

Review

Regionalism and sub-regionalism: A theoretical framework with special reference to India

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Regionalism and sub-regionalism are at present a fairly widespread phenomenon in Indian political system. As the various developmental programs are carried out, regional disparities are already becoming more marked and widespread engendering a sense of cumulative deprivations in the people of certain regions. This, coupled with increasing politicisation in the community, is sure to impart sharper focus to regionalism which would emerge more prominently as a factor of significance in Indian polity. Further, internal self-determination has remained the predominant form in which regionalism and sub-regionalism has sought to express itself. However, an attempt has been made in this paper to focus on the theoretical perspectives of regionalism and to find out how far and to what extent regionalism and sub-regionalism poses a challenge to the national politics in India asserting autonomy and self-determination and what are the basic factors influencing regionalism and sub-regionalism in the sub-continent. The paper concludes with some recent issues of regionalism in different parts of the country.

Key words: Regionalism, sub-regionalism, autonomy, identity, internal colonialism.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of regionalism and sub-regionalism has attracted immense attention of the academia as well as researchers in contemporary international relations. This is due to the fact that the enduring pursuit of regionalism and sub-regionalism has an underpinning thrust on peace, security and development through exploration, identification and gradual intensification of trade, economic and cultural ties among the geographically contiguous areas. Regionalism has gained prominence in the 21st century, not only as a form of economic, political and social organization, but also as a field of study. The debate on rise of regionalism shows that we need to have a clear understanding of what we mean by regionalism and how can we explain it. Regionalism is an ideology and political movement that seeks to advance the causes of regions. But it is necessary, at the very outset, to distinguish two quite different meanings of the term

regionalism. At the international level, regionalism refers to transnational cooperation to achieve a common goal or resolve a shared problem or it refers to a group of countries, such as Western Europe, the Western Balkans, or Southeast Asia, that are linked by geography, history or economic features. Used in this sense, regionalism refers to attempts to reinforce the links between these countries. Today, the foremost example of such an attempt is the European Union (EU) (Bevir, 2009).

The second meaning of the term is regionalism refers to a process in which sub-state actors become increasingly powerful and independent of the state: power devolves from the central state to regional governments within it. In other words, it refers to a territory that is located within, or sometimes across the borders of a nation state. In this sense, different kinds of regions may be distinguished: political regions, which usually possess

some form of elected regional government; administrative regions, which are geographical entities created for the purpose of administering a service such as a health region or an electricity region; geographical regions, which refer to geographical feature, such as mountain regions, island regions, coastal or maritime regions; and, finally, economic regions, such as agricultural, industrial or declining industrial regions. As a general rule, the political or administrative regions refer to levels of government or administration immediately below the national level (Loughlin, 2007:939).

While discussing regionalism, it is of special importance to have a glance at 'regimes, regionalism and regional integration'¹ which are closely related to each other in the sense that both regionalism and regional integration can develop in a certain kind of regimes. Liberal institutionalists and realists are engaged in a major debate about the role played by regimes- delineated areas of rule-governed activity- in the international system. Both schools acknowledged that although the international system is anarchic (without a ruler) in structure, it has never been anomic (without rules). It is in this sense that a regime can be simply understood as the form of government: a set of rules, cultural or social norms that regulate the operation of government and its interaction with society; and regional integration is a process in which states enter into a regional agreement in order to enhance regional cooperation through regional institutions and rules. Integration schemes usually involve a certain degree of joint decision-making and the creation of common institutions. As such they all involve the creation of regional international regimes. Krasner (1983) defines regimes as 'a set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations' Scholarship on regionalism and regional integration in recent years has included two main groups of scholars, i.e., those who were 'strongly influenced by neo-liberal institutionalism and regime theory' and those falling into the group referred to as 'new regionalism' (Acharya and Johnson, 2007:9).

However, it is in this context that the paper first discussed the theoretical and historical perspectives of regionalism in international system and then taking insights from this theoretical and historical experience, it tried to highlight on the recent trends of regionalism in India. For this purpose, the available literature in these areas can be divided into two groups. In this regard, on the one hand, a very vast body of literature exists explaining the various dimensions of regionalism in international sphere including the concept of regionalism, theoretical perspectives of regionalism, the emergence and historical development of regionalism and regionalism in different contexts (Nye, 1968; Hurrell, 1995, 2003; Fawcett, 2004, 2008; Russett, 1967; Mansfield and Milner, 1997; Hänggi, 2000; Yi, 2007; Börzell, 2011; Travers, 2004 etc.). The 1980s saw a resurrection of

regionalism. The body of literature on this last cycle of regionalism is immense (Palmer, 1991; Fawcett and Hurrell, 1995; Mansfield and Milner, 1999; Hettne, 2002; Hettne et al., 1999-2001; Telò 2001; Vayrynen, 2003) which reflects a renovated academic interest in the subject.

On the other hand, the available literature on regionalism in Indian context defines this concept in different ways. Scholars like Paul R.Brass² and Rasheeduddin Khan³ have viewed regionalism in terms of federalism and centre-state relations. But regionalism is a complex phenomenon and to look at it either as a movement for greater autonomy or as a reaction against federal administrative imbalances. Another perspective emerges from the writings of Duncan B.Forrester, who draws a distinction between regionalism and sub-regionalism purely in terms of the size of the area covered by the two. This position cannot be accepted because size of a region cannot be the criterion for regionalism and regional movements (Forrester, 1970). Academic writings on regionalism also reflect a trend towards viewing political parties as catalysts of regional consciousness (Fickett, 1971:5). It may be argued, however, that political parties are not always indispensable to the politics of regionalism because movements of various kinds are often found to be quite capable of articulating regional sentiments on behalf of the people of any region. Another perspective on regionalism seeks to explain this phenomenon in terms of elite conflict (Sharma, 1983). But the argument that all regional demands emanate from elite conflict cannot be substantiated. A very significant approach towards regionalism has been developed by Michael Hechter and has come to be known as the 'Internal Colonial Model'. Hechter's contention is that regionalism is the outcome of real or perceived sense of 'Internal Colonialism' (Hechter, 1975). The essence of the internal colonial model is that the relationship between members of core communities and the peripheral communities in a state are characterised by exploitation (Birch, 1978). It is this real or perceived sense of exploitation that seems to lie at the core of regionalism. Recent years have witnessed an upsurge in studies on the issues of regionalism and regional movements in the context of the federal democracy in India. These studies seek to unravel the process whereby the regions emerge with geographical, cultural and political spaces getting sharpened and defined in terms of collective identities as democracy gets rooted in a decentralizing India (Majeed, 1984; Kumar, 2000a, 2000b; Prakash, 2001; Jenkins, 2004). There are also other studies which are related to different issues in different regions: these include the emergence of new social movements in different states (Brass, 1997), emergence of caste and ethnic identity (Jaffrelot, 2003). In all of these studies, however, there lacks a clarity of how regionalism in terms of region, ethnic identity, culture, religion, caste and class poses a challenge to the Indian Federation; this paper tries to look

into these matters.

REGIONALISM IN THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Regionalism has various dimensions and thus a conceptual clarification of the terms like region, regionalism regionalization, regional cooperation and regional integration is very essential. Etymologically speaking, 'region' derives from the Latin word *regio*, which refers to an administrative area or broad geographical area distinguished by similar features. History tells us that 'region' not only has a geographical but also a political connotation (Travers, 2004; Söderbaum and Shaw, 2003). A scrutiny of the literature indicates that four different dimensions are touched upon at varying degrees of intensity: 1) geography, 2) regularity and intensity of interactions, 3) shared regional perceptions, and 4) agency (Travers, 2004). Lagenhove (2003) transcends this discussion on the conceptualization of region by introducing the concept of 'regionhood' and 'regionality'. The first, which is what distinguishes regions from non-regions, is characterized by: 1) the region as a system of international acts in the international and national arena, 2) the region as a 'rational' system with statehood properties, 3) the region as a reciprocal achievement, and 4) the region as a generator and communicator of meaning and identity. Complementarily, 'regionality' is the suitable historical, geographical, economic, cultural and social conditions that encase a region (cited in Travers, 2004). In a general sense, we can say that regions, on the one hand, are territories within a state, occasionally crossing state borders. On the other hand, regions are particular areas of the world, covering a number of different sovereign states.

