



THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF REGIONALISM AND SUB REGIONALISM IN INDIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This paper will focus mainly on the conceptual debates and arguments on regionalism, sub regionalism and its origins, autonomy, and identity. It also distinguishes the determining factors and forces of the concept. Further it will enlarge to see how the concepts are historically, socially and politically existed in worldwide phenomenon with particularly reference to the Indian context. In addition to this it also focus about at what extent this concept's challenges the national politics with the prime objectives of separatism within the union as a separate state. Finally the paper concludes with some of the exposing sub regionalism demands in various parts of the country with the prime objective of administrative autonomy.

Introduction

The concepts of Regionalism and sub regionalisms are not a new phenomenon's in pre-Indian as well as post Indian politics. In the early pre independence time the concepts were intentionally encouraged by the British rulers to think over their region rather than the nation. They encouraged thinking over their princely sates and British Providences, because then the India's situation is different from the present situation. At the time there was a mass movement over the independent of India, in the form of National Movement. The Britisher's deliberately persuaded the Indian people to strengthen the regionalism and sub regionalism rather than the Nationalism. Behind this kind of encouragement there is a strong strategic reason that to divert the people's concentration towards the national Movement.¹ So the Britishers selfish strategy is inevitable behind the consciousness of regionalism and sub regionalism in per independent Indian context.

Indian constitution provide for a federal system of government in India. The constitutional framers adopted the federal system because of two main reasons such as the large size of the country and its socio multicultural diversity, because of the federal system make sure the competent governance in the country with regional and sub regional autonomy under the single nationalism.

The term federation is not at written in the constitution of India, Article 1 of the constitution describes that India as 'Union of states' according to the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar 'Union of States has been preferred to 'federation of states'.² So in post independent Indian politics, the constitutional framers, the freedom fighters, the political leaders, and Indian nationalists, by and large tried to promote the unity over the nationalism among the people as that they are belongs to one nation. But due to the vast geographical view and multiculturalism, the concept of regionalism and sub regionalism emerged across the nation in India.



In the early independent Indian politics, the concept of regionalism strongly appeared by the demand of re organization of states on linguistic base at nationwide. At the same time the concept of sub regionalism also developed within the regions or states on linguistic socio cultural and ethnic bases. So in the post Independent Indian politics the concept of Regionalism and sub regionalism are has been playing a very important role. In a Indian context the term region is may be mean that a division with in a country or a zone or a State, and sub regionalism is nothing but a sub division of a region, like state or a group of states or a district or a group of districts with in the state

The concept of sub regionalism and regionalism at present practically widespread phenomenon's in Indian political map. In the post independent era various developmental policies and programs are carried out by the various governments since from the beginning at regional and national levels are the causes for regional disparities. These kinds of situations are now becoming very distinct and extensive provoking sense of collective deprivation in the people of certain regions and within the regions of various states. This kind of situation is escalating the sense of political awareness in the society and communities. It is sure that the favoritism over a particular region or sub region within the region is root of regionalism and sub regionalism at grass route level this become a significant feature of Indian political system. However this chapter is tries to focus on the conceptual perceptions of the regionalism and the sub regionalism and at what extent this concept's challenges the national politics with the prime objectives of separatism within the union as a separate state. Finally the paper concludes with exposing some of the sub regionalism demands in various parts of the country.³

The concept of sub-regionalism and regionalism has gained massive attention of the academicians as well as research scholars of social sciences since from the beginning to the present post modern context of Indian political system. This is because of long lasting partiality over their region and sub region and the reinforcement of socio economic political and cultural attachments of that particular region and sub region. Sub regionalism and regionalism gained importance in the twenty first century by forming various social economical and political organizations at grass route level to act in accordance with its ideology and objectives. In this context the discussion on the sub regionalism and regionalism is provide a clear cut understanding over the above mentioned concepts and its rise, ideology, and the prime objectives. Sub regionalism and regionalism is an idea of socio and political association which is base to the origin of the concepts. This gives an impression to indicate that it has become very important features of modern politics. The term regionalism and sub regionalism differentiate two different meanings global politics. For example the concept of sub regionalism at the global level refers to group of countries like European Union (EU), Western Europe (WE), Western Balkans (WB), South East Asia etc, which tries to achieve a common problems of group of countries which are linked with geographical, historical, and economical common goals. The other meaning of the term sub regionalism is refers to a territorial geography which



is located within the nation or the border of an independent nation state, and sometimes within the state.⁴

