector was not prepared to go. Thus the state helped the private sector to make profit. Also, instead of helping the poor, the state intervention ended up creating a new 'middle class' that enjoyed the privileges of high salaries without much accountability. Poverty did not decline substantially during this period; even when the proportion of the poor reduced, their numbers kept going up.

Major Outcomes

Of the three objectives that were identified in independent India, discussed in the first three chapters here, the third objective proved most difficult to realise. Land reforms did not take place effectively in most parts of the country; political power remained in the hands of the landowning classes; and big industrialists continued to benefit and thrive while poverty did not reduce much. The early initiatives for planned development were at best realising the goals of economic development of the country and well-being of all its citizens. The inability to take significant steps in this direction in the very first stage was to become a political problem. Those who benefited from unequal development soon became politically powerful and made it even more difficult to move in the desired direction.

Foundations

An assessment of the outcomes of this early phase of planned development must begin by acknowledging the fact that in this period the foundations of India's future economic growth were laid. Some of the largest developmental projects in India's history were undertaken during this period. These included mega-dams like Bhakhra-Nangal and Hirakud for irrigation and power generation. Some of the heavy industries in the public sector – steel plants, oil refineries, manufacturing units, defense production etc. – were started during this period. Infrastructure for transport and communication was improved substantially. Of late, some of these mega projects have come in for a lot of criticism. Yet much of the later economic growth, including that by the private sector, may not have been possible in the absence of these foundations.

Government Campaign reaches the village

"In a way the advertisement stuck or written on walls gave an accurate introduction to the villager's problems and how to solve them. For example, the problem was that India was a farming nation, but farmers refused to produce more grain out of sheer perversity. The solution was to give speeches to farmers and show them all sorts of attractive pictures. These advised them that if they didn't want to grow more grain for themselves then they should do so for the nation. As a result the posters were stuck in various places to induce farmers to grow grain for the nation. The farmers were greatly influenced by the combined effect of the speeches and posters, and even most simple-minded cultivator began to feel the likelihood of there was some ulterior motive behind the whole campaign.

One advertisement had become especially well known in Shivpalganj. It showed a healthy farmer with turban wrapped around his head, earrings and a quilted jacket, cutting a tall crop of wheat with a sickle. A woman was standing behind him, very pleased with herself; she was laughing like an official from the Department of Agriculture.

Below and above the picture was written in Hindi and English – 'Grow More Grain'. Farmers with earrings and a quilted jacket who were also scholars of English were expected to be won over by the English slogans, and those who were scholars of Hindi, by the Hindi version. And those who didn't know how to read either language could at least recognise the figures of the man and the laughing woman. The government hoped that as soon as they saw the man and the laughing woman, farmer would turn away from the poster and start growing more grain like men possessed".

Extracts of translation from 'Raag Darbari' by Shrilal Shukla. The satire is set in a village Shivpalganj in Uttar Pradesh in the 1960s.

Land reforms

In the agrarian sector, this period witnessed a serious attempt at land reforms. Perhaps the most significant and successful of these was the abolition of the colonial system of zamindari. This bold act not only released land from the clutches of a class that had little interest in agriculture, it also reduced the capacity of the landlords to dominate politics. Attempts at consolidation of land – bringing small pieces of land together in one place so that the farm size could become viable for agriculture – were also fairly successful. But the other two components of land reforms were much less successful. Though the laws were made to put an upper limit or 'ceiling' to how much agricultural land one person could own, people with excess land managed to evade the law. Similarly, the tenants who worked on someone else's land were given greater legal security against eviction, but this provision was rarely implemented.

Oh! I thought land reforms were about improving the quality of soil!



It was not easy to turn these well-meaning policies on agriculture into genuine and effective action. This could happen only if the rural, landless poor were mobilised. But the landowners were very powerful and wielded considerable political influence. Therefore, many proposals for land reforms were either not translated into laws, or, when made into

laws, they remained only on paper. This shows that economic policy is part of the actual political situation in the society. It also shows that in spite of good wishes of some top leaders, the dominant social groups would always effectively control policy making and implementation.

The Green Revolution

In the face of the prevailing food-crisis, the country was clearly vulnerable to external pressures and dependent on food aid, mainly from the United States. The United States, in turn, pushed India to change its economic policies. The government adopted a new strategy for agriculture in order to ensure food sufficiency. Instead of the earlier policy of giving more support to the areas and farmers that were lagging behind, now it was decided to put more resources into those areas which already had irrigation and those farmers who were already well-off. The argument was that those who already had the capacity could help increase production rapidly in the short run. Thus the government offered high-yielding variety seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and better irrigation at highly subsidised prices. The government also gave a guarantee to buy the produce of the farmers at a given price. This was the beginning of what was called the 'green revolution'.

The rich peasants and the large landholders were the major beneficiaries of the process. The green revolution delivered only a moderate agricultural growth (mainly a rise in wheat production) and raised the availability of food in the country, but increased polarisation between classes and regions. Some regions like Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh became agriculturally prosperous, while others remained backward. The green revolution had two other effects: one was that in many parts, the stark contrast between the poor peasantry and the landlords produced conditions favourable for

Why don't we call it wheat revolution? And why does everything have to be 'revolution'?



Srikanth still remembers the struggle his elder brother had to undergo in order to get the monthly supply of ration for the ration shop. Their family was totally dependent on the supplies from the ration shop for rice, oil and kerosene. Many times, his brother would stand in the queue for an hour or so only to find out that the supply had ended and he would have to come later when fresh supply arrives. Find out from talking to elders in your family what is a ration card and ask your elders what, if any, items they buy from the ration shop. Visit a ration shop in the vicinity of your school or home and find out what is the difference in the prices of at least three commodities—wheat/rice, cooking oil, sugar—between the ration shop and the open market.

Let's re-search

Fast Forward The White Revolution



You must be familiar with the jingle 'utterly butterly delicious' and the endearing figure of the little girl holding a buttered toast. Yes, the Amul advertisements! Did you know that behind Amul products lies a successful history of cooperative dairy farming in India. Verghese Kurien, nicknamed the 'Milkman of India', played a crucial role in the story of Gujarat Cooperative Milk and Marketing Federation Ltd that launched Amul.

Based in Anand, a town in Gujarat, Amul is a dairy cooperative movement joined by about 2 and half million milk producers in Gujarat. The Amul pattern became a uniquely appropriate model for rural development and poverty alleviation, spurring what has come to be known as the White Revolution. In 1970 the rural development programme called Operation Flood was started. Operation Flood organised cooperatives of milk producers into a nationwide milk grid, with the purpose of increasing milk production, bringing the producer and consumer closer by eliminating middlemen, and assuring the producers a regular income throughout the year. Operation Flood was, however, not just a dairy programme. It saw dairying as a path to development, for generating employment and income for rural households and alleviating poverty. The number of members of the cooperative has continued to increase with the numbers of women members and Women's Dairy Cooperative Societies also increasing significantly.



leftwing organisations to organise the poor peasants. Secondly, the green revolution also resulted in the rise of what is called the middle peasant sections. These were farmers with medium size holdings, who benefited from the changes and soon emerged politically influential in many parts of the country.

Later developments

The story of development in India took a significant turn from the end of 1960s. You will see in Chapter Five how after Nehru's death the Congress system encountered difficulties. Indira Gandhi emerged as a popular leader. She decided to further strengthen the role of the state in controlling and directing the economy. The period from 1967 onwards witnessed many new restrictions on private industry. Fourteen private banks were nationalised. The government announced many pro-poor programmes. These changes were accompanied by an ideological tilt towards socialist policies. This emphasis generated heated debates within the country among political parties and also among experts.

However, the consensus for a state-led economic development did not last forever. Planning did continue, but its salience was significantly reduced. Between 1950 and 1980 the Indian economy grew at a sluggish per annum rate of 3 to 3.5%. In view of the prevailing

inefficiency and corruption in some public sector enterprises and the not-so-positive role of the bureaucracy in economic development, the public opinion in the country lost the faith it initially placed in many of these institutions. Such lack of public faith led the policy makers to reduce the importance of the state in India's economy from the 1980s onwards. We shall look at that part of the story towards the end of this book.



Credit: Shankar

EXERCISES

1. Which of these statements about the Bombay Plan is incorrect?

(a) It was a blueprint for India's economic future. (b) It supported state-ownership of industry. (c) It was made by some leading industrialists. (d) It supported strongly the idea of planning.	(c) Cooperative Farming (d) Self sufficiency
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2. Which of the following ideas did not form part of the early phase of India's development policy?

(a) Planning (b) Liberalisation	(c) Cooperative Farming (d) Self sufficiency
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3. The idea of planning in India was drawn from

(a) the Bombay plan (b) experiences of the Soviet bloc countries i. b and d only ii. d and c only	(c) Gandhian vision of society (d) Demand by peasant organisations iii. a and b only iv. all the above
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4. Match the following.
- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) Charan Singh | i. Industrialisation |
| (b) P C Mahalanobis | ii. Zoning |
| (c) Bihar Famine | iii. Farmers |
| (d) Verghese Kurien | iv. Milk Cooperatives |
5. What were the major differences in the approach towards development at the time of Independence? Has the debate been resolved?
6. What was the major thrust of the First Five Year Plan? In which ways did the Second Plan differ from the first one?
7. What was the Green Revolution? Mention two positive and two negative consequences of the Green Revolution.
8. State the main arguments in the debate that ensued between industrialisation and agricultural development at the time of the Second Five Year Plan.
9. "Indian policy makers made a mistake by emphasising the role of state in the economy. India could have developed much better if private sector was allowed a free play right from the beginning". Give arguments for or against this proposition.
10. Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

"In the early years of Independence, two contradictory tendencies were already well advanced inside the Congress party. On the one hand, the national party executive endorsed socialist principles of state ownership, regulation and control over key sectors of the economy in order to improve productivity and at the same time curb economic concentration. On the other hand, the national Congress government pursued liberal economic policies and incentives to private investment that was justified in terms of the sole criterion of achieving maximum increase in production. — FRANCINE FRANKEL

- (a) What is the contradiction that the author is talking about? What would be the political implications of a contradiction like this?
- (b) If the author is correct, why is it that the Congress was pursuing this policy? Was it related to the nature of the opposition parties?
- (c) Was there also a contradiction between the central leadership of the Congress party and its State level leaders?

EXERCISES



Credit: NMML

In this chapter...

Thus far we have focussed in this book on the developments within the country and on domestic challenges. We now turn to the external challenges. Here too our leaders faced the challenge with an innovative response by way of the policy of non-alignment. But they also found themselves in conflict with neighbours. This led to three wars in 1962, 1965 and 1971. These wars, and the external relations in general, were shaped by and had its impact on the politics in the country.

In this chapter we study the story of this relationship between the external and the internal politics by focussing on

- the international context that shaped India's external relations;
- the operational principles that informed the country's foreign policy;
- the history of India's relations with China and Pakistan; and
- the evolution of India's nuclear policy.

Nehru with Nkrumah from Ghana, Nasser from Egypt, Sukarno from Indonesia and Tito from Yugoslavia at the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung in 1955. These five comprised the core leadership of the Non Aligned Movement.

INDIA'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

International context

India was born in a very trying and challenging international context. The world had witnessed a devastating war and was grappling with issues of reconstruction; yet another attempt to establish an international body was underway; many new countries were emerging as a result of the collapse of colonialism; and most new nations were trying to come to terms with the twin challenges of welfare and democracy. Free India's foreign policy reflected all these concerns in the period immediately after Independence. Apart from these factors at the global level, India had its own share of concerns. The British government left behind the legacy of many international disputes; Partition created its own pressures, and the task of poverty alleviation was already waiting for fulfilment. This was the overall context in which India started participating in the world affairs as an independent nation-state.

As a nation born in the backdrop of the world war, India decided to conduct its foreign relations with an aim to respect the sovereignty of all other nations and to achieve security through the maintenance of peace. This aim finds an echo in the Directive Principles of State Policy.

Just as both internal and external factors guide the behaviour of an individual or a family, both domestic and international environment influence the foreign policy of a nation. The developing countries lack the required resources to effectively advocate their concerns in the international system. So they pursue more modest goals than the advanced states. They focus more on peace and development in their own neighbourhood. Moreover, their economic and security dependence on the more powerful states occasionally influences their foreign policy. In the period immediately after the Second World War, many developing nations chose to support the foreign policy preferences of the powerful countries who were giving them aid or credits. This resulted in the division of countries of the world into two clear camps. One was under the influence of the United States and its western allies and the other was under the influence of the then Soviet Union. You have read about this in the book on *Contemporary World Politics*. You have read there about the experiment called the Non-Aligned Movement. As you also read there, the end of the Cold War changed the context of international relations entirely. But when India achieved its freedom and started framing its foreign policy, the

“ What does independence consist of? It consists fundamentally and basically of foreign relations. That is the test of independence. All else is local autonomy. Once foreign relations go out of your hands into the charge of somebody else, to that extent and in that measure you are not independent. ”

Jawaharlal Nehru
during a debate in the Constituent Assembly in March 1949.

The Constitutional principles

Article 51 of the Indian Constitution lays down some Directive Principles of State Policy on 'Promotion of international peace and security'.

"The State shall endeavour to –

- (a) Promote international peace and security
- (b) Maintain just and honourable relations between nations
- (c) Foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organised people with one another; and
- (d) Encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration."

How well did the Indian state live up to these principles in the first two decades after Independence? You may come back to this question after reading the chapter.

Cold War was just beginning and the world was getting divided into these two camps. Did India belong to any of these two camps in global politics of the fifties and the sixties? Was it successful in conducting its foreign policy peacefully and avoiding international conflicts?

Policy of non-alignment

The Indian national movement was not an isolated process. It was a part of the worldwide struggle against colonialism and imperialism. It influenced the liberation movements of many Asian and African countries. Prior to India's Independence, there were contacts between the nationalist leaders of India and those of other colonies, united as they were in their common struggle against colonialism and imperialism. The creation of the Indian National Army (INA) by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose during the Second World War was the clearest manifestation of the linkages established between India and overseas Indians during the freedom struggle.

The foreign policy of a nation reflects the interplay of domestic and external factors. Therefore, the noble ideals that inspired India's struggle for freedom influenced the making of its foreign policy. But India's attainment of independence coincided with the beginning of the Cold War era. As you read in the first chapter of the book on Contemporary World Politics, this period was marked by the political, economic, and military confrontation at the global level between the two blocs led by the superpowers, the US and the USSR. The same period also witnessed developments like the establishment of the UN, the creation of nuclear weapons, the emergence of Communist



It's the fourth chapter and it's Nehru once again! Was he a superman or what? Or have the historians glorified his role?

China, and the beginning of decolonisation. So India's leadership had to pursue its national interests within the prevailing international context.

Nehru's role

The first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru played a crucial role in setting the national agenda. He was his own foreign minister. Thus both as the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, he exercised profound influence in the formulation and implementation of India's foreign policy from 1946 to 1964. The three major objectives of Nehru's foreign policy were to preserve the hard-earned sovereignty, protect territorial integrity, and promote rapid economic development. Nehru wished to achieve these objectives through the strategy of non-alignment. There were of course parties and groups in the country that believed that India should be more friendly with the bloc led by US because that bloc claimed to be pro-democracy. Among those who thought on these lines were leaders like Dr Ambedkar. Some political parties, which were opposed to communism, also wanted India to follow a pro-US foreign policy. These included the Bharatiya Jan Sangh and later the Swatantra Party. But Nehru possessed considerable leeway in formulating the foreign policy.

Distance from two camps

The foreign policy of independent India vigorously pursued the dream of a peaceful world by advocating the policy of non-alignment, by reducing the Cold War tensions and by contributing human resources to the UN peacekeeping operations. You might ask why India did not join either of the two camps during the Cold War era. India wanted to keep away from the military alliances led by US and Soviet Union against each other. As you have read in the book on Contemporary World Politics, during the Cold War, the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact came into existence. India advocated non-alignment as the ideal foreign policy approach. This was a difficult balancing act and sometimes the balance did not appear perfect. In 1956 when Britain attacked Egypt over the Suez canal issue, India led the world protest against this neo-colonial invasion. But in the same year when the USSR invaded Hungary, India did not join its public condemnation. Despite such situation, by and large India did take an independent stand on various international issues and could get aid and assistance from members of both the blocs.

While India was trying to convince the other developing countries about the policy of non-alignment, Pakistan joined the US-led military alliances. The US was not happy about India's independent initiatives and the policy of non-alignment. Therefore, there was a considerable

“ Our general policy is to avoid entanglement in power politics and not to join any group of powers as against any other group. The two leading groups today are the Russian bloc and the Anglo-American bloc. We must be friendly to both and yet not join either. Both America and Russia are extraordinarily suspicious of each other as well as of other countries. This makes our path difficult and we may well be suspected by each of leaning towards the other. This cannot be helped. ”

Jawaharlal Nehru
Letter to K.P.S.
Menon, January
1947.



Did we have more recognition and power in the world when we were younger, poorer and more vulnerable than now? Isn't that strange?

“a country without material, men or money – the three means of power – is now fast coming to be recognised as the biggest moral power in the civilised world ... her word listened to with respect in the councils of the great.

”

C. Rajagopalachari
Letter to Edwina Mountbatten, 1950.

unease in Indo-US relations during the 1950s. The US also resented India's growing partnership with the Soviet Union.

You have studied in the last chapter, the strategy of planned economic development adopted by India. This policy emphasised import-substitution. The emphasis on developing a resource base also meant that export oriented growth was limited. This development strategy limited India's economic interaction with the outside world.

Afro-Asian unity

Yet, given its size, location and power potential, Nehru envisaged a major role for India in world affairs and especially in Asian affairs. His era was marked by the establishment of contacts between India and other newly independent states in Asia and Africa. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Nehru had been an ardent advocate of Asian unity. Under his leadership, India convened the Asian Relations Conference in March 1947, five months ahead of attaining its independence. India made earnest efforts for the early realisation of freedom of Indonesia from the Dutch colonial regime by convening an international conference in 1949 to support its freedom struggle. India was a staunch supporter of the decolonisation process and firmly opposed racism, especially apartheid in South Africa. The Afro-Asian conference held in the Indonesian city of Bandung in 1955, commonly known as the Bandung Conference, marked the zenith of India's engagement with the newly independent Asian and African nations. The Bandung Conference later led to the establishment of the NAM. The First Summit of the NAM was held in Belgrade in September 1961. Nehru was a co-founder of the NAM (See Chapter 1 of *Contemporary World Politics*).

Peace and conflict with China

Unlike its relationship with Pakistan, free India began its relationship with China on a very friendly note. After the Chinese revolution in 1949, India was one of the first countries to recognise the communist government. Nehru felt strongly for this neighbour that was coming out of the shadow of western domination and helped the new government in international fora. Some of his colleagues, like Vallabhbhai Patel, were worried about a possible Chinese aggression in future. But Nehru thought it was 'exceedingly unlikely' that India will face an attack from China. For a very long time, the Chinese border was guarded by para-military forces, not the army.

The joint enunciation of Panchsheel, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, by the Indian Prime Minister Nehru and the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on 29 April 1954 was a step in the direction of stronger relationship between the two countries. Indian and Chinese leaders visited each other's country and were greeted by large and friendly crowds.

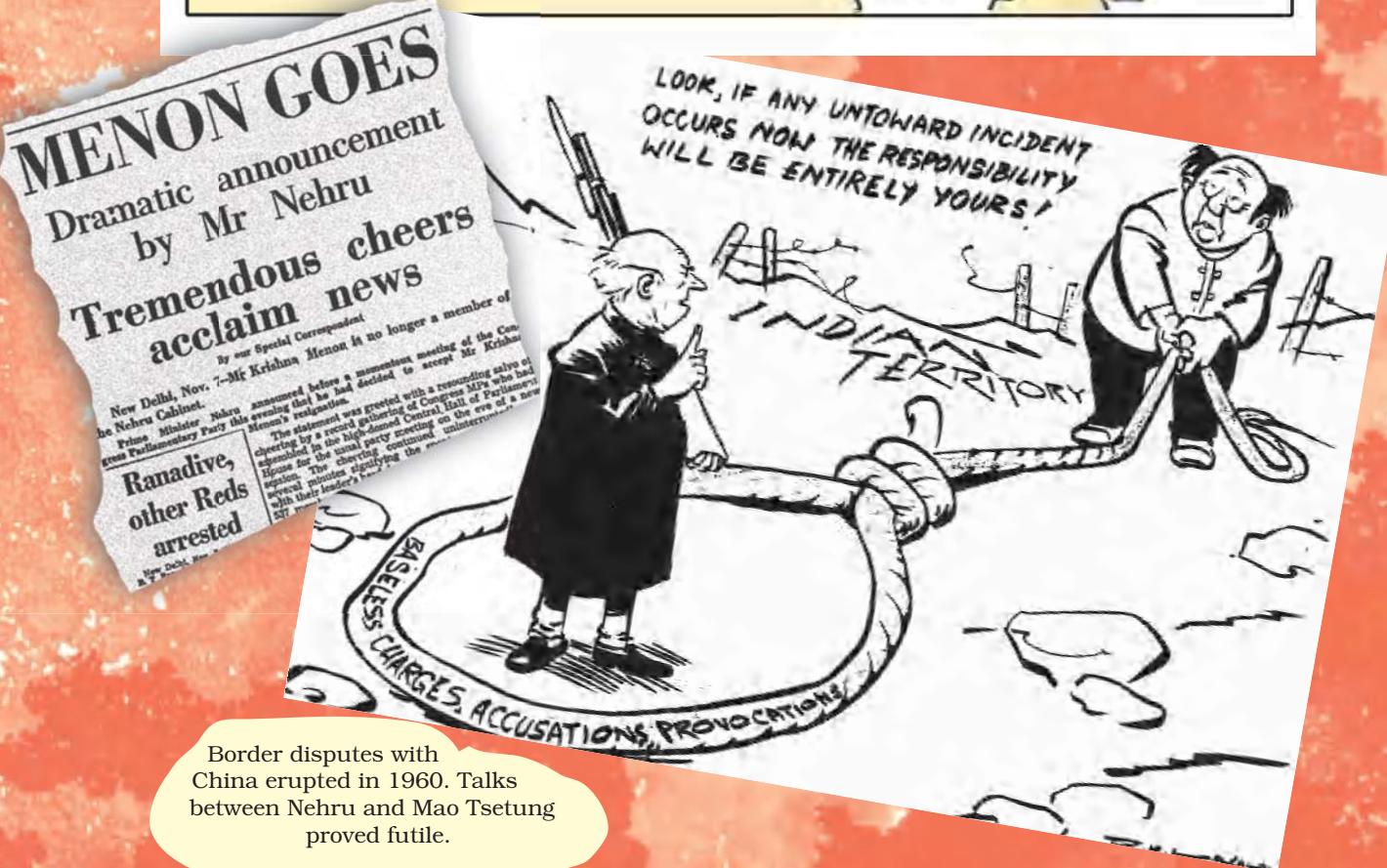


Credit: Homai Vyarawalla

TIBET

The plateau of the central Asian region called Tibet is one of the major issues that historically caused tension between India and China. From time to time in history, China had claimed administrative control over Tibet. And from time to time, Tibet was independent too. In 1950, China took over control of Tibet. Large sections of the Tibetan population opposed this takeover. India tried to persuade China to recognise Tibet's claims for independence. When the Panchsheel agreement was signed between India and China in 1954, through one of its clauses about respecting each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, India conceded China's claim over Tibet. The Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama accompanied the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai during the official Chinese visit to India in 1956. He informed Nehru about the worsening situation in Tibet. But China had already assured India that Tibet will be given greater autonomy than enjoyed by any other region of China. In 1958, there was armed uprising in Tibet against China's occupation. This was suppressed by the Chinese forces. Sensing that the situation had become worse, in 1959, the Dalai Lama crossed over into the Indian border and sought asylum which was granted. The Chinese government strongly protested against this. Over the last half century, a large number of Tibetans have also sought refuge in India and many other countries of the world. In India, particularly in Delhi, there are large settlements of Tibetan refugees. Dharmashala in Himachal Pradesh is perhaps the largest refugee settlement of Tibetans in India. The Dalai Lama has also made Dharmashala his home in India. In the 1950s and 1960s many political leaders and parties in India including the Socialist Party and the Jan Sangh supported the cause of Tibet's independence.

China has created the Tibet autonomous region, which is an integral part of China. Tibetans oppose the Chinese claim that Tibet is part of Chinese territory. They also oppose the policy of bringing into Tibet more and more Chinese settlers. Tibetans dispute China's claim that autonomy is granted to the region. They think that China wants to undermine the traditional religion and culture of Tibet.



The Hindustan Times Weekly

Largest Circulation in Northern and Central India
New Delhi Sunday Edition 1,750,000

10-rupee Price

71

Indian troops fall back in NEFA and Ladakh

Dhola, Khinzemane posts abandoned

Chinese advance pushed at heavy cost



We will not live

1962

killed in
Takhpur
airing
students
correspondent

China has numerical
and logistic edge



Credit: R. K. Laxman

China roller
evidence
under
construction.



V.K. Krishna Menon
(1897-1974):
Diplomat and
minister; active
in the Labour
Party in UK
between 1934-
1947; Indian High

Commissioner in UK and later head
of India's delegation to UN; Rajya
Sabha MP and later Lok Sabha MP;
member of the Union Cabinet from
1956; Defence Minister since 1957;
considered very close to Nehru;
resigned after the India-China war in
1962.



The Chinese invasion, 1962

“ Frankly ... my impression (of Zhou Enlai) was very favourable.the Chinese premier is, I believe a good type of man and trustworthy.”

C. Rajagopalachari
In a letter, December 1956

I heard it from my grandfather. Nehru Ji cried in public when Lata Mangeshkar sang “Ai mere watan ke logo...” after the 1962 war.



Two developments strained this relationship. China annexed Tibet in 1950 and thus removed a historical buffer between the two countries. Initially, the government of India did not oppose this openly. But as more information came in about the suppression of Tibetan culture, the Indian government grew uneasy. The Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, sought and obtained political asylum in India in 1959. China alleged that the government of India was allowing anti-China activities to take place from within India.

A little earlier, a boundary dispute had surfaced between India and China. India claimed that the boundary was a matter settled in colonial time, but China said that any colonial decision did not apply. The main dispute was about the western and the eastern end of the long border. China claimed two areas within the Indian territory: Aksai-chin area in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir and much of the state of Arunachal Pradesh in what was then called NEFA (North Eastern Frontier Agency). Between 1957 and 1959, the Chinese occupied the Aksai-chin area and built a strategic road there. Despite a very long correspondence and discussion among top leaders, these differences could not be resolved. Several small border skirmishes between the armies of the two countries took place.

Do you remember the Cuban Missile Crisis in Chapter One of the *Contemporary World Politics*? While the entire world's attention was on this crisis involving the two superpowers, China launched a swift and massive invasion in October 1962 on both the disputed regions. The first attack lasted one week and Chinese forces captured some key areas in Arunachal Pradesh. The second wave of attack came next month. While the Indian forces could block the Chinese advances on the western front in Ladakh, in the east the Chinese managed to advance nearly to the entry point of Assam plains. Finally, China declared a unilateral ceasefire and its troops withdrew to where they were before the invasion began.

The China war dented India's image at home and abroad. India had to approach the Americans and the British for military assistance to tide over the crisis. The Soviet Union remained neutral during the conflict. It induced a sense of national humiliation and at the same time strengthened a spirit of nationalism. Some of the top army commanders either resigned or were retired. Nehru's close associate and the then Defence Minister, V. Krishna Menon, had to leave the cabinet. Nehru's own stature suffered as he was severely criticised for his naïve assessment of the Chinese intentions and the lack of military preparedness. For the first time, a no-confidence motion against his government was moved and debated in the Lok Sabha. Soon thereafter, the Congress lost some key by-elections to Lok Sabha. The political mood of the country had begun to change.

Fast Forward**Sino-Indian relations since 1962**

It took more than a decade for India and China to resume normal relations. It was in 1976 that full diplomatic relations were restored between the two countries. Atal Behari Vajpayee was the first top level leader (he was then External Affairs Minister) to visit China in 1979. Later, Rajiv Gandhi became the first Prime Minister after Nehru to visit China. Since then, the emphasis is more on trade relations between the two countries. In the book, *Contemporary World Politics*, you have already read about these developments.

The Sino-Indian conflict affected the opposition as well. This and the growing rift between China and the Soviet Union created irreconcilable differences within the Communist Party of India (CPI). The pro-USSR faction remained within the CPI and moved towards closer ties with the Congress. The other faction was for sometime closer to China and was against any ties with the Congress. The party split in 1964 and the leaders of the latter faction formed Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M). In the wake of China war, many leaders of what became CPI (M) were arrested for being pro-China.

The war with China alerted Indian leadership to the volatile situation in the Northeast region. Apart from being isolated and extremely underdeveloped, this region also presented India with the challenge of national integration and political unity. The process of its reorganisation began soon after the China war. Nagaland was granted statehood; Manipur and Tripura, though Union Territories, were given the right to elect their own legislative assemblies.

Let's watch a film**HAQEEQAT**

A small platoon of Indian army is rescued by the gypsies in Ladakh region. The enemy has surrounded their post. Capt. Bahadur Singh and his gypsy girlfriend Kammo help the *jawans* vacate their posts. Both Bahadur Singh and Kammo die while holding the Chinese but the *jawans* too, are out powered by the enemy and lay down their lives for the country.

Set in the backdrop of the China war of 1962, this film portrays the soldier and his travails as its central theme. It pays tribute to the soldiers while depicting their plight, and the political frustration over the betrayal by the Chinese. The film uses documentary footage of war scenes and is considered as one of the early war films made in Hindi.

Year: 1964

Director: Chetan Anand
Actors: Dharmendra, Priya Rajvansh, Balraj Sahni, Jayant, Sudhir, Sanjay Khan, Vijay Anand

Wars and Peace with Pakistan

In the case of Pakistan the conflict started just after Partition over the dispute on Kashmir. You will read more about the dispute in Chapter 8. A proxy war broke out between Indian and Pakistani army in Kashmir during 1947 itself. But this did not turn into a full war. The issue was then referred to the UN. Pakistan soon emerged as a critical factor in India's relations with the US and subsequently with China.

The Kashmir conflict did not prevent cooperation between the governments of India and Pakistan. Both the governments worked together to restore the women abducted during Partition to their original families. A long-term dispute about the sharing of river waters was resolved through mediation by the World Bank. The India-Pakistan Indus Waters Treaty was signed by Nehru and General Ayub Khan in 1960. Despite all ups and downs in the Indo-Pak relations, this treaty has worked well.

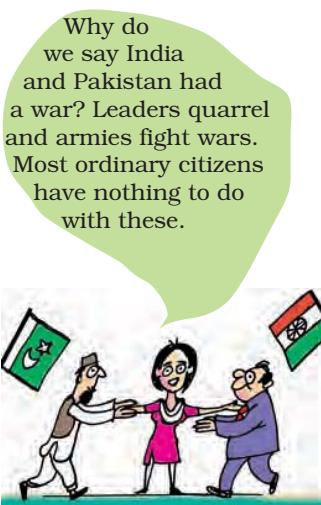
A more serious armed conflict between the two countries began in 1965. As you would read in the next chapter, by then Lal Bahadur Shastri had taken over as the Prime Minister. In April 1965 Pakistan launched armed attacks in the Rann of Kutch area of Gujarat. This was followed by a bigger offensive in Jammu and Kashmir in August-September. Pakistani rulers were hoping to get support from the local population there, but it did not happen. In order to ease the pressure on the Kashmir front, Shastri ordered Indian troops to launch a counter-offensive on the Punjab border. In a fierce battle, the Indian army reached close to Lahore.

The hostilities came to an end with the UN intervention. Later, Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistan's General Ayub Khan signed the Tashkent Agreement, brokered by the Soviet Union, in January 1966. Though India could inflict considerable military loss on Pakistan, the 1965 war added to India's already difficult economic situation.

Bangladesh war, 1971

Beginning in 1970, Pakistan faced its biggest internal crisis. The country's first general election produced a split verdict – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's party emerged a winner in West Pakistan, while the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman swept through East Pakistan. The Bengali population of East Pakistan had voted to protest against years of being treated as second class citizens by the rulers based in West Pakistan. The Pakistani rulers were not willing to accept the democratic verdict. Nor were they ready to accept the Awami League's demand for a federation.