There is no commonly accepted definition of what a region is. Most would agree that a region implies some "geographical proximity and contiguity" (Hurrell, 1995:353) and mutual interdependence (Nye, 1965: vii). Some would add a certain degree of cultural homogeneity (Russett, 1967), sense of community (Deutsch et al., 1957) or "regionness" (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000). Regionalism, then, refers to processes and structures of region-building in terms of closer economic, political, security and socio-cultural linkages between states and societies that geographically proximate. In political science, regionalism is often used synonymous with regional cooperation and regional integration, which could be seen as the opposite ends of a continuum along which regionalism may vary.⁴

A distinction may be made between regionalism and regionalization. Regionalism refers to a political project, pushed toward by purposive actors, especially states, intent on realizing a region at the sub-global level. Whether that sub-global level is a "region" or "not" is a subjective and contested question, not an objective of activity in geographic space. Regionalization, on the

other hand, is a dynamic process of interactions set in motion by non-purposive actors, such as multi-national actors (MNCs), in this case intent on realizing a profit not a region. According to Breslin and Higgot, regionalism refers to the political process in which states derive cooperative initiatives. Regionalization, by contrast, refers to process of economic integration which, while it may be influenced by state policies, is essentially the un-coordinated consequence of private sector activities (Breslin and Higgot, 2000).

When considering the different kinds which are agreed upon by countries, a distinction is often made between 'cooperation' and 'integration'. Regional cooperation has various forms. Functional cooperation refers to limited arrangements which are agreed upon between states in order to work together in particular areas, for example, in transport, energy or health. Economic cooperation refers to agreements which foresee some degree of commercial preferentialism, but with no harmonization of domestic rules or any obligation for common action in international affairs. Political cooperation entails mutual support and commitment regarding the implementation of certain values and practices within the countries. As stated before, formal integration refers to processes by which states go beyond the removal of obstacles to interaction between their countries and create a regional space subject to some distinct common rules. With regard to economic integration, several degrees of ambition are usually distinguished: free trade area, customs union, common market, economic and monetary union (Baylis et al., 2008:436).

Regionalism in global context

As regionalism is a global phenomenon, examples of regional organizations may be found in Europe, the America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. In Europe, the European Coal and Steel Community, established in 1953 between France, West Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries, initiated the process of European integration and led to the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1958, which established the European Community (EEC). By 1992, the Maastricht Treaty on European Monetary and Political Union was adopted, and by 1993, the Community was formally known as the European Union to signify the level of integration that it had achieved (encompassing most of the countries in Western Europe by that point). In the Americas, including Mercosur (the Mercado Común del Sur or the Southern Common Market), the countries of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Bolivia and the Chile are associate members), and the North American Free Trade agreement (NAFTA), Canada, Mexico, and the United States are among such organisations on the constituent of Africa; the Southern African Development Community (SADC), consisting of the countries in its southern cone,

was relaunched in 1992 to promote economic and social development objectives. Finally, in Asia and the Pacific, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which encompasses most of the countries of South East Asia and intends to promote regional political stability as well as economic development, and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) are just two examples. APEC, which was formed in 1989 to promote open free-trade and investment, includes as its members the countries of ASEAN and spans the Pacific to include the Japan, South Korea, China, Russia, Taiwan, Hongkong, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the United States, Mexico, Chile and Peru (Buzdugan, 2007:812).

APPROACHES TO REGIONALISM

In order to explain, describe or explore the subject of regionalism numerous approaches and theories were generated within International Relations (IR) or International Political Economy (IPE) over the years. The body of literature is so extensive that some authors have recently endeavoured to compile and compartmentalize the theoretical landscape. A first systemic attempt, done by Hurrell (1995) divides up all the approaches into systematic theories (neorealism, structural interdependence and globalization), regional and interdependence theories (neo-functionalism, neoliberal institutionalism and constructivism) and finally, domestic level theories (regionalism and state coherence, regime type and democratization and convergence theories). Schulz et al. (1999) presented four approaches (neorealism, functionalism and institutionalism, regional economic integration and the new regionalist approach). Mattli (1999) classified the approaches into two groups: political science approaches (functionalism, neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism) and economic approaches (customs union theory, optimal currency area and fiscal federalism).

What follows from the above theories or approaches? Let us look at some major approaches to regionalism.

a) Neofunctionalism: Neofunctionalism has played a central role in the development of theories of European integration. Neofunctionalists argued that high and rising levels of interdependence would set in motion an ongoing process of cooperation that would lead eventually to political integration. Supranational institutions were seen as the most effective means of solving common problems, beginning with technical and non-controversial issues, but 'spilling over' into the realm of high politics and leading to a redefinition of group identity around the regional level (Hurrell, 1995:348).

Neofunctionalist interpretations of regional integration retained the thrust of the functionalist approach, which is that cooperation between nation-states begins with low

level economic and social cooperation, but then shifted their analytical focus from the international to regional and introduced a utilitarian framework to describe the motives of rational political actors. As such, the neo-functional perspective seeks to understand and explain why sovereign nation-states choose to integrate in such a manner as to exchange aspects of their sovereignty for the authority of regional institutions. Proponents of this view argue that the explanation lies in the concept of 'spill over' and the interests of national and supranational political actors. Through the interdependence inherent in the various sectors of modern economies, integration in one sector 'spills over' into other sectors and necessarily leads to sectoral integration. Furthermore, due to the interwoven nature of the economic and political spheres, according to this argument, functional and political spill over induces the processes of regional integration to take place. The result is that supranational regional institutions are created with the jurisdiction over their member states to facilitate these integrative functions.

b) Neoliberal institutionalism: Neoliberal institutionalism has been the most influential theoretical approach to the recent study of international cooperation and presents a highly plausible and generalizable theory for understanding 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 cooperation 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.

c) Neorealism: 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 in

fact tell us a number of very important things about regionalism (Hurrell, 1995:339).

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, neorealists 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 hegemon, while others have emphasized the role that a hegemonic state may play in strengthening economic and military relations among smaller and medium-sized states (Buzdugan, 2007:810).

d) 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' (Hurrell, 1995:352). 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 societies (hence the label 'transactionalism') [cited in Hurrell, 1995].

The second variant rejects the rigidity of the linkage in Deutsch's work between transaction and identity and the behaviouralist methodologies that underpin it, but

upholds the fundamental importance of understanding the processes by which new communities are created and sustained. This involves a number of central ideas: first, that, in contrast to rationalist theories, we need to pay far more attention to the processes by which both interests and identities are created and evolve, to the ways in which self-images interact with changing material incentives, and to the language and discourse through which these understandings are expressed; second, that it matters how actors interpret the world and how their understandings of 'where they belong' are formed; and third, that both interests and identities are shaped by particular histories and cultures, by domestic factors and by ongoing processes of interaction with each other (ibid.).

Instead of focussing solely on material incentives, constructivists emphasize the importance of shared knowledge, learning, ideational forces, and normative and institutional structures. They claim that understanding inter-subjective structures allows us to trace the ways in which interests and identities change over time and new forms of cooperation and community can emerge (ibid.-353).

However, all these theoretical arguments – whether rationalist or institutionalist- and those that take the nature of the international system as a starting point, offer the most important insights into the start-up, growth and functions of regional institutions. More 'region specific' theories, whether those designed to explain European integration (Neofunctionalism or neoliberal institutionalism or neorealism), or those that take regional ideas and identities as a point of departure (constructivism), provide useful nuance in explaining regional choices and differences.

