

Regionalism in Indian scenario

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Abstract

The term region is difficult to define. It is understood in different contexts. However, it has been generally defined as “a homogeneous area with physical and cultural characteristics distinct those of neighboring areas”. A region is generally conceived as a permanent and definite area but it is a contextual and dynamic concept. The concept of region varies according to criteria chosen for its demarcation. Regions are defined on the basis of different criteria such as economic development, geography etc. before Christaller, the regional analyst; defined regions as natural systems created by topographical features. But Christaller defined them in terms of social relationships and organizational principles. Skinner extended the regional analysis to social and cultural phenomena. On the basis of physical characteristics of the land such as land forms, climate, soil vegetation etc. We get a physical geo-graphic region. When economic levels are considered as criteria, we arrive at economic regions. A person becomes partial toward his region and don't think about country.

Keywords: Regionalism, India, region and U.P.

Introduction

Regionalism is a country wide phenomenon and it took the form of well-conceived and well organized agitations and campaigns. Regionalism has been the most potent force in Indian politics since India's independence. It has remained the basis of regional political parties. It is a significant type of sub-territorial loyalty. Interestingly enough, regionalism in India, has flourished in close identification with the regions. In the post-independence period, it has often been conflicting as well as collaborating force, largely depending on the manner of accommodation. Regionalism in India is deeply rooted in its manifold diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, religions, communities, etc. It originates from the feeling of regional concentration, which is often fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation. The country of more than a billion people of different castes, creeds, customs and cultures, India's broad regions are distinct from one another. For instance, southern India, the home of Dravidian cultures, itself a region of many regions is very different from the north. A region can subsume a number of nations such as Arctic region, the region of South East Asia, the far Eastern region and so on. A region can be used for a nation such as the sub-continent region of India. It can be used for the Eastern region, Western region, Northern region or Southern region in India. The states in India also form distinct regions. Further, there can be sub-regions within a state like the Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh, Vidarbha region in Maharashtra, etc.

Regionalism describes situations in which different religious or ethnic groups with distinctive identities co-exist within the same state boundaries, often concentrated within a particular region and sharing strong feelings of collective identity. Regionalism stands for the love of a particular region or an area in preference to the nation or any other region. It often involves ethnic groups whose aims include independence from a national state and the development of their own political

power. In Indian context, regionalism refers to assertion of distinct ethnic, linguistic or economic interests by various groups within the nation. Since the roots of regionalism lie in linguistic, ethnic, economic and cultural identities of the people living in specific geo-graphical area, political scholars have treated various forms of regionalism which include economic regionalism, linguistic regionalism, political regionalism and even sub-regional movements in the general frame of regionalism. In other words, it is the manifestation of those neglected socio-political elements which fail to find expression in the mainstream polity and culture. These feelings of frustration and anger resulting from exclusion and neglect find expression in regionalism. Prejudices and biases have a lasting impact on the mind of the people. They themselves do not play a part in the political process, but as a psychic factor they do influence their party organizations and their political behaviour. Seen in this perspective, regionalism in India, as elsewhere, is basically a psychic phenomenon; it has its root in the minds of the people.

Regionalism; the extreme loyalty and love shown to a particular region, It expresses itself in such a distorted notions like development of one's own region even at the cost of interests of other regions and people, and unwillingness to allow people from other regions to work and settle in region. Regionalism militates against nationalism and impedes the process national integration. This may be characterized by the commonness of cultural, linguistic or historical and social background.

According to Marachell E. Dimock, regionalism is a clustering of environment, economic, social and governmental factors to such an extent that an identity within the whole, a need for autonomous planning, a manifestation of cultural peculiarities and a desire for administrative freedom, are theoretically recognized and actually put into effect. Regionalism in India may be viewed from two dimensions-positive and negative. In

positive terms regionalism embodies a quest for self-identity and self-fulfillment on the part of two domiciles of a region. In negative terms, regionalism reflects a psyche of relative deprivation on the part of People of an area not always viable in terms of national economic analysis. In this way regionalism is a concept that shows narrow vision of social life.