Instead, in early 1971, the Pakistani army arrested Sheikh Mujib and unleashed a reign of terror on the people of East Pakistan. In



This sounds like joining the Soviet bloc. Can we say that we were non-aligned even after signing this treaty with the Soviet Union?



Refugee influx threatens peace, India warns Pak



response to this, the people started a struggle to liberate 'Bangladesh' from Pakistan. Throughout 1971, India had to bear the burden of about 80 lakh refugees who fled East Pakistan and took shelter in the neighbouring areas in India. India extended moral and material support to the freedom struggle in Bangladesh. Pakistan accused India of a conspiracy to break it up.

Support for Pakistan came from the US and China. The US-China rapprochement that began in the late 1960s resulted in a realignment of forces in Asia. Henry Kissinger, the adviser to the US President Richard Nixon, made a secret visit to China via Pakistan in July 1971. In order to counter the US-Pakistan-China axis, India signed a 20-year Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union in August 1971. This treaty assured India of Soviet support if the country faced any attack.

After months of diplomatic tension and military build-up, a full-scale war between India and Pakistan broke out in December 1971. Pakistani aircrafts attacked Punjab and Rajasthan, while the army moved on the Jammu and Kashmir front. India retaliated with an attack involving the air force, navy and the army on both the Western and the Eastern front. Welcomed and supported by the local population, the Indian army made rapid progress in East Pakistan. Within ten days the Indian army had surrounded Dhaka from three sides and the Pakistani army of about 90,000 had to surrender. With Bangladesh as a free country, India declared a unilateral ceasefire. Later, the signing of the Shimla Agreement between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on 3 July 1972 formalised the return of peace.

A decisive victory in the war led to national jubilation. Most people in India saw this as a moment of glory and a clear sign of India's growing military prowess. As you would read in the next chapter, Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister at this time. She had already won the Lok Sabha elections in 1971. Her personal popularity soared

Fast Forward Kargil Confrontation



In the early part of 1999 several points on the Indian side of the LoC in the Mashkoh, Dras, Kaksar and Batalik areas were occupied by forces claiming to be Mujahideens. Suspecting involvement of the Pakistan Army, Indian forces started reacting to this occupation. This led to a confrontation between the two countries. This is known as the Kargil conflict. This conflict went on during May and June 1999. By 26 July 1999, India had recovered control of many of the lost points. The Kargil conflict drew attention worldwide for the reason that only one year prior to that, both India and Pakistan had attained nuclear capability. However, this conflict remained confined only to the Kargil region. In Pakistan, this conflict has been the source of a major controversy as it was alleged later that the Prime Minister of Pakistan was kept in the dark by the Army Chief. Soon after the conflict, the government of Pakistan was taken over by the Pakistan Army led by the Army Chief, General Pervez Musharraf.

JHONLAJEE
STEEL
TUBES
BOILER TUBES
To my Specifications
Size and Thickness
GOVARDHAM DRS P. &
LTD MARGESH CH. ROAD NO. 22
NEW DELHI - 110 002
TELEGRAMS - 22442

APRIL 1961
Published from Sunday Delhi and Associated

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1971

EL WISE
PLATE PAINT
EXTRA GLOSS



YAHYA YIELDS TO INDIRA, ENDS WAR Somersault by General as 1971 S. hails Delhi as keeps out



Gen. A. A. K. Niazi signing the surrender documents in Decca on Thursday. Lt.-Gen. Niazi from left are Vice Admiral Krishna, Air Marshal H. C. Dewar, Lt.-Gen. Sepah

Remain alert, warn

INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER SIGNED AT DELTA 463 BAZAR (DECC)
ON 16 DEC 1971

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command agrees to surrender all PAKISTAN Armed Forces to ARYALA DESH to Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA, General Officer Commanding in Chief of the Indian and BANGLA DESH Forces in the Eastern Theatre. This surrender includes all PAKISTAN Land, air and naval forces as also all para-military forces and civil armed forces. The forces will lay down their arms and surrender at the places where they are currently located to the nearest regular troops under the command of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command shall come under the orders of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA as soon as this instrument has been signed. Disbandment of forces will be according to the surrender terms and will be dealt with in accordance w/o the accepted form and usage of war. The decision of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA will be final, should any doubt arise as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms.

Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA gives a solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to the safety and well-being of all. GENOA Convention and guarantees the safety of all surrendered forces and personnel. Protection will be provided to families, nationalists, ethnic minorities and persons of REST PAKISTAN origin by the forces under the command of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.

Jagjit Singh AAK Niazi dt L.
(GEN. ABDULLAH KHAN NIAZI)
Lieutenant-General
Commander-in-Chief Martial Law Administrator Zone 8 and
BANGLA DESH Forces in the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Command (PAKISTAN)

16 December 1971.

The surrender document

Twenty five

New Delhi Sunday March 26 1972

Twenty five

New Delhi Sunday March 26 1972



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Regd. No. 014

New Delhi Tuesday March 15 1972

Twenty five

New Delhi Sunday March 26 1972

Twenty five

New Delhi Sunday March 26 1972

MUJIB TAKES OVER 'BANGLA DESH'

PAK PLANES BOMB BANGLA DESH

Baluchistan,
NWFP are
also free?

Freedom fighters
blow up bridges



Cong(N)
majority
in UP now

From Today's Times

further after the 1971 war. After the war, assembly elections in most States took place, bringing large majorities for the Congress party in many states.

India, with its limited resources, had initiated development planning. However, conflicts with neighbours derailed the five-year plans. The scarce resources were diverted to the defence sector especially after 1962, as India had to embark on a military modernisation drive. The Department of Defence Production was established in November 1962 and the Department of Defence Supplies in November 1965. The Third Plan (1961-66) was affected and it was followed by three Annual Plans and the Fourth Plan could be initiated only in 1969. India's defence expenditure increased enormously after the wars.

India's nuclear policy

Another crucial development of this period was the first nuclear explosion undertaken by India in May 1974. Nehru had always put his faith in science and technology for rapidly building a modern India. A significant component of his industrialisation plans was the nuclear programme initiated in the late 1940s under the guidance of Homi J. Bhabha. India wanted to generate atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Nehru was against nuclear weapons. So he pleaded with the superpowers for comprehensive nuclear disarmament. However, the nuclear arsenal kept rising. When Communist China conducted nuclear tests in October 1964, the five nuclear weapon powers, the US, USSR, UK, France, and China (Taiwan then represented China) – also the five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council – tried to impose the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968 on the rest of the world. India always considered the NPT as discriminatory and had refused to sign it. When India conducted its first nuclear test, it was termed as peaceful explosion. India argued that it was committed to the policy of using nuclear power only for peaceful purposes.

I am confused! Isn't it all about atom bombs? Why don't we say so?



The period when the nuclear test was conducted was a difficult period in domestic politics. Following the Arab-Israel War of 1973, the entire world was affected by the Oil Shock due to the massive hike in the oil prices by the Arab nations. It led to economic turmoil in India resulting in high inflation. As you will read in Chapter Six, many agitations were going on in the country around this time, including a nationwide railway strike.

Although there are minor differences among political parties about how to conduct external relations, Indian politics is generally marked by a broad agreement among the parties on national integration, protection of international boundaries, and on questions of national interest. Therefore, we find that in the course of the decade of 1962-1972, when India faced three wars, or even later, when different parties came to power from time to time, foreign policy has played only a limited role in party politics.

Fast Forward India's Nuclear Programme



India has opposed the international treaties aimed at non-proliferation since they were selectively applicable to the non-nuclear powers and legitimised the monopoly of the five nuclear weapons powers. Thus, India opposed the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 and also refused to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

India conducted a series of nuclear tests in May 1998, demonstrating its capacity to use nuclear energy for military purposes. Pakistan soon followed, thereby increasing the vulnerability of the region to a nuclear exchange. The international community was extremely critical of the nuclear tests in the subcontinent and sanctions were imposed on both India and Pakistan, which were subsequently waived. India's nuclear doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence professes "no first use" and reiterates India's commitment to global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament leading to a nuclear weapons free world.

Shifting alliances in world politics

As you will read in Chapter Six and also in Chapter Nine, many non-Congress governments came to power in the period starting 1977. This was also the time when world politics was changing dramatically. What did it mean for India's external relations?

The Janata Party government that came to power in 1977 announced that it would follow genuine non-alignment. This implied that the pro-Soviet tilt in the foreign policy will be corrected. Since then, all governments (Congress or non-Congress) have taken initiatives for restoring better relations with China and entering into close ties with US. In Indian politics and in popular mind, India's foreign policy is always very closely linked to two questions. One is India's stand vis-à-vis Pakistan and the other is Indo-US relations. In the post-1990 period the ruling parties have often been criticised for their pro-US foreign policy.

Foreign policy is always dictated by ideas of national interest. In the period after 1990, Russia, though it continues to be an important friend of India, has lost its global pre-eminence. Therefore, India's foreign policy has shifted to a more pro-US strategy. Besides, the contemporary international situation is more influenced by economic interests than by military interests. This has also made an impact on India's foreign policy choices. At the same time, Indo-Pakistan relations have witnessed many new developments during this period. While Kashmir continues to be the main issue between the two countries, there have been many efforts to restore normal relations. This means that cultural exchanges, movement of citizens and economic cooperation would be encouraged by both countries. Do you know that a train and a bus service operate between these two countries? This has been a major achievement of the recent times. But that could not avoid the near-war situation from emerging in 1999. Even after this setback to the peace process, efforts at negotiating durable peace have been going on.

EXERCISES

1. Write 'true' or 'false' against each of these statements.
 - (a) Non-alignment allowed India to gain assistance both from USA and USSR.
 - (b) India's relationship with her neighbours has been strained from the beginning.
 - (c) The cold war has affected the relationship between India and Pakistan.
 - (d) The treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1971 was the result of India's closeness to USA.

2. Match the following

(a) The goal of India's foreign policy in the period 1950-1964 (b) Panchsheel (c) Bandung Conference (d) Dalai Lama	i. Tibetan spiritual leader who crossed over to India ii. Preservation of territorial integrity, sovereignty and economic development iii. Five principles of peaceful coexistence iv. Led to the establishment of NAM
--	---

3. Why did Nehru regard conduct of foreign relations as an essential indicator of independence? State any two reasons with examples to support your reading.

4. "The conduct of foreign affairs is an outcome of a two-way interaction between domestic compulsions and prevailing international climate". Take one example from India's external relations in the 1960s to substantiate your answer.

5. Identify any two aspects of India's foreign policy that you would like to retain and two that you would like to change, if you were to become a decision maker. Give reasons to support your position.

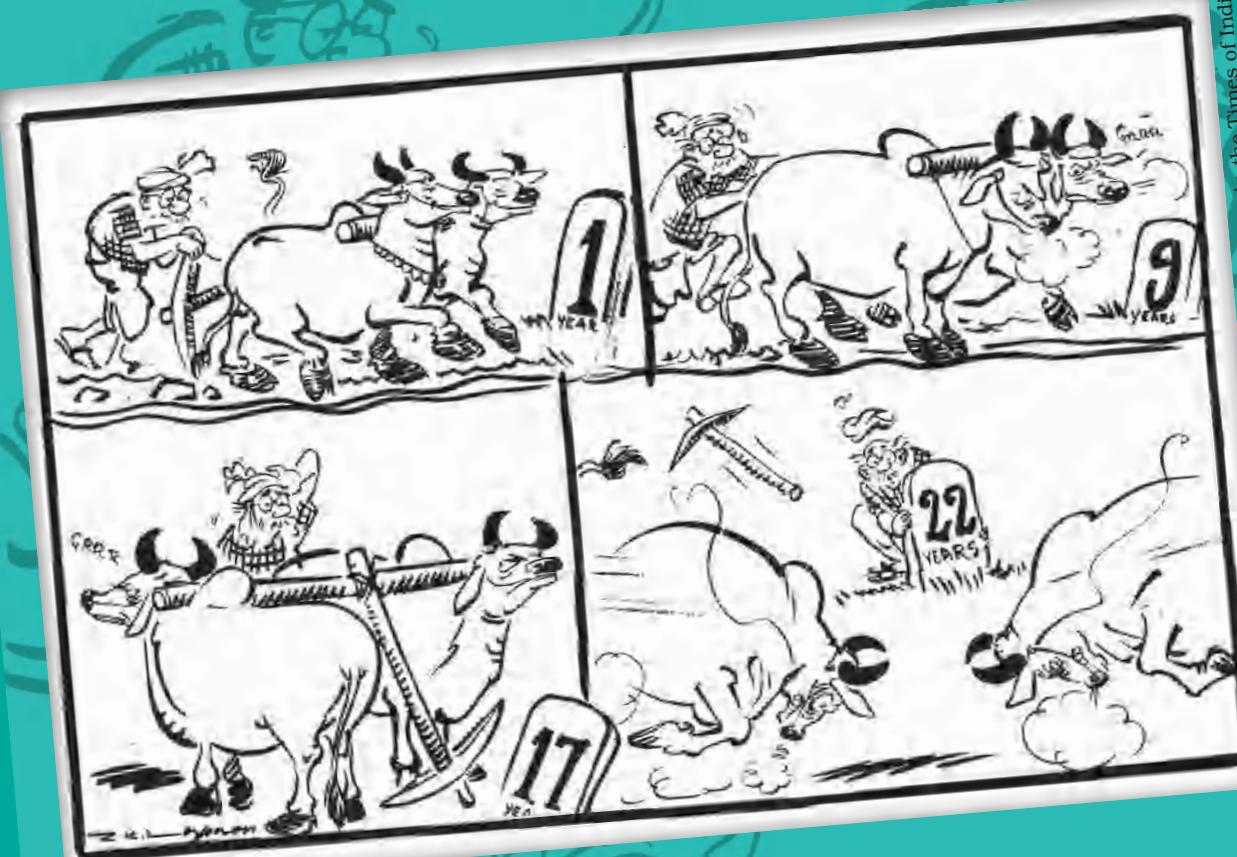
6. Write short notes on the following.
 - (a) India's Nuclear policy
 - (b) Consensus in foreign policy matters

7. India's foreign policy was built around the principles of peace and cooperation. But India fought three wars in a space of ten years between 1962 and 1972. Would you say that this was a failure of the foreign policy? Or would you say that this was a result of international situation? Give reasons to support your answer.

8. Does India's foreign policy reflect her desire to be an important regional power? Argue your case with the Bangladesh war of 1971 as an example.
9. How does political leadership of a nation affect its foreign policy? Explain this with the help of examples from India's foreign policy.
10. Read this passage and answer the questions below:

"Broadly, non-alignment means not tying yourself off with military blocs....It means trying to view things, as far as possible, not from the military point of view, though that has to come in sometimes, but independently, and trying to maintain friendly relations with all countries." — JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

- (a) Why does Nehru want to keep off military blocs?
- (b) Do you think that the Indo-Soviet friendship treaty violated the principle of non-alignment? Give reasons for your answer.
- (c) If there were no military blocs, do you think non-alignment would have been unnecessary?



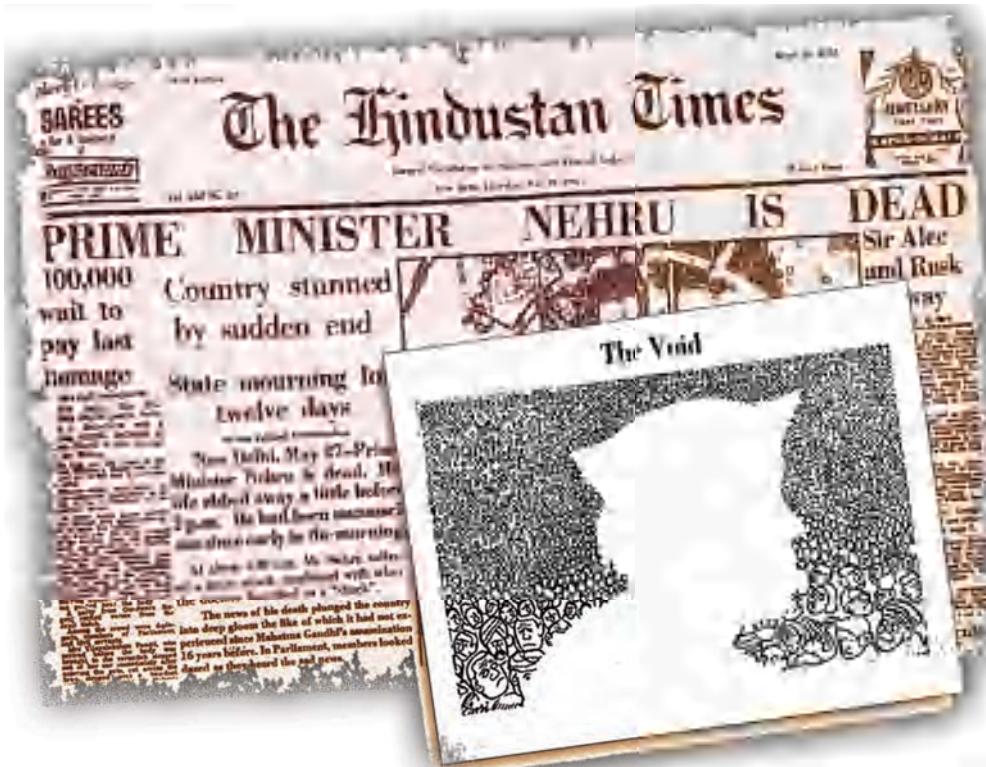
In this chapter...

In Chapter Two we read about the emergence of the Congress system. This system was first challenged during the 1960s. As political competition became more intense, the Congress found it difficult to retain its dominance. It faced challenges from the opposition that was more powerful and less divided than before. The Congress also faced challenges from within, as the party could no longer accommodate all kinds of differences. In this chapter we pick the story from where we left it in Chapter Two, in order to

- understand how the political transition took place after Nehru;
- describe how the opposition unity and the Congress split posed a challenge to Congress dominance;
- explain how a new Congress led by Indira Gandhi overcame these challenges; and
- analyse how new policies and ideologies facilitated the restoration of the Congress system.

Originally the election symbol of the Congress was a pair of bullocks. This famous cartoon depicts the changes within the Congress leading to a head-on confrontation in the 22nd year after Independence.

CHALLENGES TO AND RESTORATION OF THE CONGRESS SYSTEM



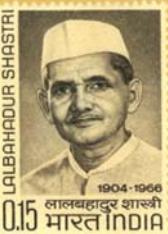
challenge of Political succession

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru passed away in May 1964. He had been unwell for more than a year. This had generated a lot of speculation about the usual question of succession: after Nehru, who? But in a newly independent country like India, this situation gave rise to a more serious question: after Nehru, what?

The second question arose from the serious doubts that many outsiders had about whether India's democratic experiment will survive after Nehru. It was feared that like so many other newly independent countries, India too would not be able to manage a democratic succession. A failure to do so, it was feared, could lead to a political role for the army. Besides, there were doubts if the new leadership would be able to handle the multiple crises that awaited a solution. The 1960s were labelled as the 'dangerous decade' when



When France or Canada have similar problems, no one talks about failure or disintegration. Why are we under this constant suspicion?



Lal Bahadur Shastri (1904-1966): Prime Minister of India; participated in the freedom movement since 1930; minister in UP cabinet; General Secretary of Congress; Minister in Union Cabinet from 1951 to 1956 when he resigned taking responsibility for the railway accident and later from 1957 to 1964; coined the famous slogan 'Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan'.

unresolved problems like poverty, inequality, communal and regional divisions etc. could lead to a failure of the democratic project or even the disintegration of the country.

From Nehru to Shastri

The ease with which the succession after Nehru took place proved all the critics wrong. When Nehru passed away, K. Kamraj, the president of the Congress party consulted party leaders and Congress members of Parliament and found that there was a consensus in favour of Lal Bahadur Shastri. He was unanimously chosen as the leader of the Congress parliamentary party and thus became the country's next Prime Minister. Shastri was a non-controversial leader from Uttar Pradesh who had been a Minister in Nehru's cabinet for many years. Nehru had come to depend a lot on him in his last year. He was known for his simplicity and his commitment to principles. Earlier he had resigned from the position of Railway Minister accepting moral responsibility for a major railway accident.

Shastri was the country's Prime Minister from 1964 to 1966. During Shastri's brief Prime Ministership, the country faced two major challenges. While India was still recovering from the economic implications of the war with China, failed monsoons, drought and serious food crisis presented a grave challenge. As discussed in the previous chapter, the country also faced a war with Pakistan in 1965. Shastri's famous slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan', symbolised the country's resolve to face both these challenges.

Shastri's Prime Ministership came to an abrupt end on 10 January 1966, when he suddenly expired in Tashkent, then in USSR and currently the capital of Uzbekistan. He was there to discuss and sign an agreement with Muhammad Ayub Khan, the then President of Pakistan, to end the war.

From Shastri to Indira Gandhi

Thus the Congress faced the challenge of political succession for the second time in two years. This time there was an intense competition between Morarji Desai and Indira Gandhi. Morarji Desai had earlier served as Chief Minister of Bombay state (today's Maharashtra and Gujarat) and also as a Minister at the centre. Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, had been Congress President in the past and had also been Union Minister for Information in the Shastri cabinet. This time the senior leaders in the party decided to back Indira Gandhi, but the decision was not unanimous. The contest was resolved through a secret ballot among Congress MPs. Indira Gandhi defeated Morarji Desai by securing the support of more than two-thirds of the party's MPs. A peaceful transition of power, despite intense competition for leadership, was seen as a sign of maturity of India's democracy.

“...new Prime Minister of India, in spite of all forebodings, had been named with more dispatch, and much more dignity, than was the new Prime Minister of Britain.

Editorial in The Guardian, London, 3 June 1964, comparing the political succession after Nehru with the succession drama after Harold Macmillan in Britain.

Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India



It took some time before the new Prime Minister could settle down. While Indira Gandhi had been politically active for very long, she had served as a minister under Lal Bahadur Shastri only for a short period. The senior Congress leaders may have supported Indira Gandhi in the belief that her administrative and political inexperience would compel her to be dependent on them for support and guidance. Within a year of becoming Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi had to lead the party in a Lok Sabha election. Around this time, the economic situation in the country had further deteriorated, adding to her problems. Faced with these difficulties, she set out to gain control over the party and to demonstrate her leadership skills.

Indira Gandhi (1917-1984): Prime Minister of India from 1966 to 1977 and 1980 to 1984; daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru; participated in the freedom struggle as a young Congress worker; Congress President in 1958; minister in Shastri's cabinet from 1964-66; led the Congress party to victory in 1967, 1971 and 1980 general elections; credited with the slogan 'garibi hatao', victory in 1971 war and for policy initiatives like abolition of Privy Purse, nationalisation of banks, nuclear test and environmental protection; assassinated on 31 October 1984.





It must have been difficult for her – one woman in a world dominated by men. Why don't we have more women in positions like that?



Credit: Raghu Rai

Fourth General Elections, 1967

The year 1967 is considered a landmark year in India's political and electoral history. In Chapter Two you read about how the Congress party was the dominant political force throughout the country from 1952 onwards. This trend was to undergo significant changes with the 1967 elections.

Context of the elections

In the years leading up to the fourth general elections, the country witnessed major changes. Two Prime Ministers had died in quick succession, and the new Prime Minister, who was being seen as a political novice, had been in office for less than a year. You will recall from the discussion in Chapter Three and in the previous section of this chapter that the period was fraught with grave economic crisis resulting from successive failure of monsoons, widespread drought,

decline in agricultural production, serious food shortage, depletion of foreign exchange reserves, drop in industrial production and exports, combined with a sharp rise in military expenditure and diversion of resources from planning and economic development. One of the first decisions of the Indira Gandhi government was to devalue the Indian rupee, under what was seen to be pressure from the US. Earlier one US dollar could be purchased for less than Rs. 5; after devaluation it cost more than Rs. 7.

The economic situation triggered off price rise. People started protesting against the increase in prices of essential commodities, food scarcity, growing unemployment and the overall economic condition in the country. Bandhs and hartals were called frequently across the country. The government saw the protests as a law and order problem and not as expressions of people's problems. This further increased public bitterness and reinforced popular unrest.

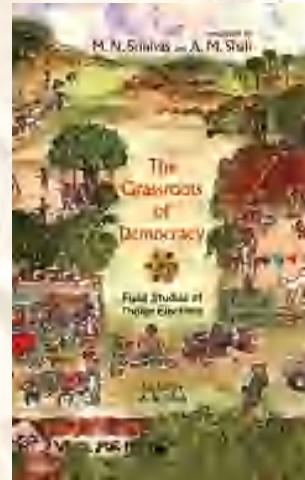
The communist and socialist parties launched struggles for greater equality. You will read in the next chapter about how a group of communists who separated from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to form the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) led armed agrarian struggles and organised peasant agitations. This period also witnessed some of the worst Hindu-Muslim riots since Independence.

Non-Congressism

This situation could not have remained isolated from party politics in the country. Opposition parties were in the forefront of organising public protests and pressurising the

Election in a Rajasthan Village

This is a story about 1967 assembly elections. In the Chomu constituency, the main parties in the fray were Congress and the Swatantra party. But village Devisar had its own local political dynamics and it got mixed up with the competition between the two parties. Sher Singh, traditionally dominated village politics, but gradually his nephew, Bhim Singh was emerging as the more popular leader and rival. Though both were Rajputs, Bhim Singh cultivated the support of many non-Rajputs in the village by attending to their requirements after becoming the panchayat Pradhan. So, he struck a new equation—the alliance of Rajputs and non-Rajputs.



He proved to be more adept in building alliances across the village by supporting candidates in other villages for the posts of village Pradhan. In fact, he took an initiative and took a delegation to the State Chief Minister and Congress leader Mohan Lal Sukhadia for pressing the name of one of his friends from a nearby village as Congress candidate in the Assembly election. When Sukhadia convinced him of some other name, Bhim Singh, in turn, convinced many others that they should work for the party candidate. Bhim Singh knew that if the party candidate won from this constituency, that candidate would become a minister and thus, he would have direct contacts with a minister for the first time!

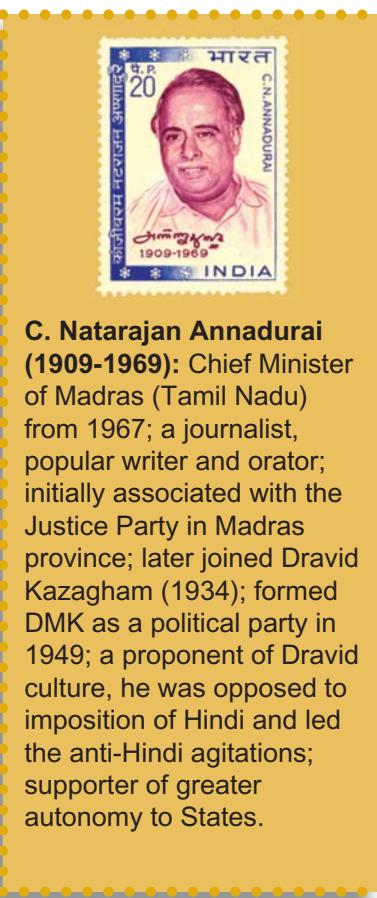
Sher Singh had no option but to work for the Swatantra candidate, who was a jagirdar. He kept telling people that the jagirdar would help build the village school and use his resources for the development of the locality. At least in Devisar village, the Assembly election had turned into a factional fight between uncle and nephew.

Based on Anand Chakravarti, 'A Village in Chomu Assembly Constituency in Rajasthan.'

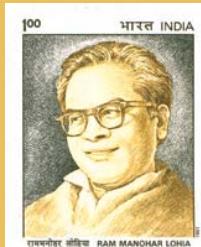
“...in India, as present trends continue... maintenance of an ordered structure of society is going to slip out of reach of an ordered structure of civil government and the army will be only alternative source of authority and order....the great experiment of developing India within a democratic framework has failed.

Neville Maxwell
‘India’s Disintegrating Democracy’ an article published in the London Times, 1967.

government. Parties opposed to the Congress realised that the division of their votes kept the Congress in power. Thus parties that were entirely different and disparate in their programmes and ideology got together to form anti-Congress fronts in some states and entered into electoral adjustments of sharing seats in others. They felt that the inexperience of Indira Gandhi and the internal factionalism within the Congress provided them an opportunity to topple the Congress. The socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia gave this strategy the name of ‘non-Congressism’. He also produced a theoretical argument in its defense: Congress rule was undemocratic and opposed to the interests of ordinary poor people; therefore the coming together of the non-Congress parties was necessary for reclaiming democracy for the people.



C. Natarajan Annadurai (1909-1969): Chief Minister of Madras (Tamil Nadu) from 1967; a journalist, popular writer and orator; initially associated with the Justice Party in Madras province; later joined Dravid Kazagham (1934); formed DMK as a political party in 1949; a proponent of Dravid culture, he was opposed to imposition of Hindi and led the anti-Hindi agitations; supporter of greater autonomy to States.



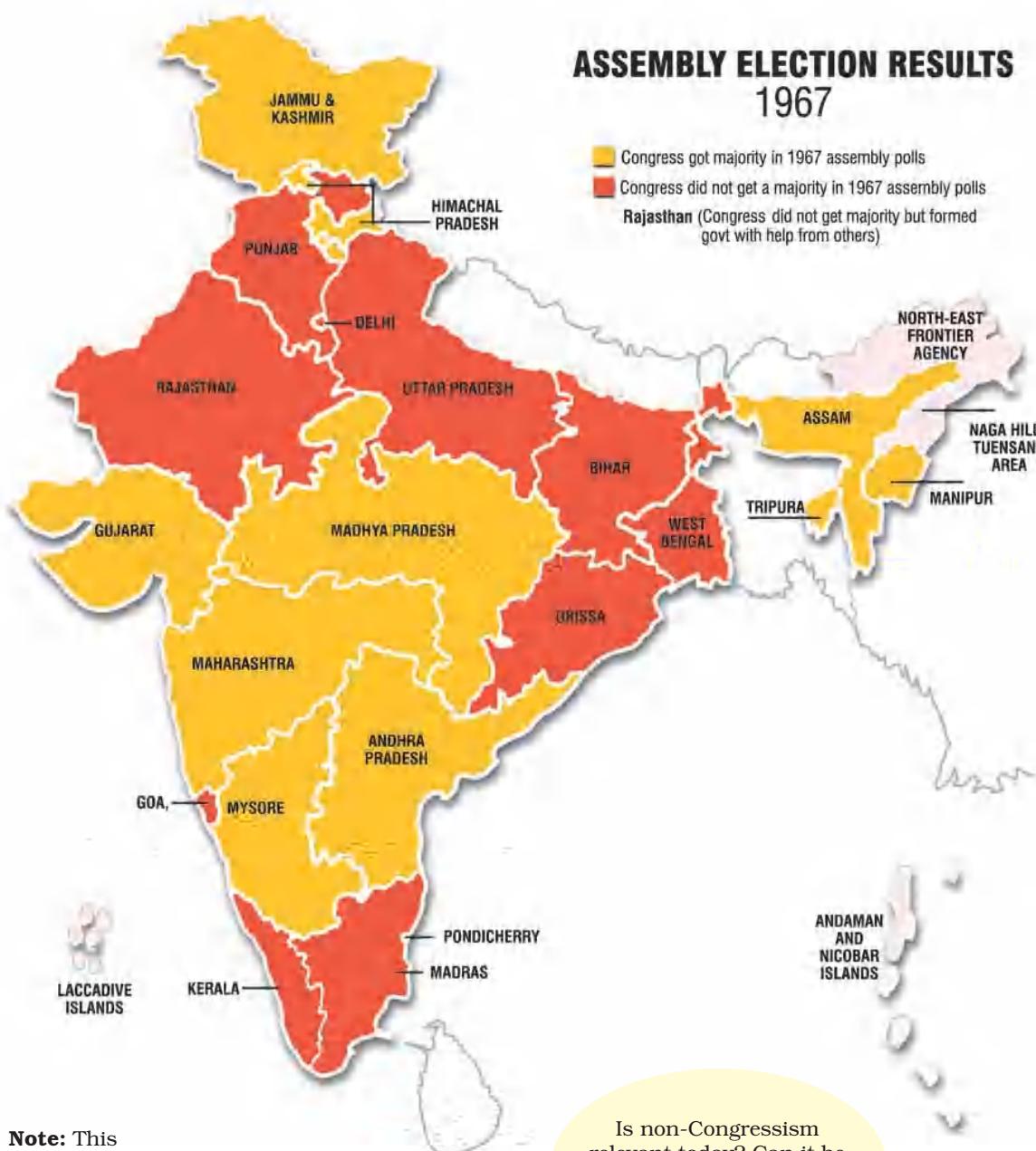
Rammanohar Lohia (1910-1967): Socialist leader and thinker; freedom fighter and among the founders of the Congress Socialist Party; after the split in the parent

party, the leader of the Socialist Party and later the Samyukta Socialist Party; Member, Lok Sabha, 1963-67; founder editor of Mankind and Jan, known for original contribution to a non-European socialist theory; as political leader, best known for sharp attacks on Nehru, strategy of non-Congressism, advocacy of reservation for backward castes and opposition to English.