REGIONALISM IN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The emergence of regionalism must be placed in a broader historical perspective, including three waves of regionalism during the twentieth century. The world experienced the tragedy of both an aggressive nationalism and an imperial regionalism during the inter-war period. The international economy was characterized by the crucial fact that the British-centred hegemonic multilateral stability came to an end, which was already perceptible *in nuce* with the consequence of the Great Depression of 1873 and the Age Empires. The crisis publicly crashed with the First World War and the international system came to its demise in August 1931, with the end of the Gold Standard's basis for the pound being one of the direct consequences of the Great Depression of 1929. After the failure of the International Economic Conference in 1933, it was finally realized that the UK could no longer play the role of hegemonic power and that the US could not, as yet, take over the role. The end of the long era of the self-regulated market and of

free trade was an international event. The American economic crash of 1929 had a huge global impact. It undermined the apparent economic boom of the 1920s, which J.M. Keynes had warned of ten years earlier, in *The Economic Consequences of Peace*. International economics shifted from open trade order and the first seeds of international liberalization (including the Most Favoured Nation Clause, MFN) to state protectionism, discriminatory and regionalist imperialisms (cited in Telò, 2001).

The parallel crisis in the fragile League of Nations peace system, the breakdown of the first steps towards a farsseeing European unity design, namely the Briand-Stresemann dialogue, and the parallel Japanese expansion in East Asia, heralded the end of the first attempt to construct a modern multilateral collective security system able to cope with the challenges of the twentieth century. During the 1930s and the early 1940s, the world experienced the difficult times of both economic and political 'malevolent regionalism', as a result of German and Japanese attempts to become regional hegemonic powers. The military and fascist regimes of Japan and Germany replaced the former 'pax-Britannica', holder of a cooperative king of balance of power, with new conflicts for regional domination, in Asia/Pacific and Europe respectively, provoking the outbreak of the Second World War (ibid.).

It is in this context that Fawcett (2004)⁵ divided the historical development of regionalism into three waves: I) Regional Institutions: The First Wave 1945-1965, II) Regionalism: The Second Wave, 1965-1985, and III) Regionalism: The Third Wave, 1985-Present.

I. Despite such negative impressions, the spirit of regionalism was quickly revised and strengthened against the backdrop of the ending of the Second World War and the creation of a new set of international institutions, notably the United Nations and Bretton Woods/GATT system. Three main types of regional institution can be identified in this period. First, what are often called 'multipurpose' institutions like the League of Arab States (LAS), the Organization of American States (OAS), successor to the Inter-American system and the Organization of African Unity (OAU); second, security alliances like NATO and the Warsaw Pact; and third, institutions with a principally economic focus, notably the early European institutions and later attempts to replicate them elsewhere.

Institutions of the second type, regional security alliances, notably NATO, the Warsaw Pact, SEATO, CENTO, and ANZUS, were established in the 1950s. Rather than the UN-friendly institutions envisaged by the Charter, these alliances owed their rationale more to the evolving Cold War system and corresponding attempts by the superpowers to consolidate their respective spheres of influence, and as such constituted a blow to multilateralism. What is striking about this first wave of

regionalism, whether in the area of economics or security, was the fact that it was characterized less by any new normatively informed understanding of regional-multilateral relationships, more by strictly material calculations of power, security and interest. Above all it was the post-war balance of power, which quickly became that of the Cold War that represented the overriding factor in determining regionalism's early trajectory.

II. Against this backdrop and with the Cold War entering its third decade, a further and somewhat distinctive round of regional activity took place. This was, in part, a reaction to the superpower dominance of the regional security arena, the disappointing early results of both the multipurpose institutions and non-European economic institutions and the changing regional security environment itself. The second wave of institution building which occurred mainly among developing countries, had an underlying security focus, and hence was clearly distinguishable from the earlier wave of economic regionalism that had been inspired by the creation and successful early years of the EC. It was similar in that it was mostly sub-regionalism scope (with sub-regionalism here meaning sub-continental, or at least encompassing a smaller geographical space and fewer states than the earlier pan-regional groups) though it also included both a pan-European security institution, the CSCE, and a pan-Islamic one, the ICO. The more familiar examples of this second regional wave are the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the South African Development Community (SADC), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

III. Just as the international system had closely defined the parameters and possibilities of regionalism during the Cold War, it was system change and its consequences that also help explain the post-Cold War changes and developments. Though arguably more complex and diverse than previous regional waves, the new regionalism was no less a response to the shifting political, economic and security imperatives of the post-Cold War environment in which states now found themselves. On the one hand, the example of Europe, the effects of globalization and uncertainty about the capacity of multilateral institutions all provided incentives to other countries to foster projects of economic integration, notably the creation of free trade areas (FTAs). On the other hand, the removal of Cold War overlay also changed the parameters of the security domain making regional security more vulnerable and accessible to local actors. Like the earlier waves of regionalism, the post-Cold War phenomena, widely dubbed the 'new regionalism- despite its continuities with the old- has been the subject of sustained debate and a growing literature.

Looking across the globe in the aftermath of two major World Wars, peace protagonists started to think that the

fire of regionalism, tribalism, nationalism and racism no more existed. It is because in Europe, there appeared a few signs of regional protests or ethnic and nationalist movements after the Second World War. In America, though regional sentiments persisted, their hold appeared to be weakening and even the smouldering racial feelings seemed latent and inactive. In Asia and Africa, nationalist movements were indeed making their appearances, but they seemed to have grounded on the anti-colonial feeling rather than on regional sentiments. This was having a few exceptions in Burma and Iraq. Even the so called communal differences of South East Asian colonies appeared to be in check (Smith, 1981:8). But such optimism cannot be expected to continue for long. Today, people are realising more and more that the world is plural and multicultural. The so called nation states rarely have ethnically homogenous population. Rather, they are composed of two or more ethnic communities living in an uneasy harmony within the state borders. Large and small states possess sizeable minorities which have their regional problems.

Smith (1981) tries to identify states with large minorities and states with small minorities. States with large minorities include Canada, The United States, Mexico (North American States), Brazil, Peru, Trinidad, Bolivia, Guyana, Paraguay, Ecuador (South American States), Britain, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Cyprus (European States), Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey and Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Burma, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Philippines (Asian States), Australia, New Zealand, In Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Angola, the Congo, the Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and many other new states. On the other hand, states which have small minorities are the Frisians in Holland, the Tyrolese and Friulians in Italy, the Capps in Sweden, Karibbeans in Finland, the Gypsies Armenian, Turks, Pomaks, Wailachians, Karakachani, Gagauzi and others in Bulgaria, the Sorbs or Wends of Lusatia in Germany, the Ainu of Japan, the hill people of Northern Thailand, the Saharans of ex-Spanish Sahara incorporated in Morocco and Amerindian minorities in Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Belize. Only few states today can claim to be 'pure' nations with completely homogenous composition. Portugal, Greece, Iceland, Malta, West Germany (except a small population on North Fransians), Norway and Japan (with the exception of Ainu) may be considered homogenous. Even Denmark has Eskimos and Faroese minorities and Austria has its Slovenes. Thus, it is a fact that a very few states of the world are ethnically homogenous and many of them are distinctly polyethnic in composition (ibid.). Many polyethnic states have bent upon rapid national integration. In their desire for social integration, the

leaders of these states generally employ politics of cultural assimilation. As it is known that the new states of Africa and Asia are particularly anxious to counter the fragility and artificiality of state borders by integrating their culturally desperate population. Expecting the fear of balkanization, African leaders especially are keen to counter tribalism and regional movement by turning the members of antipathetic ethnic community into fraternal citizens of the new nation. Unfortunately, the very act of integrating such divided people may be well exacerbated regional antagonism and highlight ethnic solidarities at least in the short run. In fact, the process of state homogenization policies in reinforcing regional cleavages is not confined to the Third World countries. Its effects can be witnessed in the Western and Eastern countries. Pluralism and integration are woven together in a complex nexus and provide the political basis for the increasing salience of regional cleavages today (ibid.-9/10).