In this context the chapter is tries to overlooks about the concept at global context, and in other hand it tries to deal with Indian context.

Regionalism and sub regionalism Meaning and definitions

In Indian politics Regionalism has been treated in differently by different scholar under different compulsions. In a Local perspective Regionalism is local concept with the centre of democratic social aggregative desire of their territory.

R A Seligman and Johnson pointed out long ago regionalism can be identified as a counter movement to any exaggerated or oppressive form of centralization⁵ it involves the tribal, cultural linguistic and economical forces which leads the emergence of sub regional groups.

Regionalism in Indian politics regarded as anti system anti federal and against the basic interest of a well integrated and well developed polity.

Our former PM, Dynamic lady Mrs. Indira Gandhi described regionalism “a very serious threat to the development, progress, and unity of the country”⁶

Even though the term regionalism is now used in Indian politics to indicate an amalgamation all those forces which are generally considered to be centrifugal polarized to centralism and nationalism⁷ the birth of regionalism may be on the basis economical aspect linguistic aspect and religion aspect. etc.

Regionalism means the love or interest of particular region in preference to the country as whole, and certain cases in preference to the state which the region was part, where as **sub regionalism** means love or interest of particular sub region within the region in preference to the state which the sub region was the part of the state as wells as country.⁸

According to Duncan B Forrster⁹ sub- Regionalism is a smaller area with in a region or nation which for economic, geographic, historical and social reasons is aware of possessing a distinct identity.

Regionalism is a feeling or an ideology among a section of people residing in a particular geographical space characterized by unique language, culture etc. that they are the sons of the soil and every opportunity that exists in their land must be belongs to them first but not to the outsiders

Regionalism and sub regionalism consciousness ideology associate with the concept of identity and development of the region and with in a region, it links with the problem of minorities of the region towards the administrative de centralization, local self government, autonomy, and against oppressive form of centralization¹⁰



This type of regional and sub regional feelings may increase either due to the continuous neglect of a particular region or sub region by the ruling authorities, it may be cause of increasing political awareness and movement consciousness among the people.

Genesis of regionalism and sub regionalism

India acquired a homogeneous political structure since from the time of Ashok emperor. The Britishers ruled India more than two hundred years. Then they (Britishers) had drawn the boundaries of the provinces to get over the command for the administrative convenience. So later they mooted the idea of formation of states on linguistic bases in 1919 act (montenge Chelmsford). Balagangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi also supported the idea. The all India congress committee also adopted a new resolution in its Nagpur session 1920 by supporting the formation of states on the linguistic demands¹¹. Linguistic based state formation concept is come out from pre independence. After independence various consequences are taken place in Indian politics with the name of states formation, regionalism and sub regionalism.

However 1953 December 16th Gandhian Potti Sriramulu struggled and sacrificed his life by doing 52 days of fast hunger strike with the demand of separate state as Andhra with capital of Madras for all Telugu speaking people against the united Madras Tamilians dominance in employment, industry and for neglecting the Andhra region ¹². His death created regionalism consciousness in the minds of the Indian's on the base of language, this incident is the strong voice of regionalism in Indian politics. From that onwards the concept of regionalism in Indian politics become strong. It reflected the aspirations of people at that time. It stood for fulfilling the longstanding desire of people to have their own linguistic state through nationwide.