Electoral verdict

It was in this context of heightened popular discontent and the polarisation of political forces that the fourth general elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies were held in February 1967. The Congress was facing the electorate for the first time without Nehru.

The results jolted the Congress at both the national and state levels. Many contemporary political observers described the election results as a ‘political earthquake’. The Congress did manage to get a majority in the Lok Sabha, but with its lowest tally of seats and share of votes since 1952. Half the ministers in Indira Gandhi’s cabinet were defeated. The political stalwarts who lost in their constituencies included Kamaraj in Tamil Nadu, S.K. Patil in Maharashtra, Atulya Ghosh in West Bengal and K. B. Sahay in Bihar.



Note: This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.

Is non-Congressism relevant today? Can it be applied against Left Front in today's West Bengal?

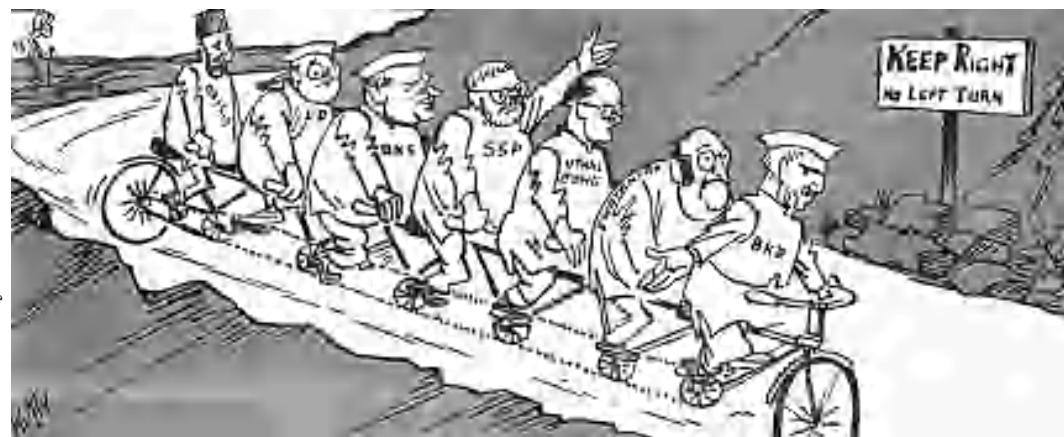


The dramatic nature of the political change would be more apparent to you at the State level. The Congress lost majority in as many as seven States. In two other States defections prevented it from forming a government. These nine States where the Congress lost power were spread across the country – Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala. In Madras State (now called Tamil Nadu), a regional party — the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) — came to power by securing a clear majority. The DMK won power after having led a massive anti-Hindi agitation by students against the centre on the issue of imposition of Hindi as the official language. This was the first time any non-Congress party had secured a majority of its own in any State. In the other eight States, coalition governments consisting of different non-Congress parties were formed. A popular saying was that one could take a train from Delhi to Howrah and not pass through a single Congress ruled State. It was a strange feeling for those who were used to seeing the Congress in power. So, was the domination of the Congress over?



Coalitions

The elections of 1967 brought into picture the phenomenon of coalitions. Since no single party had got majority, various non-Congress parties came together to form joint legislative parties (called Samyukt Vidhayak Dal in Hindi) that supported non-Congress governments. That is why these governments came to be described as SVD governments. In most of these cases the coalition partners were ideologically incongruent. The SVD government in Bihar, for instance, included the two socialist parties – SSP and the PSP – along with the CPI on the left and Jana Sangh on the right. In Punjab it was called the 'Popular United Front' and comprised the two rival Akali parties at that time – Sant group and the Master group – with both the communist parties – the CPI and the CPI(M), the SSP, the Republican Party and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.



Credit: Kutty

A cartoonist's reading of Charan Singh's attempt to build a United Front of non-communist parties in 1974

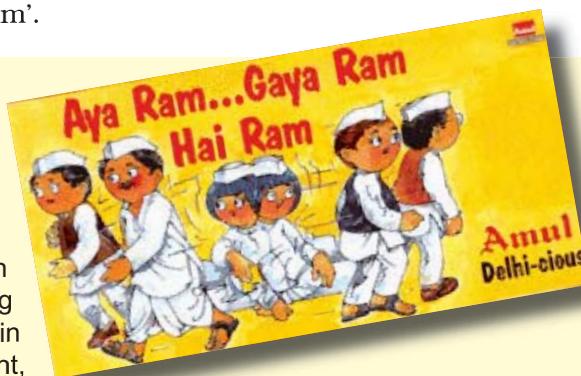
Defection

Another important feature of the politics after the 1967 election was the role played by defections in the making and unmaking of governments in the States. Defection means an elected representative leaves the party on whose symbol he/she was elected and joins another party. After the 1967 general election, the breakaway Congress legislators played an important role in installing non-Congress governments in three States - Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The constant realignments and shifting political loyalties in this period gave rise to the expression 'Aya Ram, Gaya Ram'.

The story of 'Aya Ram, Gaya Ram'

The expression 'aya ram, gaya ram' became popular in the political vocabulary in India to describe the practice of frequent floor-crossing by legislators. Literally translated the terms meant, Ram came and Ram went. The expression originated in an amazing feat of floor crossing achieved by Gaya Lal, an MLA in Haryana, in 1967. He changed his party thrice in a fortnight, from Congress to United Front, back to Congress and then within nine hours to United Front again! It is said that when Gaya Lal declared his intention to quit the United Front and join the Congress, the Congress leader, Rao Birendra Singh brought him to Chandigarh press and declared "Gaya Ram was now Aya Ram".

Gaya Lal's feat was immortalised in the phrase "Aya Ram, Gaya Ram" which became the subject of numerous jokes and cartoons. Later, the Constitution was amended to prevent defections.



Split in the Congress

We saw that after the 1967 elections, the Congress retained power at the Centre but with a reduced majority and lost power in many States. More importantly, the results proved that the Congress could be defeated at the elections. But there was no substitute as yet. Most non-Congress coalition governments in the States did not survive for long. They lost majority, and either new combinations were formed or President's rule had to be imposed.

Indira vs. the 'Syndicate'

The real challenge to Indira Gandhi came not from the opposition but from within her own

K. Kamraj

(1903-1975): Freedom fighter and Congress President; Chief Minister of Madras (Tamil Nadu); having suffered educational deprivation, made efforts to spread education in Madras province; introduced mid-day meal scheme for schoolchildren; in 1963 he proposed that all senior Congressmen should resign from office to make way for younger party workers—this proposal is famous as the 'Kamraj plan.'



The Congress 'Syndicate'

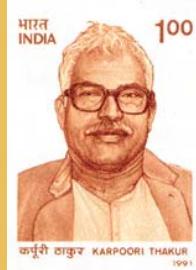
Syndicate was the informal name given to a group of Congress leaders who were in control of the party's organisation. It was led by K. Kamraj, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and then the president of the Congress party. It included powerful State leaders like S. K. Patil of Bombay city (later named as Mumbai), S. Nijalingappa of Mysore (later Karnataka), N. Sanjeeva Reddy of Andhra Pradesh and Atulya Ghosh of West Bengal. Both Lal Bahadur Shastri and later Indira Gandhi owed their position to the support received from the Syndicate. This group had a decisive say in Indira Gandhi's first Council of Ministers and also in policy formulation and implementation. After the Congress split the leaders of the syndicate and those owing allegiance to them stayed with the Congress (O). Since it was Indira Gandhi's Congress (R) that won the test of popularity, all these big and powerful men of Indian politics lost their power and prestige after 1971.



So,
there is nothing
new about State
level leaders being
the king-makers at
the centre. I thought
it happened only in
the 1990s.

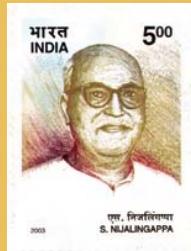
party. She had to deal with the 'syndicate', a group of powerful and influential leaders from within the Congress. The Syndicate had played a role in the installation of Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister by ensuring her election as the leader of the parliamentary party. These leaders expected Indira Gandhi to follow their advise. Gradually, however, Indira Gandhi attempted to assert her position within the government and the party. She chose her trusted group of advisers from outside the party. Slowly and carefully, she sidelined the Syndicate.

Indira Gandhi thus faced two challenges. She needed to build her independence from the Syndicate. She also needed to work towards regaining the ground that the Congress had lost in the 1967 elections. Indira Gandhi adopted a very bold strategy. She converted a simple power struggle into an ideological struggle. She launched a series of initiatives to give the government policy a Left orientation. She got the Congress Working Committee to adopt a Ten Point Programme in May 1967. This programme included social control of banks, nationalisation of General Insurance, ceiling on urban property and income,



Karpoori Thakur
(1924-1988): Chief Minister of Bihar between December 1970 and June 1971 and again between June 1977 and April 1979; Freedom Fighter and socialist leader; active in labour and peasant movements; staunch follower of Lohia;

participated in the movement led by JP; known for his decision to introduce reservations for the backward classes in Bihar during his second Chief Ministership; strong opponent of the use of English Language.



S. Nijalingappa
(1902-2000): Senior Congress leader; Member of Constituent Assembly; member of Lok Sabha; Chief Minister of the then Mysore (Karnataka) State; regarded as the maker of modern Karnataka; President of Congress during 1968-71.

public distribution of food grains, land reforms and provision of house sites to the rural poor. While the 'syndicate' leaders formally approved this Left-wing programme, they had serious reservations about the same.

Presidential election, 1969

The factional rivalry between the Syndicate and Indira Gandhi came in the open in 1969. Following President Zakir Hussain's death, the post of President of the India fell vacant that year. Despite Mrs Gandhi's reservations the 'syndicate' managed to nominate her long time opponent and then speaker of the Lok Sabha, N. Sanjeeva Reddy, as the official Congress candidate for the ensuing Presidential elections. Indira Gandhi retaliated by encouraging the then Vice-President, V.V. Giri, to file his nomination as an independent candidate. She also announced several big and popular policy measures like the nationalisation of fourteen leading private banks and the abolition of the 'privy purse' or the special privileges given to former princes. Morarji Desai was the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

**V.V. Giri
(1894-1980):**
President of India from 1969 to 1974; Congress worker and labour leader from Andhra Pradesh; Indian High Commissioner to Ceylon (Sri Lanka); Labour Minister in Union cabinet; Governor of U.P., Kerala, Mysore (Karnataka); Vice-President (1967-1969) and acting President after the death of President Zakir Hussain; resigned and contested presidential election as independent candidate; received support from Indira Gandhi for his election as President.



Credit: R. K. Laxman in *The Times of India*

"The Left Hook" was published after the victory of V.V. Giri, (the boxer with the garland) over the nominee of the Syndicate, represented here by Nijalingappa (on his knees).

“History... is replete with instances of the tragedy that overtakes democracy when a leader who has risen to power on the crest of a popular wave or with the support of a democratic organisation becomes a victim of political narcissism and is egged on by a coterie of unscrupulous sycophants.....
”

S Nijalingappa

Letter to Indira Gandhi expelling her from the party, 11 November 1969.

On both the above issues serious differences emerged between him and the Prime Minister resulting in Desai leaving the government.

Congress had seen differences of this kind in the past. But this time both the parties wanted a showdown which took place during the Presidential elections. The then Congress President S. Nijalingappa issued a 'whip' asking all the Congress MPs and MLAs to vote in favour of Sanjeeva Reddy, the official candidate of the party. Supporters of Indira Gandhi requisitioned a special meeting of the AICC (that is why this faction came to be known as 'requisitionists') but this was refused. After silently supporting V.V. Giri, the Prime Minister openly called for a 'conscience vote' which meant that the MPs and MLAs from the Congress should be free to vote the way they want. The election ultimately resulted in the victory of V.V. Giri, the independent candidate, and the defeat of Sanjeeva Reddy, the official Congress candidate.

The defeat of the official Congress candidate formalised the split in the party. The Congress President expelled the Prime Minister from the party; she claimed that her group was the real Congress. By November 1969, the Congress group led by the 'syndicate' came to be referred to as the Congress (Organisation) and the group led by Indira Gandhi came to be called the Congress (Requisitionists). These two parties were also described as Old Congress and New Congress. Indira Gandhi projected the split as an ideological divide between socialists and conservatives, between the pro-poor and the pro-rich.

Abolition of Privy Purse

In Chapter One you have read about the integration of the Princely States. This integration was preceded by an assurance that after the dissolution of princely rule, the then rulers' families would be allowed to retain certain private property, and given a grant in heredity or government allowance, measured on the basis of the extent, revenue and potential of the merging state. This grant was called the privy purse. At the time of accession, there was little criticism of these privileges since integration and consolidation was the primary aim.

Yet, hereditary privileges were not consonant with the principles of equality and social and economic justice laid down in the Constitution of India. Nehru had expressed his dissatisfaction over the matter time and again. Following the 1967 elections, Indira Gandhi supported the demand that the government should abolish privy purses. Morarji Desai, however, called the move morally wrong and amounting to a 'breach of faith with the princes'.

The government tried to bring a Constitutional amendment in 1970, but it was not passed in Rajya Sabha. It then issued an ordinance which was struck down by the Supreme Court. Indira Gandhi made this into a major election issue in 1971 and got a lot of public support. Following its massive victory in the 1971 election, the Constitution was amended to remove legal obstacles for abolition of 'privy purse'.



A cartoonist's impression of the implication of Indira Gandhi's conflict with the Syndicate.

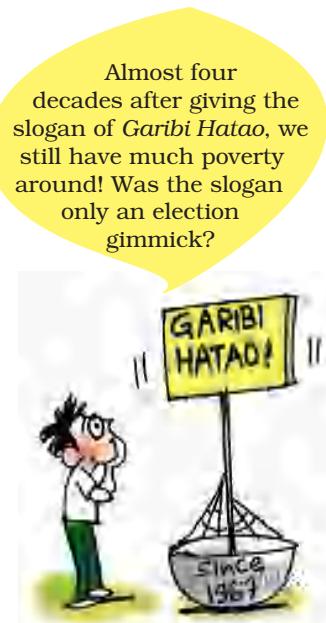
The 1971 Election and Restoration of Congress

The split in the Congress reduced Indira Gandhi Government to a minority. Yet her government continued in office with the issue-based support of a few other parties including the Communist Party of India and the DMK. During this period the government made conscious attempts to project its socialist credentials. This was also a phase when Indira Gandhi vigorously campaigned for implementing the existing land reform laws and undertook further land ceiling legislation. In order to end her dependence on other political parties, strengthen her party's position in the Parliament, and seek a popular mandate for her programmes, Indira Gandhi's government recommended the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in December 1970. This was another surprising and bold move. The fifth general election to Lok Sabha were held in February 1971.

The contest

The electoral contest appeared to be loaded against Congress(R). After all, the new Congress was just one faction of an already weak party. Everyone believed that the real organisational strength of the Congress party was under the command of Congress(O). To make matters worse for Indira Gandhi, all the major non-communist, non-Congress opposition parties formed an electoral alliance known as the Grand Alliance. The SSP, PSP, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party and the Bharatiya Kranti Dal came together under this umbrella. The ruling party had an alliance with the CPI.

Yet the new Congress had something that its big opponents lacked – it had an issue, an agenda and a positive slogan. The Grand Alliance did not have a coherent political programme. Indira Gandhi said that the opposition alliance had only one common programme: *Indira Hatao* (Remove Indira). In contrast to this, she put forward a positive programme captured in the famous slogan: *Garibi Hatao* (Remove Poverty). She focused on the growth of the public sector, imposition of ceiling on rural land holdings and urban property, removal of disparities in income and opportunity, and abolition of princely privileges. Through *garibi hatao* Indira Gandhi tried to generate a support base among the disadvantaged, especially among the landless labourers, Dalits and Adivasis, minorities, women and the unemployed youth. The slogan of *garibi hatao* and the programmes that followed it were part of Indira Gandhi's political strategy of building an independent nationwide political support base.



The outcome and after

The results of the Lok Sabha elections of 1971, were as dramatic as was the decision to hold these elections. The Congress(R)-CPI alliance won more seats and votes than the Congress had ever won in the first four general elections. The combine won 375 seats in Lok Sabha and secured 48.4 per cent votes. Indira Gandhi's Congress(R) won 352 seats with about 44 per cent of the popular votes on its own. Contrast this with the performance of the Congress(O): the party with so many stalwarts could get less than one-fourth of the votes secured by Indira Gandhi's party and win merely 16 seats. With this the Congress party led by Indira Gandhi established its claim to being the 'real' Congress and restored to it the dominant position in Indian politics. The Grand Alliance of the opposition proved a grand failure. Their combined tally of seats was less than 40.

Credit: R. K. Laxman in The Times of India



"The Grand Finish" is how a cartoonist interpreted the outcome of the 1971 elections. Players on the ground are the then leading opposition figures.

Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India



Soon after the 1971 Lok Sabha elections, a major political and military crisis broke out in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). As you have read in Chapter Four, the 1971 elections were followed by the crisis in East Pakistan and the Indo-Pak war leading to the establishment of Bangladesh. These events added to the popularity of Indira Gandhi. Even the opposition leaders admired her statesmanship. Her party swept through all the State Assembly elections held in 1972. She was seen not only as the protector of the poor and the underprivileged, but also a strong nationalist leader. The opposition to her, either within the party or outside of it, simply did not matter.

With two successive election victories, one at the centre and other at the State level, the dominance of the Congress was

restored. The Congress was now in power in almost all the States. It was also popular across different social sections. Within a span of four years, Indira Gandhi had warded off the challenge to her leadership and to the dominant position of the Congress party.



The new manner of choosing CMs by Indira Gandhi inspired this cartoon.

Credit: Kutty

Restoration?

But does it mean that the Congress system was restored? What Indira Gandhi had done was not a revival of the old Congress party. In many ways she had re-invented the party. The party occupied a similar position in terms of its popularity as in the past. But it was a different kind of a party. It relied entirely on the popularity of the supreme leader. It had a somewhat weak organisational structure. This Congress party now did not have many factions, thus it could not accommodate all kinds of opinions and interests. While it won elections, it depended more on some social groups: the poor, the women, Dalits, Adivasis and the minorities. This was a new Congress that had emerged. Thus Indira Gandhi restored the Congress system by changing the nature of the Congress system itself.

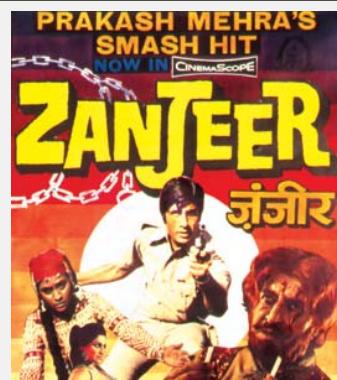
Despite being more popular, the new Congress did not have the kind of capacity to absorb all tensions and conflicts that the Congress system was known for. While the Congress consolidated its position and Indira Gandhi assumed a position of unprecedented political authority, the spaces for democratic expression of people's aspirations actually shrank. The popular unrest and mobilisation around issues of development and economic deprivation continued to grow. In the next chapter you will read about how this led to a political crisis that threatened the very existence of constitutional democracy in the country.

That
is like
changing the top
and legs of a table
and still calling it the
old table! What was
common between the
Old and the New
Congress?



Let's watch a film

ZANJEER



Vijay, a young police officer is framed in false charges and sent to jail while fighting gangsters. Released from jail, Vijay is determined to take revenge. He fights all odds and vanquishes the villains. Even while he is engaged in taking revenge, Vijay is fighting the anti-social element and gets the tacit support of many others from within the system.

This film portrayed the erosion of moral values and the deep frustrations arising from that quite forcefully. It represents the indifference of the system and the harsh and volcanic eruption of protest through the anger of Vijay. The film set the trend of what was later to be known as the 'angry young man' of the seventies.

Year: 1973
Director: Prakash Mehra
Screenplay: Javed Akhtar
Cast: Amitabh Bachchan, Ajit, Jaya Bhaduri, Pran

EXERCISES

1. Which of these statements about the 1967 elections is/are correct?
 - (a) Congress won the Lok Sabha elections but lost the Assembly elections in many states.
 - (b) Congress lost both Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.
 - (c) Congress lost majority in the Lok Sabha but formed a coalition government with the support of some other parties.
 - (d) Congress retained power at the Centre with an increased majority.

2. Match the following:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Syndicate (b) Defection (c) Slogan (d) Anti-Congressism 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. An elected representative leaving the party on whose ticket s/he has been elected ii. A catchy phrase that attracts public attention iii. parties with different ideological position coming together to oppose Congress and its policies iv. A group of powerful and influential leaders within the Congress
--	---

3. Whom would you identify with the following slogans/phrases?

(a) Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan
(b) Indira Hatao!
(c) Garibi Hatao!

4. Which of the following statement about the Grand Alliance of 1971 is correct?
 The Grand Alliance

(a) was formed by non-Communist, non-Congress parties.
(b) had a clear political and ideological programme.
(c) was formed by all non-Congress parties.

5. How should a political party resolve its internal differences? Here are some suggestions. Think of each and list out their advantages and shortcomings.

(a) Follow the footsteps of the party president
(b) Listen to the majority group
(c) Secret ballot voting on every issue
(d) Consult the senior and experienced leaders of the party

6. State which of these were reasons for the defeat of the Congress in 1967. Give reasons for your answer.

(a) The absence of a charismatic leader in the Congress party
(b) Split within the Congress party
(c) Increased mobilisation of regional, ethnic and communal groups

- (d) Increasing unity among non-Congress parties
(e) Internal differences within the Congress party

7. What were the factors which led to the popularity of Indira Gandhi's Government in the early 1970s?
8. What does the term 'syndicate' mean in the context of the Congress party of the sixties? What role did the Syndicate play in the Congress party?
9. Discuss the major issue which led to the formal split of the Congress Party in 1969.
10. Read the passage and answer the questions below:

...Indira Gandhi changed the Congress into highly centralised and undemocratic party organisation, from the earlier federal, democratic and ideological formation that Nehru had led.....But this... could not have happened had not Indira Gandhi changed the entire nature of politics. This new, populist politics turned political ideology into a mere electoral discourse, use of various slogans not meant to be translated into government policies..... During its great electoral victories in early 1970s, amidst the celebration, the Congress party as a political organisation died..... — SUDIPTA KAVIRAJ

- (a) What according to the author is the difference between the strategies of Nehru and Indira Gandhi?
(b) Why does the author say that the Congress party 'died' in the seventies?
(c) In what way, did the change in the Congress party affect other political parties also?

LET US DO IT TOGETHER

- Make a list of slogans coined by political parties.
- Do you see any similarities between advertisements and manifestoes, slogans and advertisements of political parties?
- Have a discussion on how price rise affects the political fortunes of the political parties.

३१. इस साप्ताहिक के लिए निम्नलिखित विषयों पर बहुत ध्यान देना चाहिए। इसकी विवरणों में अधिक जानकारी दी गई है। इसकी विवरणों में अधिक जानकारी दी गई है। इसकी विवरणों में अधिक जानकारी दी गई है।

मिलावट रोकने में जन सहयोग का अभाव

प्रश्नों का उत्तर

मिलावट रोकने में जन सहयोग का अभाव

प्रश्नों का उत्तर



In this chapter...

We have seen in the last chapter that the Congress recovered after 1971, but was not the same kind of party. The difference became clear in a series of events between 1973 and 1975 that brought new challenges to India's democratic politics and the institutional balance sought by the Constitution. These developments led to the imposition of 'emergency' in June 1975. Normally, we would associate 'emergency' with war and aggression or with natural disaster. But this 'emergency' was imposed because of the perceived threat of internal disturbance. The Emergency ended as dramatically as it had begun, resulting in a defeat of the Congress in the Lok Sabha elections of 1977.

In this chapter we focus on this crucial phase in the history of democracy in India and ask some questions that have remained controversial after all these years.

- Why was Emergency imposed? Was it necessary?
- What did the imposition of Emergency mean in practice?
- What were the consequences of Emergency on party politics?
- What are the lessons of Emergency for Indian democracy?

The editorial page of 'Nai Dunia' of 27 June 1975 was like any other day, except that the space for editorial was left blank. The editorial was "censored" using emergency powers. Many other newspapers also carried such blank spaces-sometimes to protest against emergency. Later, leaving blank space was also banned.

THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRATIC ORDER

Background to Emergency

We have already studied the changes that were taking place in Indian politics since 1967. Indira Gandhi had emerged as a towering leader with tremendous popularity. This was also the period when party competition became bitter and polarised. This period also witnessed tensions in the relationship between the government and the judiciary. The Supreme Court found many initiatives of the government to be violative of the Constitution. The Congress party took the position that this stand of the Court was against principles of democracy and parliamentary supremacy. The Congress also alleged that the Court was a conservative institution and it was becoming an obstacle in the way of implementing pro-poor welfare programmes. The parties opposed to the Congress felt that politics was becoming too personalised and that governmental authority was being converted into personal authority. The split in the Congress had sharpened the divisions between Indira Gandhi and her opponents.

Economic context

In the elections of 1971, Congress had given the slogan of *garibi hatao* (remove poverty). However, the social and economic condition in the country did not improve much after 1971-72. The Bangladesh crisis had put a heavy strain on India's economy. About eight million people crossed over the East Pakistan border into India. This was followed by war with Pakistan. After the war the U.S government stopped all aid to India. In the international market, oil prices increased manifold during this period. This led to an all-round increase in prices of commodities. Prices increased by 23 per cent in 1973 and 30 per cent in 1974. Such a high level of inflation caused much hardship to the people.

Industrial growth was low and unemployment was very high, particularly in the rural areas. In order to reduce expenditure the government froze the salaries of its employees. This caused further dissatisfaction among government employees. Monsoons failed in 1972-1973. This resulted in a sharp decline in agricultural productivity. Food grain output declined by 8 per cent. There was a general atmosphere of dissatisfaction with the prevailing economic

PM says

**Hard
days
ahead**



The best we can hope for is that 1973 will be hataeoed quickly

Credit: Abu



Poor people must have had a tough time. What happened to the promise of *garibi hatao*?

“ Sampoorna Kranti
ab nara hai, bhavi itihas
hamara hai [With Total
Revolution as our motto, the
future belongs to us.]
”

A slogan of the Bihar movement, 1974

situation all over the country. In such a context non-Congress opposition parties were able to organise popular protests effectively. Instances of students' unrests that had persisted from the late 1960s became more pronounced in this period. There was also an increase in the activities of Marxist groups who did not believe in parliamentary politics. These groups had taken to arms and insurgent techniques for the overthrow of the capitalist order and the established political system. Known as the Marxist-Leninist (now Maoist) groups or Naxalites, they were particularly strong in West Bengal, where the State government took stringent measures to suppress them.

Gujarat and Bihar movements

Students' protests in Gujarat and Bihar, both of which were Congress ruled States, had far reaching impact on the politics of the two States and national politics. In January 1974 students in Gujarat started an agitation against rising prices of food grains, cooking oil and other essential commodities, and against corruption in high places. The students' protest was joined by major opposition parties and became widespread leading to the imposition of President's rule in the state. The opposition parties demanded fresh elections to the state legislature. Morarji Desai, a prominent leader of Congress (O), who was the main rival of Indira Gandhi when he was in the Congress, announced that he would go on an indefinite fast if fresh elections were not held in the State. Under intense pressure from students, supported by the opposition political parties, assembly elections were held in Gujarat in June 1975. The Congress was defeated in this election.

In March 1974 students came together in Bihar to protest against rising prices, food scarcity, unemployment and corruption. After a point they invited Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), who had given up active politics and was involved in social work, to lead the student movement. He accepted it on the condition that the movement will remain non-violent and will not limit itself to Bihar. Thus the students' movement assumed a political character and had national appeal. People from all walks of life now entered the movement. Jayaprakash Narayan demanded the dismissal of the Congress government in Bihar and gave a call for total revolution in the social, economic and political spheres in order to establish what he considered to be true democracy. A series of bandhs, gehraos, and strikes were organised in protest against the Bihar government. The government, however, refused to resign.

“ Indira is India,
India is Indira
”

A slogan given by
D. K. Barooah, President of the
Congress, 1974

The Naxalite Movement

In 1967 a peasant uprising took place in the Naxalbari police station area of Darjeeling hills district in West Bengal under the leadership of the local cadres of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Beginning from the Naxalbari police station, the peasant movement spread to several states of India and came to be referred broadly as the Naxalite movement. In 1969, they broke off from the CPI (M) and a new party, Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI-ML), was formed under the leadership of Charu Majumdar. It argued that democracy in India was a sham and decided to adopt a strategy of protracted guerrilla warfare in order to lead to a revolution.

The Naxalite movement has used force to snatch land from the rich landowners and give it to the poor and the landless. Its supporters advocated the use of violent means to achieve their political goals. In spite of the use of preventive detention and other strong measures adopted by the West Bengal government run by the Congress party, the Naxalite movement did not come to an end. In later years, it spread to many other parts of the country. The Naxalite movement has by now splintered into various parties and organisations. Some of these parties, like the CPI – ML (Liberation) participate in open, democratic politics.

Currently about 75 districts in nine States are affected by Naxalite violence. Most of these are very backward areas inhabited by Adivasis. In these areas the

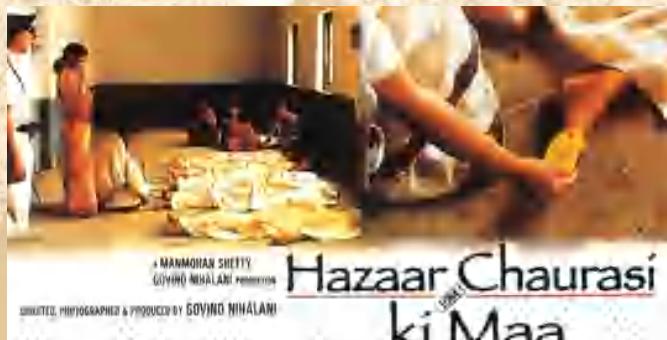
sharecroppers, under-tenants and small cultivators are denied their basic rights with regard to security of tenure or their share in produce, payment of fair wages etc. Forced labour, expropriation of resources by outsiders and exploitation by moneylenders are also common in these areas. These conditions lead to the growth of the Naxalite movement.

Governments have taken stern measures in dealing with the Naxalite movement. Human right activists have criticised the government for violating constitutional norms in dealing



Charu Majumdar (1918-1972): Communist revolutionary and the leader of the Naxalbari uprising; participated in the Tebhaga movement before independence; left the CPI and founded the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist); believed

in the Maoist path of peasant rebellion and defended revolutionary violence; died in police custody.



with the Naxalites. Many thousand people have lost their lives in the violence by the Naxalites and the anti-Naxalite violence by the government.



Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India



Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) (1902-1979): A marxist in his youth; founder general secretary of the Congress Socialist

Party and the Socialist Party; a hero of the 1942 Quit India movement; declined to join Nehru's cabinet; after 1955 quit active politics; became a Gandhian and was involved in the Bhoodan movement, negotiations with the Naga rebels, peace initiative in Kashmir and ensured the surrender of decoits in Chambal; leader of Bihar movement, he became the symbol of opposition to Emergency and was the moving force behind the formation of Janata Party.