The crucial fact is that intra-national regional conflicts have become more intense and complex in the twentieth century. A few countries have been able to avoid serious regional conflicts. There have been ethnic riots in Malaysia, chronic regional antagonism between Burmese, Karen, Shan and Kachin in Burma, the Chinese Ambonese and Achinese in Indonesia, between Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, a war against Huk and Mara guerrillas in the Philippines, region based ethno-national conflicts between Khamers and Vietnamese in Vietnam. The Chinese conflict with Tibetans in Tibetan, Japanese hostilities to Burakumin in Japan and a whole series of regional and linguistic conflicts in India, Pakistan involving Baluchis, Marathis, Bengalis, Andhrans and Pathans. Western Asia too, has witnessed a considerable amount of ethno-regional conflicts notably with Kurds in Iraq and Cyprus, the Turkmen in Iran, the Armenians in Turkey, the Assyrians in Iraq, the Maronite Muslim civil war in Lebanon, the Palestinian conflict, the antagonism of Wahabis and Hiazis in Saudi Arabia, the Dhofaris in Oman and the chronic Middle East conflict itself. In Africa, the best known regional conflicts between Ibo and Hausa in Nigerian Civil War, the Somali Ethiopian conflict which has clear regional dimension, the related Eritrean conflict and the various wars in Congo which involved the Bakongo, Baluba, Lauda and other ethnic groups. But ethno-regional antagonism has surfaced in other African states also. They underline the continuing conflict in Angola, they were prominent in Southern Sudan, they have appeared in Ghana and Togo in the guise of Ewe irredentism and they played a prominent role in Uganda, Zanzibar and of course in South Africa. Most other African states from Rwanda and Burundi to Senegal and Chad have been threatened by regional conflicts. America and Europe have also been spared by regional antagonism (ibid.-10-11).

France, which is regarded as the classic land of political unity and administrative centralization, has experienced

prolonged regionalist movement in the past. The movement aimed at arresting the forces which were at work to make all of France virtually a suburb of Paris. In the year 1960 regionalism found expression in the "Nancy Programme" which demanded that communal matters should be regulated by the commune, regional affairs by the region and matters of national concern by the nation. Demands were generally made for decentralization of powers and balanced economic growth. The movement further involved revival of local dialects, collection of folk songs and publication of many independent local newspapers and periodicals. Thus by 1900 A.D. the movement grew as a serious challenge to the political and administrative set up of France (Mishra, 1984:9).

Regionalism is not altogether unknown in the United States of America, the fourth largest state in the world. The vastness of its size and multiplicity of cultural groups have engendered regional cleavages on many occasions. The civil war between the Northern and Southern States, the latter comprising the area of the old confederacy that fought and was defeated in the civil war, furnishes one of the most remarkable inter-regional cleavages in the history of USA. But it is not the only instance. There have been threats from New England in 1814 for breaking away from the Union. Further, the Middle Western States have an atmosphere of their own; they have their own economic interest and they too, were for a long time in uneasy opposition to the bankers and merchants, the importers and manufacturers of the North-Eastern States (Finer, cited in Mishra, 1984: 10).

The German immigrants inhabiting the sparsely populated plain states, Nebrakas and Dakotas, have "atavistically retained something of a pre-1914 German outlook on foreign affairs" (ibid.). The "Silver States" such as the states of Nevada and Idaho also have their own peculiar problem deriving from their sparse populations and their dependence upon extractive industries.

In Europe, people are accustomed to a strong central government "whose authority over all other institutions in the country is paramount and to which regionalism is not of overriding importance: they tend to think of government as reaching outwards from the centre to the periphery and downwards from top to the base... In the USA, the governmental system starts at the bottom and works up to the top and the top merely caps an already existing edifice. It does not create that edifice, as it often seems to do in the states of Europe" (ibid.-195)

Regionalism makes an interesting study in the new states which may be said to have been passing through a process of reduction of their primordial sentiments to civil order. The reason is obvious. "The transfer of sovereignty from a colonial to an independent one is more than a mere shift of power from foreign hands to native ones; it is a transformation of the whole pattern of political life, a metamorphosis of subjects into citizens"(Geertz, cited in Mishra, 1984:10). In most of these states struggle against the imperial rule was "at ones a reassertion of traditional

values and symbols against alien intrusions and itself an alien modern, untraditional phenomenon" (Owen, cited in Mishra, 1984: 10)

The socio-economic and political change which the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America known as the Third World, face today are very often attributed to the process of modernization, a term used to designate the transformation of society and culture that began in Europe towards the fifteenth century and that by now has engulfed the rest of the mankind. The three major aspects of this change which need to be emphasised are, firstly, "the revolutionary change in the conception of community constituting the state," secondly, the change in the nature of industrial production; and thirdly, the rapid social changes constituting a break in the immediate part (Panikkar, cited in Mishra, 1984:11). In political sphere, the process of modernization is identified with secularisation, participatory democracy, structural differentiation and replacement of ascriptive loyalties to the rulers by achieved loyalties on the basis of elections or other mechanisms of participation (Bhambhri, cited in Mishra, 1984: 11).

REGIONALISM IN INDIA

Recently, India has been witnessing the onset of the democratic processes that have resulted in the reconfiguration of its politics and economics. Among these processes, most significant has been the assertion of identity politics. There have been struggles around the assertiveness and conflicting claims of the identity groups and of struggles amongst them, often fought out on the lines of region, religion, language (even dialect), caste, and community. These struggles have found expressions in the changed mode of electoral representation that has brought the local/regional into focus with the hitherto politically dormant groups and regions finding voices. A more genuinely representative democracy has led to the sharpening of the line of distinction between or among the identity groups and regions (Kumar, 2009:14).

In Indian federalism, centre-state relations have been designed in such a way that the centre is predominantly more powerful than the federal units in legislative, administrative and financial matters. Since independence, the Indian state has addressed the task of coping with the tensions arising in different regions of the country by restoring to a variety of means depending upon the particular facet- economic, political, cultural or linguistic-involved in each specific conflict. The Indian government initiated different initiatives in different periods including the JVC Committee, the Dar Commission, the States Reorganisation Commission, Rajamannar Committee and the Sarkaria Commission in order to overcome the centre-state conflicts and give accommodation to the numerous identity related demands. However, the centre-state relations stand as the root cause of regionalism in

India.

Regionalism has remained perhaps the most potent force in Indian politics ever since (1947), if not before. Regionalism is rooted in India's manifold diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, communities, religions and so on, and encouraged by the regional concentration of those identity markers, and fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation. For many centuries, India remained the land of many lands, regions, cultures and traditions. The country of more than a billion people inhabiting some 3,287, 263sq km. India's broad regions, socio-culturally speaking are distinct from one another. For instance, southern India (the home of Dravidian cultures) which is itself a region of many regions is evidently different from the north, the west, the central and the north-east. Even the east of India is different from the north-east of India comprising today seven constituent units of Indian federation with the largest concentration of tribal peoples. The British colonial division of the Indian Territory broadly between the directly ruled provinces, and some 560 (indirectly-ruled) autocratic princely kingdoms of many sizes, religions, tribes, and languages added complexity to regionalism in India. Even after various phases of territorial reorganization since 1950, most regions of India contain many sub-regions marked by some social and cultural identity symbols (Bhattacharya, 2005). In India, regionalism or the acute sense of loyalty to the particular region manifested itself variously (Ram, 1968; Rao, 1975; Chandra et al., Mathur and Pandey, 1976; Reddy and Sharma, 1979; Mishra, 1984; Wallace, 1985; Das Gupta, 1988; Sarkar, 1991; Mukherjee, 1992, cited in Bhattacharya, 2005:2). It has often expressed itself in antagonistic terms to that of the nation, fuelled as it is by the sense of enduring deprivation due to long-term neglect in development and resource distribution. Regionalism has often expressed itself in terms, which are opposed to national unity and integrity, and challenging to the legitimacy of the state. While the rulers have most often liked to see in regionalism "a very serious threat to the development, progress and unity" (Gandhi: 1969 85), some scholars have expressed similar views by seeing regionalism as "anti-system, anti-federal" and so on (Reddy and Sharma, 1979). But positively oriented scholars have seen values in regionalism in the context of building the nation or national cohesion provided the political system is accommodative of timely meeting the demands of the regions (Mukherjee, 1992:12). The literature on regionalism, its meaning, forms, causes and consequences in India etc are already vast and there is perhaps little to add to clarifying the meaning of regionalism in India, or its forms and content. The basic point that highlights in this respect is that internal self-determination of community, whether linguistic, tribal, religious, regional, or their combinations, has remained the predominant form in which regionalism in India has sought to express itself, historically as well as contemporaneously. Most often, self-determination has

been couched in terms of statehood or state autonomy (Bhattacharya, 2005).