After the death of Potti Sriramulu, the Central Government was forced by other parts of the country with similar demands. So that In 1954, the union government was formed a States Reorganization Committee, (SRC) under the intellectual group of Justice Fazal Ali, Historian K.M. Panikkar, and Social scientist Hrudaya Nath Kunzru. Justice Fazal Ali as its head, the committee qualitatively studied all the states and submitted its report in 1955 by suggesting to form 16 new states including Telangana 13 state and 3 Union Territories based on the geographical issues and language, the people spoke in those respective regions. This indication is a new phase in the Indian politics. After linguistic base formation of the states the sub regional political assertion was come out in different parts of the Indian union on the basis of culture, under development, backwardness, and tribal bases, this is the indication that language is not only the centre point to the state formation. But it linked with other above mentioned social issues.



The Construction of a Region:

Region is a conceptual category in many social science disciplines.¹⁴ And 'regionalism or regional consciousness is the ideological correlate of the concept that develops from a sense of identity within the region.'¹⁵ The concept of region is used in analysis, planning and many national programs in India. In India, region is taken to be ethnic or cultural or linguistic unit and by some as economic or geographic unit or simply a political subdivision of the nation-state. Therefore, regional identities or regionalism are simply taken to be associated with the real or alleged inadequacies of the Indian nation-state. Region is taken to be something given or natural, something present 'out there' to be discovered by geographers or economic planners of the nation-state. Bhawani Singh defines region as an 'areal concept, a nucleus of social aggregation on a well demarcated and identifiable geographical expanse of territory which is to be understood in a time space context. People living in a particular region over a period of time are apt to develop an identity affiliation with it. Continued stay in that area creates a common new identity which provides a self image. This image identification is a resultant of an interplay of several dependent variables such as religion, language, ethnicity, a common past rooted in history, and a common desire to live together in future.'¹⁶ Brass defines regionalism as 'resource-sharing aspiration of a coherent political unit, in competition with other regions.' These definitions summarises the ways region and regional aspirations have been perceived in India. The above studies fail to recognize that region is constructed through human intervention. It is an 'intellectual construct created by selection of features relevant to a particular problem and the disregard of the other features considered to be irrelevant'.¹⁷ As Aloysius argues, 'The first point to note about region is that they are set up for definite purpose, for identification and solution of specific problems... their so being set up is justified or unjustified only in relation to the stated objective... this means that there is no fixed and all purpose regions waiting to be discovered by the geographer'. There is no true or artificial of correct region.¹⁸

They also suggest that regions - which can range from a large continent, to a nation-state, a specific area within a nation-state, a frontier of a nation-state, a city, a town, a ward, a school, an office, a religious institution, an hospital and so on - are not something to be understood as *given*. Rather they are produced by the interplay of power and space. Further, they are produced in history, with an ontology subjected to historical conditions and contingencies. 'Region', in other words, can be defined as a particular way of partitioning space and the control and exercise of power over it. To regionalize a space therefore involves political interests of accessing, governing, controlling and monitoring certain spaces or an area of land on the surface of the earth. This definition furthermore demands that there is a political agent/actor who regionalizes a space, who can be labeled as a 'regionalist'. In turn, a regionalist can be any organized political group or institution with an interest to control certain spaces, insofar as the ideology of the regionalist is to control spaces and the things and people in that space. Some forms of regionalist ideologies that we can discern in the modern era are imperialism, nationalism, ethnic movements, the conception and development of the modern state, civilization, developmentalism, and so on"



Political parties have become an indispensable factor in the working of a representative form of government. Political parties are organisations that try to win public office in electoral competition with one or more similar organisation. According to Samuel J. Eldersveld, an authority on political parties in the behavioural period, has distinguished seven functions of political parties ‘to recruit leadership, formulate policy, organise decision-making, communicate upward and downward between leaders and the public; promote consensus, enforce responsibility and thus move society towards the effective and expeditious resolution of its conflict.’¹⁹ Thus a political party whether at the national or regional level, in one form or another, is omnipresent. This phenomenon also signifies that the electorate has to express their confidence by way of casting their votes either in favour of a national or regional political party. Thus, citizens’ commitment to political parties plays an important role for the maintenance of a representative form of government