The movement was beginning to influence national politics. Jayaprakash Narayan wanted to spread the Bihar movement to other parts of the country. Alongside the agitation led by Jayaprakash Narayan, the employees of the Railways gave a call for a nationwide strike. This threatened to paralyse the country. In 1975, JP led a peoples' march to the Parliament. This was one of the largest political rallies ever held in the capital. He was now supported by the non-Congress opposition parties like the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the Congress (O), the Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Socialist Party and others. These parties were projecting JP as an alternative to Indira Gandhi. However, there were many criticisms about his ideas and about the politics of mass agitations that he was employing. Both the Gujarat and Bihar

agitations were seen as anti-Congress and rather than opposing the State governments, they were seen as protests against the leadership of Indira Gandhi. She believed that the movement was motivated by personal opposition to her.

Railway Strike of 1974

What would happen when the railways stop running? Not for one or two days, but for more than a week? Of course, many people would be inconvenienced; but more than that, the economy of the country would come to a halt because goods are transported from one part to another by trains.

Do you know that such a thing actually happened in 1974? The National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle led by George Fernandes gave a call for nationwide strike by all employees of the Railways for pressing their demands related to bonus and service conditions. The government was opposed to these demands. So, the employees of India's largest public sector undertaking went on a strike in May 1974. The strike by the Railway employees added to the atmosphere of labour unrest. It also raised issues like rights of the workers and whether employees of essential services should adopt measures like strikes.

The government declared the strike illegal. As the government refused to concede the demands of the striking workers, arrested many of their leaders and deployed the territorial army to protect railway tracks, the strike had to be called off after twenty days without any settlement.

Conflict with Judiciary

This was also the period when the government and the ruling party had many differences with the judiciary. Do you remember the discussion about the long drawn conflict between the Parliament and the judiciary? You have studied this last year. Three constitutional issues had emerged – can the Parliament abridge Fundamental Rights? The Supreme Court said it cannot. Secondly, can the Parliament curtail the right to property by making an amendment? Again, the Court said that Parliament cannot amend the Constitution in such a manner that rights are curtailed. Thirdly, the Parliament amended the Constitution saying that it can abridge Fundamental Rights for giving effect to Directive Principles. But the Supreme Court rejected this provision also. This led to a crisis as far as the relations between the government and the judiciary were concerned. You may remember that this crisis culminated in the famous Kesavananda Bharati Case. In this case, the Court gave a decision that there are some basic features of the Constitution and the Parliament cannot amend these features.

Two developments further added to the tension between the judiciary and the executive. Immediately after the Supreme Court's



Put simply, committed judiciary and committed bureaucracy means that the judges and officers should be loyal to the ruling party. What a pity!

decision in 1973 in the Kesavananda Bharati case, a vacancy arose for the post of the Chief Justice of India. It had been a practice to appoint the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court as the Chief Justice. But in 1973, the government set aside the seniority of three judges and appointed Justice A. N. Ray as the Chief Justice of India. The appointment became politically controversial because all the three judges who were superseded had given rulings against the stand of the government. Thus, constitutional interpretations and political ideologies were getting mixed up rapidly. People close to the Prime Minister started talking of the need for a judiciary and the bureaucracy 'committed' to the vision of the executive and the legislature. The climax of the confrontation was of course the ruling of the High Court declaring Indira Gandhi's election invalid.

Declaration of Emergency

On 12 June 1975, Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court passed a judgment declaring Indira Gandhi's election to the Lok Sabha invalid. This order came on an election petition filed by Raj Narain, a socialist leader and a candidate who had contested against her in 1971. The petition, challenged the election of Indira Gandhi on the ground that she had used the services of government servants in her election campaign. The judgment of the High Court meant that legally she was no more an MP and therefore, could not remain the Prime Minister unless she was once again elected as an MP within six months. On June 24, the Supreme Court granted her a partial stay on the High Court order – till her appeal was decided, she could remain an MP but could not take part in the proceedings of the Lok Sabha.

Crisis and response

That is like asking the army to disobey the government! Is that democratic?



The stage was now set for a big political confrontation. The opposition political parties led by Jayaprakash Narayan pressed for Indira Gandhi's resignation and organised a massive demonstration in Delhi's Ramlila grounds on 25 June 1975. Jayaprakash announced a nationwide satyagraha for her resignation and asked the army, the police and government employees not to obey "illegal and immoral orders". This too threatened to bring the activities of the government to a standstill. The political mood of the country had turned against the Congress, more than ever before.

The response of the government was to declare a state of emergency. On 25 June 1975, the government declared that there was a threat of internal disturbances and therefore, it invoked Article 352 of the Constitution. Under the provision of this article the government could declare a state of emergency on grounds of external threat or a threat of internal disturbances. The government decided that a grave crisis had arisen which made the proclamation of a state of emergency necessary. Technically speaking this was within the powers of the

Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India



This cartoon appeared few days before the declaration of Emergency and captures the sense of impending political crisis. The man behind the chair is D. K. Barooah, the Congress President.

government, for our Constitution provides for some special powers to the government once an emergency is declared.

Once an emergency is proclaimed, the federal distribution of powers remains practically suspended and all the powers are concentrated in the hands of the union government. Secondly, the government also gets the power to curtail or restrict all or any of the Fundamental Rights during the emergency. From the wording of the provisions of the Constitution, it is clear that an Emergency is seen as an extraordinary condition in which normal democratic politics cannot function. Therefore, special powers are granted to the government.

On the night of 25 June 1975, the Prime Minister recommended the imposition of Emergency to President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. He issued the proclamation immediately. After midnight, the electricity to all the major newspaper offices was disconnected. In the early morning, a large number of leaders and workers of the opposition parties were arrested. The Cabinet was informed about it at a special meeting at 6 a.m. on 26 June, after all this had taken place.



Should the President have declared Emergency without any recommendation from the Cabinet?

पंच २१ नंक लालिमा

स्वतंत्र गुरुवार २६ जून १९७५

दोस्रा १० पेसे

नया आपात्काल : जयप्रकाश और कई नेता गिरफ्तार

To our readers

The city edition of Friday and Saturday editions of the Hindustan Times could not be brought out as no power was available from 12-45 P.M. on Thursday till 7-15 P.M. on Friday. The inconvenience is deeply regretted.

Emergency ensures
YOUR Security—
and the NATION'S

**WORK MORE
TALK LESS**

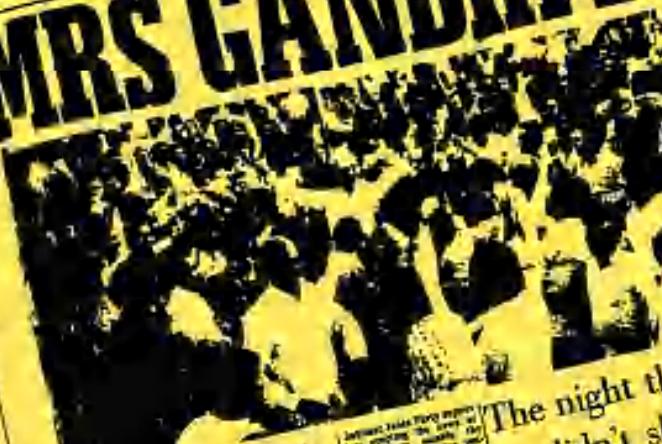
THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Price: 50/- Monthly March 21, 1975

क्या नहीं हुआ
(१) भारत का संविधान वह
नहीं है और वह उमापत् नहीं
हुआ है। आपात्काल की अवधि
संविधान की बात ३५२ के अंत-
र्गत ही नहीं है। भारत ने जो काम
किया है, वहूँ उन्हें अधिकार
नहीं १९७१ से रखे।
(२) एक्षणर्त भारत नाम
नहीं हुआ है। भारत के संविधान
के एक्षणर्त भारत नाम होने की
लोक व्यवस्था नहीं है। यहि
संविधान एक्षणर्त को सबाह क
स्वतंत्रता देने के लिए काम के
बाबू होने के लिए काम के
निपट उन्हें

प्रधान मंत्री का
कान्तिकारी कार्यक्रम
आइए इसे सफल बनाएं

MRS GANDHI DEFEATED



Cong rout in
Delhi total

Nightmare
over, says
Vajpayee

The night the
didn't sleep

Janta Party forges
ahead in North
Bansi Lal, Sanjay out

Hindustan Times Correspondent
NEW DELHI, March 20, 1975
Indira Gandhi's

Woe always follows
Compulsory
sterilisation

Party Parliament
at 7.30 P.M.
Hansard, 21
Mrs. Gandhi
22

Capital's
Leading

Last City Update

Consequences

This brought the agitation to an abrupt stop; strikes were banned; many opposition leaders were put in jail; the political situation became very quiet though tense. Deciding to use its special powers under Emergency provisions, the government suspended the freedom of the Press. Newspapers were asked to get prior approval for all material to be published. This is known as press censorship. Apprehending social and communal disharmony, the government banned Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Jamait-e-Islami. Protests and strikes and public agitations were also disallowed. Most importantly, under the provisions of Emergency, the various Fundamental Rights of citizens stood suspended, including the right of citizens to move the Court for restoring their Fundamental Rights.

The government made extensive use of preventive detention. Under this provision, people are arrested and detained not because they have committed any offence, but on the apprehension that they may commit an offence. Using preventive detention acts, the government made large scale arrests during the Emergency. Arrested political workers could not challenge their arrest through habeas corpus petitions. Many cases were filed in the High Courts and the Supreme Court by and on behalf of arrested persons, but the government claimed that it was not even necessary to inform the arrested persons of the reasons and grounds of their arrest. Several High Courts gave judgments that even after the declaration of Emergency the courts could entertain a writ of habeas corpus filed by a person challenging his/her detention. In April 1976, the constitution bench of the Supreme Court over-ruled the High Courts and accepted the government's plea. It meant that during Emergency the government could take away the citizen's right to life and liberty. This judgment closed the doors of judiciary for the citizens and is regarded as one of the most controversial judgments of the Supreme Court.



There were many acts of dissent and resistance to the Emergency. Many political workers who were not arrested in the first wave, went 'underground' and organised protests against the government. Newspapers like the *Indian Express* and the *Statesman* protested against censorship by leaving blank spaces where news items had been censored. Magazines like the *Seminar* and the *Mainstream* chose to close down rather than submit to censorship. Many journalists were arrested for writing against the Emergency. Many underground newsletters and leaflets were published to bypass censorship. Kannada writer Shivarama Karanth, awarded with Padma Bhushan, and Hindi writer Fanishwarnath Renu, awarded with Padma Shri, returned their awards in protest against the suspension of democracy. By and large, though, such open acts of defiance and resistance were rare.

The Parliament also brought in many new changes to the Constitution. In the background of the ruling of the Allahabad High

Court in the Indira Gandhi case, an amendment was made declaring that elections of Prime Minister, President and Vice-President could not be challenged in the Court. The forty-second amendment was also passed during the Emergency. You have already studied that this amendment consisted of a series of changes in many parts of the Constitution. Among the various changes made by this amendment, one was that the duration of the legislatures in the country was extended from five to six years. This change was not only for the Emergency period, but was intended to be of a permanent nature. Besides this, during an Emergency, elections can be postponed by one year. Thus, effectively, after 1971, elections needed to be held only in 1978; instead of 1976.

Controversies regarding Emergency

Emergency is one of the most controversial episodes in Indian politics. One reason is that there are differing view points about the need to declare emergency. Another reason is that using the powers given by the Constitution, the government practically suspended the democratic functioning. As the investigations by the Shah Commission after the Emergency found out, there were many 'excesses' committed during the Emergency. Finally, there are varying assessments of what the lessons of Emergency are for the practice of democracy in India. Let us look at these one by one.

Was the Emergency necessary?

The Constitution simply mentioned 'internal disturbances' as the reason for declaring Emergency. Before 1975, Emergency was never proclaimed on this ground. We have noted that agitations were going on in many parts of the country. Was this reason enough for declaring Emergency? The government argued that in a democracy, the opposition parties must allow the elected ruling party to govern according to its policies. It felt that frequent recourse to agitations, protests and collective action are not good for democracy. Supporters of Indira Gandhi also held that in a democracy, you cannot continuously have extra-parliamentary politics targeting the government. This leads to instability and distracts the administration from its routine task of ensuring development. All energies are diverted to maintenance of law and order. Indira Gandhi wrote in a



Let us not talk about the few who protested. What about the rest? All the big officials, intellectuals, social and religious leaders, citizens... What were they doing?

Shah Commission of Inquiry

In May 1977, the Janata Party government appointed a Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice J.C. Shah, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, to inquire "into several aspects of allegations of abuse of authority, excesses and malpractices committed and action taken in the wake of the Emergency proclaimed on the 25th June, 1975". The Commission examined various kinds of evidence and called scores of witnesses to give testimonies. These included Indira Gandhi who appeared before the Commission but refused to answer any questions.

The Government of India accepted the findings, observations and recommendations contained in the two interim reports and third and final report of the Shah Commission. The reports were also tabled in the two houses of Parliament.

“

In the name of democracy it has been sought to negate the very functioning of democracy. Duly elected governments have not been allowed to function.... Agitations have surcharged the atmosphere, leading to violent incidents. ... Certain persons have gone to the length of inciting our armed forces to mutiny and our police to rebel. The forces of disintegration are in full play and communal passions are being aroused, threatening our unity.

How can any Government worth the name stand by and allow the country's stability to be imperilled?

The actions of a few are endangering the rights of the vast majority.

”

Indira Gandhi

Addressing the nation on All India Radio on 26 June 1975



Mrs. Gandhi's confrontation with the Shah Commission provoked this cartoon when the commission's report was released.

letter to the Shah Commission that subversive forces were trying to obstruct the progressive programmes of the government and were attempting to dislodge her from power through extra-constitutional means.

Some other parties, like the CPI that continued to back the Congress during the Emergency, also believed that there was an international conspiracy against the unity of India. It believed that in such circumstances some restrictions on agitations were justified.

Demolitions in Turkman Gate area, Delhi

Emergency witnessed large-scale displacement of people living in Delhi's poorer localities. The *jhuggi-jhopris* were forcibly relocated in the then barren areas across the river Yamuna. One such affected area was the colonies in Turkman gate. The *jhuggis* of the area were demolished. Hundreds of people of this area were forcibly sterilised. However, many people escaped sterilisation simply because they were able to motivate other people to get themselves sterilised and were rewarded by the grant of title to a piece of land. Thus, while some people became victims of government-sponsored actions, some people managed to victimise others in their desire to legally secure a piece of land, which would safeguard them from arbitrary displacement.

Source: *Shah Commission of Inquiry, Interim Report II*

Let's re-search

Ask your parents or other elders in the family or neighbourhood about their experience during 1975-77. Take down notes on the following:

- Their personal experience of the Emergency.
- Any report of support or opposition to the Emergency in your locality.
- Their participation in the 1977 elections and why they voted the way they did.

Put your notes together and make a collective report on 'Emergency in my city/village.'

The CPI felt that the agitations led by JP were mainly by the middle classes who were opposed to the radical policies of the Congress party. After the Emergency, the CPI felt that its assessment was mistaken and that it was an error to have supported the Emergency.

On the other hand, the critics of the Emergency argued that ever since the freedom movement, Indian politics had a history of popular struggles. JP and many other opposition leaders felt that in a democracy, people had the right to publicly protest against the government. The Bihar and Gujarat agitations were mostly peaceful and non-violent. Those who were arrested were never tried for any anti-national activity. No cases were registered against most of the detainees. The Home Ministry, which is entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the internal situation of the country, also did not express any concern about the law and order situation in the country. If some agitations had over-stepped their limits, the government had enough routine powers to deal with it. There was no need to suspend democratic functioning and use draconian measures like the Emergency for that. The threat was not to the unity and integrity of the country but to the ruling party and to the Prime Minister herself. The critics say that Indira Gandhi misused a constitutional provision meant for saving the country to save her personal power.

What happened during emergency?

The actual implementation of the Emergency is another contentious issue. Did the government misuse its Emergency powers? Were there excesses and abuse of authority? The government said that it wanted to use the Emergency to bring law and order, restore efficiency, and above all, implement the pro-poor welfare programmes. For this purpose, the government led by Indira Gandhi announced a twenty-point programme and declared its determination to implement this programme. The twenty-point programme included land reforms, land redistribution, review of agricultural wages, workers' participation in management, eradication of bonded labour, etc. In the initial months

after the declaration of Emergency, the urban middle classes were generally happy over the fact that agitations came to an end and discipline was enforced on the government employees. The poor and rural people also expected effective implementation of the welfare programmes that the government was promising. Thus, different sections of society had different expectations from the emergency and also different viewpoints about it.



Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India

Critics of Emergency point out that most of these promises by the government remained unfulfilled, that these were simply meant to divert attention from the excesses that were taking place. They question the use of preventive detention on such a large scale. We have noted that many prominent political leaders were arrested. In all, 676 opposition leaders were arrested. The Shah Commission estimated that nearly one lakh eleven thousand people were arrested under preventive detention laws. Severe restrictions were put on the press, sometimes without proper legal sanctions. The Shah Commission report mentions that the General Manager of the Delhi Power Supply Corporation received verbal orders from the office of the Lt. Governor of Delhi to cut electricity to all newspaper presses at 2.00 a.m. on 26 June, 1975. Electricity was restored two to three days later after the censorship apparatus had been set up.

Custodial death of Rajan

On 1 March 1976, P. Rajan, a final year student of the Calicut Engineering College, Kerala, was whisked away from the hostel in the early hours along with another student, Joseph Chali. Rajan's father, T.V. Eachara Warrior made frantic efforts to trace his son. He met legislators, he petitioned the concerned authorities, he also sought the help of the then Home Minister, K. Karunakaran. As the emergency was proclaimed, issues relating to the citizen's liberty could not be raised in the courts. After the Emergency was lifted, Warrior filed a petition for writ of Habeas Corpus in the Kerala High Court at Ernakulam. From the evidence of witnesses, it became clear that from the hostel, Rajan had been taken to the Tourist Bungalow in Calicut the next day where he was tortured by the police. At a subsequent hearing Kerala government told the High Court that Raian had died in "unlawful police custody", as a result of continuous police torture. The Division Bench of Kerala High Court held that Karunakaran had lied to the Court. K. Karunakaran who had by then become Chief Minister of Kerala, had to resign because of the strictures passed by the High Court.

Source: Shah Commission of Inquiry, Interim Report II

There were other and more serious allegations regarding the exercise of governmental power by people who held no official position. Sanjay Gandhi, the Prime Minister's younger son, did not hold any official position at the time. Yet, he gained control over the administration and allegedly interfered in the functioning of the government. His role in the demolitions and forced sterilisation in Delhi became very controversial.

Apart from the arrests of political workers and the restrictions on the press, the Emergency directly affected lives of common people in many cases. Torture and custodial deaths occurred during the Emergency; arbitrary relocation of poor people also took place; and over-enthusiasm about population control led to cases of compulsory sterilisation. These instances show what happens when the normal democratic process is suspended.

Lessons of the Emergency

The Emergency at once brought out both the weaknesses and the strengths of India's democracy. Though there are many observers who think that India ceased to be democratic during the Emergency, it is noteworthy that normal democratic functioning resumed within a short span of time. Thus, one lesson of Emergency is that it is extremely difficult to do away with democracy in India.

Secondly, it brought out some ambiguities regarding the Emergency provision in the Constitution that have been rectified since. Now,

“ ... death of
D. E. M. O'Crary, mourned by
his wife T. Ruth, his son
L. I. Bertie, and his
daughters Faith, Hope and
Justice.”

An anonymous
advertisement in the Times
of India, soon after the
declaration of Emergency,
1975.

“ Today is India's
Independence Day... Don't
Let the Lights Go Out on
India's Democracy **”**

An advertisement in The
Times, London,
15 August 1975 by
'Free JP Campaign'.

'internal' Emergency can be proclaimed only on the grounds of 'armed rebellion' and it is necessary that the advice to the President to proclaim Emergency must be given in writing by the Council of Ministers.

Thirdly, the Emergency made everyone more aware of the value of civil liberties. The Courts too, have taken an active role after the Emergency in protecting the civil liberties of the individuals. This is a response to the inability of the judiciary to protect civil liberties effectively during the emergency. Many civil liberties organisations came up after this experience.

However, the critical years of emergency brought many issues that have not been adequately grappled with. We have noted in this chapter that there is a tension between routine functioning of a democratic government and the continuous political protests by parties and groups. What is the correct balance between the two? Should the citizens have full freedom to engage in protest activity or should they have no such right at all? What are the limits to such a protest?

Secondly, the actual implementation of the Emergency rule took place through the police and the administration. These institutions could not function independently. They were turned into political instruments of the ruling party and according to the Shah Commission Report, the administration and the police became vulnerable to political pressures. This problem did not vanish after the Emergency.

Politics after Emergency

The most valuable and lasting lesson of the Emergency was learnt as soon as the Emergency was over and the Lok Sabha elections were announced. The 1977 elections turned into a referendum on the experience of the Emergency, at least in north India where the impact of the Emergency was felt most strongly. The opposition fought the election on the slogan of 'save democracy'. The people's verdict was decisively against the Emergency. The lesson was clear and has been reiterated in many state level elections thereafter – governments that are perceived to be anti-democratic are severely punished by the voters. In this sense the experience of 1975 -77 ended up strengthening the foundations of democracy in India.

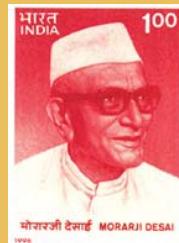
Lok Sabha Elections, 1977

In January 1977, after eighteen months of Emergency, the government decided to hold elections. Accordingly, all the leaders and activists were released from jails. Elections were held in March 1977. This left the opposition with very little time, but political developments took place very rapidly. The major opposition parties had already been coming closer in the pre-Emergency period. Now they came together on the

eve of the elections and formed a new party, known as the Janata Party. The new party accepted the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan. Some leaders of the Congress who were opposed to the Emergency also joined this new party. Some other Congress leaders also came out and formed a separate party under the leadership of Jagjivan Ram. This party named as Congress for Democracy, later merged with the Janata Party.

The Janata Party made this election into a referendum on the Emergency. Its campaign was focused on the non-democratic character of the rule and on the various excesses that took place during this period. In the backdrop of arrests of thousands of persons and the censorship of the Press, the public opinion was against the Congress. Jayaprakash Narayan became the popular symbol of restoration of democracy. The formation of the Janata Party also ensured that non-Congress votes would not be divided. It was evident that the going was tough for the Congress.

Yet the final results took everyone by surprise. For the first time since Independence, the Congress party was defeated in the Lok Sabha elections. The Congress could win only 154 seats in the Lok Sabha. Its share of popular votes fell to less than 35 per cent. The Janata Party and



Morarji Desai
(1896-1995): Freedom fighter; a Gandhian leader; Proponent of Khadi, naturopathy and prohibition; Chief Minister of Bombay State; Deputy Prime Minister (1967-1969); joined Congress (O) after the split in the party; Prime Minister from 1977 to 1979—first Prime Minister belonging to a non-Congress party.

Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India



A cartoonist's reading of who won and what was defeated in the 1977 election. Those standing with the common man include Jagjivan Ram, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Atal Behari Vajpayee.

its allies won 330 out of the 542 seats in the Lok Sabha; Janata Party itself won 295 seats and thus enjoyed a clear majority. In north India, it was a massive electoral wave against the Congress. The Congress lost in every constituency in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana and the Punjab and could win only one seat each in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Indira Gandhi was defeated from Rae Bareli, as was her son Sanjay Gandhi from Amethi.

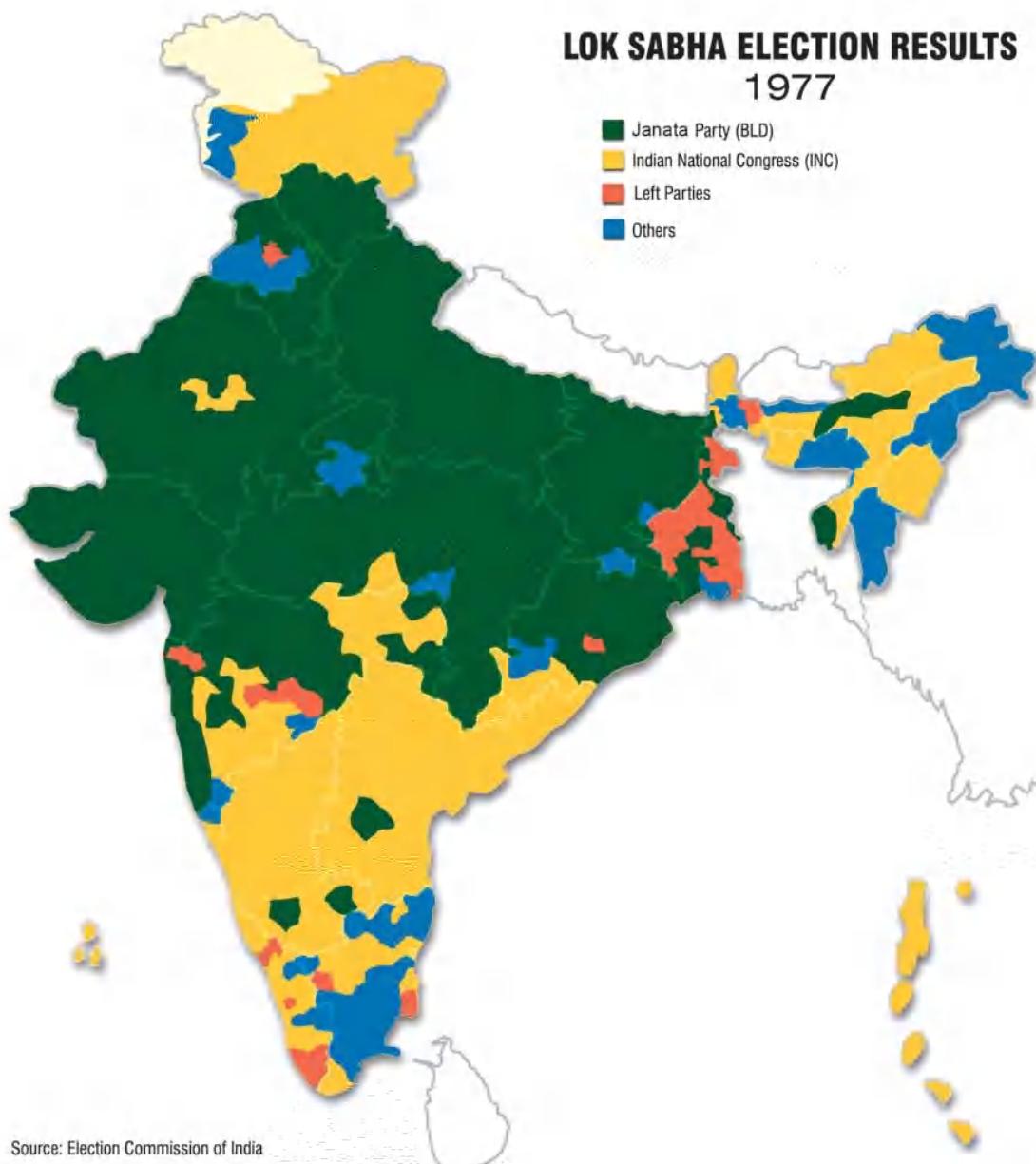
But if you look at the map showing the result of this election, you will notice that Congress did not lose elections all over the country. It retained many seats in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Orissa and virtually swept through the southern States. There are many reasons for this. To begin with, the impact of Emergency was not felt equally in all the States. The forced relocation and displacements, the forced sterilisations, were mostly concentrated in the northern States. But more importantly, north India had experienced some long term changes in the nature of political competition. The middle castes from north India were beginning to move away from the Congress and the Janata party became a platform for many of these sections to come together. In this sense, the elections of 1977 were not merely about the Emergency.

Janata Government

The Janata Party government that came to power after the 1977 elections was far from cohesive. After the election, there was stiff competition among three leaders for the post of Prime Minister – Morarji Desai, who



Oath taking by the first non-congress government at the centre in 1977. In the picture are Jayaprakash Narayan, J. B. Kriplani, Morarji Desai and Atal Behari Vajpayee.



Note: This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.

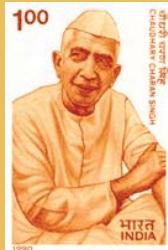
Read this map and identify the states where

- Congress lost,
- Congress lost very badly and
- those states where Congress and its allies nearly swept the polls.

Which are the constituencies in north India that the Congress managed to win?

How can we talk about a mandate or verdict in 1977 when the north and the south voted so differently?





Chaudhary Charan Singh (1902-1987): Prime Minister of India between July 1979 - January 1980; freedom fighter; active in the politics of Uttar Pradesh; proponent of rural and agricultural development; left Congress party and founded Bharatiya Kranti Dal in 1967; twice Chief Minister of U.P.; later he was one of the founders of the Janata Party in 1977 and became Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister (1977-79); founder of Lok Dal.



I got it! Emergency was like a vaccination against dictatorship. It was painful and caused fever, but strengthened the resistance of our democracy.

Janata Party's faction fight inspired many cartoons at that time. Here is a selection.



Credit: Atanu Roy/India Today

Credit: R.K. Laxman in the Times of India

was the rival to Indira Gandhi ever since 1966-67; Charan Singh, leader of the Bharatiya Lok Dal and a farmers' leader from UP; and Jagjivan Ram, who had vast experience as a senior minister in the Congress governments. Eventually Morarji Desai became the Prime Minister but that did not bring the power struggle within the party to an end.

The opposition to Emergency could keep the Janata Party together only for a while. Its critics felt that the Janata Party lacked direction, leadership, and a common programme. The Janata Party government could not bring about a fundamental change in policies from those pursued by the Congress. The Janata Party split and the government which was led by Morarji Desai lost its majority in less than 18 months. Another government headed by Charan Singh was formed on the assurance of the support of the Congress party. But the Congress party later decided to withdraw its support with the result that the Charan Singh government could remain in power for just about four months. Fresh Lok Sabha elections were held in January 1980 in which the Janata Party suffered a comprehensive defeat, especially in north India where it had swept the polls in 1977. Congress party led by Indira Gandhi nearly repeated its great victory in 1971. It won 353 seats and came back to power. The experience of 1977-79 taught another lesson in democratic politics: governments that are seen to be unstable and quarrelsome are severely punished by the voters.

Legacy

But was it only a case of return of Indira Gandhi? Between the elections of 1977 and 1980 the party system had changed dramatically. Since 1969, the Congress party had started shedding its character as an umbrella party which accommodated leaders and workers of different ideological dispensations and viewpoints. The Congress party now identified itself with a particular ideology, claiming to be the only socialist and pro-poor party. Thus with the early nineteen seventies, the Congress's political success depended on attracting people on the basis of sharp social and ideological divisions and the appeal of one leader, Indira Gandhi. With the change in the nature of the Congress party, other opposition parties relied more and more on what is known in Indian politics as 'non-Congressism'. They also realised the need to avoid a division of non-Congress votes in the election. This factor played a major role in the elections of 1977.

In an indirect manner the issue of welfare of the backward castes also began to dominate politics since 1977. As we saw above, the results of 1977 elections were at least partly due to a shift among the backward castes of north India. Following the Lok Sabha elections, many states also held Assembly elections in 1977. Again, the northern States elected non-Congress governments in which the leaders of the backward castes played



**Jagjivan Ram
(1908-1986):**
Freedom fighter and
Congress leader from
Bihar; Deputy Prime
Minister of India
(1977-79); member
of Constituent
Assembly; also
a Member of
Parliament since
1952 till his death;
Labour Minister in the
first ministry of free
India; held various
other ministries from
1952 to 1977; a
scholar and astute
administrator.



Credit: India Today



Credit: R.K. Laxman in the Times of India

This cartoon appeared after the election results of 1980.

an important role. The issue of reservations for 'other backward classes' became very controversial in Bihar and following this, the Mandal Commission was appointed by the Janata Party government at the centre. You will read more about this and about the role of the politics of backward castes, in the last chapter. The elections after the Emergency set off the process of this change in the party system.