Maheswari (2000) points out that a particular territory is set apart as a region over a period of time, when different variables operate in different degrees. These variables may be geography, topography, religion, language, usage or customs, socio-economic and political stages of development, common historical traditions and experiences, a common way of living and more than anything else, a widely prevalent sentiment of togetherness (we feeling, which differentiates a people from them). In this sense feeling of regional identities can coincide with state boundaries like that in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal etc., there can be in parts of a state like that of Telengana in Andhra Pradesh, Vidharbha in Maharashtra, Darjeeling in West Bengal etc. Or it can also be in parts of more than one state as in Jharkhand (Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal) [Narang, 1985:303-304].

Regionalism, in this sense, can politically be understood as "a search for an intermediate control system between the centre and the periphery for competitive advantage in the national arena". Regional autonomy demands to treat region as coherent units politically having a right to reflect the constituent's aspirations to manage their internal affairs, while making claims on national resources, in competition with other regions. In this competition for resources, language, culture, religion, economic advancement and administrative coherence are used as a basis of identity (ibid.).

Regionalism as a countrywide phenomenon often tends to take the form of well-conceived and well-organised agitations and campaigns. It assumes mainly three forms. According to Iqbal Narain, these are: *First*, supra-state regionalism that is built around and is an expression of group identity of several states which join hands to take a common stand on an issue of mutual interest vis-a-vis another group of states. The group identity thus forged is usually negative in character; it is usually against some other group identity. It is also issue specific in the sense that it is confined to certain matter on which the group would like to take a common and joint stand. It is not at all a case of a total and permanent merger of state identities in the group identity; in fact, rivalries, tensions and even conflicts continue to take place at times even simultaneously with group postures. South vs. North on such issues as language or the location of steel plants or more powers for states illustrates the point. *Secondly*, there is the phenomenon of inter-state regionalism which is coterminous with state boundaries and involves juxtaposing of one or more state identities against another on specific issues which threaten their interest. River water disputes and border disputes like those between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Haryana, Maharashtra and Karnataka can be cited as examples. *Thirdly*, there is the phenomenon of inter-state regionalism, which embodies the quest of a part within a state for self-identity and self-development in positive terms and negatively speaking,

reflects a psyche of deprivation and/or exploitation of a part in relation to other parts of the same state. This type of regionalism is most important, typified by a Vidharbha in Maharashtra, a Saurashtra in Gujarat, a Telengana in Andhra Pradesh, an East UP in Uttar Pradesh or East Rajasthan in Rajasthan etc. (Narain, cited in Narang, 1985:304).

In general regionalism is manifested through four different ways viz. Demand of people of certain areas for secession from the Indian Union, demand of people of certain areas for separate statehood, demand of people of certain union territories for full-fledged statehood, and the demand of certain people for favourable settlement in inter-state disputes (Perumal, cited in Narang, 1985:304) like exclusive utilization or possession of certain areas or natural resources.

BACKGROUND OF REGIONALISM IN INDIA

Regionalism in India has been rooted in India's manifold diversity. India, demographically speaking, is the second largest country (its population a billion over now) after China, and socially and culturally most diverse in the world. India's one billion plus people live today in 28 states (federal units, doubled since the inauguration of the constitution in 1950) and 7 Union Territories (centrally ruled). Formed over many thousand years as a country of immigrants who brought their own cultures and traditions, India's diversity is proverbial. Although predominantly inhabited by the 'Hindus' (over 80 per cent) who are, however, regionally specific, plural in beliefs and practices, and divided by castes and languages, India contains large proportions of Muslims (about 13%) spread over the country with more than a million in as many as 13 states (out of 28), Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Jains and so on (Bhattacharya, 2005).

The Indian state was confronted with demands for the reorganisation of the states (provinces or federating units) immediately after independence. Upon the recommendation of the States Reorganisation Committee (SRC) of 1953, headed by Fazal Ali, the provinces were recognised on the basis of language. By the 1960s, the provinces seemed to have settled down within the redrawn boundaries. The larger province of Bombay was divided into Marathi-speaking Maharashtra and Gujarati-speaking Gujarat. Punjab was trifurcated into a Punjabi-speaking Punjab, Hindi-speaking Haryana, and Pahari-speaking Himachal Pradesh. The Kannad-speaking areas of Bombay were transferred to the state of Mysore/Karnataka, and similarly, Telugu-speaking areas of the Madras province were transferred to Andhra Pradesh. The linguistic reorganisation looked complete and the first phase of reorganisation of the states within the Indian union was over. Then came the demands for autonomy in the north-eastern region. The aspirations of the tribal groups were soon recognised by the Indian state. The

states of Manipur, Tripura, and Meghalaya were formed in the late 1970s. The North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) was granted statehood under the name of Arunachal Pradesh in 1987. The restive Nagas and the Mizos, however, were granted statehood only after violent encounters with the Indian state. The Naga insurgency continues until the present day, even after the formation of the state of Nagaland in 1956. The Mizo insurgency subsided after the 1973 agreement which declared the Mizo district of Assam as a Union Territory. Mizoram was later granted full state status after the 1986 agreement with the rebel leader Laldenga (Behuria, 2002:346). However; this did not completely exhaust the aspirations for autonomous administration or statehood by many groups. The cultural differences within the overarching linguistic unity, in many cases, led to demands for statehood within the primarily language-based federating units of the Indian union. The Telengana movement raged on until the 1980s in the less developed Telugu-speaking region in Western Andhra Pradesh, which was under the rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad and was later merged with the more economically developed, Telugu-speaking, - coastal Andhra Pradesh. The less assertive Kosal movement in western Orissa still continues. Similarly, the movements for Chhattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh, the Jharkhand movement in Bihar, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh, and the movement for Uttaranchal/Uttarakhand in Uttar Pradesh, have been active since the 1950s until they were granted statehood in 2001. This has led to an intensification of demands for autonomy from other ethnocultural groupings within Indian society. Recent forceful demands for statehood for Vindhyanal, Vidarbha, Haritdes, Coorg, Kamtapur, Gorkhaland, Madhyadesh, Bundelkhand, and Purvanchal have demonstrated the rising aspirations of sub cultural groupings to have their own autonomous administrative units. In the 1950s and 1960s, in the wake of the movement for constitutional recognition of Hindi as the national language, there was a lurking suspicion in the minds of the political elite in the southern states of India that the elite of the northern region- perceived to be mainly of Aryan racial stock- were intent on subjugating the predominantly Dravidian south through their language policy. The anti-Hindi movement in the south had assumed violent proportions and there were demands for the secession of southern states and establishment of Dravidstan. The Indian state demonstrated remarkable wisdom in accommodating the demands of the southerners and recognised English as an official language along with Hindi.

However, this spirit of accommodation gradually gave way to statist-integrationist zeal and all demands for autonomy were treated with force, leading to complications further down the line. The unwillingness of the state to share its authority with the constituent units was the primary reason for this "siege" attitude. During the 1980s, an increasingly closed and paranoid Indian state adopted

a siege mentality when confronted by demands for autonomy, which bordered on secession. The demands for autonomous statehood within the Indian Union were also unfavourably received by the central administration. The 1980s saw the rise of secessionist movements in Punjab, Kashmir and some of the north eastern states (Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura). The movements for autonomy in several regions-Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal, and Gorkhaland- also gathered momentum and made their presence felt on the political horizon. The response of the ruling Congress Party under Rajiv Gandhi was to negotiate with the leaders of the more assertive movements. There were a series of accords with the Akali Dal leadership in Punjab, with the All Assam Students' Union (which later became Assam Gana Parishad), and with Gorkha leader Subhas Ghising in 1985. In all these cases, the central government led by the Congress Party seemed accommodating and granted some amount of autonomy to the assertive units. In the case of Jharkhand, the Congress tried to absorb the assertive leadership and thus defuse the movement.