The concept of regionalism originated from the Latin word ‘regio’ which means administrative area or a broad geographical area differentiated by similar features. So for the concept of sub regionalism also originated from the same Latin word, which refers to sub administrative area or a specific geographical area within the area. So it seem that the terms regionalism and sub regionalism are not only a geographical words but also the political terms, it linked with the socio economic political and cultural issues of the region or particular sub region wit in the region.²⁰ So the concepts are spread across the global sovereign states. In general understanding the concept of region is territory within country or across the state border in a national sense. The sub region also a particular territory with in the state or within the region. where as in global context region or regions are particular areas by covering a number of various sovereign nations in the world. Sub regions are particular areas within the identified broad region.

Regionalism and sub regionalism in global perspective

The concepts of regionalism and sub regionalism were the world wide phenomena. It has its own historical background and physical structures at global as well as national level to maintain National and International relations. The concepts have been a continuous wide spreading phenomenon’s in the world politics, it means it has not a new phenomenon, it has been a distinguishing unreliable appearance of the worldwide structure of the 20th and 21st centuries to change and develop in a socio economic and political context.²¹

Causes of regionalism and sub regionalism in India

Geographical factor

The territorial orientation based on geographical boundaries relate to the inhabitants of a particular region which are symbolic, at least in the Indian context. This is more so because of the linguistic distribution along geographical boundaries. The topographic and climatic variations along with differences in the settlement pattern induce in people the concept of regionalism.



For the purpose of administrative convenience the union of India has divided seven geographical areas they are identified in the following Geographical regions²²

- a. *North-Eastern region*: comprising Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. These are seven states in the region. That is why states of the north east are collectively known as seven sisters,
- b. *Eastern region*: it consists of four states - Bihar, Orissa, Sikkim, and West Bengal,
- c. *Northern region*: comprising Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- d. *Central region*: comprising Madhya Pradesh.
- e. *Western region*: comprising Dadra Nagar Haveli, Gujarat, Goa, Daman & Diu, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan.
- f. *South region*: This consists of four states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
- g. *The Island region*: comprising Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep Islands.

Historical and cultural factors

In the Indian scenario, the historical and cultural factors assume greater significance. The historical and cultural components interpret regionalism by way of cultural heritage, folklore, myths, symbolism and historical traditions. People of a particular cultural group also derive inspirations from the noble deeds and glorious achievements of the local heroes. Nevertheless, there are sudden political and economic realities which can be covered under the gamut of historical and cultural factors.

Caste and religion

When caste is combined with language conflicts or religious fundamentalism, it breeds regional feeling. It leads to dogmatism, orthodoxy and obscurantism.

Economic factors

Uneven development in many parts of the country may be construed as the prime reason of regionalism and separatism. There are certain regions in the country where industries and factories have been concentrated, educational and health facilities are adequately provided, communication network has been developed, rapid agricultural development has been made possible. But there are also certain areas where the worth of independence is yet to be realized in terms of socioeconomic development. Indeed, the British administration may be held responsible for causing such wide regional variations due to their suitability for the purpose of administration, trade and commerce. But in the post-independence era, efforts should have been made for regional balance in matters of industrial, agricultural and above all, economic development. This disparity has caused the feeling of relative deprivation among the inhabitants of economically neglected regions. It has manifested itself in the demand for separate states such as Bodoland, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Chhatisgarh, Telangana, and so on.



Politico-administrative factors

Political parties, especially the regional political parties as well as local leaders, exploit the regional sentiments, regional deprivation and convert them to solidify their factional support bases. They give place to the regional problems in their election manifesto and promise for political and regional development.