The Emergency and the period around it can be described as a period of constitutional crisis because it had its origins in the constitutional battle over the jurisdiction of the Parliament and the judiciary. On the other hand, it was also a period of political crisis. The party in power had absolute majority and yet, its leadership decided to suspend

the democratic process. The makers of India's Constitution trusted that all political parties would basically abide by the democratic norm. Even during the Emergency, when the government would use extraordinary powers, its use would be within the norms of the rule of law. This expectation led to the wide and open ended powers given to the government in times of Emergency. These were abused during the Emergency. This political crisis was more serious than the constitutional crisis.

Another critical issue that emerged during this period was the role and extent of mass protests in a parliamentary democracy. There was clearly a tension between institution-based democracy and democracy based on spontaneous popular participation. This tension may be attributed to the inability of the party system to incorporate the aspirations of the people. In the two chapters that follow we shall study some of the manifestations of this tension, in particular, popular movements and debates around regional identity.

Let's watch a Film

HAZARON KHWAISHEIN AISI



Siddharth, Vikram and Geeta are three spirited and socially engaged students. Graduating from Delhi, they follow different paths. While Siddharth is a strong supporter of the revolutionary ideology of social transformation, Vikram is in favour of achieving success in life, whatever the cost. The film narrates the story of their journeys towards their goals and the underlying disappointments.

The film is set in the backdrop of the seventies. The young characters are products of the expectations and idealism of that period. Siddharth is not successful in his ambition to stage a revolution, but is so involved in the plight of the poor that he begins valuing their uplift more than revolution. On the other hand, Vikram becomes a typical political fixer but is constantly ill at ease.

Year: 2005
Director: Sudhir Mishra
Screenplay: Sudhir Mishra
Ruchi Narain
Shivkumar Subramaniam
Cast: Kay Kay Menon, Shiney Ahuja, Chitrangada Singh

EXERCISES

1. State whether the following statements regarding the Emergency are correct or incorrect.
 - (a) It was declared in 1975 by Indira Gandhi.
 - (b) It led to the suspension of all fundamental rights.
 - (c) It was proclaimed due to the deteriorating economic conditions.
 - (d) Many Opposition leaders were arrested during the emergency.
 - (e) CPI supported the proclamation of the Emergency.

2. Find the odd one out in the context of proclamation of Emergency
 - (a) The call for 'Total Revolution.'
 - (b) The Railway Strike of 1974
 - (c) The Naxalite Movement
 - (d) The Allahbad High Court verdict
 - (e) The findings of the Shah Commission Report

3. Match the following

(a) Total Revolution (b) Garibi hatao (c) Students' Protest (d) Railway Strike	i. Indira Gandhi ii. Jayaprakash Narayan iii. Bihar Movement iv. George Fernandes
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4. What were the reasons which led to the mid-term elections in 1980?

5. The Shah Commission was appointed in 1977 by the Janata Party Government. Why was it appointed and what were its findings?

6. What reasons did the Government give for declaring a National Emergency in 1975?

7. The 1977 elections for the first time saw the Opposition coming into power at the Centre. What would you consider as the reasons for this development?

8. Discuss the effects of Emergency on the following aspects of our polity.
 - Effects on civil liberties for citizens.
 - Impact on relationship between the Executive and Judiciary
 - Functioning of Mass Media
 - Working of the Police and Bureaucracy.

9. In what way did the imposition of Emergency affect the party system in India? Elaborate your answer with examples.

10. Read the passage and answer the questions below:

Indian democracy was never so close to a two-party system as it was during the 1977 elections. However, the next few years saw a complete change. Soon after its defeat, the Indian National Congress split into two groups..... The Janata Party also went through major convulsions.....David Butler, Ashok Lahiri and Prannoy Roy. — PARTHA CHATTERJEE

- (a) What made the party system in India look like a two-party system in 1977?
- (b) Many more than two parties existed in 1977. Why then are the authors describing this period as close to a two-party system?
- (c) What caused splits in Congress and the Janata parties?



Credit: Bhawan Singh

In this chapter...

Three decades after Independence, the people were beginning to get impatient. Their unease expressed itself in various forms. In the previous chapter, we have already gone through the story of electoral upheavals and political crisis. Yet that was not the only form in which popular discontent expressed itself. In the 1970s, diverse social groups like women, students, Dalits and farmers felt that democratic politics did not address their needs and demands. Therefore, they came together under the banner of various social organisations to voice their demands. These assertions marked the rise of popular movements or new social movements in Indian politics.

In this chapter we trace the journey of some of the popular movements that developed after the 1970s in order to understand:

- what are popular movements?
- which sections of Indian society have they mobilised?
- what is the main agenda of these movements?
- what role do they play in a democratic set up like ours?

Photograph on this and the facing page are of the participants and leaders of the Chipko Movement, recognised as one of the first environmental movements in the country.



RISE OF POPULAR MOVEMENTS

Nature of popular movements

Take a look at the opening image of this chapter. What do you see there? Villagers have literally embraced the trees. Are they playing some game? Or participating in some ritual or festival? Not really. The image here depicts a very unusual form of collective action in which men and women from a village in what is now Uttarakhand were engaged in early 1973. These villagers were protesting against the practices of commercial logging that the government had permitted. They used a novel tactic for their protest – that of hugging the trees to prevent them from being cut down. These protests marked the beginning of a world-famous environmental movement in our country – the Chipko movement.

Chipko movement

The movement began in two or three villages of Uttarakhand when the forest department refused permission to the villagers to fell ash trees for making agricultural tools. However, the forest department allotted the same patch of land to a sports manufacturer for commercial use. This enraged the villagers and they protested against the move of the government. The struggle soon spread across many parts of the Uttarakhand region. Larger issues of ecological and economic exploitation of the region were raised. The villagers demanded that no forest-exploiting contracts should be given to outsiders and local communities should have effective control over natural resources like land, water and forests. They wanted the government to provide low cost materials to small industries and ensure development of

Fascinating!
But I wonder how it
relates to the history of
politics.



Two historic pictures of the early Chipko movement in Chamoli, Uttarakhand.

Credit: Anupam Mishra

the region without disturbing the ecological balance. The movement took up economic issues of landless forest workers and asked for guarantees of minimum wage.

Women's active participation in the Chipko agitation was a very novel aspect of the movement. The forest contractors of the region usually doubled up as suppliers of alcohol to men. Women held sustained agitations against the habit of alcoholism and broadened the agenda of the movement to cover other social issues. The movement achieved a victory when the government issued a ban on felling of trees in the Himalayan regions for fifteen years, until the green cover was fully restored. But more than that, the Chipko movement, which started over a single issue, became a symbol of many such popular movements emerging in different parts of the country during the 1970s and later. In this chapter we shall study some of these movements.

Party based movements

Popular movements may take the form of social movements or political movements and there is often an overlap between the two. The nationalist movement, for example, was mainly a political movement. But we also know that deliberations on social and economic issues during the colonial period gave rise to independent social movements like the anti-caste movement, the *kisan sabhas* and the trade union movement in early twentieth century. These movements raised issues related to some underlying social conflicts.

Some of these movements continued in the post-independence period as well. Trade union movement had a strong presence among industrial workers in major cities like Mumbai, Kolkata and Kanpur. All major political parties established their own trade unions for mobilising these sections of workers. Peasants in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh organised massive agitations under the leadership of Communist parties in the early years of independence and demanded redistribution of land to cultivators. Peasants and agricultural labourers in parts of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal,

Bihar and adjoining areas continued their agitations under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninist workers; who were known as the Naxalites (you have already read about the Naxalite movement in the last chapter). The peasants' and the workers' movements mainly focussed on issues of economic injustice and inequality.

These movements did not participate in elections formally. And yet they retained connections with political parties, as many participants in these movements, as individuals and as organisations, were actively associated with parties. These links ensured a better representation of the demands of diverse social sections in party politics.



I don't get it. How can you do politics without a party?

Non-party movements

In the 1970s and 1980s, many sections of the society became disillusioned with the functioning of political parties. Failure of the Janata experiment and the resulting political instability were the immediate causes. But in the long run the disillusionment was also about economic policies of the state. The model of planned development that we adopted after Independence was based on twin goals of growth and distribution. You have read about it in Chapter Three. In spite of the impressive growth in many sectors of economy in the first twenty years of independence, poverty and inequalities persisted on a large scale. Benefits of economic growth did not reach evenly to all sections of society. Existing social inequalities like caste and gender sharpened and complicated the issues of poverty in many ways. There also existed a gulf between the urban-industrial sector and the rural agrarian sector. A sense of injustice and deprivation grew among different groups.

Many of the politically active groups lost faith in existing democratic institutions and electoral politics. They therefore chose to step outside of party politics and engage in mass mobilisation for registering their protests. Students and young political activists from various sections of the society were in the forefront in organising the marginalised sections such as Dalits and Adivasis. The middle class young activists launched service organisations and constructive programmes among rural poor. Because of the voluntary nature of their social work, many of these organisations came to be known as voluntary organisations or voluntary sector organisations.

These voluntary organisations chose to remain outside party politics. They did not contest elections at the local or regional level nor did they support any one political party. Most of these groups believed in politics and wanted to participate in it, but not through political parties. Hence, these organisations were called 'non-party political formations'. They hoped that direct and active participation by local groups of citizens would be more effective in resolving local issues than political parties. It was also hoped that direct participation by people will reform the nature of democratic government.

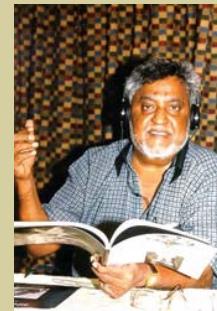
Such voluntary sector organisations still continue their work in rural and urban areas. However, their nature has changed. Of late many of these organisations are funded by external agencies including international service agencies. The ideal of local initiatives is weakened as a result of availability of external funds on a large scale to these organisations.

Popular movements have inspired artistic production like these posters. The three posters (from Top to Bottom) are from a campaign against a Coca Cola plant, agitation against a highway and Save Periyar river movement.



Namdeo Dhasal

Turning their backs to the sun, they journeyed through centuries.
 Now, now we must refuse to be pilgrims of darkness.
 That one, our father, carrying, carrying the darkness is now bent;
 Now, now we must lift the burden from his back.
 Our blood was spilled for this glorious city
 And what we got was the right to eat stones
 Now, now we must explode the building that kisses the sky!
 After a thousand years we were blessed with sunflower giving fakir;
 Now, now, we must like sunflowers turn our faces to the sun.



English translation by Jayant Karve and Eleanor Zelliot of Namdeo Dhasal's Marathi poem in Golpitha.

Dalit Panthers

Read this poem by well-known Marathi poet Namdeo Dhasal. Do you know who these 'pilgrims of darkness' in this poem are and who the 'sunflower-giving fakir' was that blessed them? The pilgrims were the Dalit communities who had experienced brutal caste injustices for a long time in our society and the poet is referring to Dr. Ambedkar as their liberator. Dalit poets in Maharashtra wrote many such poems during the decade of seventies. These poems were expressions of anguish that the Dalit masses continued to face even after twenty years of independence. But they were also full of hope for the future, a future that Dalit groups wished to shape for themselves. You are aware of Dr. Ambedkar's vision of socio-economic change and his relentless struggle for a dignified future for Dalits outside the Hindu caste-based social structure. It is not surprising that Dr. Ambedkar remains an iconic and inspirational figure in much of Dalit liberation writings.

Origins

By the early nineteen seventies, the first generation Dalit graduates, especially those living in city slums began to assert themselves from various platforms. Dalit Panthers, a militant organisation of the Dalit youth, was formed in Maharashtra in 1972 as a part of these assertions. In the post-Independence period, Dalit groups were mainly fighting against the perpetual caste based inequalities and material injustices that the Dalits faced in spite of constitutional guarantees of equality and justice. Effective implementation of reservations and other such policies of social justice was one of their prominent demands.

You know that the Indian Constitution abolished the practice of untouchability. The government passed laws to that effect in the 1960s and 1970s. And yet, social discrimination and violence against the



Has the condition of Dalits changed much since that time? I keep reading about atrocities against Dalits. Did these movements fail? Or is it the failure of the entire society?

ex-untouchable groups continued in various ways. Dalit settlements in villages continued to be set apart from the main village. They were denied access to common source of drinking water. Dalit women were dishonoured and abused and worst of all, Dalits faced collective atrocities over minor, symbolic issues of caste pride. Legal mechanisms proved inadequate to stop the economic and social oppression of Dalits. On the other hand, political parties supported by the Dalits, like the Republican Party of India, were not successful in electoral politics. These parties always remained marginal; had to ally with some other party in order to win elections and faced constant splits. Therefore the Dalit Panthers resorted to mass action for assertion of Dalits' rights.

Activities

Activities of Dalit Panthers mostly centred around fighting increasing atrocities on Dalits in various parts of the State. As a result of sustained agitations on the part of Dalit Panthers along with other like minded

HIDDEN APARTHEID | Political Rights

Woman Dalit Sarpanch Dismissed

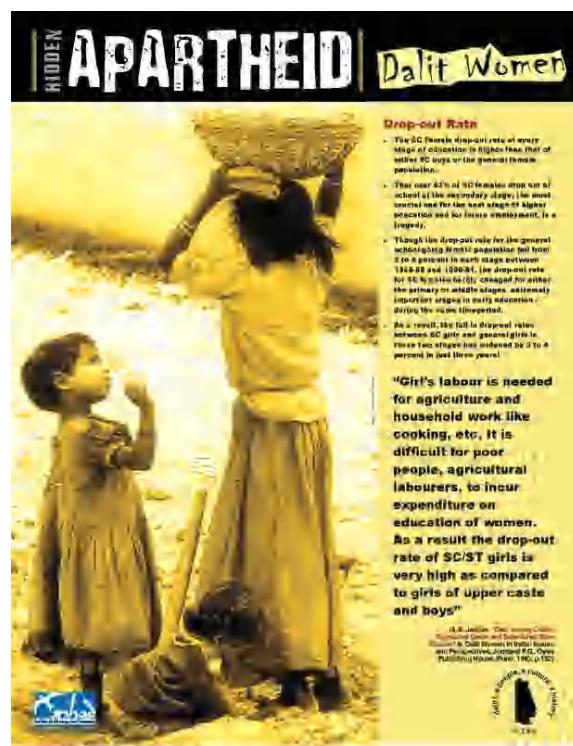
Some educated Dalit ladies, the woman sarpanches, got dismissed from their posts. After the election to the reserved post—a part of Andhra Pradesh, India, Kolleru Taluk in Mahabubnagar district of Telangana—SC/ST candidates were denied the term ending four months of the election, after succeeded in getting themselves elected. They insisted that these women be given permanent posts or otherwise, they would be deprived of their right to represent their constituencies.

On 20 October 1997, Balaji, Jyoti, Venkata, Palle, Nandini, Rakesh and Purnima Chakravarthy, who were elected to the reserved post of Sarpanch in Kolleru Taluk, were dismissed. Their demands were rejected by the government. They were asked to leave their posts and asked to return to their previous posts. They refused and filed a writ petition in the Andhra Pradesh High Court, challenging government's order. The court accepted it and ordered that the government should reinstate them in their posts.

The two rounds of panchayat polls in Eicher have seen large sections of Dalits being denied their voting rights. In Mahabubnagar block of Valenali district, a bomb explosion claimed the lives of four Dalits on Sunday. Reports suggest that the weaker sections were denied access to polling booths in Hellapur, Phulwari, Barh and Dhamoli panchayats.

DISAPPEARANCE OF POLITICAL RIGHTS

By B.R. Amritavalli



organisations over the issue of atrocities against Dalits, the government passed a comprehensive law in 1989 that provided for rigorous punishment for such acts. The larger ideological agenda of the Panthers was to destroy the caste system and to build an organisation of all oppressed sections like the landless poor peasants and urban industrial workers along with Dalits.

The movement provided a platform for Dalit educated youth to use their creativity as a protest activity. Dalit writers protested against the brutalities of the caste system in their numerous autobiographies and other literary works published during this period. These works portraying the life experiences of the most downtrodden social sections of Indian society sent shock waves in Marathi literary world, made literature more broad based and representative of different social sections and initiated contestations in the cultural realm. In the post-Emergency period, Dalit Panthers got involved in electoral compromises; it also underwent

many splits, which led to its decline. Organisations like the Backward and Minority Communities' Employees Federation (BAMCEF) took over this space.

Bharatiya Kisan Union

The social discontent in Indian society since the seventies was manifold. Even those sections that partially benefited in the process of development had many complaints against the state and political parties. Agrarian struggles of the eighties is one such example where better off farmers protested against the policies of the state.

Growth

In January 1988, around twenty thousand farmers had gathered in the city of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. They were protesting against the government decision to increase electricity rates. The farmers camped for about three weeks outside the district collector's office until their demands were fulfilled. It was a very disciplined agitation of the farmers and all those days they received regular food supply from the nearby villages. The Meerut agitation was seen as a great show of rural power – power of farmer cultivators. These agitating farmers were members of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), an organisation of farmers from western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana regions. The BKU was one of the leading organisations in the farmers' movement of the eighties.

We have noted in Chapter Three that farmers of Haryana, Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh had benefited in the late 1960s from the state policies of 'green revolution'. Sugar and wheat became the main cash crops in the region since then. The cash crop market faced a crisis in mid-eighties due to the beginning of the process of liberalisation of Indian economy. The BKU demanded higher government floor prices

for sugarcane and wheat, abolition of restrictions on the inter-state movement of farm produce, guaranteed supply of electricity at reasonable rates, waiving of repayments due on loans to farmers and the provision of a government pension for farmers.

Similar demands were made by other farmers' organisations in the country. Shetkari Sanghatana of Maharashtra declared the farmers' movement as a war of Bharat (symbolising rural, agrarian sector) against forces of India (urban industrial sector). You have already studied in Chapter Three that the debate between industry and

Credit: Hindustan Times



A Bhartiya Kisan Union Rally in Punjab.

agriculture has been one of the prominent issues in India's model of development. The same debate came alive once again in the eighties when the agricultural sector came under threat due to economic policies of liberalisation.

Characteristics

Activities conducted by the BKU to pressurise the state for accepting its demands included rallies, demonstrations, sit-ins, and *jail bharo* (courting imprisonment) agitations. These protests involved tens of thousands of farmers – sometimes over a lakh – from various villages in western Uttar Pradesh and adjoining regions. Throughout the decade of eighties, the BKU organised massive rallies of these farmers in many district headquarters of the State and also at the national capital. Another novel aspect of these mobilisations was the use of caste linkages of farmers. Most of the BKU members belonged to a single community. The organisation used traditional caste panchayats of these communities in bringing them together over economic issues. In spite of lack of any formal organisation, the BKU could sustain itself for a long time because it was based on clan networks among its members. Funds, resources and activities of BKU were mobilised through these networks.

Until the early nineties, the BKU distanced itself from all political parties. It operated as a pressure group in politics with its strength of sheer numbers. The organisation, along with the other farmers' organisations across States, did manage to get some of their economic demands accepted. The farmers' movement became one of the most successful social movements of the 'eighties in this respect. The success of the movement was an outcome of political bargaining powers that its members possessed. The movement was active mainly in the prosperous States of the country. Unlike most of the Indian farmers who engage in agriculture for subsistence, members of the organisations like the BKU grew cash crops for the market. Like the BKU, farmers' organisations across States recruited their members from communities that dominated regional electoral politics.

Shetkari Sanghatana of Maharashtra and Rayata Sangha of Karnataka, are prominent examples of such organisations of the farmers.

I have never met anyone who says he wishes to be a farmer. Don't we need farmers in the country?



Kisan union wants agriculture out of WTO purview

By Our Staff Correspondent

MYSORE, FEB. 15. The Bharatiya Kisan Union has warned of socio-economic upheavals in the country if India does not bargain to keep agriculture out of the purview of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Addressing a press conference here today, the chief

of the union, Mahendra Singh Tikait, and its national coordinating committee convener, M. Yudhveer Singh, warned of the impending dangers if India goes ahead and agrees to the stipulations of the WTO in the next round of negotiations scheduled to be held in Hong Kong in November.

The leaders said a farmers' rally will be taken out in New Delhi on March 17 to pressure the Government to keep agriculture out of the purview of the WTO. More than five lakh farmers from all over India are expected to attend the rally. Subsequently, the agitation will be intensified across the country.

The Hindu, Feb 16, 2005



Credit: Hindu

National Fish Workers' Forum

Do you know that the Indian fishers constitute the second largest fishing population in the world? Both in the eastern and the western coastal areas of our country hundreds of thousands of families, mainly belonging to the indigenous fishermen communities, are engaged in the occupation of fishing. These fish workers' lives were threatened in a major way when the government permitted entry to mechanised trawlers and technologies like bottom trawling for large-scale harvest of fish in the Indian seas. Throughout the seventies and eighties, local fish workers' organisations fought with the State governments over the issues of their livelihood. Fisheries being a State subject, the fish workers were mostly mobilised at the regional level.

With the coming of policies of economic liberalisation in and around the mid 'eighties, these organisations were compelled to come together on a national level platform—the NFF or National Fishworkers' Forum. Fish workers from Kerala took the main responsibility of mobilising fellow workers, including women workers from other States. Work of the NFF consolidated when in 1991 it fought its first legal battle with the Union government successfully. This was about the government's deep sea fishing policy that opened up India's waters to large commercial vessels including those of the multinational fishing companies. Throughout the nineties the NFF fought various legal and public battles with the government. It worked to protect the interests of those who rely on fishing for subsistence rather than those who invest in the sector for profit. In July 2002, NFF called for a nationwide strike to oppose the move of the government to issue licenses to foreign trawlers. The NFF joined hands with organisations all over the world for protecting ecology and for protecting lives of the fish workers.

Anti-Arrack Movement

When the BKU was mobilising the farmers of the north, an altogether different kind of mobilisation in the rural areas was taking shape in the southern State of Andhra Pradesh. It was a spontaneous mobilisation of women demanding a ban on the sale of alcohol in their neighbourhoods.

Liquor Mafia take to Heels as Women Hit Back

The women of village Gundlur in Kalikari vendor informed the contractor about this, contractor's goondas with assembled and resolved to put an end to the sale of arrack in their village. They conveyed this resolution to the village arrack vendor. They turned back the jeep that brought arrack packets to the village. However, week later, women who

the village arrack prevented the sale of arrack. The contractor sent him a iron rods and other lethal gang of men to help him weapons. But when the women resisted the assault resume sales. Women of the village were adamant unitedly, the hired mafia opposed this move. The contractor called in women later destroyed took to their heels. The police but even they three jeeps full of arrack.

Based on a report in Eenadu,
October 29, 1992.

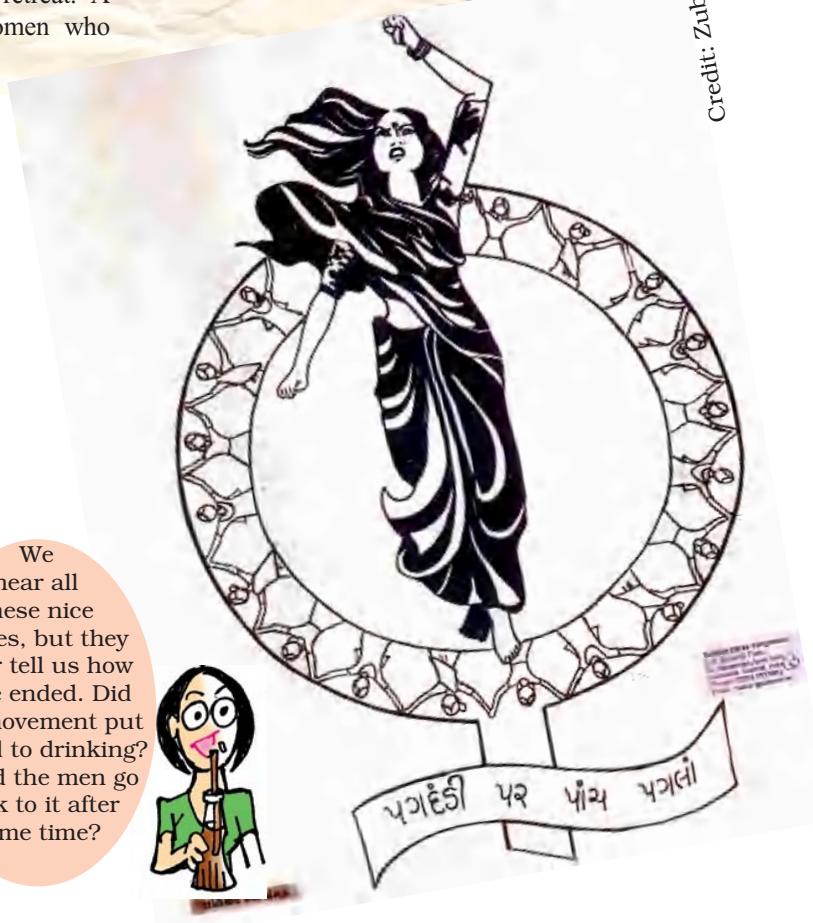
Stories of this kind appeared in the Telugu press almost daily during the two months of September and October 1992. The name of the village would change in each case but the story was the same. Rural women in remote villages from the State of Andhra Pradesh fought a battle against alcoholism, against mafias and against the government during this period. These agitations shaped what was known as the anti-arrack movement in the State.

We hear all these nice stories, but they never tell us how these ended. Did this movement put an end to drinking? Or did the men go back to it after some time?

Credit: Zuban



Credit: Zuban



Origins

In a village in the interior of Dubagunta in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, women had enrolled in the Adult Literacy Drive on a large scale in the early nineteen nineties. It is during the discussion in the class that women complained of increased consumption of a locally brewed alcohol – arrack – by men in their families. The habit of alcoholism had taken deep roots among the village people and was ruining their physical and mental health. It affected the rural economy of the region a great deal. Indebtedness grew with increasing scales of consumption of alcohol, men remained absent from their jobs and the contractors of alcohol engaged in crime for securing their monopoly over the arrack trade. Women were the worst sufferers of these ill-effects of alcohol as it resulted in the collapse of the family economy and women had to bear the brunt of violence from the male family members, particularly the husband.

Credit: The Hindu



Women taking out procession in Hyderabad in 1992, protesting against the selling of arrack.

Linkages

The slogan of the anti-arrack movement was simple — prohibition on the sale of arrack. But this simple demand touched upon larger social, economic and political issues of the region that affected women's life. A close nexus between crime and politics was established around the business of arrack. The State government collected huge revenues by way of taxes imposed on the sale of arrack and was therefore not willing to impose a ban. Groups of local women tried to address these complex issues in their agitation against arrack. They also openly discussed the issue of domestic violence. Their movement, for the first time, provided a platform to discuss private issues of domestic violence. Thus, the anti-arrack movement also became part of the women's movement.

Earlier, women's groups working on issues of domestic violence, the custom of dowry, sexual abuse at work and public places were active mainly among urban middle class women in different parts of the country. Their work led to a realisation that issues of injustice

Women in Nellore came together in spontaneous local initiatives to protest against arrack and forced closure of the wine shop. The news spread fast and women of about 5000 villages got inspired and met together in meetings, passed resolutions for imposing prohibition and sent them to the District Collector. The arrack auctions in Nellore district were postponed 17 times. This movement in Nellore District slowly spread all over the State.

to women and of gender inequalities were complicated in nature. During the decade of the eighties women's movement focused on issues of sexual violence against women – within the family and outside. These groups ran a campaign against the system of dowry and demanded personal and property laws based on the norms of gender equality.

These campaigns contributed a great deal in increasing overall social awareness about women's questions. Focus of the women's movement gradually shifted from legal reforms to open social confrontations like the one we discussed above. As a result the movement made demands of equal representation to women in politics during the nineties. We know that 73rd and 74th amendments have granted reservations to women in local level political offices. Demands for extending similar reservations in State and Central legislatures have also been made. A constitution amendment bill to this effect has been proposed but has not received enough support from the Parliament yet. Main opposition to the bill has come from groups, including some women's groups, who are insisting on a separate quota for Dalit and OBC women within the proposed women's quota in higher political offices.



Women's demonstration in favour of anti-dowry act.

Credit: India Today

Let's watch a Film

AAKROSH



The lawyer Bhaskar Kulkarni is assigned a legal aid case to represent Bhiku Lahanya, an Adivasi who is charged with murdering his wife. The lawyer tries hard to find out the cause of the killing but the accused is determinedly silent and so is his family. The lawyer's perseverance leads to an attack on him and also a tip off by a social worker about what had happened.

But the social worker disappears and Bhiku's father dies. Bhiku is permitted to attend the funeral of his father. It is here that Bhiku breaks down and the 'Aakrosh' (screaming cry) erupts....This hard hitting film depicts the sub-human life of the oppressed and the uphill task facing any intervention against dominant social powers.

Year: 1980
 Director: Govind Nihlani
 Story: Vijay Tendulkar
 Screenplay: Satyadev Dubey
 Actors: Naseeruddin Shah, Om Puri, Smita Patil, Nana Patekar, Mahesh Elkunchwar

Narmada Bachao Aandolan



Credit: Design and People

A poster in support of *Narmada Bachao Andolan*.

Social movements that we discussed so far raised various issues about the model of economic development that India had adopted at the time of Independence. Chipko movement brought out the issue of ecological depletion whereas the farmers complained of neglect of agricultural sector. Social and material conditions of Dalits led to their mass struggles whereas the anti-arrack movement focused on the negative fallouts of what was considered development. The issue implicit in all these movements was made explicit by the movements against displacement caused by huge developmental projects.

Sardar Sarovar Project

An ambitious developmental project was launched in the Narmada valley of central India in early 'eighties. The project consisted of 30 big dams, 135 medium sized and around 3,000 small dams to be constructed on the Narmada and its tributaries that flow across three states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Sardar Sarovar Project in Gujarat and the Narmada Sagar Project in Madhya Pradesh were two of the most important and biggest, multi-purpose dams planned under

the project. Narmada Bachao Aandolan, a movement to save Narmada, opposed the construction of these dams and questioned the nature of ongoing developmental projects in the country.

Sardar Sarovar Project is a multipurpose mega-scale dam. Its advocates say that it would benefit huge areas of Gujarat and the three adjoining states in terms of availability of drinking water and water for irrigation, generation of electricity and increase in agricultural production. Many more subsidiary benefits like effective flood and drought control in the region were linked to the success of this dam. In the process of construction of the dam 245 villages from these States were expected to get submerged. It required relocation of around two and a half lakh people from these villages. Issues of relocation and proper rehabilitation of the project-affected people were first raised by local activist groups. It was around 1988-89 that the issues crystallised under the banner of the NBA – a loose collective of local voluntary organisations.

Debates and struggles

Since its inception the NBA linked its opposition to the Sardar Sarovar Project with larger issues concerning the nature of ongoing developmental projects, efficacy of the model of development that



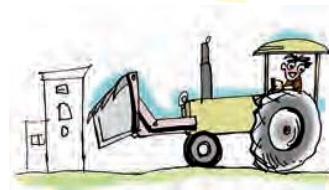
Credit: NBA

the country followed and about what constituted public interest in a democracy. It demanded that there should be a cost-benefit analysis of the major developmental projects completed in the country so far. The movement argued that larger social costs of the developmental projects must be calculated in such an analysis. The social costs included forced resettlement of the project-affected people, a serious loss of their means of livelihood and culture and depletion of ecological resources.

Initially the movement demanded proper and just rehabilitation of all those who were directly or indirectly affected by the project. The movement also questioned the nature of decision-making processes that go in the making of mega scale developmental projects. The NBA insisted that local communities must have a say in such decisions and they should also have effective control over natural resources like water, land and forests. The movement also asked why, in a democracy, should some people be made to sacrifice for benefiting others. All these considerations led the NBA to shift from its initial demand for rehabilitation to its position of total opposition to the dam.

Arguments and agitations of the movement met vociferous opposition in the States benefiting from the project, especially in Gujarat. At the same time, the point about right to rehabilitation has been now recognised by the government and the judiciary. A comprehensive National Rehabilitation Policy formed by the government in 2003 can be seen as an achievement of the movements like the NBA. However, its demand to stop the construction of the dam was severely criticised by many as obstructing the process of development, denying access to water and to economic development for many. The Supreme

I have never heard of posh colonies and cities being demolished for any developmental project. Why is it always the Adivasis and the poor who are asked to leave their homes?