However, during the 1990s when the movements for Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh came to the fore, Congress was rather undecided about the question of granting autonomy to these regions. But the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)- the party leading the coalition in power in India- during the days of its ascendancy in the 1990s, exhibited a spirit of accommodation and openly supported the idea of statehood for aspiring groups. This also helped it gain political footholds in areas such as Jharkhand, western Orissa, and Uttaranchal. The reservations of the Congress leadership in December 1998 led the BJP to withdraw the Vananchal/Jharkhand Bill. However, the grant of statehood to Jharkhand, Uttaranchal, and Chhattisgarh in the year 2000 has conveyed an attitude of sympathy towards such assertions from the opposition as well as the parties in power at the centre (ibid.-348-49). Finally, during the BJP rule in 2000, three new states were created i.e., Jharkhand carved out from Bihar, Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh and Uttaranchal from Uttar Pradesh.

REGIONS, REGIONALISM AND TRIGGERS IN INDIAN FEDERALISM

The openness for political leadership to the idea of the formation of smaller states for electoral gains has led many analysts to conclude that such steps will open up a Pandora's Box and demands for autonomous units will proliferate. This could well lead to "remapping" of the Indian federation. In fact, the assertions by people of Kamtapur in West Bengal and the renewed demands of Gorkhas for a separate state have strengthened such suspicions. There have also demands for statehood from other regions (Vidarbha, Harit Desh, Coorg, Vindhyanal, and Purvanchal). Many others are in the

offing: Malwa, Kutch, Saurashtra, Mithilanchal, Kosala (Western Orissa), etc. It may be useful to outline some of these upcoming demands for autonomy/statehood.

Situated in northeast Maharashtra, Vidarbha is an economically backward region but rich in mineral and forest resources. The economic viability of the Vidarbha region as a separate province was recognised by the State Reorganization committee in 1953-1955. However, the demand for a separate state/province for Vidarbha (which predates the Chhattisgarh and Uttaranchal movements) was subsumed in the Samyukta Maharashtra movement (a movement for unification of all Marathi-speaking areas) in the 1960s and it was absorbed in the state of Maharashtra. However, the demand for Vidarbha state continued to be raised intermittently (Behuria, 2002).

The Vidarbha Rajya Sanghrsha Samity ("Struggle for the Separate State of Vidarbha") and Maha-Vidarbha Sanghrsha Samity ("Association for the Struggle for Greater Vidarbha"), the organizations that led this movement, gathered speed in the 1990s when BJP supported the idea of a separate Vidarbha state. A statutory development board for the region came into existence in 1994 in recognition of the need for developmental initiatives in the region. The BJP advocacy had a political motive – it wanted to penetrate into the Vidarbha region, traditionally regarded as a bastion of the Congress Party. The BJP advocacy was however, contested by its ally Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, which is still wedded to the idea of preserving and nurturing "the emotional and linguistic unity of all Maharastrians". In fact, in 1996, when the Vidarbha demand was raised, Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray had vowed to lead the movement for statehood himself if the region's developmental backlog was not cleared within two years. Since the creation of three new states in August 2000, the demand for the Vidarbha state has gathered further momentum. The decision of the Congress Party apart from other parties on the issue will determine the course of the movement in the near future (ibid.).

Since the creation of Chhattisgarh state, a demand for "Vindhya Pradesh" has been raised by the politicians from the region headed by the speaker of the Madhya Pradesh legislative assembly, Srinivas Tiwari. Tiwari reportedly called twenty-five MLAs (members of the legislative assembly) to his residence in March 2000 to discuss the issue of a separate state of Vindhya Pradesh. This would comprise six regions of the Vindhya region: Datia, Tikamgarh, Rewa, Seedhi, Shehdol, and Santa. After the independence of India from the colonial rule, Vindhya Pradesh came into existence in 1948 and a government was installed in the state after the 1952 elections. However, it was merged with Madhya Pradesh in 1956. Thousands of people had protested the move and were jailed. On 10 March 2000, the state assembly unanimously adopted the nongovernment resolution to carve out a Vindhya state. The resolution had been

forwarded to the central government in New Delhi and the centre has yet to make a decision on this (ibid.).

The Kodagu Rajya Mukti Morcha (KRMM), which roughly translated means the Movement for the Liberation of the State of Kodagu, is an organization led by N.U. Nachappa that has campaigned for a separate state of Coorg to be carved out of the present state of Karnataka. The declaration by Deve Gowda, the then prime Minister of India, in 1996 that Uttarakhand would soon be granted statehood, gave a further boost to this movement. The Kodagu or Coorg district is the smallest district in the southwest of the Karnataka state. Until its amalgamation into the Kannad state of Mysore (now Karnataka) on linguistic grounds following the recommendation of the States Reorganization Commission, the Coorg functioned as a Part "C" state from January 1952 to 1 November 1956- slightly less than five years. The KRMM sponsored the "Madikeri Declaration" of 22 November 1996, projected as the Cauvery land charter of rights, followed soon after the "Gowda Declaration", which formed the framework and the inspiration for the KRMM to lead Coorg to the "liberation of Kodagu and its creation as a separate Ethnic State." The KRMM was later known as the Coorg National Council (CNC) with Nachappa as its secretary-general. The CNC also has a web site to promote its cause (ibid.).

Purvanchal Mukti Morcha- roughly translated as Liberation Front for Purvanchal- headed by Raj Kumar Singh, first demanded a separate state of Purvanchal comprising twenty districts of eastern UP in 1996. This is a relatively backward area, and the "green revolution" that brought agricultural prosperity to the western districts of the state could not touch this area. The people in this area speak a local dialect, "Bhojpuri." The leaders of this area have often held the discriminatory policy of the Uttar Pradesh government responsible for the backwardness of the area. This has led them to demand a separate state. The Pragatisheel Bhojpur Samaj ("Progressive Bhojpuri Society") has made frequent demands for an even larger Bhojpur, comprising twenty-five districts of eastern UP and neighbouring Bihar, with Varanasi as its capital, and inclusion of the Bhojpuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The SRC of 1953 debated the possibility of creating a separate state of Western Uttar Pradesh (Paschim Pradesh) and 97 out of 100 MLAs from this region then submitted a memorandum to the SRC demanding the separation of the western districts. But it was discouraged by the congress leadership of the time on the excuse that there was no public support behind the issue. This region has benefited most during the green revolution and the planned economy of the Nehru era and is a prosperous area. Recently, Ajit Singh, son of former prime minister Charan Singh and leader of the farmers, has called this region Harit Desh (the "Green Country") and convened a meeting of western UP leaders on 19 August 2000 to forcefully put his demand for a Harit Pradesh. Recently

the BJP leadership expressed its willingness to support the demand purely for electoral advantage. The issue of Harit Desh is being debated now in India with great enthusiasm. The future of this movement will depend on the political mobilization of the people in the region and the interests the leaders of the movement take in the issue (ibid.).

The Bundelkhand region of central India encompasses twelve districts of northern Madhya Pradesh (MP) and five districts of southern Uttar Pradesh. The area once known in history as Bundelkhand is identified with the districts of Jhansi, Lalitpur, Jalun, Hamirpur, Banda and Mahoba in Uttar Pradesh, Sagar, Chattarpur, Tikamgarh, Panna, and Damoh in Madhya Pradesh and parts of Gwalior, Datia, Shivpuri, and Chanderi. It is located in central Hindi belt, south of the Yamuna River, between the fertile Gangetic plain stretching across northern UP and highlands of central MP. This region has recently witnessed a movement for the recognition of the separate state of Bundelkhand led by Raja Bundela, a film actor.

The movement for creating a separate state of Kamtapur from the state of West Bengal is being spearheaded by the Coch-Rajbangshis, who mainly inhabit areas in north Bengal and parts of Assam. Besides statehood, they are also demanding the inclusion of Kamtapuri language in the Eighth Schedule and the propagation of the Kamtapuri language and culture through state controlled radio and television. The two organizations taking the lead in this field are the Kamtapur Peoples' Party (KPP) and the Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO). The former is more moderate; yet its leader, Atul Roy, reportedly said "We will not abandon our demand for statehood, and if Rajbangshi mothers have to lose their sons for achieving the goal of statehood, so be it".