Regionalism is the process of decision in which central government and a local government decides who will take decision on matter. So regionalism talks about decentralization with cutting state sovereignty and questioning on central government. Regionalism is a disputed thought it talks about cutting of central government power and empowering local region and works as gathering whole country. In International level regionalism takes the form of 'supra-nationalism'. Regionalism in U.P. can be found in slow sound. Telangana and other states movement are more powerful than that of UP, especially development of Western UP is basic reason of regionalism which means a kind of mentality in which people try to get economic, social and Political empowerment for their areas. In India regionalism is spreading like a powerful political movement. The elements that empower regionalism are racial and cultural nationalism and are loose bases of political foundation. In this way regionalism can be called as opposite of globalization, there are two approaches about regionalism:

- (a) Excess nationality is a reason for regionalism; people from all the parts of country demands for many rights.
- (b) Regionalism is dangerous for national integration, because state aim becomes superior to national aim.

R. C. Pandey says – "Hindi speaker and non-Hindi speaker's area is more affected as Assamis versus North Indian in Maharashtra, Telangana movement can be seen, this is because of regionalism. Unaffected area also demands for local demands."

We have to care that in Indian context the existence of regional parts and regionalism are not similar. In Indian Politics regionalism means to love or more affection to a special part of state than country. In this way regionalism is opposite of nationalism, whose aim is to keep narrow fulfilling. In Indian environment this is a policy that is based upon language, religion, region etc. and tries to collapse the way of nation building and give life to deconstruction and separatism. As we know in 1956 it was decided to re-arrange Indian states but U.P. is biggest populated and socially, culturally diversified area in India. It was continuously demanded that U.P. must be divided into Purvanchal, Bundelkhand and Harit Pradesh. The demand for Bundelkhand is being made forcefully as it is poorest part of U. P., Bundelkhand is economically backward than the other parts of U. P. On the other side Harit Pradesh demands for autonomy because it does not agree to spend its money on other parts of U.P., it will affect the development of Harit Pradesh. Generally it is considered that regionalism is relevant only in those states where more people live and differ in cultural activities and regional Political Parties are strong. India is a larger country having continental dimension and comprising no fewer than 29 States and 7 Union Territories.

Regionalism tries to show that their culture and tradition are in danger because central governments don't protect their values and think that the movement they have initiated for their profit is against central government, although politics in itself does

not give birth to regionalism but it is relevant to make in process. We have to know that what are the factors which encourage regionalism in U.P., where Western U.P. is moving toward development eastern part is very backward. From ancient times regionalism can be found in many forms, it is present in form of religion, language, culture and in modern period in collective interest. Any group takes support of regionalism to show co-ordination. In U.P. cultural diversity is encouraging regionalism. On the same basics many years ago Dravid-Munetra-Kadgam talks to separate Madras from India. Assam-Gan-Parishad talks about his cultural insecurity in India. Regional imbalance social and economic condition tendency of separation and special regional environment is helpful for regionalism.

In politics, regionalism is a political ideology that focuses on the interests of a particular region or group of region, whether traditional or formal (administrative divisions, country subdivisions, political divisions, sub-national units). Regionalism centers on increasing the region's influence and political power, either through movements for limited form of autonomy (devolution, states' rights, decentralization) or through stronger measures for a greater degree of autonomy (sovereignty, separatism, independence). Regionalists often favour loose federation or confederations over a unitary state with a strong central government. Regionalism may be contrasted with nationalism. Broader discursive on federal reorganization in the post-colonial India comprises streams / debates of the Constituent Assembly, of the mid 1950s, early 1970s, between 1999 to 2001 and during the recent movements towards statehood and sub-statehood. Each stream unravels the ways in which federal arrangements, democracy and ethnic plurality have taken contour in India. Every phase of reorganization had a dominant causality with complex set of variables affecting the political processes. During the Constituent Assembly debates the hectoring factor was to fashion a territorially coherent and sustaining nation state.

Cultural claims and demand of regional autonomy now competed with the central state. While things in 1970s were associated more with governance, national security and electoral politics which shaped the rival perspectives on what the Indian Federation should be? The discourse on federalism dichotomized in wake of separatist movements in Punjab and Assam in 1980s and in Kashmir in 1990s, hurdling India's territorial integrity but surprisingly this trend and concerns vanished abruptly in coming years. Being far from centre some area of U.P. and India does not inter-act each-other.