In India, regional politics have to a great extent defined the nature of democratic politics. Regional politics, largely defined as regional aspirations based on regional identity, do not seem to disappear despite the belief that once 'national integration' is achieved these 'parochial' identities will cease to cohere. However, in these present historical times of globalization of economies and knowledge forms equally assertive persistence process of cultural differentiation and fragmentation of consciousness in the form of regional identity and other continue to counter that globalizing process. Identity politics in India continue to revolve around and studied as 'regional politics'. Region in India is conceptualised as given geographical separation. It is this geographical or physical separation or isolation, and to a certain extent helped by economic deprivation, which shapes regional identities.

The regionalism and sub regionalism Growth in Democratic India

After Indian independence the concept of regionalism and sub regionalism with in a region grow by and large due to the various factors because the regions and sub regions have a different socio economic and cultural individuality within the framework of democratic India

Sixty years of independence India failed in balancing the economic growth of all parts and regions. The political leadership became narrow minded selfishness and corrupt. The failure of planning was important factor to help the emergence of sub regionalism in the favor of small states.

According to Manoj Sharma the regionalism and sub regionalism is grew due to the various factors such as the problem of economic and social development of Indian society, parochial, selfish tendencies of the politicians, loyalty, local sentiment, and backwardness of the people.²³

Regionalism and sub regionalism persevered throughout India. It is a country wide phenomenon. Its expression exists in various forms in political field according to Monoj Sharma it assumed four forms i) secession from the Indian union, ii) Demand for separate statehood, iii) demand for full fledged statehood, iv) and interstate disputes.²⁴

According to Bhavani Singh the classification of regionalism and sub regionalism in pluralistic society like India had five types such as i)transcendental or cross national regionalism,ii)Transitory Regionalism, iii)Supra-State Regionalism, iv)Inter state Regionalism, and v)Intra-state regionalism.²⁵



Secessionist regionalism and Cross national regionalism is excessive form of regionalism it demand to break away the Indian union, for example the DMK in Tamil Nadu, Dravida movement started with the strong desire of Regionalism. The movement initially begins with focused on empowering Dalit Bahujans, anti Brahmins, and poor people. Later it taken step against the forceful imposition of Hindi as sole official language on non-Hindi speaking areas. Some time the movement focused on divide from Indian union to carve out their own Dravidastan or Dravida Nadu, later the movement slowly turns down, but today they have strong regional parties playing prominent roles in Indian politics. The same situation taken place in other states like Akalidal in Punjab the Mizos and Nagas in North-East. Kalisthan in Punjab,

Sub regionalism is a desire of demand for separate statehood with in the Indian union, in a democratic manner where the people of the area can develop their languages and culture, the sub regionalism express its desire in the form of agitations and campaigns for their fundamental issues like employment, education exploitation, resources distribution and separate state formation this type of separate statehood sub regionalism is gained momentum with the help of different organizations and by regional political parties

Sub Regionalism in India turns voluntarily to gaining political support and political representation of their sub region and against the exploitation. In Indian politics the rise of regional parties like RJD, BSP, LJP, DMK, AIADMK, BJD TDP TRS have to some extent represented those people who were neglected in the political process for long time.

Contemporary Regionalism and sub regionalism connects with various problems of socio economic political and cultural life of ethno linguistic communities. The sub regional demands and expressions are accommodating with resources exploitation river water sharing and boundary demands. The sentiments based on language, ethnicity, region, religion and geography,

At present in India there are nearly thirty to forty separate statehood movements going on the basis of equal development self rule liberty equality and self respect, because of the political consciousness of the people²⁶