The KLO is allegedly coordinating its militant activities with the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), which is demanding formation of an independent Assam. The fledgling KLO militants are reportedly being groomed by seasoned militants from the ULFA in the Dooars region (known for its teas), the Buxa reserve forests, Cooch Behar and North Bengal's bordering areas with Assam and Bangladesh. Recently, KLO activists have launched a number of attacks on Communist Party workers. The situation became so critical that police teams from Assam and West Bengal launched a joint operation code-named "Operation Shadow" in mid-November 2000 to arrest the activists. On 6 November, 2000, Kamtapur activists descended in the thousands on the Nilmoni Airport in Cooch Behar town in support of the demand for a separate state of Kamtapur, and held a hugely successful mass rally. The movement for a Kamtapur state is progressing quickly at present. The Kamtapuris have also resorted to violence to uphold their cause (ibid.).

Gorkhaland was granted autonomous council status in August 1985. However in the wake of the recent formation of three new states, the Gorkhas have renewed demands

for a separate state for the Gorkha people, comprising parts of hill subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Kalimpong. The Gorkha Liberation Front and the Gorkhaland United Front have recently marked the renewal of their agitation for Gorkhaland with a series of strikes.

Several Bodo insurgent groups have been working since the 1960s for goals that range from the establishment of a Bodo autonomous council, to a separate Bodo state within India, to total independence from India. The Bodos were granted an autonomous council in February 1993, but were unsatisfied with the amount of autonomy in this arrangement and demanded a separate state, which soon led to demands for "a sovereign Bodoland". The Bodos have taken to violence to drive their points home. Their violence expulsion of non-Bodos from the region has resulted in the displacement of more than 87,000 ethnic Santhals, and a smaller number Bengalis and Nepalis have been displaced by the violent conflict between Bodo insurgents and non-Bodos in western Assam. Ethnic tension is rife in Assam, which is home to many ethnic groups. Some groups, such as the Assamese and Bodos, have lived in the region for many centuries. Others, including Bengalis, Santhals, and ethnic Nepalese, migrated there during the 1980s. The campaign for Bodoland and its attendant violence continues unabated. However, the government's initiative to bring the Bodos to the discussion table is showing some promise. The recent meeting of some of the Bodo leaders with the Indian home minister showed that the centre is powerless as the Assam legislature would not approve a separate state of Bodoland at present. However, it may not be long before a separate state of Bodoland is carved out of Assam within the purview of the Indian constitution. On 18 January, 2001, Mainao Daimary, publicity secretary of the Bodo Liberation Tigers, expressed satisfaction at the progress of peace talks between the outfits and the Indian government (ibid.).

The unity and integrity of the Indian state, mostly understood in the territorial sense, has clouded the central government's approach toward demands for confederal autonomy. In some cases, the movements for maximum autonomy have confronted the coercive might of the state and have violent in nature. In such cases, the fear of disintegration has often led the state to react to such demands with a reflexive statist attitude- with sweeping, indiscriminate military aggression. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir and some of the north eastern states (such as Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Tripura) external support for autonomist-turned-secessionist demand has further complicated matters, compelling the defense mechanism of the Indian state to resort to intense counterinsurgency operations.

But research shows that in many cases, apart from external intervention, unimaginative handling of demands for "autonomy" within the Indian union has itself led to violence. Often it is this descent into violence that has

invited external forces to fish in troubled waters. The unending cycle of violence has assumed "autonomy" of its own and refuses to subside. The example of Kashmir and many instances from the north east corroborate such a point of view. The autonomy provision for the state of Jammu and Kashmir that is written in the Indian constitution via Article 370 and the articles that seek to determine the relative autonomy of the north eastern states have time and again emerged as irritants for the central administration (ibid.).

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR REGIONALISM IN INDIA

In a country where federalisation has brought about political unity, one finds it difficult to notice emotional integration, and it is not strange that divisive forces of linguism and regionalism should have emerged.

Of late, India has been witnessing struggles around the assertiveness and conflicting claims of identity groups, and of struggles amongst them. These struggles are often along regional lines primarily due to uneven development and unequal access to political power. Let us refer to three factors responsible for bringing local/ regional demands into sharp focus. *First*, the changed mode of electoral representation has led to hitherto politically dormant regions. The political articulation and mobilisation along caste/ethnic/language-based social cleavages undertaken by these newly emergent state/ region level parties remain territorially contained and rarely cross the regional lines. Also, the national parties with distinct regional characters increasingly adhere to region-specific electoral campaigns and policies. *Second*, growing regional inequalities in terms of income and consumption in the post-reforms period have accentuated the perception of neglect and discrimination. Coastal regions/developed regions have invariably benefited more from the flow of private investment as compared to the regions at peripheral locations, those with disturbed law and order situations, and those with poor economic and social infrastructure. *Third*, we have what may be called ironically the "secession of the rich", even rich regions within constituent states, attracting huge private investments and registering impressive growth, have started resenting the continued dependence of relatively underdeveloped regions on the revenues transferred to them (i.e. Harit Pradesh). The local elites complain of "reverse" discrimination as often the elites from the other politically dominant regions manage to corner financial grants/deals/lucrative portfolios. As a consequence of the above processes, India's federal ideology has registered a marked shift reflected in the following three developments. *First*, regional identity, culture, and geographical differences now appear to be better recognised as a valid basis for administrative division and political representation. *Separate statehood movements are no longer*

being stigmatised as parochial, chauvinist and even anti-national as was done in the past. *Second*, the shift is visible in the way the new states are now being proposed on the grounds of good governance had development rather than on the language principle that had, ostensibly, guided state formation during the first phase of the reorganisation of states. *Third*, the dialect communities of late have been asking for their own “territorial homeland” while underlining the cultural and literary distinctiveness and richness of the dialectic, i.e., Bundelkhand, Ruhelkhand, and Mithilanchal (Kumar, 2010:15).

Regionalism is a dynamic, pragmatic concept. It seldom sustains itself on one single factor: a coalition of factors and circumstances, including politicisation of the region and sense of economic retardation is the basis of regional revival and assertions. But the specific factors fostering regionalism are apt to vary from place to place, and even in the context of the same place, the precise mix of them and their individual potency do not remain unaltered over a period of time. The peculiar historical processes have a bearing on regionalism. What could be the criteria, then, for recognising a region? (Maheshwari, 2000:221).

Rasheeduddin Khan who has examined this problem quite deeply observes: To promote discussion and further classification it is suggested that the criteria for determining a socio-cultural sub-region in India can be formulated as follows: Maximum homogeneity within and maximum identity without; where homogeneities are to be established on ten counts: 1) language dialect; 2) social composition (communities/jatis); 3) ethnic regions; 4) demo-geographic features; 5) area (geographic contiguity); 6) cultural pattern; 7) economy and economic life; 8) historical antecedents; 9) political background; 10) psychological make-up and felt consciousness of group identity (Khan, cited in Maheshwari, 2000:222).

Ashok Behuria points out that the consequent calculus of electoral politics has led to the growth of immensely stratified entrepreneurial elite, especially in multicultural/pluralist societies like India, who have sought to build their constituencies on ever proliferating ethnocultural identities. This has fractured the existing civil society and ruptured the uniting links and necessitated the introduction of fresh and refined bonds of unity. The state with its inertial status-quo-ism has failed to take the lead by redefining its relations of power with the constituent units. This has led to systemic violence. The Indian federation has temperamentally behaved as a “union” and not a “federation”. However, the leadership in the country has to take care to adopt federal principles to judge such cases of autonomy and gradually develop powers (especially financial powers) to the units if it is to contain such ethnocultural assertions (Behuria, 2002).

Indian federalism has provided the institutional terrains within which various “ethnic nations” in India (e.g., Tamil, Telegu, Bengali, Sikh, Gujarati, Manipuri, or Assamese) have taken shape, defined themselves, and are able to

celebrate their identity. The underlying principle in various accommodations of identity in India has remained internal self-determination. Internal self-determination has remained the predominant form in which regionalism, and even sub-regionalism, has sought to express itself. The regional and sub-regional accommodation of identity in India has served to weaken the bases of political secessionism and separatism while not defeating the principle of (internal) self-determination (of nations) [Kumar, 2010:18].