In the 21st century aspirations of the regional political elite to gain new political space fashioned the demand of the state/sub-statehood. Recently new forces of interdependence and globalization have strengthened the cause of ethnic and religious nationalism demanding greater autonomy in the federal structure. It is a multi-racial, multi-lingual nation. There are scores of regional languages, various strains of culture and different loyalties, single as well as multiple. Amidst the amazing diversities, it is natural that regional feeling, regional parties, regional institutions and similar other organizations meant for voicing the aspirations of local people and providing forums for them, should emerge. Because of this divert culture India and, U.P. has made their regional existence and was the reason for rising of regionalism.

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A language difference also encourages regionalism and language has been used as political weapon. To make language based states many movements can be found in India and also brings national calamity. Many parts of U.P. grow speedily although Bundelkhand, Purvanchal are economically weak so these parts are not satisfied and want to make separate state. Caste factor is also important for regionalism. Same caste is powerful in making regionalism. As Hariyana, Maharastra are making regionalism on basis of caste. Demand for Khalishtan, there is a Sikh Ugravadi groups which encourages on the base of caste. Many political thinkers say if there will be new states like Purvanchal, Bundelkhand political interests of politician will be fulfilled more than earlier and they will rule for a long time. In Indian politics regionalism can be seen more dangerous as state wants to become separate from Union. First time in 1959-61 this slogan was given by Tamil people. Dangerous regional mentality can be seen in Punjab where a Sikh leader Jagjit Singh Chauhan efforts for Sikhistan and travel all over the world to get support for Khalistan; although he was failed in his efforts. Many sociologists do not agree with the bases on which any part must be given freedom neither it can be decided. But if any part lives fundamentally alienated and reacts on other parts it can be symbol of regionalism.

In U.P. regionalism is rising because state and district level political and administrative supremacy exists on the other parts. In reality economic and regional differences which make inequality, imbalances are basic reason for regionalism in U.P. slow speed of development and policy of development after independence makes regional differences. Regionalism is deciding factor of politics in U.P. whose definition cannot be made. Regionalism is a political element in which people prefer Purvanchal, Bundelkhand more than U.P. citizenship talks about the patriotic mentality of person and keeping faith in Union. But our mind prefers more to be Bengalis, Purvanchali, Bihari, and Punjabi than Indian. Finally many circumstances come when regional mentality pollutes Indian nationality. In reality regionalism came from our federal constitution. Integration means to make one, diverse thinking's. It keeps two meaning-there must not be much difference in states though in must be supportive in nature.

The people of U.P. want dual policy for them; on one side they want facility for themselves and different behaviour with others. Because of regionalism country suffers from many problems. When regionalism and provincialism clashes against national interest then country's unity, strength and uniqueness come in danger. Unfortunately wheel of regionalism comes in U.P. from time-to-time. Mayawati was also convinced with the idea of division of U.P. because as politician her vote bank will be stronger than earlier. Then there will be less protest to her government. Ajit Singh demands for Harit Pradesh because western U.P.'s mentality is that why they should lend their profit to Purvanchal or Bundelkhand. On the other side people of Purvanchal think all industries have been established in western U.P. that's why they are backward. This element of regionalism encourages the demand for Purvanchal, Bundelkhand etc.

After independence political machinery is being used for special person, special area that's why every zone of states is not developed because of that regional development show differences. Telangana in Andhra-Pradesh was burning example of economic differences which encourages casteism.

Language differences, at last people demand for new states or autonomous state, if We have a glance on Indian polity We are clear that economic growth can be found in the root of Meghalay, Himanchal-Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura like centre rulling states. Although it is a disputed question whether autonomy is symbol of whole development? Surely, avoiding economic development results in regionalism.

In short, today regionalism has been a big movement in political and social of U.P. in nearest future we are not table to see any way to keep regionalism away from the general mind of people. This is a multi-dimensional geo-graphical, cultural, Political, economic and mostly psychological.

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