Top:
NBA leader Medha Patkar and other activists in Jalsamadhi (protesting in rising waters) in 2002.

Bottom:
A boat rally organised by NBA.



Credit: NBA

Court upheld the government's decision to go ahead with the construction of the dam while also instructing to ensure proper rehabilitation.

Narmada Bachao Aandolan continued a sustained agitation for more than twenty years. It used every available democratic strategy to put forward its demands. These included appeals to the judiciary, mobilisation of support at the international level, public rallies in support of the movement and a revival of forms of Satyagraha to convince people about the movement's position. However, the movement could not garner much support among the mainstream political parties – including the opposition parties. In fact, the journey of the Narmada Bachao Aandolan depicted a gradual process of disjunction between political parties and social movements in Indian politics. By the end of the 'nineties, however, the NBA was not alone. There emerged many local groups and movements that challenged the logic of large scale developmental projects in their areas. Around this time, the NBA became part of a larger alliance of people's movements that are involved in struggles for similar issues in different regions of the country.

Lessons from popular movements

The history of these popular movements helps us to understand better the nature of democratic politics. We have seen that these non-party movements are neither sporadic in nature nor are these a problem. These movements came up to rectify some problems in the functioning of party politics and should be seen as integral part of our democratic politics. They represented new social groups whose economic and social grievances were not redressed in the realm of electoral politics. Popular movements ensured effective representation of diverse groups and their demands. This reduced the possibility of deep social conflict and disaffection of these groups from democracy. Popular movements suggested new forms of active participation and thus broadened the idea of participation in Indian democracy.

Critics of these movements often argue that collective actions like strikes, sit-ins and rallies disrupt the functioning of the government, delay decision making and destabilise the routines of democracy. Such an argument invites a deeper question: why do these movements resort to such assertive forms of action? We have seen in this chapter that popular movements have raised legitimate demands of the people and have involved large scale participation of citizens. It should be noted that the groups mobilised by these movements are poor, socially and economically disadvantaged sections of the society from marginal social groups. The frequency and the methods used by the movements suggest that the routine functioning of democracy did not have enough space for the voices of these social groups. That



Can we say that movements are like laboratories of politics? New experiments are carried out here and the successful ones are taken up by parties.



Popular movements have produced a wide range of literature, often in the form of small magazines. Here is a selection.

Movement for Right to Information

Credit: Pankaj Pushkar



"Ghotala Rathyatra", a popular theatre form evolved by MKSS.

could force an amendment in the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act to permit the public to procure certified copies of documents held by the Panchayats. The Panchayats were also required to publish on a board and in newspapers the budget, accounts, expenditure, policies and beneficiaries. In 1996 MKSS formed National Council for People's Right to Information in Delhi to raise RTI to the status of a national campaign. Prior to that, the Consumer Education and Research Center, the Press Council and the Shourie committee had proposed a draft RTI law. In 2002, a weak Freedom of Information Act was legislated but never came into force. In 2004 RTI Bill was tabled and received presidential assent in June 2005.

The movement for Right to Information (RTI) is one of the few recent examples of a movement that did succeed in getting the state to accept its major demand. The movement started in 1990, when a mass based organisation called the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) in Rajasthan took the initiative in demanding records of famine relief work and accounts of labourers. The demand was first raised in Bhim Tehsil in a very backward region of Rajasthan. The villagers asserted their right to information by asking for copies of bills and vouchers and names of persons on the muster rolls who have been paid wages on the construction of schools, dispensaries, small dams and community centres. On paper such development projects were all completed, but it was common knowledge of the villagers that there was gross misappropriation of funds. In 1994 and 1996, the MKSS organised Jan Sunwais or Public Hearings, where the administration was asked to explain its stand in public.

The movement had a small success when they



Credit: Sudhir Tallaang/UNDP and Planning Commission

Let's re-search

Identify at least one popular movement in your city or district in the last 25 years. Collect the following information about that movement.

- When did it start? How long did it last?
- Who were the main leaders? Which social groups supported the movement?
- What were the main issues or demands of the movement?
- Did it succeed? What was the long term effect of the movement in your area?

is perhaps why these groups turned to mass actions and mobilisations outside the electoral arena.

This can be seen in the recent case of the new economic policies. As you will read in Chapter Nine, there is a growing consensus among political parties over the implementation of these policies. It follows that those marginal social groups who may be adversely affected by these policies get less and less attention from political parties as well as the media. Therefore, any effective protest against these policies involves assertive forms of action that are taken up by the popular movements outside the framework of political parties.

Movements are not only about collective assertions or only about rallies and protests. They involve a gradual process of coming together of people with similar problems, similar demands and similar expectations. But then movements are also about making people aware of their rights and the expectations that they can have from democratic institutions. Social movements in India have been involved in these educative tasks for a long time and have thus contributed to expansion of democracy rather than causing disruptions. The struggle for the right to information is a case in point.

Yet the real life impact of these movements on the nature of public policies seems to be very limited. This is partly because most of the contemporary movements focus on a single issue and represent the interest of one section of society. Thus it becomes possible to ignore their reasonable demands. Democratic politics requires a broad alliance of various disadvantaged social groups. Such an alliance does not seem to be shaping under the leadership of these movements. Political parties are required to bring together different sectional interests, but they also seem to be unable to do so. Parties do not seem to be taking up issues of marginal social groups. The movements that take up these issues operate in a very restrictive manner. The relationship between popular movements and political parties has grown weaker over the years, creating a vacuum in politics. In the recent years, this has become a major problem in Indian politics.

EXERCISES

- Which of these statements are incorrect
The Chipko Movement
 - (a) was an environmental movement to prevent cutting down of trees.
 - (b) raised questions of ecological and economic exploitation.
 - (c) was a movement against alcoholism started by the women
 - (d) demanded that local communities should have control over their natural resources
- Some of the statements below are incorrect. Identify the incorrect statements and rewrite those with necessary correction:
 - (a) Social movements are hampering the functioning of India's democracy.
 - (b) The main strength of social movements lies in their mass base across social sections.
 - (c) Social movements in India emerged because there were many issues that political parties did not address.
- Identify the reasons which led to the Chipko Movement in U.P in early 1970s. What was the impact of this movement?
- The Bharatiya Kisan Union is a leading organisation highlighting the plight of farmers. What were the issues addressed by it in the nineties and to what extent were they successful?
- The anti-arrack movement in Andhra Pradesh drew the attention of the country to some serious issues. What were these issues?
- Would you consider the anti-arrack movement as a women's movement? Why?
- Why did the Narmada Bachao Aandolan oppose the dam projects in the Narmada Valley?
- Do movements and protests in a country strengthen democracy? Justify your answer with examples.
- What issues did the Dalit Panthers address?
- Read the passage and answer questions below:

...., nearly all 'new social movements' have emerged as corrective to new maladies – environmental degradation, violation of the status of women, destruction of tribal cultures and the undermining of human rights – none of which are in and by themselves transformative of the social order. They are in that way quite different from revolutionary ideologies of the past. But their weakness lies in their being so heavily fragmented.a large part of the space occupied by the new

social movements seem to be suffering from .. various characteristics which have prevented them from being relevant to the truly oppressed and the poor in the form of a solid unified movement of the people. They are too fragmented, reactive, ad hocish, providing no comprehensive framework of basic social change. Their being anti-this or that (anti-West, anti-capitalist, anti-development, etc) does not make them any more coherent, any more relevant to oppressed and peripheralized communities. — RAJNI KOTHARI

- (a) What is the difference between new social movements and revolutionary ideologies?
- (b) What according to the author are the limitations of social movements?
- (c) If social movements address specific issues, would you say that they are 'fragmented' or that they are more focused? Give reasons for your answer by giving examples.

LET US DO IT TOGETHER

Trace newspaper reports for a week and identify any three news stories you would classify as 'Popular Movement'. Find out the core demands of these movements; the methods used by them to pursue their demands and the response of political parties to these demands.

हमें हर भारतवासी का सहयोग चाहिये

हमें हर भारतवासी का सहयोग चाहिये
अन्याय-प्रोषण व दमन के खिलाफ
उत्तरारवण्ड राज्य के निर्माण के लिए।



जानकारी सर्व मारोय जलाया सहयोगाद्वारे प्राप्त!
उत्तरारवण्ड उत्तरारवण्ड राज्याविरोधी संघी!



त्रिपुरा और पानीपती विधानसभा क्षेत्रों में
बिन्दु यात्रा योग्यकारी शुल्कों का लागू।



प्रिय भारत निधा न हो
न अपनी द सेवा रहें दे।

WE SEEK SUPPORT OF EVERY INDIAN AGAINST
INJUSTICE, EXPLOITATION AND OPPRESSION
FOR THE CREATION OF UTTARAKHAND STATE

Regional aspirations are usually expressed in the language of the region and addressed to the local population or the rulers. This unusual poster from Uttarakhand movement appeals to all the Indian citizens in seven different languages and thus underscores the compatibility of the regional aspirations with nationalist sentiments.

In this chapter...

In the first chapter of this book we studied the process of 'nation-building' in the first decade after Independence. But nation-building is not something that can be accomplished once and for all times to come. In the course of time new challenges came up. Some of the old problems had never been fully resolved. As democratic experiment unfolded, people from different regions began to express their aspirations for autonomy. Sometimes these aspirations were expressed outside the framework of the Indian union. These involved long struggles and often aggressive and armed assertions by the people.

This new challenge came to the fore in the 1980s, as the Janata experiment came to an end and there was some political stability at the centre. This decade will be remembered for some major conflicts and accords in the various regions of the country, especially in Assam, the Punjab, Mizoram and the developments in Jammu and Kashmir. In this chapter we study these cases so as to ask some general questions.

- Which factors contribute to the tensions arising out of regional aspirations?
- How has the Indian state responded to these tensions and challenges?
- What kind of difficulties are faced in balancing democratic rights and national unity?
- What are the lessons here for achieving unity with diversity in a democracy?

REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Region and the Nation

1980s may be seen as a period of rising regional aspirations for autonomy, often outside the framework of the Indian Union. These movements frequently involved armed assertions by the people, their repression by the government, and a collapse of the political and electoral processes. It is also not surprising that most of these struggles were long drawn and concluded in negotiated settlements or accords between the central government and the groups leading the movement for autonomy. The accords were reached after a process of dialogue that aimed to settle contentious issues within the constitutional framework. Yet the journey to the accord was always tumultuous and often violent.

Indian approach

In studying the Indian Constitution and the process of nation-building we have repeatedly come across one basic principle of the Indian approach to diversity – the Indian nation shall not deny the rights of different regions and linguistic groups to retain their own culture. We decided to live a united social life without losing the distinctiveness of the numerous cultures that constituted it. Indian nationalism sought to balance the principles of unity and diversity. The nation would not mean the negation of the region. In this sense the Indian approach was very different from the one adopted in many European countries where they saw cultural diversity as a threat to the nation.

India adopted a democratic approach to the question of diversity. Democracy allows the political expressions of regional aspirations and does not look upon them as anti-national. Besides, democratic politics allows parties and groups to address the people on the basis of their regional identity, aspiration and specific regional problems. Thus, in the course of democratic politics, regional aspirations get strengthened. At the same time, democratic politics also means that regional issues and problems will receive adequate attention and accommodation in the policy making process.

Such an arrangement may sometimes lead to tensions and problems. Sometimes, the concern for national unity may overshadow the regional needs

Does it mean that regionalism is not as dangerous as communalism? Or maybe, not dangerous at all?



and aspirations. At other times a concern for region alone may blind us to the larger needs of the nation. Therefore, political conflicts over issues of power of the regions, their rights and their separate existence are common to nations that want to respect diversity while trying to forge and retain unity.

Areas of tension

In the first chapter you have seen how immediately after Independence our nation had to cope with many difficult issues like Partition, displacement, integration of Princely States, reorganisation of states and so on. Many observers, both within the country and from outside, had predicted that India as one unified country cannot last long. Soon after Independence, the issue of Jammu and Kashmir came up. It was not only a conflict between India and Pakistan. More than that, it was a question of the political aspirations of the people of Kashmir valley. Similarly, in some parts of the north-east, there was no consensus about being a part of India. First Nagaland and then Mizoram witnessed strong movements demanding separation from India. In the south, some groups from the Dravid movement briefly toyed with the idea of a separate country.

These events were followed by mass agitations in many parts for the formation of linguistic States. Today's Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Gujarat were among the regions affected by these agitations. In some parts of southern India, particularly Tamil Nadu, there were protests against making Hindi the official national language of the country. In the north, there were strong pro-Hindi agitations demanding that Hindi be made the official language immediately. From the late 1950s, people speaking the Punjabi language started agitating for a separate State for themselves. This demand was finally accepted and the States of Punjab and Haryana were created in 1966. Later, the States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand (now Uttarakhand) were created. Thus the challenge of diversity was met by redrawing the internal boundaries of the country.

Yet this did not lead to resolution of all problems and for all times. In some regions, like Kashmir and Nagaland, the challenge was so complex that it could not be resolved in the first phase of nation-building. Besides, new challenges came up in States like Punjab, Assam and Mizoram. Let us study these cases in some detail. In this process let us also go back to some of the earlier instances of difficulties of nation building. The successes and failures in these cases are instructive not merely for a study of our past, but also for an understanding of India's future.

Why does the challenge always come from the border States?



Jammu and Kashmir

You may have heard about the violence in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). This has resulted in the loss of many lives and the displacement of many families. The 'Kashmir issue' is always seen as a major issue between India and Pakistan. But the political situation in the State has many dimensions.

Jammu and Kashmir comprises three social and political regions: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The heart of the Kashmir region is the Kashmir valley; the people are Kashmiri speaking and mostly Muslim with a small Kashmiri speaking Hindu minority. Jammu region is a mix of foothills and plains, of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and speakers of various languages. The Ladakh region is mountainous, has very little population which is equally divided between Buddhists and Muslims.

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

Roots of the problem

Before 1947, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was a Princely State. Its Hindu ruler, Hari Singh, did not want to merge with India and tried to negotiate with India and Pakistan to have an independent status for his state. The Pakistani leaders thought the Kashmir region 'belonged' to Pakistan, since majority population of the State was Muslim. But this is not how the people themselves saw it – they thought of themselves as Kashmiris above all. The popular movement in the State, led by Sheikh Abdullah of the National Conference, wanted to get rid of the Maharaja, but was against joining Pakistan. The National Conference was a secular organisation and had a long association with the Congress. Sheikh Abdullah was a personal friend of some of the leading nationalist leaders including Nehru.

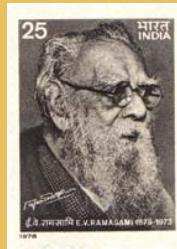
In October 1947, Pakistan sent tribal infiltrators from its side to capture Kashmir. This forced the Maharaja to ask for Indian military help. India extended the military support and drove back



Note: This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.

In that case, why don't they rename the State as "Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh"? Besides, JKL makes for an easy abbreviation!





**E.V.
Ramasami
Naicker
(1879-1973):**
Known as
Periyar (the
respected);
strong

supporter of atheism; famous for his anti-caste struggle and rediscovery of Dravid identity; initially a worker of the Congress party; started the self-respect movement (1925); led the anti-Brahmin movement; worked for the Justice party and later founded Dravid Kazhagam; opposed to Hindi and domination of north India; propounded the thesis that north Indians and Brahmins are Aryans.

Dravidian movement

'Vadakku Vaazhkirathu; Therkku Thaeikirathu' [The north thrives even as the south decays]. This popular slogan sums up the dominant sentiments of one of India's most effective regional movements, the Dravidian movement, at one point of time. This was one of the first regional movements in Indian politics. Though some sections of this movement had ambitions of creating a Dravid nation, the movement did not take to arms. It used democratic means like public debates and the electoral platform to achieve its ends. This strategy paid off as the movement acquired political power in the State and also became influential at the national level.

The Dravidian movement led to the formation of Dravida Kazhagam [DK] under the leadership of Tamil social reformer E.V. Ramasami 'Periyar'. The organisation strongly opposed the Brahmins' dominance and affirmed regional pride against the political, economic and cultural domination of the North. Initially, the Dravidian movement spoke in terms of

the whole of south India; however lack of support from other States limited the movement to Tamil Nadu.

The DK split and the political legacy of the movement was transferred to Dravida

Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). The DMK made its entry into politics with a three pronged agitation in 1953-54. First, it demanded the restoration of the original name of Kallakudi railway station which had been renamed Dalmiapuram, after an industrial house from the North. This demand brought out its opposition to the North Indian economic and cultural symbols. The second agitation was for



Anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu, 1965

HINDI PROTAGONISTS ALLEGEDLY BID TO REVERSE POLICY

The Times of India, New Delhi
Wednesday, December 2, 1964

A STORM broke out in the Lok Sabha today during discussions on Government's right to retain the position of medium of instruction in the Education Committee after Parliament had voted in favour of a proposal on the Government's language policy.

Opposition leader Mr. M. G. Dharmadhikari said that the proposal came at a time when the Government was trying to impose English as the sole medium of instruction in the schools.

Mr. C. Subrahmanya

said that the Government's proposal was aimed at "making English the sole medium of instruction in all Government schools."

He said that the Government's

proposal was aimed at

making English the sole medium of instruction in all Government schools.

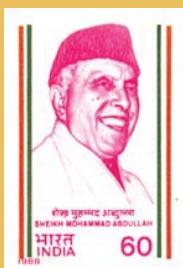
He said that the Government's

giving Tamil cultural history greater importance in school curricula. The third agitation was against the craft education scheme of the State government, which it alleged was linked to the Brahmanical social outlook. It also agitated against making

Hindi the country's official language. The success of the anti-Hindi agitation of 1965 added to the DMK's popularity.

Sustained political agitations brought the DMK to power in the Assembly elections of 1967. Since then, the Dravidian parties have dominated the politics of Tamil Nadu. Though the DMK split after the death of its leader, C. Annadurai, the influence of Dravidian parties in Tamil politics actually increased. After the split there were two parties – the DMK and the All India Anna DMK (AIADMK) – that claimed Dravidian legacy. Both these parties have dominated politics in Tamil Nadu for the last four decades. Since 1996, one of these parties has been a part of the ruling coalition at the Centre. In the 1990s, many other Dravidian parties have emerged. These include Marumalarchchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) and Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK). All these parties have kept alive the issue of regional pride in the politics of Tamil Nadu. Initially seen as a threat to Indian nationalism, regional politics in Tamil Nadu is a good example of the compatibility of regionalism and nationalism.





**Sheikh
Mohammad
Abdullah
(1905-1982):**
Leader of Jammu
and Kashmir;
proponent of
autonomy and
secularism for

Jammu and Kashmir; led the popular struggle against princely rule; opposed to Pakistan due to its non-secular character; leader of the National Conference; Prime Minister of J&K immediately after its accession with India in 1947; dismissed and jailed by Government of India from 1953 to 1964 and again from 1965 to 1968; became Chief Minister of the State after an agreement with Indira Gandhi in 1974.

the infiltrators from Kashmir valley, but only after the Maharaja had signed an 'Instrument of Accession' with the Government of India. It was also agreed that once the situation normalised, the views of the people of J&K will be ascertained about their future. Sheikh Abdullah took over as the Prime Minister of the State of J&K (the head of the government in the State was then called Prime Minister) in March 1948. India agreed to maintain the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir.

External and internal disputes

Since then, the politics of Jammu and Kashmir always remained controversial and conflict ridden both for external and internal reasons. Externally, Pakistan has always claimed that Kashmir valley should be part of Pakistan. As we noted above, Pakistan sponsored a tribal invasion of the State in 1947, as a consequence of which one part of the State came under Pakistani control. India claims that this area is under illegal occupation. Pakistan describes this area as 'Azad Kashmir'. Ever since 1947,

Kashmir has remained a major issue of conflict between India and Pakistan.

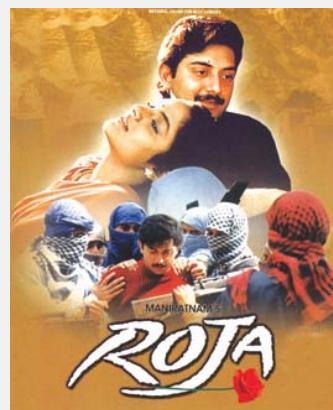
Internally, there is a dispute about the status of Kashmir within the Indian union. You know that Kashmir was given a special status by Article 370 in our Constitution. You have studied about the special provisions under Articles 370 and 371 last year in Indian Constitution at Work. Article 370 gives greater autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir compared to other States of India. The State has its own Constitution. All provisions of the Indian Constitution are not applicable to the State. Laws passed by the Parliament apply to J&K only if the State agrees.

This special status has provoked two opposite reactions. There is a section of people outside of J&K that believes that the special status of the State conferred by Article 370 does not allow full integration of the State with India. This section feels that Article 370 should therefore be revoked and J&K should be like any other State in India.

Another section, mostly Kashmiris, believe that the autonomy conferred by Article 370 is not enough. A section of Kashmiris have expressed at least three major grievances. First, the promise that Accession would be referred to the people of the State after the situation created by tribal invasion was normalised, has not been fulfilled. This has generated the demand for a 'Plebiscite'. Secondly, there is a feeling that the special federal status guaranteed by Article 370, has been eroded in practice. This has led to the demand for restoration of autonomy or 'Greater State Autonomy'. Thirdly, it is felt that democracy which is practiced in the rest of India has not been similarly institutionalised in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Let's watch a Film

Roja



Tamil film depicting the travails of Roja, a newly wed and doting wife when her husband, Rishi, is abducted by militants. Rishi is a cryptologist who is assigned duty in Kashmir to decode the enemy messages. As love blossoms between the husband and the wife, the husband is kidnapped. The kidnappers demand that their jailed leader, be set free in exchange of Rishi.

Roja's world is shattered and she is seen knocking at the doors of officials and politicians. Since the film has the background of Indo-Pakistan dispute, it made instant appeal. The film was dubbed in Hindi and many other Indian languages.

Year: 1992
 Director: Maniratnam
 Screenplay: Maniratnam
 Cast (Hindi version): Madhu, Arvind Swamy, Pankaj Kapoor, Janagaraj

Politics since 1948

After taking over as the Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdullah initiated major land reforms and other policies which benefited ordinary people. But there was a growing difference between him and the central government about his position on Kashmir's status. He was dismissed in 1953 and kept in detention for a number of years. The leadership that succeeded him did not enjoy as much popular support and was able to rule the State mainly due to the support of the Centre. There were serious allegations of malpractices and rigging in various elections.

During most of the period between 1953 and 1974, the Congress party exercised a lot of influence on the politics of the State. A truncated National Conference (minus Sheikh Abdullah) remained in power with the active support of Congress for some time but later it merged with the Congress. Thus the Congress gained direct control over the government in the State. In the meanwhile, there were several attempts to reach an agreement between Sheikh Abdullah and the Government of India. Finally, in 1974 Indira Gandhi reached an agreement with Sheikh Abdullah and he became the Chief Minister of the State. He revived the National Conference which was elected with



So, Nehru kept his personal friend in jail for such a long period! How did they feel about it?

Credit: The Times of India

a majority in the assembly elections held in 1977. Sheikh Abdullah died in 1982 and the leadership of the National Conference went to his son, Farooq Abdullah, who became the Chief Minister. But he was soon dismissed by the Governor and a breakaway faction of the National Conference came to power for a brief period.

The dismissal of Farooq Abdullah's government due to the intervention of the Centre generated a feeling of resentment in Kashmir. The confidence that Kashmiris had developed in the democratic processes after the accord between Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah, received a set-back. The feeling that the Centre was intervening in politics of the State was further strengthened when the National Conference in 1986 agreed to have an electoral alliance with the Congress, the ruling party in the Centre.

Insurgency and after

It was in this environment that the 1987 Assembly election took place. The official results showed a massive victory for the National Conference – Congress alliance and Farooq Abdullah returned as Chief Minister. But it was widely believed that the results did not reflect popular choice, and that the entire election process was rigged. A popular resentment had already been brewing in the State against the inefficient administration since early 1980s. This was now augmented by the commonly prevailing feeling that democratic processes were being undermined at the behest of the Centre. This generated a political crisis in Kashmir which became severe with the rise of insurgency.

By 1989, the State had come in the grip of a militant movement mobilised around the cause of a separate Kashmiri nation. The insurgents got moral, material and military support from Pakistan. For a number of years the State was under President's rule and effectively under the control of the armed forces. Throughout the period from 1990, Jammu and Kashmir experienced violence at the hands of the insurgents and through army action. Assembly elections in the State were held only in 1996 in which the National Conference led by Farooq Abdullah came to power with a demand for regional autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir. J&K experienced a very fair election in 2002. The National Conference failed to win a majority and was replaced by People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress coalition government.

Separatism and beyond

Separatist politics which surfaced in Kashmir from 1989 has taken different forms and is made up of various strands. There is one strand



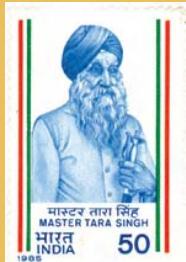
A cartoonist's take on the Sheikh Abdullah – Indira Gandhi Agreement which led to his becoming the Chief Minister.

Credit: Kutty

“ The Kashmiris were convinced now at the second dethronement of their elected leader [in 1984] that India would never permit them to rule themselves. **”**

B. K. Nehru
Governor of J&K before the dismissal of Farooq Abdullah's government.

This is all about governments, officials, leaders, terrorists... but what about the people in Kashmir? In a democracy we must go by what they want, shouldn't we?



Master Tara Singh (1885-1967):
Prominent Sikh religious and political leader; one of the early leaders of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC); leader of the Akali movement; supporter of the freedom movement but opposed to Congress' policy of negotiating only with the Muslims; after Independence, he was the senior most advocate of formation of separate Punjab State.

of separatists who want a separate Kashmiri nation, independent of India and Pakistan. Then there are groups that want Kashmir to merge with Pakistan. Besides these, there is a third strand which wants greater autonomy for the people of the State within the Indian union. The idea of autonomy attracts the people of Jammu and Ladakh regions in a different way. They often complain of neglect and backwardness. Therefore, the demand for intra-State autonomy is as strong as the demand for the State autonomy.

The initial period of popular support to militancy has now given way to the urge for peace. The Centre has started negotiations with various separatist groups. Instead of demanding a separate nation, most of the separatists in dialogue are trying to re-negotiate a relationship of the State with India.

Jammu and Kashmir is one of the living examples of plural society and politics. Not only are there diversities of all kind (religious, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, tribal) but there are also divergent political aspirations. However, despite all these diversities and divergence on the one hand, and the continued situation of conflict on the other, the plural and secular culture of the State has remained largely intact.

Punjab

The decade of 1980s also witnessed major developments in the State of Punjab. The social composition of the State changed first with Partition and later on after the carving out of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. While the rest of the country was reorganised on linguistic lines in 1950s, Punjab had to wait till 1966 for the creation of a Punjabi speaking State. The Akali Dal, which was formed in 1920 as the political wing of the Sikhs, had led the movement for the formation of a 'Punjabi suba'. The Sikhs were now a majority in the truncated State of Punjab.

Political context

After the reorganisation, the Akalis came to power in 1967 and then in 1977. On both the occasions it was a coalition government. The Akalis discovered that despite the redrawing of the boundaries, their political position remained precarious. Firstly, their government was dismissed by the Centre mid-way through its term. Secondly, they did not enjoy strong support among the Hindus. Thirdly, the Sikh community, like all other religious communities, was internally differentiated on caste and class lines. The Congress got more support among the Dalits, whether Hindu or Sikh, than the Akalis.

It was in this context that during the 1970s a section of Akalis began to demand political autonomy for the region. This was

reflected in a resolution passed at their conference at Anandpur Sahib in 1973. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution asserted regional autonomy and wanted to redefine centre-state relationship in the country. The resolution also spoke of the aspirations of the Sikh *qaum* (community or nation) and declared its goal as attaining the *bolbala* (dominance or hegemony) of the Sikhs. The Resolution was a plea for strengthening federalism, but it could also be interpreted as a plea for a separate Sikh nation.

The Resolution had a limited appeal among the Sikh masses. A few years later, after the Akali government had been dismissed in 1980, the Akali Dal launched a movement on the question of the distribution of water between Punjab and its neighbouring States. A section of the religious leaders raised the question of autonomous Sikh identity. The more extreme elements started advocating secession from India and the creation of 'Khalistan'.

Cycle of violence

Soon, the leadership of the movement passed from the moderate Akalis to the extremist elements and took the form of armed insurgency. These militants made their headquarters inside the Sikh holy shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, and turned it into an armed fortress. In June 1984, the Government of India carried out 'Operation Blue Star', code name for army action in the Golden Temple. In this operation, the Government could successfully flush out the militants, but it also damaged the historic temple and deeply hurt the sentiments of the Sikhs. A large proportion of Sikhs in India and abroad saw the military operation as an attack on their faith and this gave further impetus to militant and extremist groups.

Still more tragic turn of events complicated the Punjab problem further. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated on 31 October 1984 outside her residence by her bodyguards. Both the assassins were Sikhs and wanted to take revenge for Operation Bluestar. While the entire country was shocked by this development, in Delhi and in many parts of northern India violence broke out against the Sikh community. The violence against the Sikhs continued



Sant Harchand Singh Longowal (1932-1985):

Sikh political and religious leader; began his political career in mid-sixties as an Akali leader; became president of Akali Dal in 1980; reached an agreement with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on key demands of Akalis; assassinated by unidentified Sikh youth.



“ There is also evidence to show that on 31-10-84 either meetings were held or persons who could organise attacks were contacted and were given instructions to kill Sikhs and loot their houses and shops. The attacks were made in a systematic manner and without much fear of the police, almost suggesting that they were assured that they would not be harmed while committing those acts or even after.

”

Justice Nanavati
Commission of Inquiry,
Report, Vol. I, 2005



Credit : Times of India



Road to peace

After coming to power following the election in 1984, the new Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi initiated a dialogue with moderate Akali leaders. In July 1985, he reached an agreement with Harchand Singh Longowal, then the President of the Akali Dal. This agreement, known as the Rajiv Gandhi - Longowal Accord or the Punjab Accord, was a step towards bringing normalcy to Punjab. It was agreed that Chandigarh would be transferred to Punjab, a separate commission would be appointed to resolve the border dispute between Punjab and Haryana, and a tribunal would be set up to decide the sharing of Ravi-Beas river water among Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. The agreement also provided for compensation to and better treatment of those affected by the militancy in Punjab and the withdrawal of the application of Armed Forces Special Powers Act in Punjab.

However, peace did not come easily or immediately. The cycle of violence continued nearly for a decade. Militancy and counter insurgency violence led to excesses by the police and violations of human rights. Politically, it led to fragmentation of the Akali Dal. The central government had to impose President's rule in the State and the normal electoral and political process was suspended. It was not easy to restore the political process in the atmosphere of suspicion and violence. When elections were held in Punjab in 1992, only 24 per cent of the electors turned out to vote.

Militancy was eventually eradicated by the security forces. But the losses incurred by the people of Punjab – Sikhs and Hindus alike – were enormous. Peace returned to Punjab by the middle of 1990s. The alliance of Akali Dal (Badal) and the BJP scored a major victory in 1997, in the first normal elections in the State in the post-militancy era. The State is once again preoccupied with questions of economic development and social change. Though religious identities continue to be important for the people, politics has gradually moved back along secular lines.

The Times of India brought out a special mid-day edition on the day Indira Gandhi was assassinated.

I have no hesitation in apologising not only to the Sikh community but the whole Indian nation because what took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood and what is enshrined in our Constitution. So, I am not standing on any false prestige. On behalf of our Government, on behalf of the entire people of this country, I bow my head in shame that such thing took place. But, Sir, there are ebbs, there are tides in the affairs of nations. The past is with us. We cannot rewrite the past. But as human beings, we have the willpower and we have the ability to write better future for all of us.