Approaches to the study of regionalism and sub regionalism

Over the past few years some of the eminent scholars has been explaining several approaches to study the concepts of regionalism and sub regionalism in international relations. According to the review of literature eminent scholar Hurrel²⁷ is tried an attempt to classify the approaches in a sequence, he identify three approaches to the study of regionalism and sub regionalism, such as i. systematic theories, which deals with neo realism, structural interdependence, and globalization ii. Regional and interdependence theories it covers neo functionalism, neo liberal institutionalism and constructivism, iii. Domestic level theories, it exposes regionalism and state rationality over administration democratization and



convergence theories. One of the intellectual Mattli²⁸ categorized the regionalism approaches onto two groups i.e. economic approach and political science approach, economic approach deals with customs union theory, optimal currency area and fiscal federalism, where as political science approach deals with functionalism, neofunctionalism and inter governmentalism, another eminent scholar Schulz²⁹ classified the approaches of regionalism and sub regionalism in four types such as i. neorealism, ii. Functionalism and institutionalism iii. Regional economic integration and iv. New regionalist approach.

As per the above review of literature the approaches of regionalism and sub regionalism broadly categorize as four types. i). Neo-functionalism, ii) Neoliberal institutionalism, iii) Neo-realism, iv) Constructivism,

Neo-functionalism

It has played a central role within the development of theories of European integration. Neo functionalists argued that top associated rising levels of mutuality would set in motion an in progress method of cooperation that will lead eventually to political integration. International establishments were seen because the handiest means that of finding common issues, starting with technical and non-controversial problems, however 'spilling over' into the realm of high politics and resulting in a definition of cluster identity round the regional level.

Neo-functionalist interpretations of regional integration maintained the thrust of the champion approach, that is that cooperation between nation-states begins with low level economic and social cooperation, on the other hand shifted their analytical focus from the international to regional and introduced a utilitarian framework to explain the motives of rational political actors. As such, the neo-functionalist perspective seeks to know and make a case for why sovereign nation-states value more highly to integrate in such a way on exchange aspects of their sovereignty for the authority of regional establishments. Proponents of this read argue that the reason lies within the conception of 'spill over' and also the interests of national and international political actors. Through the mutuality inherent within the varied sectors of recent economies, integration in one sector 'spills over' into alternative sectors and essentially ends up in sectoral integration. Moreover, because of the interlinking nature of the economic and political spheres, in keeping with this argument, practical and political spill over induces the processes of regional integration to require place.

The result's that international regional establishment's area unit created with the jurisdiction over their member states to facilitate these integrative functions³⁰

Neo-liberal institutionalism

Neoliberal institutionalism has been the most important theoretical approach to the recent study of international cooperation and presents a highly reasonable and generalizable theory for under-standing the resurgence of regionalism. Neoliberal institutionalists emphasize the role of institutions in the formation of regional



organization. These institutions, it is argued, lower the transaction costs of increase co-operation and thus satisfy the demand of increased interconnectedness at the regional level. Unlike neo-functionalists, neoliberal institutionalists focus their analyses on the state as a rational actor in an anarchical system of states. From this perspective, states seek long-term, absolute gains from cooperation and are discouraged by the actions of states that seek to cheat or defect from their mutual obligations. Regional institutions, it is argued, may provide the transparency, unified expectations, and the mechanisms to inhibit cheating through their coordination role at the supranational level. Thus, for neoliberal institutionalists, as with Neofunctionalists, the creation of regional institutions depends on the benefits of cooperation accorded to the regional actors involved. Therefore, these regional institutions are subject to the actions of states and motivated by internal political interest groups and domestic political objectives. The success and longevity of these regional institutions, then, depend on their ability to successfully carry out their coordinating and problem-solving functions

