

Chapter-8

Regional Aspirations

1. 1980s may be seen as a period of rising regional aspirations creating various regional movements which conclude in a negotiated settlement or accords between the governments groups. Indian approach maintained a balance in the principles of unity and diversity even by redrawing the internal boundaries of country in response to preserve the culture of different regions and linguistic groups.
2. Immediately after independence, India had to cope up with the issues of partition, displacement, integration of princely states and reorganisation of states i.e. Jammu and Kashmir issues political aspiration, North-East had no consensus to be a part of India and Dravidian movement briefly toyed with the idea of separate country.
3. Article 370: The article gives great autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir compared to other states of India.
4. Jammu and Kashmir comprises three social and political regions ; Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh. The heart of the Kashmir region is the Kashmir valley; the people are Kashmiri speaking and mostly muslim with a small Kashmiri speaking Hindu minority.
5. During most of the period between 1953 to 1974, Congress exercised a lot of influence on the politics of Jammu and Kashmir. Finally in 1974, Sheikh became Chief Minister of the state. Except it, from 1989, separatist politics was also surfaced in Kashmir with the stronger demand for intra state autonomy rather than state autonomy. In present scenario, most of separatist in dialogue are trying to re-negotiate a relationship of the state with India.
6. The Akali Dal, was formed in 1920s as the political wing of the Sikhs had led the movement for the formation of a 'Punjabi Suba'. After the reorganisation the Akalis came to power in 1967 and then in 1977, On both the occasions it was a coalition government.
7. In Punjab, Anandpur Sahib Resolution was passed at the conference of Akali Dal at Anandpur Sahib in 1973 to ascertain regional autonomy and to redefine centre-state relationship. It had a limited appeal and Akali government was dismissed in 1980. Afterwards, the movement launched by Akali Dal took the form of armed insurgency and

resolution became controversial.

8. Operation Blue Star; Akalis militants made their headquarters inside the the Golden Temple in Amritsar & turned it into an armed fortress. In June 1984, the government of India carried out 'Operation Blue Star', code name for army action in the Golden Temple. In this operation the government could successfully flush out the militants, but also damaged the historical temple & deeply hurt the sentiments of the Sikhs.
9. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated on 31 October 1984 outside her residence by her body guards.
10. In 1985, Punjab accord was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and Harchand Singh Longowal, President of Akali Dal to transfer Chandigarh, appointment of a commission to resolve order dispute and agreement for compensation to better treatment. But peace did not come easily, violence led many excesses and fragmentation of Akali Dal. Hence, it led to president's rule in the state. In 1997, first normal elections in Punjab were held in post militancy era and alliance of Akali Dal and BJP scored a major victory.
11. The North-East region consisted of seven states referred to as 'Seven Sisters'. The region shores boundaries with China, Myanmar and Bangladesh and serves as India's gateway of south-east Asia.
12. The reorganisation of North-East was complete by 1972 but did not end the autonomy demands i.e. Bodos, Karbis, Dimasas demanded separate state in Assam and issues were resolved with the grant of some autonomy to these issues. Even 'Assam Accord' was signed over the issue of 'Outsiders' in Assam in 1985.
13. Nagaland state was created in 1963, Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya in 1972 while Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh become separate state only in 1987.
14. In 1979, the all Assam students Union (AASU) a students group not affiliated to any party, led an anti-foreigner movement. The Assam movement was combination of cultural pride and economic backwardness as it was against outsiders to maintain cultural integration and poverty, unemployment also existed despite natural resources like oil, tea and coal.
15. Regional aspirations range from demands of statehood and economic development to autonomy and separation were coming up which taught many lessons to us i.e. expression of regional issues is not abnormal phenomenon, to respond through democratic negotiations, power sharing among groups and parties, economic development of region and flexible federal system.