Prime Minister
Dr. Manmohan Singh
intervening in Rajya Sabha debate on
11 August 2005

The North-East

In the North-East, regional aspirations reached a turning point in 1980s. This region now consists of seven States, also referred to as the 'seven sisters'. The region has only 4 per cent of the country's population but about twice as much share of its area. A small corridor of about 22 kilometers connects the region to the rest of the country. Otherwise the region shares boundaries with China, Myanmar and Bangladesh and serves as India's gateway to South East Asia.

The region has witnessed a lot of change since 1947. Tripura, Manipur and Khasi Hills of Meghalaya were erstwhile Princely States which merged with India after Independence. The entire region of North-East has undergone considerable political reorganisation. Nagaland State was created in 1960; Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura in 1972 while Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram became separate States only in 1986. The Partition of India in 1947 had reduced the North-East to a land locked region and affected its economy. Cut off from the rest of India, the region suffered neglect in developmental terms. Its politics too remained insulated. At the same time, most States in this region underwent major demographic changes due to influx of migrants from neighbouring States and countries.

The isolation of the region, its complex social character and its backwardness compared to other parts of the country have all resulted in the complicated set of demands from different states of the

North-East. The vast international border and weak communication between the North-East and the rest of India have further added to the delicate nature of politics there. Three issues dominate the politics of North-East: demands for autonomy, movements for secession, and opposition to 'outsiders'. Major initiatives on the first issue in the 1970s set the stage for some dramatic developments on the second and the third in the 1980s.

Demands for autonomy

At independence the entire region except Manipur and Tripura comprised the State of Assam. Demands for political autonomy arose when the non-Assamese felt that the Assam government was imposing Assamese language



Note: This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.

on them. There were opposition and protest riots throughout the State. Leaders of the major tribal communities wanted to separate from Assam. They formed the Eastern India Tribal Union which later transformed into a more comprehensive All Party Hill Leaders Conference in 1960. They demanded a tribal State to be carved out of Assam. Finally instead of one tribal State, several States got carved out of Assam. At different points of time the Central Government had to create Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh out of Assam. Tripura and Manipur were upgraded into States too.

The reorganisation of the North-East was completed by 1972. But this was not the end of autonomy demands in this region. In Assam, for example, communities like the Bodos, Karbis and Dimasas wanted separate States. They worked for this demand by mobilising public opinion and popular movement as well as through insurgency. Often the same area was claimed by more than one community. It was not possible to go on making smaller and yet smaller States. Therefore, some other provisions of our federal set up were used to satisfy their autonomy demands while remaining in Assam. Karbis and Dimasas have been granted autonomy under District Councils while Bodos were recently granted Autonomous Council.

Secessionist movements

Demands for autonomy were easier to respond to, for these involved using the various provisions in the Constitution for accommodation of diversities. It was much more difficult when some groups demanded a separate country, not in momentary anger but consistently as a principled position. The country's leadership faced this problem for a very long time in at least two States in the North-East. A comparison of these two cases offers us a lesson in democratic politics.

After Independence, the Mizo Hills area was made an autonomous district within Assam. Some Mizos believed that they were never a part of British India and therefore did not belong to the Indian union. But the movement for secession gained popular support after the Assam government failed to respond adequately to the great famine of 1959 in Mizo hills. The Mizos' anger led to the formation of the Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga.

In 1966 the MNF started an armed campaign for independence. Thus, started a two decade long battle between Mizo insurgents and the Indian army. The MNF fought a guerilla war, got support from Pakistani government and secured shelter in the then East Pakistan. The Indian security forces countered it with a series of repressive measures of which the common people were the victims. At one point even Air Force was used. These measures caused more anger and alienation among the people.

At the end of two decades of insurgency everyone was a loser. This is where maturity of the political leadership at both ends made

My friend Chon said that people in Delhi know more about the map of Europe than about the North-East in our country. I think she is right at least about my schoolmates.



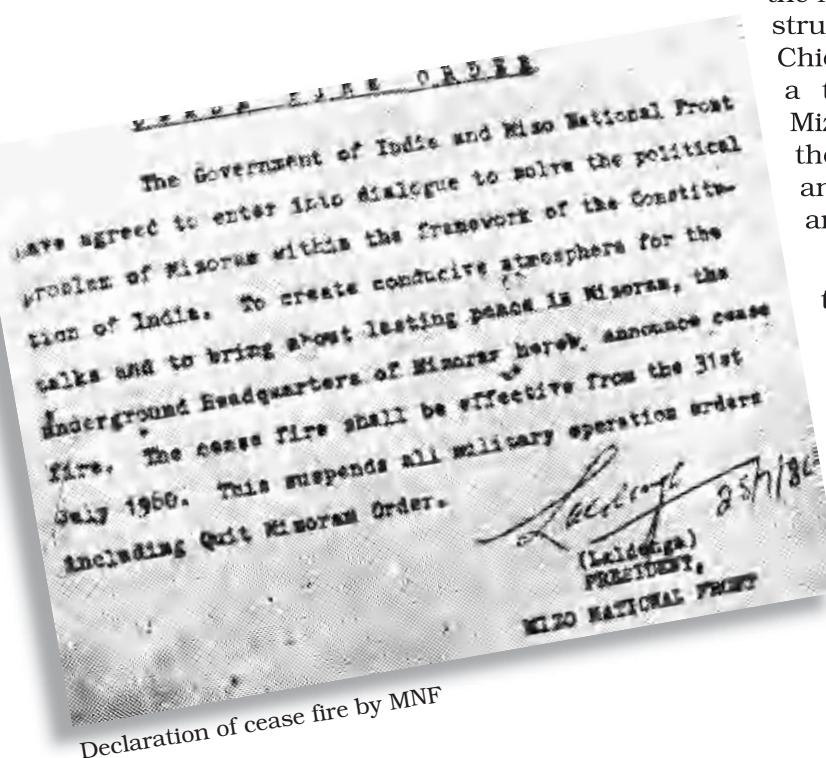
Laldenga (1937-1990): Founder and leader of the Mizo National Front; turned into a rebel after the experience of the famine in 1959; led an armed struggle against India for two decades; reached a settlement and signed an agreement with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986; became the Chief Minister of the newly created State of Mizoram.

Credit : Times of India



a difference. Laldenga came back from exile in Pakistan and started negotiations with the Indian government. Rajiv Gandhi steered these negotiations to a positive conclusion. In 1986 a peace agreement was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and Laldenga. As per this accord Mizoram was granted full-fledged statehood with special powers and the MNF agreed to give up secessionist struggle. Laldenga took over as the Chief Minister. This accord proved a turning point in the history of Mizoram. Today, Mizoram is one of the most peaceful places in the region and has taken big strides in literacy and development.

The story of Nagaland is similar to Mizoram, except that it started much earlier and has not yet had such a happy ending. Led by Angami Zaphu Phizo, a section of the Nagas declared independence from India way back in 1951. Phizo turned down many offers of negotiated settlement. The Naga National Council launched an armed struggle for sovereignty of Nagas. After a period of violent insurgency a section of the Nagas signed an agreement with the Government of India



Declaration of cease fire by MNF

but this was not acceptable to other rebels. The problem in Nagaland still awaits a final resolution.

Movements against outsiders

The large scale migration into the North-East gave rise to a special kind of problem that pitted the 'local' communities against people who were seen as 'outsiders' or migrants. These latecomers, either from India or abroad are seen as encroachers on scarce resources like land and potential competitors to employment opportunities and political power. This issue has taken political and sometimes violent form in many States of the North-East.

The Assam Movement from 1979 to 1985 is the best example of such movements against 'outsiders'. The Assamese suspected that there were huge numbers of illegal Bengali Muslim settlers from Bangladesh. They felt that unless these foreign nationals are detected and deported they would reduce the indigenous Assamese into a minority. There were other economic issues too. There was widespread poverty and unemployment in Assam despite the existence of natural resources like oil, tea and coal. It was felt that these were drained out of the State without any commensurate benefit to the people.

In 1979 the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), a students' group not affiliated to any party, led an anti-foreigner movement. The movement was against illegal migrations, against domination of Bengalis and other outsiders, and against faulty voters' register that included the names of lakhs of immigrants. The movement demanded that all outsiders who had entered the State after 1951 should be sent back. The agitation followed many novel methods and mobilised all sections of Assamese people, drawing support across the State. It also involved many tragic and violent incidents leading to loss of property and human lives. The movement also tried to blockade the movement of trains and the supply of oil from Assam to refineries in Bihar.

Eventually after six years of turmoil, the Rajiv Gandhi-led government entered into negotiations with the AASU leaders, leading to the signing of an accord in 1985. According to this agreement those foreigners who migrated into Assam during and after Bangladesh war and since, were to be identified and deported. With the successful completion of the movement, the AASU and the Asom Gana Sangram Parishad organised themselves as a regional political party called Asom Gana Parishad (AGP). It came to power in 1985 with the promise of resolving the foreign national problem as well as to build a 'Golden Assam'.

Assam accord brought peace and changed the face of politics in Assam, but it did not solve the problem of immigration. The issue of the 'outsiders' continues to be a live issue in the politics of Assam



Angami Zapu

Phizo (1904-1990): Leader of the movement for independent Nagaland; president of Naga National Council; began an armed struggle against the Indian state; went 'underground', stayed in Pakistan and spent the last three decades of his life in exile in UK.

I've never understood this insider-outsider business. It's like the train compartment. Someone who got in before others treats others as outsiders.



অসম সমজৌতা : উল্লেখনোয় উপলব্ধি

অসম কে মার্টে কেন্দ্র বরকার তথ্য অসম গো
প্যাল সিস্টেমে কে বিশ্ব মাঝে তারণের কো নহকে হু।
সকলীতে কে অসম কা ন কৰ্ত্ত পুরণ আংগোছে
সমাজে হো গয়া হৈ। অসম কে বিশ্বিভ ছাত্র
সমন্বন্হ হুৱা নোমিনে কৰকাৰ বিশেষ
আওকাফ কে বৈচিন সাধে বৈচ হুৱাত ন অধিক
জানে এই শ্বেত আওকাফ কো আৰিক হাতি হৈ।
শাখ মুসলিম ১৯৮০ কো পৰি তাৰকালীন
প্ৰতাঞ্চলৰ ব্যোৰাণী ইদেৱা আৰু সুভাষণ্ঠৰ মড়
ৰো তে ছাত্র মেনা ১৯৮০ কো আৰু কৰ্ত্ত মানক
চিৰেশী নাগৰিকৰ কো সমস্যা কে সমাধান কৈ
তৈয়া হো গৈ বৈ। যাই প্ৰতাঞ্চলৰ তত্ত্ব ১৯৮০ কো
জাধাৰ কৰ্ত্ত আৰু জানে পৰি নহো রহী। প্ৰতাঞ্চলৰ
সংস্কৃত তথ্য ছাত্র সমন্বন্হ কে মৌচ ডামৰোজ স্থৰ
হৈ। থীপৰী গোধী ন অসম গোৱাচাৰী কো সুজ্ঞানে
কৈ কিছি ধৰা গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণি—। জৈশিহ, বীৰ আৰ
কেকচুন, যো প্ৰকাশনক মেনী তথ্য বীৰ
নৰ্ম্মতৰকাৰ কো সেনাতাৰ কো উপযোগ কিবা।
কিন্তু, বিশ্বিভ কৰী কৰো। পৈতোৱা কা কা
দোতাৰণ বন্ধ কো, বহু গোৱা তহী থা কি কোই
নমুকীতা হো পাতা।

দিন বাবু হো বন্ধন তাতার্দাৰ কে গোৱা হো পুৰাতো যান
বাবু ভসম কো হামল্যা কো ইমাম্যাৰ কোকৰ
বীৰ রাজোৱা গোৱা নে আৰু সমাধানকৰ্ত্তাৰ কা
বিশেষজ্ঞ বিকাশ কৰ কিম্বা হৈ।

জনজীবি কে অনুসার বিদেশী তাৎপৰ্যতাৰ কো
প্ৰচাৰণ কৰন্তে কে লিএ ১ জনবৰ্ষী ১৫২৫ লো
আংশিক বৰ্ণ মান গয়া হৈ। তাৰ তিথিৰ কৈ পঞ্চ মুগ
বিশেষজ্ঞৰ কো নিয়মসম্বন্ধ লাভ কৰিব জাপান।
এক জনমাম কে পৰস্পৰ ১৫৬১ বৰ্ষৰ ৩৫৫০ কৈ
বৈচ কো স্বৰ্গ পৰি তাৰ বিদেশী পুৰো
পাকিস্তান সে অসম রাজ্য মে আৰ থে। ১ জনবৰ্ষী
১৯৬৮ চনা ২৪ মাৰ্চ ১৯৭১ কৈ বীচ অসম মে
অনুষ্ঠান কৈ বিদেশীয়ৰ কো,

*Cheers great
pact anno*

वो गणीत गोपी के जाम करने को लौटी इस
तर्फ में नहीं हुई जा सकती ही विषयों तक का
विद्यासामान लेना है। वो माझी किणारते हेने को
नैतिक रखते हैं, जिसके काल-स्वरूप सम्भव न लाला
पक्ष भी विद्यारथ वृक्ष समझीला बुझे की तैयारा
हो जाता है। केवल साक्षात् के गुरु साचन की ओर,
जी, जधान ने शक्ष के लाल नेताओं के जाम
तृतीयाओं वास्तविक कर सक्षमति का आधार
संचार किया। गुहमती थी ऐसी जो चलाया ने
व्यक्ति और से वात्सल्यत ये चाह जिएगा। कृष्ण
साक्षात् के बड़े प्रधानननेजी राजीव गांधी के
हृदयोंसे खाबोंको लकड़ीते के लिए शारीर किया
जा सका वैर इस सूखी लम्घाती पर हस्ताक्षर ही
है।

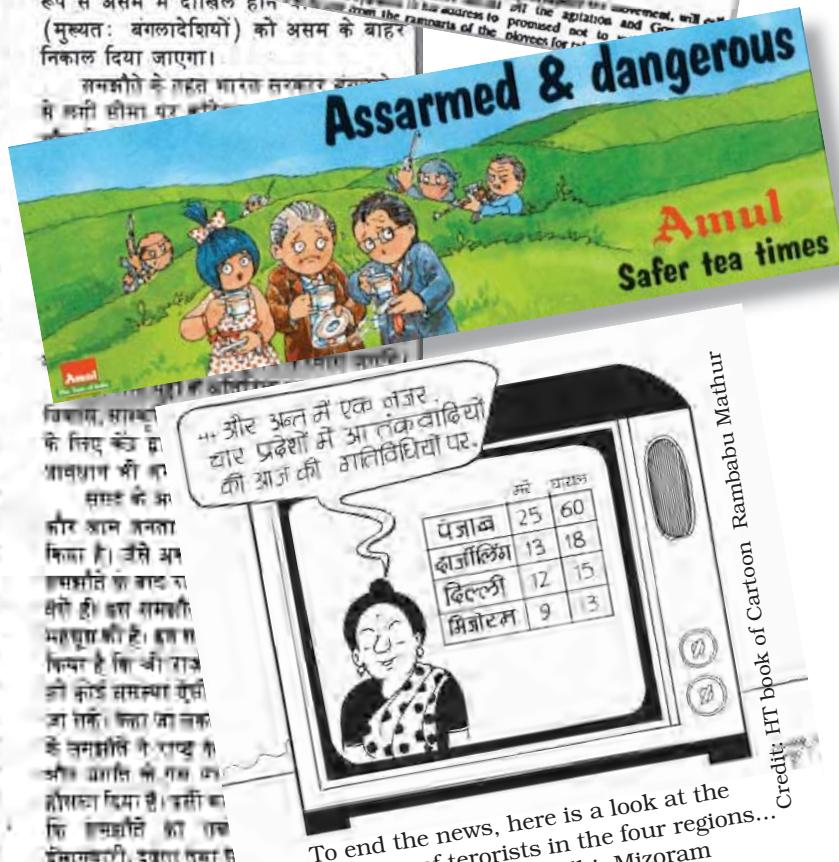
‘गम्भीरी को देखने से मात्र आहट हो जाता है कि बुद्धिमत्ता समझतों में लड़ सकता है यह छात्र संघठनों, ‘आनंद’ नाम ‘अखिल-जलस गण क्षेत्र’ के नवाचों, दोनों ने एक-दूसरे को उत्तोलनीय विवाहों दो हैं। इत्तोलन यह गतने का कार्य बोधार्थ नहीं है, कि पढ़ने का समय का अलम समाप्तीप्राप्ति किसी पक्ष विशेषज्ञी जीव-प्रा किसी पक्ष की विशेषज्ञी होता है, इसमें समझौता एक बहाविष्युर्ग गतिशीलता और विशेषज्ञ है, जहांका ऐसा सारांश के पृष्ठों पर भी और दाढ़ों वालों को जाता है, जो एक साक्षर संघठनों के भेत्र भी बोधार्थ के पास है, तो उसके द्वारा सीधारं एवं परिचय देना के लिये वह एक मुद्रण लाइसेन्स समाजकारीने की ओर से दिया जाए है। साक्षरताओं को कोशल में उत्तम समझौती एवं एक और बाहर कोड दिया है। अभी यह एक को सी उल्लेख प्राप्त को फैलाना के लिये से

दिन बढ़ते ही अन्त आसार्दी के लागे से पुलारो जाने वालों असम को समझा कि इमाराम और बकरी वो राष्ट्रीय गौषधि ने अपूर्व समाधानकर्ताओं का विदेशीय अद्वितीय कर दिया है।

समलैंगिक अद्वितीय विदेशी लाभार्थियों की गहनतावाली करने के लिए १९५३-५४ की आशाएँ बर्च माना जाया है। इस तिथि के पछले भारत विदेशियों को नियमसंस्कृत हाल लिया जाएगा। एक अन्यमान के अन्तर्गत १९५६-५७ और १९५८ के बीच ही स्वभाव गैरि लाइव विदेशी पुलों पाकिस्तान से असम राज्य में आए थे। १९५८-५९ का २४ मार्च १९७१ के बीच असम में अन्य

Cheers greet Assam pact announcement

रूप से असम में दाखिल होना के लिए विभिन्न विभागों को असम के बाहर (मुख्यतः बगलादेशियों) को असम के बाहर निकाल दिया जाएगा।



To end the news, here is a look at the activities of terorists in the four regions... Punjab, Darjeeling, Delhi, Mizoram

Credit: HT book of Cartoon Rambabu Mathur

Sikkim's merger

At the time of Independence, Sikkim was a 'protectorate' of India. It meant that while it was not a part of India, it was also not a fully sovereign country. Sikkim's defence and foreign relations were looked after by India, while the power of internal administration was with the Chogyal, Sikkim's monarch. This arrangement ran into difficulty as the Chogyal was unable to deal with the democratic aspirations of the people. An overwhelming majority of Sikkim's population was Nepali. But the Chogyal was seen as perpetuating the rule of a small elite from the minority Lepcha-Bhutia community. The anti-Chogyal leaders of both the communities sought and got support from the Government of India.

The first democratic elections to Sikkim assembly in 1974 were swept by Sikkim Congress which stood for greater integration with India. The assembly first sought the status of 'associate state' and then in April 1975 passed a resolution asking for full integration with India. This was followed by a hurriedly organised referendum that put a stamp of popular approval on the assembly's request. The Indian Parliament accepted this request immediately and Sikkim became the 22nd State of the Indian union. Chogyal did not accept this merger and his supporters accused the Government of India of foul play and use of force. Yet the merger enjoyed popular support and did not become a divisive issue in Sikkim's politics.

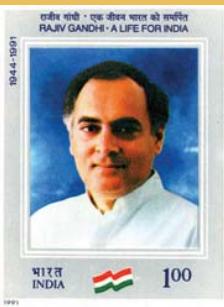


**Kazi Lhendup Dorji
Khangarpa (1904):**
Leader of democracy movement in Sikkim; founder of Sikkim Praja Mandal and later leader of the Sikkim State Congress; in 1962 founded the Sikkim National Congress; after an electoral victory, he led the movement for integration of Sikkim with India; after the integration, Sikkim Congress merged with the Indian National Congress.

Accommodation and National Integration

These cases have shown us that even after six decades of Independence, some of the issues of national integration are not fully resolved. We have seen that regional aspirations ranging from demands of statehood and economic development to autonomy and separation keep coming up. The period since 1980 accentuated these tensions and tested the capacity of democratic politics to accommodate the demands of diverse sections of the society. What lessons can we draw from these examples?

First and the most elementary lesson is that regional aspirations are very much a part of democratic politics. Expression of regional issues is not an aberration or an abnormal phenomenon. Even in smaller countries like the United Kingdom there are regional aspirations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Spain faces secessionist movement from the Basques and so does Sri Lanka from the Tamils. A large and diverse democracy like India must deal with regional aspirations on a regular basis. Nation building is an ongoing process.



Rajiv Gandhi (1944-1991): Prime Minister of India between 1984 and 1989; son of Indira Gandhi; joined active politics after 1980; reached agreements with militants in Punjab, Mizoram and the students' union in Assam; pressed for a more open economy and computer technology; sent Indian Army contingent on the request of Sri Lankan government, to sort out the Simhala-Tamil conflict; assassinated by suspected LTTE suicide bomber.

The second lesson is that the best way to respond to regional aspirations is through democratic negotiations rather than through suppression. Look at the situation in the eighties – militancy had erupted in Punjab; problems were persisting in the North-East; students in Assam were agitating; Kashmir valley was on the boil. Instead of treating these as simple law and order problems, the Government of India reached negotiated settlement with regional movements. This produced a reconciliation which reduced the tensions existing in many regions. The example of Mizoram shows how political settlement can resolve the problem of separatism effectively.

The third lesson is about the significance of power sharing. It is not sufficient to have a formal democratic structure. Besides that, groups and parties from the region need to be given share in power at the State level. Similarly, it is not sufficient to say that the states or the regions have autonomy in their matters. The regions together form the nation. So, the regions must have a share in deciding the destiny of the nation. If regions are not given a share in the national level decision making, the feeling of injustice and alienation can spread.

The fourth lesson is that regional imbalance in economic development contributes to the feeling of regional discrimination. Regional imbalance is a fact of India's development experience. Naturally, the backward states or backward regions in some states feel that their backwardness should be addressed on priority basis and that the policies of the Indian government have caused this imbalance. If some states remain poor and others develop rapidly, it leads to regional imbalances and inter-regional migrations.

Finally, these cases make us appreciate the farsightedness of the makers of our Constitution in dealing with questions of diversity. The federal system adopted by India is a flexible arrangement. While most of the states have equal powers, there are special provisions for some states like J&K and the states in the North-East. The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution allows different tribes complete autonomy of preserving their practices and customary laws. These provisions proved crucial in resolving some very complex political problems in the North-East.

What distinguishes India from many other countries that face similar challenges is that the constitutional framework in India is much more flexible and accommodative. Therefore, regional aspirations are not encouraged to espouse separatism. Thus, politics in India has succeeded in accepting regionalism as part and parcel of democratic politics.

Goa's liberation

Although the British empire in India came to an end in 1947, Portugal refused to withdraw from the territories of Goa, Diu and Daman which were under its colonial rule since the sixteenth century. During their long rule, the Portuguese suppressed the people of Goa, denied them civil rights, and carried out forced religious conversions. After India's Independence, the Indian government tried very patiently to persuade the Portuguese government to withdraw. There was also a strong popular movement within Goa for freedom. They were strengthened by socialist satyagrahis from Maharashtra. Finally, in December 1961, the Government of India sent the army which liberated these territories after barely two days of action. Goa, Diu and Daman became Union Territory.

Another complication arose soon. Led by the Maharashtrawadi Gomanatak Party (MGP) one section desired that Goa, as a Marathi speaking area should merge with Maharashtra. However, many Goans were keen to retain a separate Goan identity and culture, particularly the Konkani language. They were led by the United Goan Party (UGP). In January 1967, the Central Government held a special 'opinion poll' in Goa asking people to decide if they wanted to be part of Maharashtra or remain separate. This was the only time in independent India that a referendum-like procedure was used to ascertain people's wishes on a subject. The majority voted in favour of remaining outside of Maharashtra. Thus, Goa continued as a Union Territory. Finally, in 1987, Goa became a State of the Indian Union.



EXERCISES

1. Match the following.
- | A | B |
|--|----------------------------|
| Nature of regional aspirations | States |
| (a) Socio-religious identity leading to statehood | i. Nagaland /Mizoram |
| (b) Linguistic identity and tensions with Centre | ii. Jharkhand /Chattisgarh |
| (c) Regional imbalance leading to demand for Statehood | iii. Punjab |
| (d) Secessionist demands on account of tribal identity | iv. Tamil Nadu |
2. Regional aspirations of the people of North-East get expressed in different ways. These include movements against outsiders, movement for greater autonomy and movement for separate national existence. On the map of the North-East, using different shades for these three, show the States where these expressions are prominently found.
3. What were the main provisions of the Punjab accord? In what way can they be the basis for further tensions between the Punjab and its neighbouring States?
4. Why did the Anandpur Sahib Resolution become controversial?
5. Explain the internal divisions of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and describe how these lead to multiple regional aspirations in that State.
6. What are the various positions on the issue of regional autonomy for Kashmir? Which of these do you think are justifiable? Give reasons for your answer.
7. The Assam movement was a combination of cultural pride and economic backwardness. Explain.
8. All regional movements need not lead to separatist demands. Explain by giving examples from this chapter.
9. Regional demands from different parts of India exemplify the principle of unity with diversity. Do you agree? Give reasons.
10. Read the passage and answer the questions below:
One of Hazarika's songs.. ... dwells on the unity theme; the seven states of north-eastern India become seven sisters born of the same mother. 'Meghalaya went own way...., Arunachal too separated

and Mizoram appeared in Assam's gateway as a groom to marry another daughter.' The song ends with a determination to keep the unity of the Assamese with other smaller nationalities that are left in the present-day Assam – 'the Karbis and the Mising brothers and sisters are our dear ones.' — SANJIB BARUAH

- (a) Which unity is the poet talking about?
- (b) Why were the States of North-East created separately out of the erstwhile State of Assam?
- (c) Do you think that the same theme of unity could apply to all the regions of India? Why?



In this chapter...

In this last chapter we take a synoptic view of the last two decades of politics in India. These developments are complex, for various kinds of factors came together to produce unanticipated outcomes in this period. The new era in politics was impossible to foresee; it is still very difficult to understand. These developments are also controversial, for these involve deep conflicts and we are still too close to the events. Yet we can ask some questions central to the political change in this period.

- What are the implications of the rise of coalition politics for our democracy?
- What is Mandalisation all about? In which ways will it change the nature of political representation?
- What is the legacy of the Ramjanambhoomi movement and the Ayodhya demolition for the nature of political mobilisation?
- What does the rise of a new policy consensus do to the nature of political choices?

The chapter does not answer these questions. It simply gives you the necessary information and some tools so that you can ask and answer these questions when you are through with this book. We cannot avoid asking these questions just because they are politically sensitive, for the whole point of studying the history of politics in India since Independence is to make sense of our present.

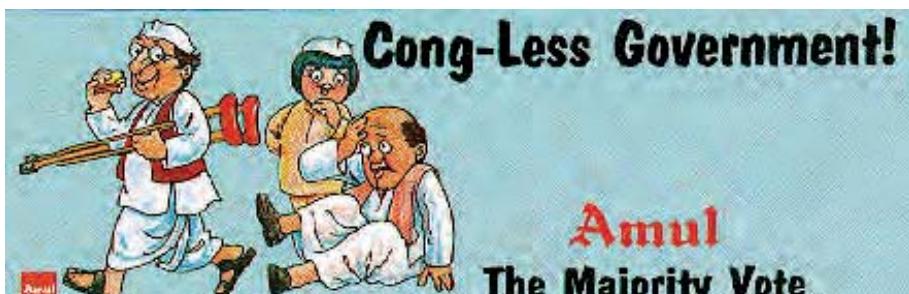
Ups and downs of various political parties in the 1990s appeared to many, like this cartoon drawn in 1990, as a roller coaster ride. Riding the roller coaster are Rajiv Gandhi, V. P. Singh, L. K. Advani, Chandrashekhar, Jyoti Basu, N. T. Rama Rao, Devi Lal, P. K. Mahanta and K. Karunanidhi.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIAN POLITICS

Context of the 1990s

You have read in the last chapter that Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. He led the Congress to a massive victory in the Lok Sabha elections held immediately thereafter in 1984. As the decade of the eighties came to a close, the country witnessed five developments that were to make a long-lasting impact on our politics.

First the most crucial development of this period was the defeat of the Congress party in the elections held in 1989. The party that had won as many as 415 seats in the Lok Sabha in 1984 was reduced to only 197 in this election. The Congress improved its performance and came back to power soon after the mid-term elections held in 1991. But the elections of 1989 marked the end of what political scientists have called the 'Congress system'. To be sure, the Congress remained an important party and ruled the country more than any other party even in this period since 1989. But it lost the kind of centrality it earlier enjoyed in the party system.



Congress leader Sitaram Kesri withdrew the crutches of support from Devegowda's United Front Government.

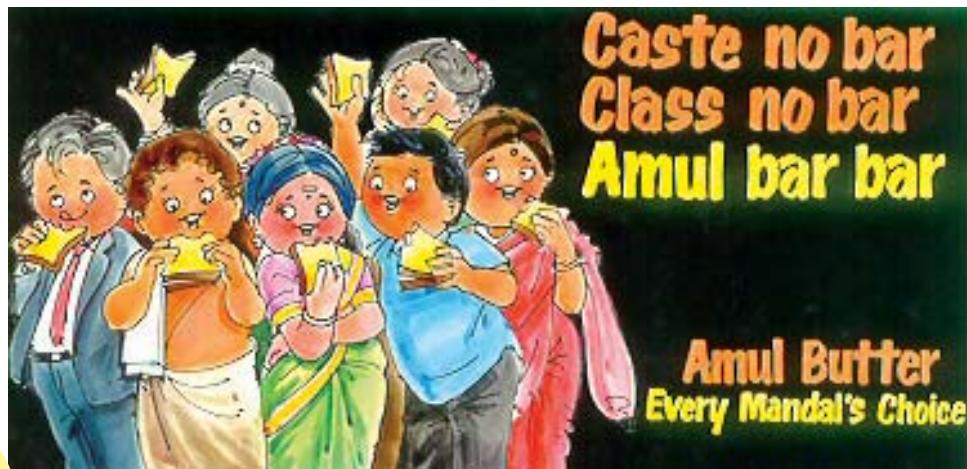
I wish to find out if the Congress can still bounce back to its old glory.



Second development was the rise of the 'Mandal issue' in national politics. This followed the decision by the new National Front government in 1990, to implement the recommendation of the Mandal Commission that jobs in central government should be reserved for the Other Backward Classes. This led to violent 'anti-Mandal' protests in different parts of the country. This dispute between the supporters and opponents of OBC reservations was known as the 'Mandal issue' and was to play an important role in shaping politics since 1989.



I wish to be sure
if this phenomenon
would have a long-term
effect.



A reaction to Mandalisation.

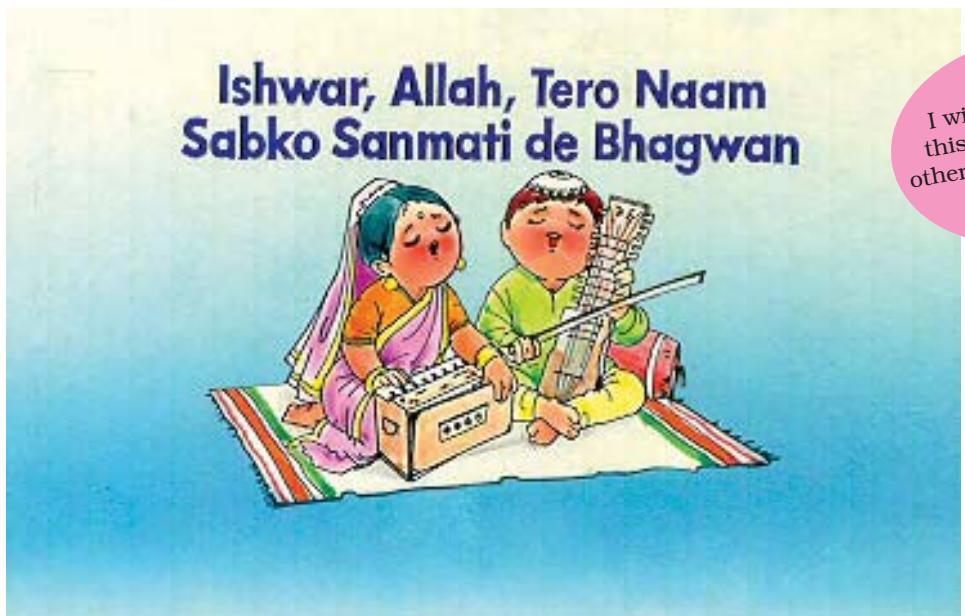
Third, the economic policy followed by the various governments took a radically different turn. This is known as the initiation of the structural adjustment programme or the new economic reforms. Started by Rajiv Gandhi, these changes first became very visible in 1991 and radically changed the direction that the Indian economy had pursued since Independence. These policies have been widely criticised by various movements and organisations. But the various governments that came to power in this period have continued to follow these.

Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India



Manmohan Singh, the then Finance Minister, with Prime Minister Narsimha Rao, in the initial phase of the 'New Economic Policy'.

Fourth, a number of events culminated in the demolition of the disputed structure at Ayodhya (known as Babri Masjid) in December 1992. This event symbolised and triggered various changes in the politics of the country and intensified debates about the nature of Indian nationalism and secularism. These developments are associated with the rise of the BJP and the politics of 'Hindutva'.

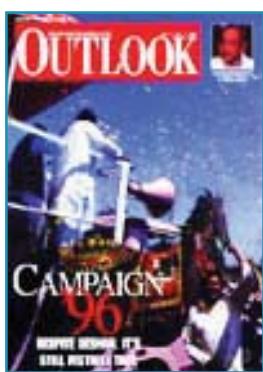


I wish to check if this affects parties other than the BJP as well.

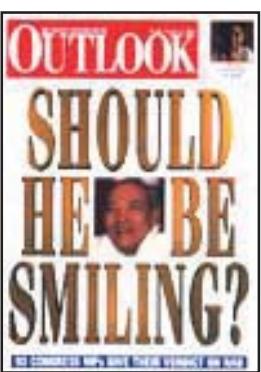


A reaction to rising communalism.

Finally, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991 led to a change in leadership of the Congress party. He was assassinated by a Sri Lankan Tamil linked to the LTTE when he was on an election campaign tour in Tamil Nadu. In the elections of 1991, Congress emerged as the single largest party. Following Rajiv Gandhi's death, the party chose Narsimha Rao as the Prime Minister.



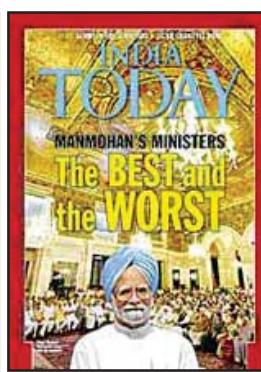
1 May 1996



25 October 1995



20 August 2001



25 October 2004

Leadership in Congress made many headlines.

Era of Coalitions

Elections in 1989 led to the defeat of the Congress party but did not result in a majority for any other party. Though the Congress was the largest party in the Lok Sabha, it did not have a clear majority and therefore, it decided to sit in the opposition. The National Front (which itself was an alliance of Janata Dal and some other regional parties) received support from two diametrically opposite political groups: the BJP and the Left Front. On this basis, the National Front formed a coalition government, but the BJP and the Left Front did not join in this government.



The National Front Government lead by V. P. Singh was supported by the Left (represented here by Jyoti Basu) as well as the BJP (represented by L. K. Advani)

Decline of Congress

The defeat of the Congress party marked the end of Congress dominance over the Indian party system. Do you remember the discussion in Chapter Five about the restoration of the Congress system? Way back in the late sixties, the dominance of the Congress party was challenged; but the Congress under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, managed to re-establish its predominant position in politics. The nineties saw yet another challenge to the predominant position of the Congress. It did not, however, mean the emergence of any other single party to fill in its place.

Thus, began an era of multi-party system. To be sure, a large number of political parties always contested elections in our country. Our Parliament always had representatives from several political parties. What happened after 1989 was the emergence of several parties in such a way that one or two parties did not get most of the votes or seats. This also meant that no single party secured a clear majority of seats in any Lok Sabha election held since 1989. This development initiated an era of coalition governments at the Centre, in which regional parties played a crucial role in forming ruling alliances.

Talk to your parents about their memories of the 1990s. Ask them what they felt were the most significant events of the period. Sit together in groups and draw a comprehensive list of the events reported by your parents, see which events get cited most, and compare them with what the chapter suggests were the most significant. You can also discuss why some events are more important for some and not for others.

Let's re-search

Alliance politics

The nineties also saw the emergence of powerful parties and movements that represented the Dalit and backward castes (Other Backward Classes or OBC). Many of these parties represented powerful regional assertion as well. These parties played an important role in the United Front government that came to power in 1996. The United Front was similar to the National Front of 1989 for it included Janata Dal and several regional parties. This time the BJP did not support the government. The United Front government was supported by the Congress. This shows how unstable the political equations were. In 1989, both Left and BJP supported the National Front Government because they wanted to keep the Congress out of power. In 1996, the Left continued to support the non-Congress government but this time the Congress, supported it, as both the Congress and the Left wanted to keep the BJP out of power.

They did not succeed for long, as the BJP continued to consolidate its position in the elections of 1991 and 1996. It emerged as the largest party in the 1996 election and was invited to form the government. But most other parties were opposed to its policies and therefore, the BJP government could not secure a majority in the Lok Sabha. It finally came to power by leading

a coalition government from May 1998 to June 1999 and was re-elected in October 1999. Atal Behari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister during both these NDA governments and his government formed in 1999 completed its full term.

Credit: Ajit Ninan/India Today



A cartoonist's depiction of the change from one-party dominance to a multi-party alliance system.

Thus, with the elections of 1989, a long phase of coalition politics began in India. Since then, there have been nine governments at the Centre, all of which have either been coalition governments or minority governments supported by other parties, which did not join the government. In this new phase, any government could be formed only with the participation or support of many regional parties. This applied to the National Front in 1989, the United Front in 1996 and 1997, the NDA in 1997, BJP-led coalition in 1998, NDA in 1999 and the UPA in 2004.

Let us connect this development with what we have learnt so far. The era of coalition governments may be seen as a long-term trend resulting from relatively silent changes that were taking place over the last few decades.

We saw in Chapter Two that in earlier times, it was the Congress party itself that was a 'coalition' of different interests and different social strata and groups. This gave rise to the term 'Congress system'.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS SINCE 1989

Period	Coalition/ Parties in Government
December 1989 November 1990	National Front (NF) , supported by Left Front and BJP
November 1990 June 1991	Section of NF led by Samajwadi Janata Party; supported by Congress
V.P. Singh	Chandrashekhar
June 1991 May 1996	Congress supported by AIADMK and a some smaller parties.
Narasimha Rao	A. B. Vajpayee
May 1996 June 1996	BJP minority government
H.D. Deve Gowda	I.K. Gujral
June 1996 April 1997	United Front with Congress support
April 1997 March 1998	United Front with Congress support
A.D. Deve Gowda	I.K. Gujral
March 1998 October 1999 October 1999 May 2004	National Democratic Alliance led by BJP
A.B. Vajpayee	Manmohan Singh
May 2004 onwards	UPA United Progressive Alliance

Note: The blank space is for you to record more information on the major policies, performance and controversies about that government.

We also saw in Chapter Five that, especially since the late 1960s, various sections had been leaving the Congress fold and forming separate political parties of their own. We also noted the rise of many regional parties in the period after 1977. While these developments weakened the Congress party, they did not enable any single party to replace the Congress.



Political Rise of Other Backward Classes

One long-term development of this period was the rise of Other Backward Classes as a political force. You have already come across this term 'OBC'. This refers to the administrative category 'Other Backward Classes'. These are communities other than SC and ST who suffer from educational and social backwardness. These are also referred to as 'backward castes'. We have already noted in Chapter Six that the support for the Congress among many sections of the 'backward castes' had declined. This created a space for non-Congress parties that drew more support from these communities. You would recall that the rise of these parties first found political expression at the national level in the form of the Janata Party government in 1977. Many of the constituents of the Janata Party, like the Bharatiya Kranti Dal and the Samyukta Socialist Party, had a powerful rural base among some sections of the OBC.

'Mandal' implemented

In the 1980s, the Janata Dal brought together a similar combination of political groups with strong support among the OBCs. The decision of the National Front government to implement the recommendations

of the Mandal Commission further helped in shaping the politics of 'Other Backward Classes'. The intense national debate for and against reservation in jobs made people from the OBC communities more aware of this identity. Thus, it helped those who wanted to mobilise these groups in politics. This period saw the emergence of many parties that sought better opportunities for OBCs in education and employment and also raised the question of the share of power enjoyed by the OBCs. These parties claimed that since OBCs constituted a large segment of Indian society, it was only democratic that the OBCs should get adequate representation in administration and have their due share of political power.



Implementation of Mandal Commission report sparked off agitations and political upheavals.

The Mandal Commission

Reservations for the OBC were in existence in southern States since the 1960s, if not earlier. But this policy was not operative in north Indian States. It was during the tenure of Janata Party government in 1977-79 that the demand for reservations for backward castes in north India and at the national level was strongly raised. Karpoori Thakur, the then Chief Minister of Bihar, was a pioneer in this direction. His government had introduced a new policy of reservations for OBCs in Bihar. Following this, the central government appointed a Commission in 1978 to look into and recommend ways to improve the conditions of the backward classes. This was the second time since Independence that the government had appointed such a commission. Therefore, this commission was officially known as the Second Backward Classes Commission. Popularly, the commission is known as the Mandal Commission, after the name of its Chairperson, Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal.



B.P. Mandal (1918-1982): M.P. from Bihar for 1967-1970 and 1977-1979; chaired the Second Backward Classes Commission that recommended reservations for Other Backward Classes; a socialist leader from Bihar; Chief Minister of Bihar for just a month and a half in 1968; joined the Janata Party in 1977.

The Mandal Commission was set up to investigate the extent of educational and social backwardness among various sections of Indian society and recommend ways of identifying these 'backward classes'. It was also expected to give its recommendations on the ways in which this backwardness could be ended. The Commission gave its recommendations in 1980. By then the Janata government had fallen. The Commission advised that 'backward classes' should be understood to mean 'backward castes', since many castes, other than the Scheduled Castes, were also treated as low in the caste hierarchy. The Commission did a survey and found that these backward castes had a very low presence in both educational institutions and in employment in public services. It therefore recommended reserving 27 per cent of seats in educational institutions and government jobs for these groups. The Mandal Commission also made many other recommendations, like, land reform, to improve the conditions of the OBCs.

In August 1990, the National Front government decided to implement one of the recommendations of Mandal Commission pertaining to reservations for OBCs in jobs in the central government and its undertakings. This decision sparked agitations and violent protests in many cities of north India. The

decision was also challenged in the Supreme Court and came to be known as the 'Indira Sawhney case', after the name of one of the petitioners. In November 1992, the Supreme Court gave a ruling upholding the decision of the government. There were some differences among political parties about the manner of implementation of this decision. But now the policy of reservation for OBCs has support of all the major political parties of the country.

Political fallouts

The 1980s also saw the rise of political organisation of the Dalits. In 1978 the Backward and Minority Classes Employees Federation (BAMCEF) was formed. This organisation was not an ordinary trade union of government employees. It took a strong position in favour of political power to the 'bahujan' – the SC, ST, OBC and minorities. It was out of this that the subsequent Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti and later the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) emerged under the leadership of Kanshi Ram. The BSP began as a small party supported largely by Dalit voters in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. But in 1989 and the 1991 elections, it achieved a breakthrough in Uttar Pradesh. This was the first time in independent India that a political party supported mainly by Dalit voters had achieved this kind of political success.

In fact, the BSP, under Kanshi Ram's leadership was envisaged as an organisation based on pragmatic politics. It derived confidence from the fact that the Bahujans (SC, ST, OBC and religious minorities) constituted the majority of the population, and were a formidable political force on the strength of their numbers. Since then the BSP has emerged as a major political player in the State and has been in government on more than one occasion. Its strongest support still comes from Dalit voters, but it has expanded its support now to various other social groups. In many parts of India, Dalit politics and OBC politics have developed independently and often in competition with each other.



Kanshi Ram (1934-2006):
Proponent of Bahujan empowerment and founder of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP); left his central government job for social and political work; founder of BAMCEF, DS-4 and finally the BSP in 1984; astute political strategist, he regarded political power as master key to attaining social equality; credited with Dalit resurgence in north Indian States.

Communalism, Secularism, Democracy

The other long-term development during this period was the rise of politics based on religious identity, leading to a debate about secularism and democracy. We noted in Chapter Six that in the aftermath of the Emergency, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh had merged into the Janata Party. After the fall of the Janata Party and its break-up, the supporters of erstwhile Jana Sangh formed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980. Initially, the BJP adopted a broader political platform than that of the Jana Sangh. It embraced 'Gandhian Socialism' as its ideology. But it did not get much success in the elections held in 1980 and 1984. After 1986, the party began to emphasise the Hindu nationalist element in its ideology. The BJP pursued the politics of 'Hindutva' and adopted the strategy of mobilising the Hindus.

Hindutva literally means 'Hinduness' and was defined by its originator, V. D. Savarkar, as the basis of Indian (in his language also Hindu) nationhood. It basically meant that to be members of the Indian nation, everyone must not only accept India as their 'fatherland' (*pitrubhu*) but also as their holy land (*punyabhu*). Believers of 'Hindutva' argue that a strong nation can be built only on the basis of a strong and united national culture. They also believe that in the case of India the Hindu culture alone can provide this base.

Two developments around 1986 became central to the politics of BJP as a 'Hindutva' party. The first was the Shah Bano case in 1985. In this case a 62-year old divorced Muslim woman, had filed a case for maintenance from her former husband. The Supreme Court ruled in her favour. The orthodox Muslims saw the Supreme Court's order as an interference in Muslim Personal Law. On the demand of some Muslim leaders, the government passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 that nullified the Supreme Court's judgment. This action of the government was opposed by many women's organisations, many Muslim groups and most of the intellectuals. The BJP criticised this action of the Congress government as an unnecessary concession and 'appeasement' of the minority community.

Ayodhya dispute

The second development was the order by the Faizabad district court in February 1986. The court ordered that the Babri Masjid premises be unlocked so that Hindus could offer prayers at the site which they considered as a temple. A dispute had been going on for many decades over the mosque known as Babri Masjid at Ayodhya. The Babri Masjid was a 16th century mosque in Ayodhya and was built by Mir Baqi – Mughal emperor Babur's General. Some Hindus believe that it was built after demolishing a temple for Lord Rama in what is believed to be his birthplace. The dispute took the form of a court case and has continued for many decades. In the late 1940s the mosque was locked up as the matter was with the court.

As soon as the locks of the Babri Masjid were opened, mobilisation began on both sides. Many Hindu and Muslim organisations tried to mobilise their communities on this question. Suddenly this local dispute became a major national question and led to communal tensions. The BJP made this issue its major electoral and political plank. Along with many other organisations like the RSS and the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), it convened a series of symbolic and mobilisational programmes. This large scale mobilisation led to surcharged atmosphere and many instances of communal violence. The BJP, in order to generate public support, took out a massive march called the *Rathyatra* from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in UP.

Demolition and after

In December 1992, the organisations supporting the construction of the temple had organised a *Karseva*, meaning voluntary service by the devotees, for building the Ram temple. The situation had become tense all over the country and especially at Ayodhya. The Supreme Court had ordered the State government to take care that the disputed site will not be endangered. However, thousands of people gathered from all over the country at Ayodhya on 6 December 1992 and demolished the mosque. This news led to clashes between the Hindus and Muslims in many parts of the country. The violence in Mumbai erupted again in January 1993 and continued for over two weeks.



community-based political parties. This democratic atmosphere of communal amity has faced many challenges since 1984. As we have read in Chapter Eight, this happened in 1984 in the form of anti-Sikh riots. In February-March 2002, similar violence broke out against the Muslims in Gujarat. Such violence against the minority community and violence between two communities is a threat to democracy.

“ These proceedings have the echo of the disastrous event that ended in the demolition on the 6th December, 1992 of the disputed structure of 'Ram Janam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid' in Ayodhya. Thousands of innocent lives of citizens were lost, extensive damage to property caused and more than all a damage to the image of this great land as one fostering great traditions of tolerance, faith, brotherhood amongst the various communities inhabiting the land was impaired in the international scene.

It is unhappy that a leader of a political party and the Chief Minister has to be convicted of an offence of Contempt of Court. But it has to be done to uphold the majesty of law. We convict him of the offence of contempt of Court. Since the contempt raises larger issues which affect the very foundation of the secular fabric of our nation, we also sentence him to a token imprisonment of one day.

Chief Justice Venkatachaliah and Justice G.N. Ray of Supreme Court Observations in a judgement on the failure of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh to keep the promise that he had made before the National Integration Council to protect the 'Ram Janam Bhumi-Babri Masjid' structure, Mohd. Aslam v. Union of India, 24 October 1994

”

Anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat

In February-March 2002, large-scale violence against Muslims took place in Gujarat. The immediate provocation for this violence was an incident that took place at a station called Godhra. A bogey of a train that was returning from Ayodhya and was full of Karsevaks was set on fire. Fifty-seven people died in that fire. Suspecting the hand of the Muslims in setting fire to the bogey, large-scale violence against Muslims began in many parts of Gujarat from the next day. This violence continued for almost a whole month. Nearly 1100 persons, mostly Muslims, were killed in this violence. The National Human Rights Commission criticised the Gujarat government's role in failing to control violence, provide relief to the victims and prosecute the perpetrators of this violence. The Election Commission of India ordered the assembly elections to be postponed. As in the case of anti-Sikh riots of 1984,

GUJARAT IS BURNING

Former MP's family among 70 dead

By Correspondent
Ahmedabad, February 28

MORE THAN 70 people were killed and several injured as Gujarat reported incidents of stabbing, rioting, arson, looting and police firing on Thursday, a day after pogroms by the Sabarmati Express train had spilled from Ayodhya, setting fire in Godhra, killing 59 people. The Cabinet Committee on Security of the Army on stand-by in the riot hit state.

Over 30 towns statewide have been under indefinite curfew. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) activists who had rallied statewide bands on Thursday to target the killing of the kar sevaks, attacked several Muslim populated areas of the state and set fire to Muslim-owned properties.

Over 50 of those killed were in Ahmedabad. And 19 of them were relatives of former Congress MP Ehsan Jaffrey, who himself was killed. They died when the building they lived in was set on fire in Meghanagar. In an earlier incident, 17 Muslim slum-dwellers were also burned alive.

The Waqf Board offices in Gandhinagar were burned down and the Centre for



BACKLASH. A truck on fire in Ahmedabad

of mosques being attacked by VHP activists. Six buses and a truck were also set on fire.

Police arrested 700 people — 80 in Godhra, including two councillors — in connection with Wednesday's attack.

Two persons died and at least six were injured when police opened fire to disperse a rampaging mob in Ahmedabad on Thursday afternoon. Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi has ordered a judicial inquiry of the attack. He said those responsible for the attack on the

“On 27 February 1947, at the very first meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribals and Excluded Areas, Sardar Patel asserted:

"It is for us to prove that it is a bogus claim, a false claim, and that nobody can be more interested than us, in India, in the protection of our minorities. Our mission is to satisfy every one of them. Let us prove we can rule ourselves and we have no ambition to rule others."

"The tragic events in Gujarat, starting with the Godhra incident and continuing with the violence that rocked the state for over two months, have greatly saddened the nation. There is no doubt, in the opinion of the Commission, that there was a comprehensive failure on the part of the state government to control the persistent violation of the rights to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the people of the state. It is, of course, essential to heal the wounds and to look to a future of peace and harmony. But the pursuit of these high objectives must be based on justice and upholding of the values of the constitution of the republic and the laws of the land.

”

National Human Rights Commission, Annual Report 2001-2002.

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Is this going to continue to be our future? Is there no way we can make all this a matter of past?

Can we ensure that those who plan, execute and support such massacres are brought to the book? Or at least punished politically?

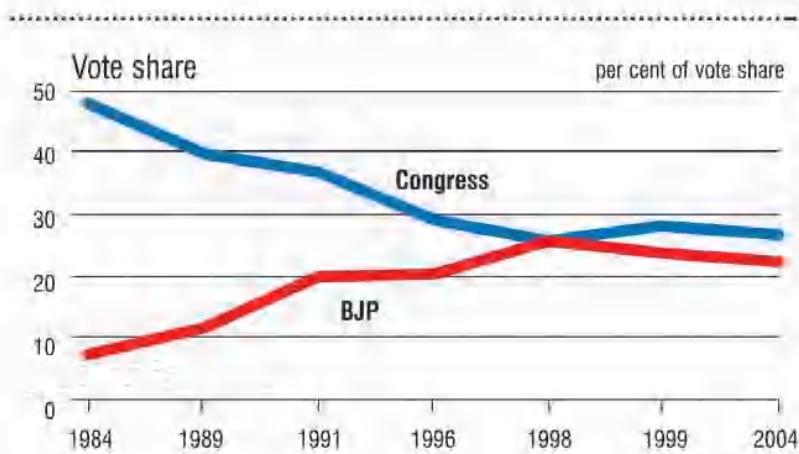
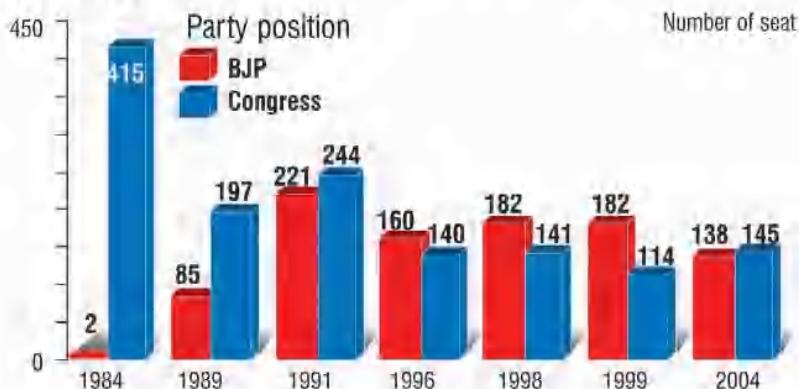
Gujarat riots show that the governmental machinery also becomes susceptible to sectarian passions. Instances, like in Gujarat, alert us to the dangers involved in using religious sentiments for political purposes. This poses a threat to democratic politics.

Emergence of a new consensus

The period after 1989 is seen sometimes as the period of decline of Congress and rise of BJP. If you want to understand the complex nature of political competition in this period, you have to compare the electoral performances of the Congress and the BJP.

Changing electoral performance of Congress and the BJP

1984-2004



Now let us try to understand the meaning of the information given in the figure.

- You will notice that BJP and Congress were engaged in a tough competition in this period. What is the difference between

“ My one message to the Chief Minister [of Gujarat] is that he should follow 'raj dharma'. A ruler should not make any discrimination between his subjects on the basis of caste, creed and religion. **”**

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, Ahmedabad,
4 April 2002.

their electoral fortunes if you compare these with the 1984 elections?

- You will notice that since the 1989 election, the votes polled by the two parties, Congress and the BJP do not add up to more than fifty per cent. The seats won by them too, do not add up to more than half the seats in the Lok Sabha. So, where did the rest of the votes and seats go?
- Look at both the charts showing Congress and Janata 'family' of parties. Which among the parties that exist today are neither part of Congress family of parties nor part of Janata family of parties?
- The political competition during the nineties is divided between the coalition led by BJP and the coalition led by the Congress. Can you list the parties that are not part of any of these two coalitions?

Lok Sabha Elections 2004

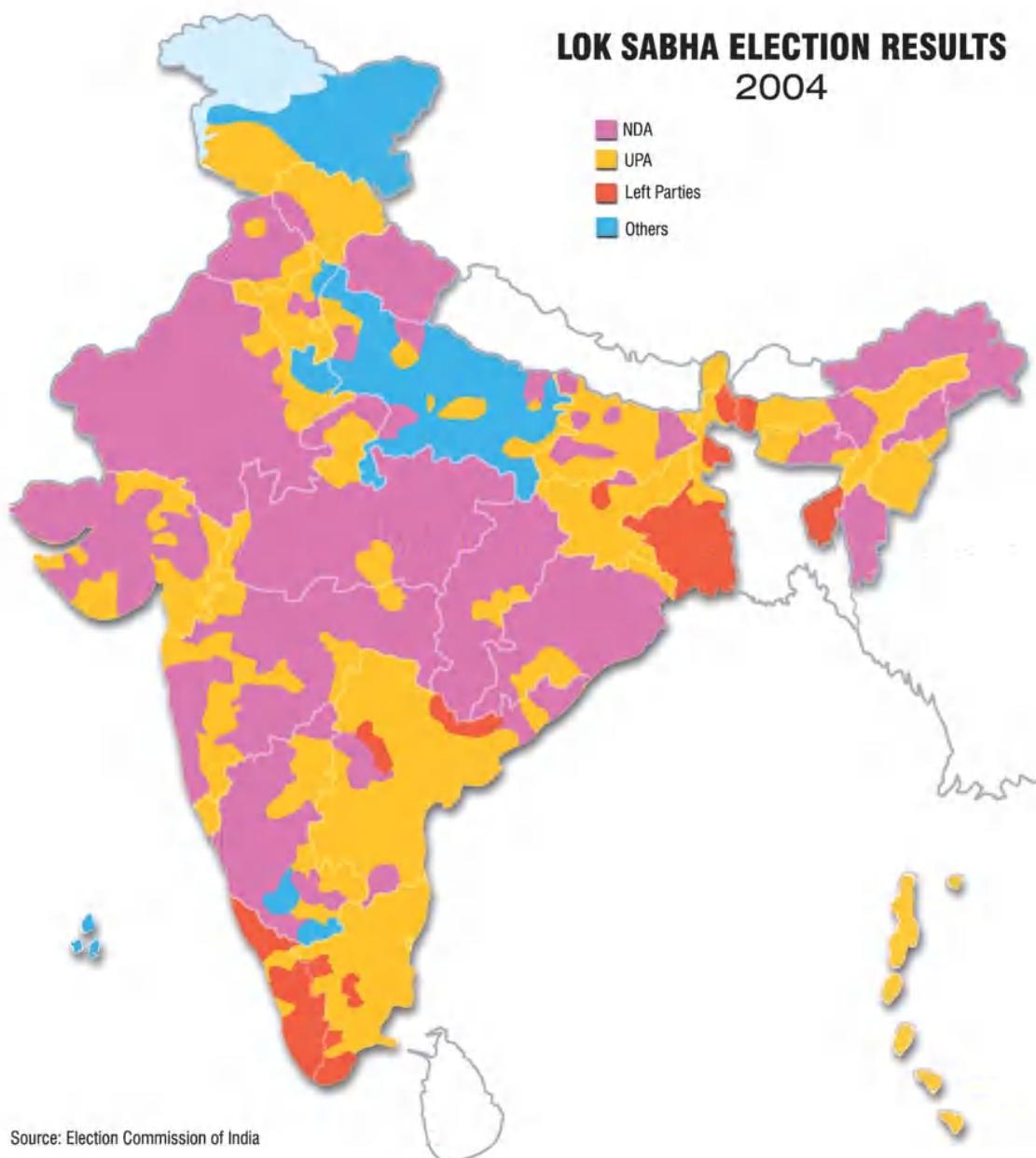
In the elections of 2004, the Congress party too entered into coalitions in a big way. The NDA was defeated and a new coalition government led by the Congress, known as the United Progressive Alliance came to power. This government received support from the Left Front parties. The elections of 2004 also witnessed the partial revival of Congress party. It could increase its seats for the first time since 1991. However, in the 2004 elections, there was a negligible difference between the votes polled by the Congress and its allies and the BJP and its allies. Thus, the party system has now changed almost dramatically from what it was till the seventies.

The political processes that are unfolding around us after the 1990s show the emergence of broadly four groups of parties – parties that are in coalition with the Congress; parties that are in alliance with the BJP; Left Front parties; and other parties who are not part of any of these three. The situation suggests that political competition will be multi-cornered. By implication the situation also assumes a divergence of political ideologies.

Growing consensus

However, on many crucial issues, a broad agreement has emerged among most parties. In the midst of severe competition and many conflicts, a consensus appears to have emerged among most parties. This consensus consists of four elements.

First, agreement on new economic policies – while many groups are opposed to the new economic policies, most political parties are in support of the new economic policies. Most parties believe that these policies would lead the country to prosperity and a status of economic power in the world.



Note: This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.

Second, acceptance of the political and social claims of the backward castes – political parties have recognised that the social and political claims of the backward castes need to be accepted. As a result, all political parties now support reservation of seats for the ‘backward classes’ in education and employment. Political parties are also willing to ensure that the OBCs get adequate share of power.

Third, acceptance of the role of State level parties in governance of the country – the distinction between State level and national level parties is fast becoming less important. As we saw in this chapter, State level parties are sharing power at the national level and have played a central role in the country's politics of last twenty years or so.

Fourth, emphasis on pragmatic considerations rather than ideological positions and political alliances without ideological agreement – coalition politics has shifted the focus of political parties from ideological differences to power sharing arrangements. Thus, most parties of the NDA did not agree with the 'Hindutva' ideology of the BJP. Yet, they came together to form a government and remained in power for a full term.

All these are momentous changes and are going to shape politics in the near future. We started this study of politics in India with the discussion of how the Congress emerged as a dominant party. From that situation, we have now arrived at a more competitive politics, but politics that is based on a certain implicit agreement among the main political actors. Thus, even as political parties act within the sphere of this consensus, popular movements and organisations are simultaneously identifying new forms, visions and pathways of development. Issues like poverty, displacement, minimum wages, livelihood and social security are being put on the political agenda by peoples' movements, reminding the state of its responsibility. Similarly, issues of justice and democracy are being voiced by the people in terms of class, caste, gender and regions. We cannot predict the future of democracy. All we know is that democratic politics is here to stay in India and that it will unfold through a continuous churning of some of the factors mentioned in this chapter.

That
is my
question – will
democracy
survive?



Credit: Ravishankar/India Today

Or may be
the real question
is – will democracy
offer meaningful
political choices?



1. Unscramble a bunch of disarranged press clipping file of Unni-Munni... and arrange the file chronologically.
 - (a) Mandal Recommendations and Anti Reservation Stir
 - (b) Formation of the Janata Dal
 - (c) The demolition of Babri Masjid
 - (d) Assassination of Indira Gandhi
 - (e) The formation of NDA government
 - (f) Godhra incident and its fallout
 - (g) Formation of the UPA government

2. Match the following.

(a) Politics of Consensus	i. Shah Bano case
(b) Caste based parties	ii. Rise of OBCs
(c) Personal Law and Gender Justice	iii. Coalition government
(d) Growing strength of Regional parties	iv. Agreement on Economic policies

3. State the main issues in Indian politics in the period after 1989. What different configurations of political parties these differences lead to?

4. "In the new era of coalition politics, political parties are not aligning or re-aligning on the basis of ideology." What arguments would you put forward to support or oppose this statement?

5. Trace the emergence of BJP as a significant force in post-Emergency politics.

6. In spite of the decline of Congress dominance the Congress party continues to influence politics in the country. Do you agree? Give reasons.

7. Many people think that a two-party system is required for successful democracy. Drawing from India's experience of last twenty years, write an essay on what advantages the present party system in India has.

8. Read the passage and answer the questions below:

Party politics in India has confronted numerous challenges. Not only has the Congress system destroyed itself, but the fragmentation of the Congress coalition has triggered a new emphasis on self-representation which raises questions about the party system and its capacity to accommodate diverse interests, An important test facing the polity is to evolve a party system or political parties that can effectively articulate and aggregate a variety of interests. — ZOYA HASAN

EXERCISES

- (a) Write a short note on what the author calls challenges of the party system in the light of what you have read in this chapter.
- (b) Given an example from this chapter of the lack of accommodation and aggregation mentioned in this passage.
- (c) Why is it necessary for parties to accommodate and aggregate variety of interests?

Notes

Notes