Neo Realism

On one level, regional cooperation has often seemed to pose a direct challenge to realism. The appearance of 'islands of peace and cooperation' in what was commonly viewed as an inherently conflictual world dominated by the struggle for power was widely seen in the 1950s as an anomaly was incapable of explaining. Indeed much of the early work on regionalism and regional integration can be seen as an attempt to shed light on this apparent anomaly. Yet, neorealism can infact tell us a number of very important things about regionalism. Neorealist accounts of regionalism, however, while also shifting analytical focus to states as rational actors in an anarchical international system, argue that integration is dependent on their concern for their own security from external threats. Within this context, neorealist's emphasize several key criteria with regard to the possibilities and rationale of integration. The underlying constraint to integration, unlike cheating or defection in institutionalist explanations, is that of the relative gains and losses of the states involved. As states are concerned with the relative gains from cooperation, an uneven distribution of gains, where some states experience losses relative to others, will affect their security and hinder efforts to form and maintain regional arrangements. In addition, the role of a hegemonic power (a state with the military and economic resources, as well as the impetus to impose order- both at the global and regional level) may affect the creation and dynamics of regional institutions. Some neorealist arguments point toward the creation of regional economic blocs in the face of the decline in power of a global hegemony, while others have emphasized the role that a hegemonic state may play in strengthening economic and military relations among smaller and medium-sized states.³¹

Constructivism

Constructivist theories focus on regional awareness and regional integrity, on the shared sense of belonging to a particular regional community, and on what has been called 'cognitive regionalism'. They stress the extent to which *regional cohesion* depends on a sustained and durable sense of community based on mutual



responsiveness, trust and high levels of what might be called ‘cognitive interdependence’³². There are two main variants that are relevant to the study of regionalism. The first derives very centrally and directly from Deutsch’s original work on integration. It involves a view of evolving community that stresses two central ideas. First, the character of inter-state (or more accurately for Deutsch, inter-societal) relations within such a community can (and should be) understood in terms of a sense of community, ‘we-ness’, mutual sympathy, loyalty and shared identity. This in turn is likely to be based on shared principles, collectively held norms and common understandings, rather than on expediency or a temporary conjunction of short term interests. And second, the process by which such a community emerges is related in some way to the compatibility of major societal values (especially capitalism and liberal democracy), and to processes of social communication based on an increase in the level of transactions between two or more societies³³

Types of Regionalism and Sub regionalism

Regionalism and sub regionalism in India has assumed various forms like

Demand for State Autonomy

Regionalism has often led to the demand by states for greater autonomy from the center. Increasing interference by the Centre in the affairs of the states has led to regional feelings. Demand for autonomy has also been raised by regions within some states of the Indian federation.

Secession from the Union

This is a dangerous form of regionalism. It emerges when states demand separation from the Centre and try to establish an independent identity of their own. Disputes between states over the sharing of river water, primacy given by the states to the language of majority and to people of their own states in job opportunities have also given rise to feelings of regionalism. Migration of people from backward state to a developed state for employment opportunities have often resulted in a hostile attitude against the migrants for example, problems going on in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.³⁴

Role of regional parties in strengthening the concept of Regionalism and Sub Regionalism

Though the regional parties operate within very limited area and pursue only limited objective, they have played significant role both in the State as well as national politics. The regional political parties formed governments in several states and tried to give concrete shape to their policies and programmes. Some of the important regional parties which formed governments in various states include DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu; National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Asom Gana Parishad in Assam; Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party in Goa; Mizo National Front in Mizoram; Sikkim Sangram Parishad in Sikkim; All Party Hill Leaders Conference in Meghalaya and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) in Haryana. Some of the regional parties were also partners in the coalition governments formed in several States after the fourth general elections of



1967. At the Centre also, of late the Regional Parties have been able to play critical role in helping formation of Congress government. DMK, a regional party, supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi's government after split in the party in 1969 and enabled her to carry on government despite loss of majority in the Parliament. Telugu Desam was the pillar of strength for the United Front and later the National Democratic Alliance. The representatives of the regional parties focus the attention of the Parliament on issues in their region and try to influence the policies of the Government to promote their own interests. But probably the greatest service rendered by the regional political parties is that they have focused the attention of the people in remote areas on various political and economic issues and contributed to their political awakening. Above all, the regional parties have been able to impress on the national political parties that they cannot put up with their attitude of indifference towards regional problems and have compelled them to take keen interest in the resolution of their problems. In short it can be said that the regional political parties have not only profoundly influenced the regional politics but also left tremendous impact on the national politics.³⁵

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