Besides the above factors, there are also many other factors responsible for the growth of regionalism like: i) Regionalism made its appearance as a reaction against the efforts of the national government to impose a particular ideology, language, or cultural pattern on all people or groups. Thus the States of south have resisted imposition of Hindi as official language because they feared this would lead to dominance of the North. Similarly, in Assam anti-foreigner movement was launched by the Assamese to preserve their own culture; ii) continuous neglect of an area or region by the ruling parties and concentration of administrative and political power has given rise to demand for decentralization of authority and bifurcate of unilingual states. On occasions “sons of soil theory” has been put forth to promote the interests of neglected groups or areas of the state; iii) the desire of the various units of the Indian federal system to maintain their sub-cultural regions and greater degree of self-government has promoted regionalism and given rise to demand for greater autonomy; iv) the desire of regional elites to capture power has also led to rise of regionalism. It is well known that political parties like DMK, AIADMK, Akali Dal, Telugu Desam, Asom Gana Parishad etc. have encouraged regionalism to capture power; v) the interactions between the forces of modernization and mass participation have also largely contributed to the growth of regionalism in India. As the country is still away from realising the goal of a nation state, the various groups have failed to identify their group interests with national interests; hence the feeling of regionalism has persisted; and vi) the growing awareness among the people of backward areas that they are being discriminated against has also promoted feeling of regionalism. The local political leaders have fully exploited this factor and tried to feed the people the idea that the central government was deliberately trying to maintain regional imbalances by neglecting social and economic development of certain areas.

Conclusion

However, regionalism is at present, a fairly widespread phenomenon in the Indian political system. Moreover, it is unlikely to lose its sway over people’s minds, at least in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, as the various developmental programmes are carried out, regional

disparities are already becoming more marked and wide-spread engendering a sense of cumulative deprivations in the people of certain regions. This coupled with increasing politicisation in the community is sure to impart sharper focus to regionalism which would emerge more prominently as a factor of small significance in Indian polity.

Among all these explanations there is a common thread of argument that says that the shrinking capacity of the state, underdevelopment, and the politicisation of plural peripheral identities, together with the search for power by neo-elites at the margins, have snapped the inter-ethnic and intercultural bonds that have so far drawn them together. This has created new identities and led to an overwhelming craze for autonomy or self-legislation. It is interesting to note that the concessions of statehood in the recent cases were conditioned by sheer electoral calculations and not by considerations of economic viability. And these concessions in no way altered the basic constitutionally guaranteed relationship between the federation and the units, which is lopsided in favour of the federation. Creation of "dependent" states will in no way improve the conditions, and the passion for a greater degree of autonomy will haunt the Indian states until a genuinely developed refederalized system of governance grows out of the present system of Unitarian federal democracy in India.

Throughout India regionalism has greatly persisted. In Maharashtra, Shiv Sena against Kannadigas in the name of Marathi pride and recently MNS (Maharashtra Nav Nirman Sena) activists against Biharis; in Punjab against non-Punjabis that gave rise to Khalistan movement and earlier Akali movement; In Andhra Pradesh, Telengana movement with an aim of separate state; in Assam, ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam) against migrant Biharis and Bengalis; in Northeast region against other Indians. So, regionalism has turned slowly from non-violent movement to violent movements. When violence is used against people in the name of regionalism it is, no doubt, a criminal act and is punishable. Article 19 of the Indian Constitution provides a citizen of India, to move and settle in any part and to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. When ULFA or MNS activists used violence against poor migrant workers, they clearly violated the law of the land. Every Indian is son of this soil. A Bihari becomes a Mumbaikar when a bomb explodes in Mumbai and a Mumbaikar becomes Bihari, when Kosi wrecks havoc in plains of Bihar.

Keeping in view the electoral calculations for the Lok Sabha polls, recently the United Progressive Alliance (UPA-II) coordination committee and Congress Working Committee's approval to partitioning Andhra Pradesh and granting Telengana to be the 29th state of the Union has triggered violent movements across the regions in the subcontinent. A number of leaders associated with the demand for separate statehood- of Gorkhaland,

Bodoland and Vidarbha in particular- have already started their agitations. The closure of public offices, schools and educational institutions and disruption of daily life in West Bengal and Assam are indicative of the desire and desperation of the people for separate states for their regions (Sarangi 2013:19). Gorkha Janmulti Morcha (GJM) chief Bimal Gurung has resigned as the chief executive of the Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA), which was set up in 2011, to press his party's demand for Union Territory status for the Gorkhaland area of the Darjeeling hills. The GTA, as a regional autonomous council, had started functioning from August 2012 following a tripartite agreement between the Government of India, the West Bengal Government and the GJM.

Similarly, through their call for a state bandh, rail blockade and the disruption and destruction of life and property, the leaders of Bodoland and the All Bodo Students Union in Assam have already intensified their struggle for Bodoland. The Bodo Territorial Council (BTC), which was founded in 2003 after the Bodo leaders ended their armed struggle, is now considered incapable of addressing the demand of the Bodos, the Karbis the Dimasas and the Koch-Rajbangshis. The demand for statehood for Vidarbha too has re-emerged, with Vilas Muttemwar, the Congress leader from Nagpur, urging his party leadership to create a Vidarbha state.

Other statehood demands come from Awadh Pradesh and Bhojpur (Uttar Pradesh and Bihar), Bodoland (Assam), Bundelkhand (Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh), Coorg (Karnataka), Gorkhaland (West Bengal), Harit Pradesh (Western Uttar Pradesh), Konkan Pradesh (Konkan region), Marathwada (Maharashtra), Mahakoshal (Odisha), Mithilachal (Bihar), Muru Pradesh (Rajasthan), Poorvanchal (Uttar Pradesh), Saurashtra (Gujarat), Vidarbha (Maharashtra), and so on. These regions having with different regional identity on the line of region, language, culture, caste and class now pose a grave challenge to the Indian federalism. The time barely needs a second States Reorganization Commission to address these issues.

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NOTES:

1. Regime, regionalism and regional integration plays a very important role in international relations today specially to determine how states across the world integrate themselves to form regional organizations in different regimes. When we talk of regional integration, we mean

“a set of policies by one or more states designed to promote the emergence of a cohesive regional unit, which dominates the pattern of relations between the states of that region and the rest of the world, and which forms the organizing basis for policy within the region across a range of issues” (Hurrell A 1992). If we focus on formal institutions and organizations, one possible way to look at regional integration is that these schemes create international regimes, i.e., rules, regulations and decision-making procedures (Krasner 1983). The scope of these regimes can then vary, including in some cases security issues- like the early years of ASEAN- and in some cases mostly economic issues in the early 1990s, when the creation of an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) was agreed. The EU, which started as economic integration, began dealing with security and defence issues from about the same time, after the end of the Cold War. There is also great variance in the capacity of the institutions created by regional integration schemes. Most regional cooperation stays rather traditional, i.e., inter-state cooperation among sovereign states. But at least the EU has gone beyond this and created supranational institutions. The member states have pooled and delegated sovereignty to common institutions. The EU has a political system that can make authoritative decisions for the entire group of participating states (cited in Laursen 2010:3/4). Although much integration theory has been developed to explain specifically the European case, integration theory has also been used to study integration in other parts of the world, including the Americas, East Asia, and the Pacific. For more information on regime, regionalism and regional integration, see, for example, Robert Keohane (1982), Walter Mattli (1999), Joseph S, Nye (1965), F. Laursen (2003, 2010).

2. Paul R. Brass (1982), “Pluralism, Regionalism and Decentralizing tendencies in Contemporary Politics” in Wilson and D. Dalton (eds.), *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration*, London, C. Hurst; Reports of the States Reorganisation Commission, New Delhi, Government of India, p.260.

3. Rasheeduddin Khan, (1992), *Federal India- A Design for Change*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, p.44.

4. See, for example, Tanja AB (2011). *Comparative Regionalism: A New Research Agenda*.

5. The three waves of regionalism have been taken from Louise Fawcett (2004). *Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism*. *International Affairs* 80(3).

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